

collectif9 – RITUÆLS

NOVEMBER 18 & 19, 2022 • Église
St-Pierre-Apôtre, Montréal

Biographies and program notes

collectif9

Known for their innovative programming and unique arrangements of classical repertoire, Montreal string ensemble collectif9 performs “with an infectious energy and vigour that grabs an audience’s attention” (The WholeNote). Since their 2011 debut, collectif9 has performed numerous concerts across North America, Europe, and Asia. As performers of classical and contemporary music, the ensemble combines the power of an orchestra with the agility of a chamber ensemble. collectif9 operates on the premise that a change of

context can influence communication and experience.

collectif9 presents several new programmes every season in Montréal, Canada, and their national and international touring schedule includes performances in chamber music series, festivals, universities, and more.

Highlights include concerts in the Festival de Música de Morelia (Mexico), La Folle journée de Nantes (France), Festival de Lanaudière (Québec), Shenzhen Concert Hall (China), and Sound Unbound (Barbican Centre, London). The ensemble continues to explore new repertoire and new artistic partnerships with composers, video artists, poets, lighting designers, and other inspired collaborators, to create multidisciplinary projects that come to life in acoustic or amplified settings.

collectif9.ca

Stacey Désilier

Passionate about movement, the possibilities of the body, and fascinated by dance, Stacey quickly realized that she wanted to dance



professionally. She pursued professional studies at the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal, collaborating with choreographers and performers including Marie-Claire Forté and George Stamos. She worked with Cirque Éloize for several years and Helen Simard with We All Fall Down Interdisciplinary Creations. In 2018, Stacey joined the company Animals of Distinction and participated in their new

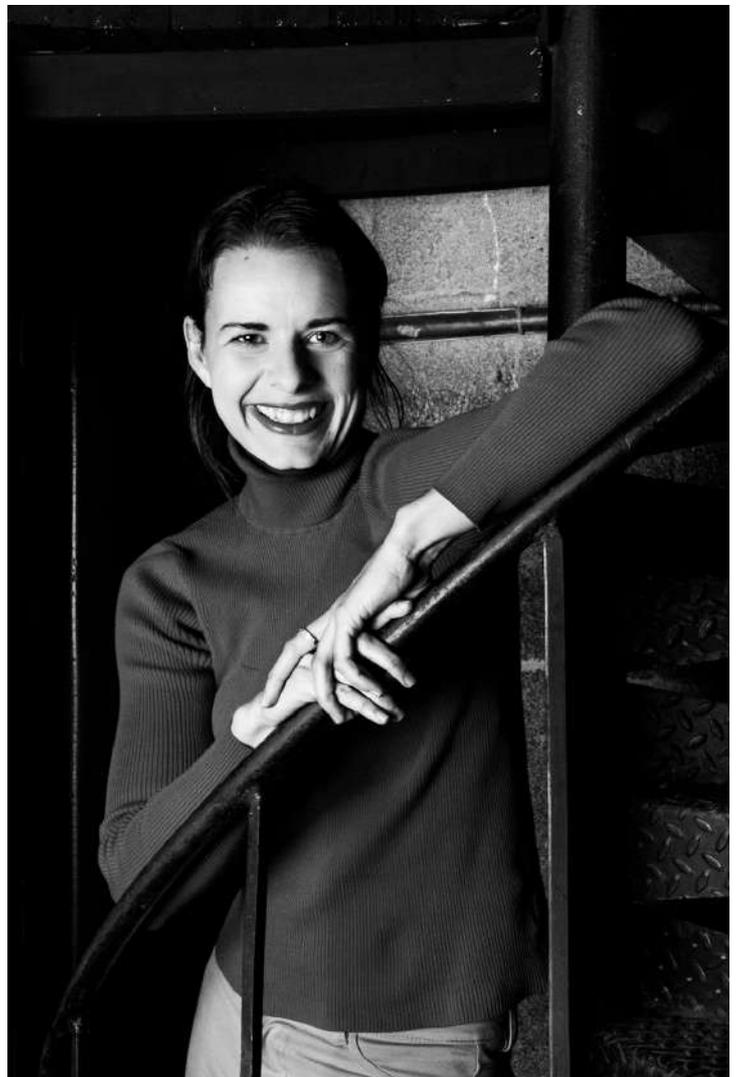
creations FRONTERA and Creation Destruction.

Following these fruitful years in large-scale shows, she was brought into the rich universe of Mélanie Demers. As soon as she joined Mayday, she broadened her horizons with several challenges including two films, a podcast, a solo taken from the Icon Pop repertoire, and two new creations; The Goddam Milky Way and Cabaret Noir. Thanks to these collaborations, Stacey was able to discover the world through movement. The pleasures of dancing are continuously renewed for Stacey through her inspiring collaborations with musical groups such as Fly Pan Am, Dead Messenger, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Jerusalem in my heart, Frannie Holder and L'Opéra de Québec with Starmania. Most recently, with the company Tentacle Tribe,

she is brought back to her urban dance roots and her Haitian culture. Her artistic practice and cooperative methodology provide her with an inner richness that she hopes to share with new organizations, countries and artists.

Laurence Jobidon

Canadian composer and organist, Laurence Jobidon has written for a variety of ensembles, from solo organ to opera and several orchestral and chamber music ensembles. Hailed for her inventiveness



(Jeu), her powerful lyricism (Avant-Scène Opéra), as well as for the richness of her language (Folia Organologica), her works have been performed in North America and Europe, recognized in several national and international composition competitions, published by Productions d'Oz and New Music Shelf (USA), in addition to having been the subject of musicological and stylistic analysis in the specialized magazines Mixtures (Quebec), L'Orgue Francophone (France) and Folia Organologica (Poland).

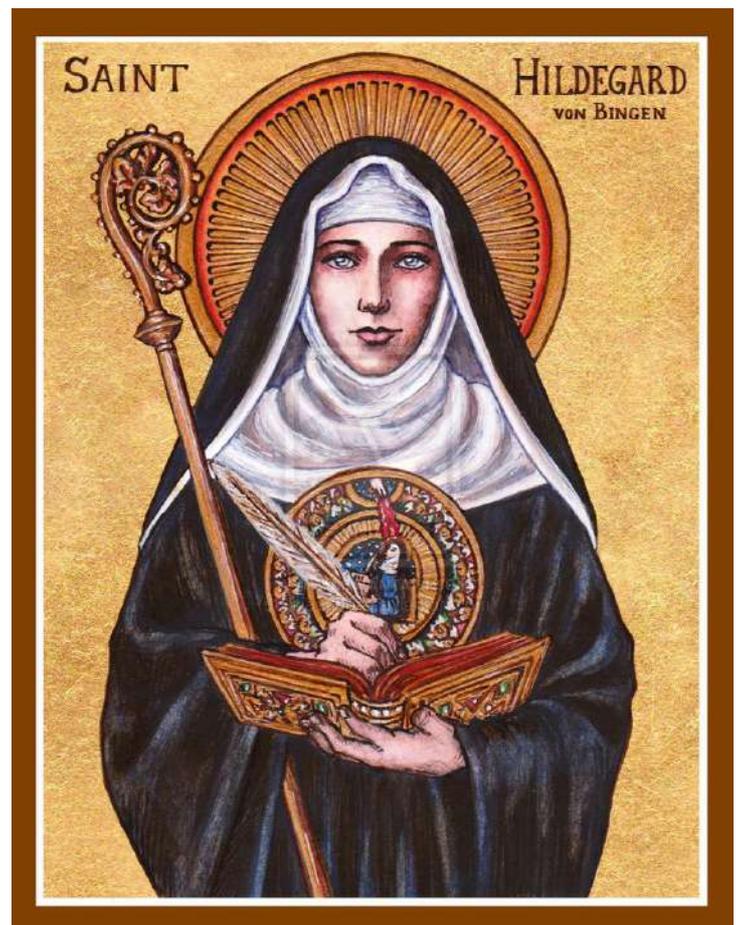
Although composition has become the focus of her musical activities in recent years, she continues to give regular organ recitals throughout Quebec. Featured organist of the Canadian International Competition in March 2021, she had previously distinguished herself as a finalist in the Claude-Lavoie competition in 2014

and as a national winner and scholarship holder at the Canadian Music Competition on several occasions. In interpretation, her principal teachers include Dany Bélisle (organ), Pamela Gill Eby (organ) and Suzanne Beaubien-Lowe (piano).

laurencejobidon.ca

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

Hildegard of Bingen was a saint, composer and poet but it's only recently that her songs, writings and remarkable life and



visions have been rediscovered.

She was born over 900 years ago and for most of her 80-plus years was shut away in an obscure hilltop monastery in the Rhineland. This remarkable woman had left behind a treasure-trove of illuminated manuscripts, scholarly writings and songs written for her nuns to sing at their devotions.

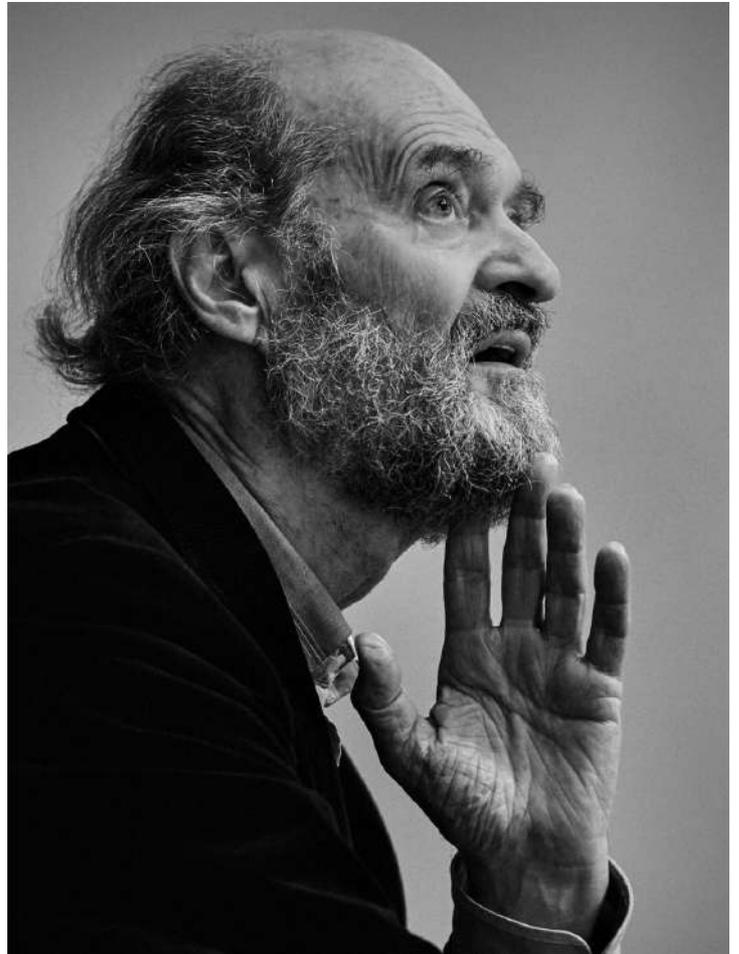
Her music is monophonic, that is, consisting of exactly one melodic line. Its style has been said to be characterized by soaring melodies that can push the boundaries of traditional Gregorian chant and to stand outside the normal practices of monophonic monastic chant.

Today we think of Hildegard as one of the first identifiable composers in the history of

Western music but there were no mentions of her music in any reference book before 1979.

Arvo Pärt (born 1935)

“I could compare my music to white light which contains all colours. Only a prism can divide the colours and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener.”



Arvo Pärt is one of those composers in the world whose creative output has significantly changed the way we

understand the nature of music. In 1976, he created a unique musical language called tintinnabuli, that has reached a vast audience of various listeners and that has defined his work right up to today. There is no compositional school that follows Pärt, nor does he teach, nevertheless, a large part of contemporary music has been influenced by his tintinnabuli compositions.

Pärt's oeuvre is rich and versatile, including many large-scale compositions for choir and orchestra, four symphonies and works for soloists and orchestra, as well as numerous choral pieces and chamber music. The majority of his works are based on liturgical texts and prayers.

arvopart.ee/en

Psalom (Arvo Pärt, 1985)

Psalom is based on Psalm 112 (113) in Church Slavonic, which, like many other of Pärt's instrumental pieces, precisely determines the course of music. The nine verses of the psalm are inscribed into music following strict *tintinnabuli* rules and composed as melodic sentences that are separated from one another by grand pauses, starting silently and fading into silence again.

Summa (Arvo Pärt, 1977)

Summa is one of these *tintinnabuli*-works Pärt has composed in several versions. Initially created in 1977 for voices *a cappella*, the composition has later been scored for both vocal and instrumental ensembles. The seeming simplicity of the work masks its

utmost complexity whereby the circular structure of the voices conveys a symbolic meaning.

“I have developed a highly formalised compositional system, which I have been using to write my music for twenty years. *Summa* is the most strict and enigmatic work in this series,” Arvo Pärt said in 1994.

The neutral title itself embodies the essence of the content as the work is based on the text of the Latin *Credo*. The great simplicity of the piece masks its complexity. The underlying rules ensure that on the surface a cycle of continuous change is created while the deep structure possesses an order of stillness. Originally Pärt composed *Summa* for choir, yet he later created various arrangements.

Nicole Lizée (born 1973)

Called “a brilliant musical scientist” (CBC), “breathtakingly inventive” (Sydney Times Herald), and “utterly inspiring” (I Care If You Listen),

award winning composer and filmmaker Nicole Lizée explores themes of malfunction, psychedelia, turntablism, rave culture, urbex, film theory, thrash metal, experimental fashion, and glitch to create a new kind of expression. She writes for unorthodox instrument combinations including the Atari 2600 video game console, vintage board games, omnichords, stylophones, Simon™, Ouija boards, and karaoke tapes.



Her commission list of over 60 works includes the Kronos Quartet, the BBC Proms, the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, Bang On a Can, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, London Sinfonietta, Donaueschingen Festival, stargaze, the National Film Board, Australian Art Orchestra, Southbank Sinfonia, Colin Currie, Sō Percussion, Eve Egoyan, Tapestry Opera, Quatuor Bozzini, Continuum, and the Banff Centre.

Nicole's works are regularly performed worldwide to international acclaim. She is the recipient of numerous awards, prizes, and honours for her work.

nicolelizee.com

Another Living Soul (Nicole Lizée, 2016)

originally written for string quartet

Another Living Soul is stop motion animation for string quartet. Considered one of the most complex and idiosyncratic art forms, stop motion demands imagination, craft, isolation, an unwavering vision, fortitude, and copious amounts of time. The act of beginning the process invites both angst at the daunting task that has just begun and a kind of zen acceptance of the labyrinthine road ahead.

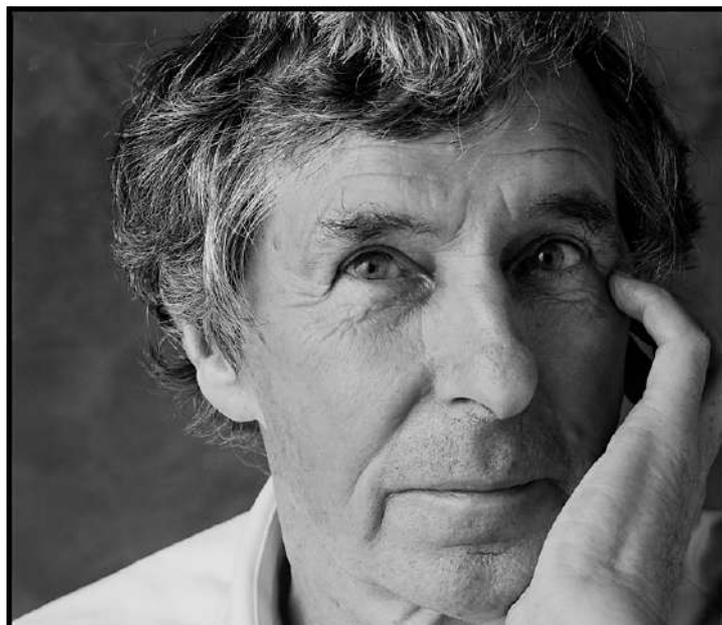
The earliest stop motion—those beings and worlds created by Harryhausen, Starevich, Clokey, et al—still impresses and inspires. Oozing creativity, their work has a

rough-hewn beauty and a timeless enchantment.

Throughout its evolution, the end result has always been incrementally imbuing vitality and life to something devoid of any such spark on its own. The close quarters, intimacy, and camaraderie of the people who work in this art form are mirrored by the scrutiny and care they afford their tiny subjects and the attention to minutiae required to render a work that is lifelike. The impossible becomes possible—souls emerge from where once there were none.

Michael Tippett (1905–1998)

Sir Michael Kemp
Tippett was an



English composer who rose to prominence during and immediately after the Second World War. In his lifetime he was sometimes ranked with his contemporary Benjamin Britten as one of the leading British composers of the 20th century. Among his best-known works are the oratorio *A Child of Our Time*, the orchestral *Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli*, and the opera *The Midsummer Marriage*.

Tippett's talent developed slowly. He withdrew or destroyed his earliest compositions, and was 30 before any of his works were published. Until the mid-to-late 1950s his music was broadly lyrical in character, before changing to a more astringent and experimental style. New influences, including those of jazz and blues after his first visit to America in 1965, became increasingly evident in his compositions.

While Tippett's stature with the public continued to grow, not all critics approved of these changes in style, some believing that the quality of his work suffered as a consequence. From around 1976 Tippett's late works began to reflect the works of his youth through a return to lyricism. Although he was much honoured in his lifetime, critical judgement on Tippett's legacy has been uneven, the greatest praise being generally reserved for his earlier works. His centenary in 2005 was a muted affair; apart from the few best-known works, his music has been performed infrequently in the 21st century.

Lament (Michael Tippett, 1952)

Lament is the 2nd variation of the Variations on an Elizabethan Theme (also seen as

Variations on Sellinger's Round) is a set of variations for string orchestra, written collaboratively in 1952 by six English composers: Lennox Berkeley, Benjamin Britten, Arthur Oldham, Humphrey Searle, Michael Tippett and William Walton.

The theme was Sellinger's Round or The Beginning of the World, an Irish dance tune, as harmonised for the keyboard by William Byrd, the leading composer from the time of Elizabeth I. It was orchestrated for the occasion by Imogen Holst, but she did not provide a variation of her own. The variations were written to celebrate the forthcoming coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June 1953.

Lament begins and ends with a transcription of 'Ah Belinda!' from Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, over which a solo violin plays a decorated version of the theme.

Bryce Dessner **(born 1976)**

Bryce Dessner is a vital and rare force in new music. He has won Grammy Awards as a classical composer and with the band The National, of



which he is founding member, guitarist, arranger, and co-principal songwriter. He is regularly commissioned to write for the world's leading ensembles, from Orchestre de Paris to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and is a high-profile presence in film score composition, with credits including *The Revenant*, for which he was Grammy and

Golden Globe nominated, Fernando Mereilles's *The Two Popes* and Mike Mill's *C'mon C'mon*.

Dessner collaborates with some of today's most creative and respected artists, including Philip Glass, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Paul Simon, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Sufjan Stevens, Fernando Mereilles, Thom Yorke, Bon Iver, Nico Muhly, and Steve Reich, who named Dessner "a major voice of his generation." Dessner's orchestrations can be heard on the latest albums of Paul Simon, Bon Iver and Taylor Swift.

brycedessner.com

Aheym (Bryce Dessner, 2009)

originally written for string quartet

Aheym means 'homeward' in Yiddish, and this piece is written as a musical evocation of the idea of flight and passage. As little boys, my brother and I used to spend hours with my grandmother, asking her about the details of how she came to America. (My father's family were Jewish immigrants from Poland and Russia). She could only give us a smattering of details, but they all found their way into our collective imagination, eventually becoming a part of our own cultural identity and connection to the past. In her poem "Di rayze aheym," the American-Yiddish poet Irena Klepfisz, a professor at Barnard in New York and one of the few child survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto, writes: "Among strangers is her home. Here

right here she must live. Her memories will become monuments."

Tenebre (Bryce Dessner, 2011)

originally written for string quartet and pre-recorded track

The significance of the *Tenebre* service for me is its relationship to light. There are 15 candles extinguished through the service, the final darkness symbolizing the death of Christ. I looked at *Tenebre* not in the context of religion but for its use of light, and how composers have scored that descent into darkness. I used the writing of the piece as an opportunity to study some of my favorite Renaissance vocal music, and I chose to reference *Tenebre* settings by Tallis, Gesualdo and Palestrina, as well as an incredible *Tenebre* service by Couperin.

These small quotes are woven together in an abstract way and my *Tenebre* inverts the form of the service: rather than going from light into darkness, we go from darkness to light. So the piece ends where it should begin.

Jocelyn Morlock (1969)

Jocelyn Morlock is a composer living in Vancouver, Canada, the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

She came to classical music in late adolescence, by way of the film *Amadeus*,



and felt like she'd passed through a magic portal, never to return.

Her music is inspired variously by birds, insomnia, nature, fear, other people's music and art, nocturnal wandering thoughts, lucid dreaming, death, and the liminal times and experiences before and after death.

As a listener and music educator, she has a broad-ranging interest in all kinds and styles of music and is grateful to be living in a time and place where we can hear so many diverse voices express their identity in music. She believes in the proliferation of positive energy that a large group of people can create together, through many small actions.

jocelynmorlock.com

Exaudi (Jocelyn Morlock, 2004)

originally written for vocal ensemble with cello solo

Exaudi was written for a concert about memory, mourning, and loss. My grandmother died the year prior to me writing it, and *Exaudi* is loosely based on her emotional and spiritual life as I saw it from a distance, in addition to being written out of love for her.

She lost her husband at a young age, and this relates to the meaning of the first half of the piece, "Exaudi orationem meam" which means "hear my words, all flesh will come to you."

At the beginning of the piece (as written for voices), this text is set as ritualized repetition

of words from the requiem mass. Gradually the repetition becomes very specific, meaningful, and painful, describing my grandmother's overwhelming sense of loss following the sudden death of her husband.

My grandmother lived to be almost 90. As she got older, the horror of death and painful nature of her grief changed and faded. The idea of death became a gentler thought to her, comforting, possibly something to look forward to. She talked about perhaps being reunited with her husband after she died. She used to joke about him seeing her and wondering who this old woman could possibly be...
