Program Notes

Annie Gosfield (b. 1960)
Uphill Slides and Knockdown Dives (2005)

Annie Gosfield, whom the BBC called "a one woman Hadron collider, the queen of the detuned industrial noise" works on the boundaries between notated and improvised music, electronic and acoustic sounds, refined timbres and noise. She composes for others and performs with her own band, taking her music on a path through festivals, factories, clubs, art spaces, and concert halls. She was a 2012 fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, and a recent recipient of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts prestigious “Grants to Artists” award. Gosfield’s newly released Tzadik CD “Almost Truths and Open Deceptions” features a piece for piano and broken shortwave radio, a cello concerto, a 5-minute blast by her band, and music inspired by baseball and warped 78's. Recent work includes compositions inspired by factory environments, jammed radio signals from WWII, and her grandparents’ immigrant experiences in New York City during the industrial revolution. Annie's discography includes four solo releases on the Tzadik label, and she often writes on the compositional process for the New York Times’ series “The Score.” She held the Darius Milhaud chair of composition at Mills College, and has taught at Princeton University and California Institute of the Arts. Notably, she studied piano for a time with Doris Stevenson at the University of Southern California.

Premiered at the Muzik3 festival in San Diego on April 13, 2005, Uphill Slides and Knockdown Dives was written for Felix Fan and David Cossin, two fine musicians who love to play together. The "uphill slides" refer to the many glissandi played on the cello. The "knockdown dives" make reference to a strong, loud, percussion part, that shifts from strong and steady to wild and wobbly.

– Annie Gosfield

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)
Recitativo (“In quali eccessi...”) and aria (“Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata”) from Don Giovanni (1787)

Donna Elvira, who sings this aria, makes her first appearance in Don Giovanni singing another aria (“Ah, chi mi dice mai”) that describes her abandonment by a former lover, and her desire for revenge against him. She soon runs into Don Giovanni, recognizes him as the former lover, and spends the rest of the first act thwarting Don Giovanni's subsequent attempts at seduction and warning others of his treachery. Yet in the first scene of the second act, Don Giovanni sings to Donna Elvira of his repentance and his desire to return to her. Donna Elvira is somehow convinced, but before she can come down from her room to meet Don Giovanni, he exchanges clothes with his servant, Loporello, so that Donna Elvira ends up following the servant. Soon enough, four of Don Giovanni's many enemies find Loporello, Donna Elvira attempts to protect him, and in order to save himself, Loporello reveals himself not to be Don Giovanni after all. Donna Elvira is once again furious at Don Giovanni's perfidy, but at the same time she feels some pity for him, sensing that his numerous misdeeds will lead to his demise. It is this aria that expresses these conflicted feelings.

“Mi tradi” was not heard at the premiere of Don Giovanni in Prague, but was added for subsequent performances in Vienna at the request of the original singer of Elvira's part, Caterina Cavalieri, who wanted something with which to show off her impressive voice. Mozart obliged and wrote this
coloratura aria (one containing elaborate and virtuosic ornamentation, heard here in frequent arpeggios, scales, and large leaps) both to please Cavalieri and to show the intensity of Elvira's emotions at her second betrayal.

– Samuel Mazzarella

Four Villains

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)
Canzonetta (“Deh vieni alla finestra”) from Don Giovanni (1787)

Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856)
Liederkreis, Op. 39, No. 3: Waldesgespräch (1840)

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)
Erlkönig, D. 328 (1821)

Charles-François Gounod (1818 – 1893)
Sérénade (“Vous qui faites l’endormie”) from Faust (1859)

God is no respecter of persons, and neither is music. Our art will embrace any kind of moral system or lack thereof. I suppose you could say it makes each of these better somehow, but what it really does is make each of these "more". Don Giovanni's profoundly beautiful Serenade is sung in near darkness, with his servant Leporello miming seduction under a young lady's window, wearing the Don's clothing. What do we see in this? We see that here Don Giovanni is the essence, not the performance. It is a lonely, pure, isolated thing. Each time we hear what might be real feeling from him – his remorse over the death of the Commendatore, this singular serenade, his heroic defiance of damnation itself – he becomes a purity. The theatre no longer confines him.

Robert Schumann's Waldgespräch features the same kind of succubus we encounter in Keats's Lamia, a femme fatale whose crooning turns into a rant, both in the poem and in the song setting.

Franz Schubert's Erlkönig is one of the most terrifying five minutes of music I know. Like the damnation music in Don Giovanni, it seems to destroy music, to be some kind of chaos in sound, each with a blunt, short, direct ending. A child, a father, the dread Erlking, and an impassioned narrator all play their role. In Mozart's case, a D-major chord after pages of D minor thunders finality. In Schubert's case, it is a broken line that is nearly spoken, and spoken in silence.

Charles Gounod's Mephisto finds himself in the unpleasant position of having to occupy the matron without, while the newly rejuvenated Faust seduces Marguerite within. At first, he tries to make a good effort of it. He really does. Once a little laughter sneaks in it is all over. It becomes a wild, sardonic caricature of a lover's serenade, ending with laughter that spans two octaves.

– Keith Kibler
César Franck (1822 – 1890)
Piano Quintet in F Minor (1879)

I. Molto moderato quasi lento – Allegro
II. Lento, con molto sentimento
III. Allegro ma non troppo, ma con fuoco

Although Franck is now consistently regarded as a master of nineteenth-century French composition, especially for the organ, this has not always been the case. His Belgian birth and German heritage have at times contributed to some controversy regarding his place in French music, and this is not the only aspect of Franck or his music that has given rise to public disagreement. While professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire (from 1872 until his death), Franck at times attracted intense opposition from his colleagues for guiding some students, including Vincent D'Indy, Ernest Chausson, and Louis Verne, away from the officially sanctioned composition syllabus and toward his own, more progressive, style of composition. Even admirers could not agree on Franck's legacy after his death: some stressed the spiritual content of his works, some promoted his operas, and others pointed toward the passion and sensuality of works such as the Piano Quintet, considering these to reveal surprisingly earthly concerns beneath Franck's staunch Roman Catholic faith.

The Piano Quintet premiered in a fittingly scandalous manner: increasingly at odds with Franck at the Conservatoire, Camille Saint-Saëns nevertheless premiered the piano part, which Franck had dedicated to him. Yet immediately at the piece's conclusion, Saint-Saëns strode off stage, leaving the score open at the piano and thus signaling his repudiation of the music on which Franck had inscribed his name. Nevertheless, the work remains one of Franck's most popular, along with his highly regarded Symphony in D minor (1888) and Violin Sonata (1886). Cyclical in form like so many of Franck's works, the Piano Quintet introduces themes in the first movement that the careful listener will hear again in both the second and, especially, the third.

– Samuel Mazzarella
The Williams Chamber Players

Ronald Feldman, cello
Among Ronald Feldman’s many roles at Williams College are Artist in Residence, Lecturer in Music, Chamber Music coordinator, and Conductor of the award winning Berkshire Symphony. Twice winner of the American Symphony League’s ASCAP Award for Adventuresome Programming of Contemporary Music, Ronald Feldman has achieved critical acclaim for his work as conductor and cellist. Mr. Feldman joined the Boston Symphony at the age of 19 and has appeared as cello soloist with many orchestras performing a wide range of concerto repertoire from Dvořák to Ligeti. His many chamber music affiliations have included performances with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Collage New Music Ensemble, the Boston Conservatory Chamber Players, and the Williams Chamber Players. His performances include collaborations with artists Emmanuel Ax, Garrick Ohlsson, Gil Shaham, and Yo Yo Ma. 2012 marks the beginning of his tenure as Music Director of the Longwood Symphony Orchestra, the orchestra of Boston's medical community.

Joana Genova, violin
Violinist Joana Genova, Artist Associate in Violin at Williams College, has an active career as a chamber musician, orchestral player, teacher and soloist. She began playing violin at the age of six in her native Bulgaria and made her solo debut at the age of twelve with the Plovdiv Chamber Orchestra. She is a prizewinner of the National Competition in Bulgaria and has appeared as soloist with the Plovdiv Symphony Orchestra and Shumen Philharmonic. Ms. Genova received her Bachelor of Music at the Conservatory of Amsterdam and her Master’s degree in chamber music at the Rotterdam Conservatory. Her teachers included Peter Brunt, Ilya Grubert and Prof. Samuel Thaviu. In Holland, Ms. Genova was concertmaster of the Amsterdam Bach Consort and a member of Amsterdam Sinfonietta.

Since 2000, Ms. Genova has lived in the US where she is the principal second violin of the Berkshire Symphony, concertmaster of the Manchester Chamber Orchestra and a member of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. She is on the summer faculty at the Manchester Music Festival and teaches violin at the Michael Rudniakov Music Academy in Vermont. Ms. Genova is active as chamber musician and has performed as soloist with Adelphi Chamber Orchestra, Metropolitan, Rockaway and Danbury Symphonies, Berkshire Symphony and Manchester Festival Orchestra. She resides with her husband, violist Ariel Rudniakov, and their two children in Manchester, VT.

Matthew Gold, percussion
Matthew Gold is a percussionist in the Talea Ensemble, where he also serves as Director of Operations, and a member of the Talujon percussion group. As a soloist and chamber musician he appears frequently on festivals and programs across the U.S. and internationally presenting concert programs, master classes, and lectures. Mr. Gold performs with the Mark Morris Dance Group, serves on the artistic faculty of the Wellesley Composers Conference, and has been an artist-faculty member of the Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance at Mannes College and a member of the resident ensemble at the Walden School’s Young Musicians Program. Recent highlights include Talujon’s performance of Gérard Grisey’s Le Noir de l’Étoile on the Bang on a Can Marathon in New York and performances of works by Stockhausen and Boulez with the New York Philharmonic on its “Philharmonic 360” program at the Park Avenue Armory. Mr. Gold is an Artist Associate in Percussion at Williams College where he directs the Williams Percussion Ensemble, the I/O New Music Ensemble, and the annual I/O Festival of New Music.

Keith Kibler, voice
“The bright heft and fully-focused center of a Helden-baritone," "His aria could not have been more intense or eloquent," "A thrillingly centered voice with heroic ring," "The model of what a bass-baritone should be." These are just a few of the critical accolades bass-baritone Keith Kibler has received for recent appearances. He was cited as a promising singer while still an undergraduate by The New York Times and made his national debuts at the age of twenty-four with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa. He has since built a career of great versatility and is one of the region's best-known artists, having appeared with every major orchestral and choral organization in New England. Keith Kibler has sung leading roles
internationally with some of the opera world's best directors: Russian opera with Galina Vishnevskaya, Mozart with Peter Sellars, Britten with David Alden and Lou Galterio, and Handel with Tito Capobianco, to name a few. He has sung the concert repertoire with the finest soloists, including Seth McCoy, Jon Humphrey, Elly Ameling, and Thomas Paul among others. Mr. Kibler studied the song literature with the late Geoffrey Parsons as the recipient of a fellowship from the Frank Huntington Beebe Fund. Shortly thereafter he won first prize in the Jessie Kneisel Lieder Competition. He has sung a wide range of early music with period instrument ensembles and was a visiting artist with the Boston Camerata. Summer engagements include appearances at the Monadnock, Wolftrap, Norfolk, and Tanglewood festivals, with pops concerts at the Finger Lakes Performing Arts Center and with the Boston Pops in Symphony Hall, Boston, Harry Ellis Dickson conducting. Mr. Kibler has premiered new compositions by Malcolm Peyton, Rodney Lister, Peter Homans, and he sang major roles in the Boston premiers of Alban Berg's Wozzeck and Arnold Schoenberg's Gurrelieder, both conducted by Gunther Schuller. Recent engagements have included Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under conductors Kaziyoshi Akiyama and Kate Tamarkin.

Joanna Kurkowicz, violin
Praised in GRAMOPHONE Magazine for “disciplined virtuosity” violinist Joanna Kurkowicz enjoys an active and versatile career as an award-winning soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and concertmistress. She has performed worldwide and has appeared as a soloist with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, the Jefferson Symphony, the San Luis Obispo Symphony, the New England String Ensemble, the Berkshire Symphony, the Poznan Philharmonic, the Polish National Radio Orchestra in Katowice and others. She has received awards from the Samuel Chester, Presser, Saint Botolph, Kosciuszko, and Olevsky Foundations, the Harvard Musical Association, the Irving McKlein International Competition, the Carmel and Coleman Chamber Music Competitions, and in Poland, the Henryk Wieniawski and Tadeusz Wronski International Competitions. Ms. Kurkowicz currently serves as concertmistress of the Boston Philharmonic and the Berkshire Symphony Orchestra. She holds the position of Artist in Residence at Williams College and is on the faculty at Tufts University. Joanna Kurkowicz is a strong advocate of contemporary music and has premiered many works by living composers. Miss Kurkowicz has recorded for Chandos, Bridge, Centaur, Neuma, Albany, CRI, New World and Archetype Records.

Erin Nafziger, voice
Erin Nafziger, Artist Associate in Voice at Williams College, was most recently seen as the soprano soloist in J.S. Bach’s Magnificat at St. Paul’s Church in Albany, NY. She has also recently performed with The New Opera company as Belinda in Dido and Aeneas, a role in which she “acquitted herself admirably…” and “her voice was consistent, well-balanced, and beautiful…” (Michael Miller, The Berkshire Review for the Arts). She received First Prize in the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen Vocal Concerto Competition with her performance of “L’Absence” from Berlioz’s Les Nuits d’ete, and in May of 2009 she sang Fiordiligi in Act I of Così fan tutte with Williams Opera. Other roles include Mimi in La Boheme, Pamina in The Magic Flute, Soeur Constance in Dialogues of the Carmelites, Adele in Die Fledermaus, and Jenny in Company. She was the soprano soloist in G.F. Handel’s Messiah at Our Lady of the Snows Church in Woodstock, Vermont in 2008. Past awards have included the Francesco and Hilda Riggio Award in the New England Regional Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and Third Place in the Bel Canto Foundation Competition. Her scenes include Melisande in Pelleas et Melisande, Semele in Semele, Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier, Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro, Gilda in Rigoletto, and many others. She was the soprano soloist in John Adams’ Grand Pianola Music, Gabriel Faure’s Requiem, Ralph Vaughn Williams’ Hodie, and Robert Schumann’s Frauenliebe und Leben. She received a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education from DePaul University, and a Master’s Degree from Northwestern University in Vocal Performance. She has been an Artist Associate in Voice at Williams College since 2006.
Ah Ling Neu, viola
Violist Ah Ling Neu’s performing career has spanned several continents, including the U.S., Europe, Australia and Asia. An avid chamber musician, she was a member of the renowned Ridge String Quartet for three seasons, and was invited to the Marlboro Music Festival for four summers in addition to touring with Musicians from Marlboro, and was also a member of New York Philomusica for 20 years. She has recently joined the North Country Chamber Players in New Hampshire. Other festivals include the Bridgehampton Festival, the White Mountain Music Festival, Manchester Music Festival and International Musician’s Seminar in Cornwall, England. Born in Japan of Chinese parents, Ah Ling started viola in the San Francisco public school system at the age of 13. She continued her studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Gennady Kleyman and Nobuko Imai at the Royal Conservatory in the Hague. Currently Principal violist of the Brandenburg Ensemble and Assistant Principal of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, Ah Ling performs frequently with several orchestras in the NYC area and is currently on the faculty of Columbia University and was recently appointed to be the Artist Associate at Williams College.

Nat Parke, cello
Nathaniel Parke is an Artist Associate in Cello at Williams College, principal cello of the Berkshire Symphony, co-principal cello of the Berkshire Opera Orchestra, and member of the Bennington String Quartet. He has also been a member of the Boston Composers String Quartet with whom he can be heard performing new works by Boston composers on the MMC label. He is currently instructor of cello at Bennington College and is a part-time lecturer at SUNY Albany in addition to maintaining a studio of private students. He has served as a faculty member and chamber music coach at the Longy School of Music, Skidmore College and is currently on the faculty of the Chamber Music Conference and Composer's Forum of the East. As a soloist, he has been heard with the Wellesley, Berkshire and Sage City Symphonies. His free-lance work in the Albany, N.Y. and Boston areas ranges from period instrument performances to premieres of new works. He can be heard on Albany records performing solo cello music by Ileana Perez-Velasquez. He received his training at the Longy School of Music studying with George Neikrug and in London with William Pleeth. He holds an MFA from Bennington College where he studied with Maxine Neuman. Mr. Parke performs on an instrument made in 1721 by C.G. Testore.

Doris Stevenson, piano
Pianist Doris Stevenson, Artist in Residence at Williams College, leads a busy life as recitalist and chamber musician in addition to teaching at Williams. She has played on many of the great stages of the world including Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Salle Pleyel in Paris and Symphony Hall as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. She has played with Jascha Heifetz and Gregor Piatigorsky, Ruggiero Ricci and Paul Tortelier, great artists of the past. She is a founding member of the Sitka Summer Music Festival in Alaska and has appeared in many other chamber music festivals. She served for ten years on the piano faculty of the University of Southern California where she was also pianist for the master classes of famed cellist, Gregor Piatigorsky. Her recordings include two CD’s each of David Kechley's and Ileana Perez Velazquez’ works, the complete works for cello and piano of Brahms and Mendelssohn, and the Saint Saens violin sonatas.