

**21C Music Festival 2015**

**Spin Cycle**

Saturday, May 23, 2015 at 8:00 pm

Koerner Hall

**Afiara Quartet**

**Valerie Li**, violin

**Timothy Kantor**, violin

**Eric Wong**, viola

**Adrian Fung**, cello

**Skratch Bastid**

**PROGRAM**

Dinuk Wijeratne: *Two Pop Songs on Antique Poems* (world premiere)

“A Letter from the After-life”

“I Will Not Let Thee Go”

Laura Silberberg: *Transcendence* (world premiere)

*Hold On*

*Let Go*

Rob Teehan: *Infinite Streams II* (world premiere)

*Breakthrough*

*In the Garden of My Beloved*

*The Pursuit*

Kevin Lau: String Quartet No. 3 (world premiere)

*Gliding*

*Winds of Change*

**The Remixes:**

*Soul Searching, Parts 1 and 2*, after Wijeratne (world premiere)

*Dirty Laundry*, after Silberberg (world premiere)

*Stream of Consciousness*, after Teehan (world premiere)

*Skratch my Bach*, after Lau (world premiere)

**The Composer Responses:**

*Through the Invisible*, by Wijeratne (world premiere)

*Dirty Laundry - Heavy Load*, by Silberberg (world premiere)

*Ow!*, by Teehan (world premiere)

*Second Wind*, by Lau (world premiere)

**Spin Cycle** is a three-stage, ground-breaking process that curates a 360-degree conversation with four of the hottest young composers in Canada, the award-winning Afiara Quartet, and the renowned scratch DJ, Skratch Bastid.

### **STAGE ONE: The Quartets**

Four young composers write new string quartets for the Afiara Quartet as the bedrock of the project. All hailing from Toronto, the city's lauded multicultural elements all co-exist and dialogue off each other. With classical music as a common denominator, the group explores all the different types of music that have influenced individual upbringing, be it pop, reggae, hip hop, world, or other music.

### **STAGE TWO: The Remixes**

In a specific element of engagement and collaboration, the works are repurposed and re-envisioned by the scratch stylings of DJ Skratch Bastid. His ability to put together different sounds, songs, and genres, and make them into something wholly new is of the rarest talents in his field.

### **STAGE THREE: The Composer Responses**

The idea of remixing is not new, but rarely, if ever, does the original artist or composer hear a remix and feel inspired to write another verse or bring again something new to the conversation. This true dialoguing of innovation and creation is the third stage of this project. Each composer hears what Skratch Bastid has done and has a chance to "respond" by writing parts for the Afiara to play with (or against) the DJ's remix. The idea of true collaboration coming from true conversation.

## **Dinuk Wijeratne**

### ***Two Pop Songs on Antique Poems***

I found the concept of this unique project to be irresistible: "pop"-influenced music for a classical string quartet. Almost as irresistible as the musicians involved. The "Afiaras" (as I like to call them) are astonishingly equidistant from tradition and innovation. And so I sought to create for them my own kind of "collision of old and new," where the beauty and meaning of vintage poems might inspire the kind of loops, grooves, and catchy tunes heard in pop. The melodies are, in fact, settings of the poem texts with the words stripped away. Contained in "A Letter from the After-life" are two quotes from Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* quartet. Ironically, they struck me as being pop-like and so I allowed them to emerge as though improvised; then to be improvised upon. Later in the project, and thanks to Skratch's world-class turntabling, I felt lucky to have the opportunity to interact with my own material in its later incarnation. My heartfelt thanks to the Afiaras, Paul, Christos, and the whole Spin Cycle team for this most inspiring project.

- *Dinuk Wijeratne*

The poems of *Two Pop Songs on Antique Poems*

#### 1. "A Letter from the After-life"

*I sent my Soul through the Invisible,  
Some letter of that After-life to spell:  
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,  
And answer'd "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell"*

- From the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1048–1131), trans. Edward Fitzgerald (1809–1883)

#### 2. "I will not Let Thee Go"

*I will not let thee go.  
Ends all our month-long love in this?  
Can it be summed up so,  
Quit in a single kiss?  
I will not let thee go.*

...

*I have thee by the hands,  
And will not let thee go.*

- Excerpt from the poem by Robert Bridges (1844–1930)

## [Laura Sgroi \(Silberberg\)](#)

### ***Transcendence***

*Transcendence* is a work that explores popular music idioms 'translated' and adapted for the sonic and structural complexity of the classical string quartet. The first movement, *Hold On*, features a cyclical, repetitive chord progression. This form is known as a chaconne in classical music and is also the foundation of most popular music. The second movement, *Let Go*, begins in a slightly rigid manner but quickly unravels into a carefree pop tune.

- Laura Silberberg

## [Rob Teehan](#)

### ***Infinite Streams II***

In 2010, I wrote a four-movement piece for violin and piano entitled *Infinite Streams*. The title was a play on the term "Third Stream," coined by American composer Gunther Schuller to describe what was, at the time (mid-20th century), a nascent art form that could be categorized neither as the "first stream" of Western art music (classical) nor the "second" (jazz) but, being some sort of fusion that drew language equally from both sides, represented a new "third stream." Nowadays the streams are infinite, and composer's individual voices are like palettes full of colours which vary widely. *Infinite Streams II* continues this exploration of my own peculiar mix of colours, drawing on fiddle traditions, thematic development of melody, pop rhythms, European folk figures, and classical forms.

- Rob Teehan

## [Kevin Lau](#)

### **String Quartet No. 3**

My Third String Quartet represents a broad attempt to weave some of my cherished musical influences into a coherent whole. In an effort to explore the roots of my musical identity, I have tried to find common ground among a diverse array of perspectives. The first movement, *Gliding*, follows an arch-like structure in which a lyrical melody, part Far East folk song and part Renaissance chorale, bookends a middle section inspired by the driving rhythms of progressive heavy metal. These disparate elements are united by an ever-shifting ground of odd meters; and with it, a sense of free-flowing spontaneity and abandon.

The second movement, *Winds of Change*, is based on an earlier work of mine that I have adapted many times for different ensembles. In this version, the theme – a buoyant, minor-key dance in 6/8 – competes with wry quotations from Christian Petzold's famous Minuet in G against the backdrop of an aggressive drone suggestive of world music-inflected electronica. At times these references collide uneasily, threatening to blow apart the entire discourse; ultimately, however, the movement is a celebration of the joyous urgency which lies beneath the surface of all music-making.

Skratch Bastid's remix, *Skratch my Bach*, playfully riffs on the Minuet quotation, both in spirit and title (as the tune is often misattributed to Bach.) My response – *Second Wind* – brings the world of the DJ and the quartet into intimate proximity. The tension inherent in the dialogue between both traditions is dramatized by a fiery duel between the first violinist and her sampled counterpart.

- Kevin Lau

## [Afiara Quartet](#)

## [Skratch Bastid](#)