

[nec]shivaree

Stephen Drury, artistic director

The Music of Christian Wolff

Thursday, April 10, 2025

8:00 p.m.

Williams Hall

PROGRAM

Christian Wolff
(b. 1934)

A Piano Piece (2006)

Kex Tian, piano

Exercises (1974)

No. 1

No. 3

No. 8

Theresa Katz, violin

Nicolette Sullivan-Cozza, viola

Miruna Eynon, cello

Rafei Wang, piano

Edges (1969)

Matt Wessner, Brenden Carniaux, reeds

Jeff Platz, guitar

Elias Shane, harp

Benedict Koh, double bass

Intermission

Duo for Pianists I (1957)

Duo for Pianists II (1958)

Pauline Pu, August Baik, piano

What If (2024)

Yoomin Kang, Yumeng Xing, voice
Xianyi Ji, clarinet
Matthew Wessner, reeds
Alexandra Richmomd, trumpet
Wednesday Hsu, viola
Man To Nicholas Tsang, cello
Misha Bjerken, double bass
Benedict Koh, double bass
Alyssa Peterson, double bass
Liam McManus, percussion
Elias Shane, harp
Hyunjin Roh, piano
Joseph Vasconi, piano
Jessica Yuma, piano
Jordan Lau, electronics

Christian Wolff was born in Nice, France, to the German literary publishers Helen and Kurt Wolff, who had published works by Franz Kafka, Robert Musil, and Walter Benjamin. After relocating to the U.S. in 1941, they helped to found Pantheon Books with other European intellectuals who had fled Europe during the rise of fascism. The Wolffs published a series of notable English translations of European literature, mostly, as well as an edition of the *I Ching* that came to greatly impress John Cage after Wolff had given him a copy.

Wolff became an American citizen in 1946. When he was sixteen his piano teacher Grete Sultan sent him for lessons in composition to the new music composer John Cage. Wolff soon became a close associate of Cage and his artistic circle which was part of the New York School and included the fellow composers Earle Brown and Morton Feldman, the pianist David Tudor, and the dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham. Cage relates several anecdotes about Wolff in his one-minute *Indeterminacy* pieces.

Almost completely self-taught as composer, Wolff studied music under Sultan and Cage. Later Wolff studied classics at Harvard University (BA, PhD) and became an expert on Euripides. Wolff taught Classics at Harvard until 1970; thereafter he taught classics, comparative literature, and music at Dartmouth College. After nine years, he became Strauss Professor of Music there. He retired from teaching at

Dartmouth in 1999. In 2004, he received an honorary degree from the California Institute of the Arts. He was also awarded the Foundation for Contemporary Arts John Cage Award (1996). – Wikipedia

[nec]shivaree, the NEC Avant-Garde Ensemble directed by Stephen Drury, is the attack wing of NEC's new music program, performing the modern, the new, and the avant-garde. Sounds are provided by such composers as John Cage, Steve Reich, Morton Feldman, George Crumb, Galina Ustvolskaya, and Giacinto Scelsi. The players of [nec]shivaree have worked with composers John Zorn, John Luther Adams, Christian Wolff, and Frederic Rzewski. The group gives concerts both inside and outside of the Conservatory, and has performed regularly at the Zeitgeist Gallery in Cambridge and Tonic and The Stone in New York.

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