

Calyx

PIANO TRIO

Calyx Piano Trio News Release

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Contact: Nina Ferrigno, 978.621.5551, calyxpnotrio321@gmail.com

St. Louis, MO (5/27/2013)

Calyx Piano Trio premieres *kiss to the earth* at MOCM Festival on Monday, June 17, 2013.

The Calyx Piano Trio will give the World Premiere of *kiss to the earth*, a new work by Amy Beth Kirsten for violin, cello and piano at the 2013 Missouri Chamber Music Festival in St. Louis, MO. Titled "The Soldier's Tale", the concert is Monday, June 17 at 8 PM in the CMS Concert Hall of Webster University, 535 Garden Avenue in Webster Groves, MO. The performance also features musicians of the 2013 MOCM Festival joined by dancers of the Missouri Ballet Theatre performing Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale" with **St. Louis Symphony Music Director, David Robertson narrating.**

"We are thrilled to present the Calyx Piano Trio to St. Louis audiences and premiere this inventive work by Amy Beth Kirsten on the final concert of the 2013 Festival. It represents what we hope is the first of many Commissioned works by the Festival and the culmination of an exciting creative process involving MOCM, Calyx and, of course, a wonderful composer: Amy Beth Kirsten!", said Scott Andrews, Co-Director of MOCM.

This commission has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Chamber Music America Endowment Fund.

Tickets are \$30 and \$35 and include a pre-concert talk with Composer Amy Beth Kirsten (7:30 PM). They are available at www.mochambermusic.org or can be purchased directly through Eventbrite at <http://soldierstale-eorg.eventbrite.com>

211 SOUTH ELM AVE. SAINT LOUIS, MO 63119

978 - 621 - 5551

WWW.CALYXTRIO.COM

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Amy Beth Kirsten Describes Her New Work

'kiss to the earth' was commissioned in honor of the 100th anniversary of Stravinsky's influential ballet, *The Rite of Spring*. I decided to pay homage to this great work by creating a kind of imaginary ballet for three players and a ghost, with themes (desire, remembrance, ritual, divination, and ecstasy) that rhyme with the original work. There is one musical homage in the piece as well, the harmony that forms part of the first movement ostinato belongs to Stravinsky and comes from the moment in the ballet when the Sage bends down to kiss the earth. This harmony, essentially a chord made up of a minor triad and a major triad one whole step apart, is embedded within much of this new work. As I sketched the music, I began to imagine a ghost dancer stranded on earth and his, at times frightening, desire to perform his famous solo one last time. The work is structured as a miniature ballet in which the "ghost" is a constant, and sometimes disruptive, presence (portrayed by the use of vocalizations, small percussion, and prepared piano). Movements I, III, V, and VII are the principle ballet scenes. The "ghost" movements are fleeting inner monologues that portray the spiritual trajectory of the phantom dancer as he makes his way toward his final dance: transcendence."

The Calyx Piano Trio

Cellist **Jennifer Lucht** describes the Trio's impression of *kiss to the earth*: "Calyx is intrigued with Amy's use of percussion and idea of a 'ghost dancer' who interjects himself into the ensemble in various ways including eerie vocalizations and disruptive interjections creating a ghostly soundscape? The extended techniques of the work are inspiring us to interact with each other in new ways as an ensemble."

In performances described as "...perfectly attuned, perfectly delightful..." (St. Louis Post Dispatch), the Calyx Piano Trio never fails to thrill audiences with their musical partnership, expressive ensemble playing, and brilliant virtuosity. Formed in 2001, the Calyx Piano Trio features **Catherine French, violin, Jennifer Lucht, cello, and Nina Ferrigno, piano**. Within the United States, the Calyx Trio has been featured at the Sheldon Concert Hall (St. Louis), and on series including the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music (NY), American Century Music (St. Louis), Pamlico Musical Society (NC), Washington University (St. Louis) and James Library (MA). They have enjoyed

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multi-year residencies at the Carolina Chamber Music Festival (NC) and the Missouri Chamber Music Festival.

These bright, accomplished musicians focus their programming on repertoire that juxtaposes classical masterworks with fresh pieces by living composers, including commissions written expressly for the Trio. In addition to performances on the east and west coasts, the 2013-2014 season will also see the trio entering the recording studio to record its premier disc.

About Amy Beth Kirsten

Amy Beth Kirsten moved from the Midwest to Baltimore in 2004 to attend Peabody Conservatory. Previously a singer-songwriter in Chicago, she played at many of the cities smallest, but mightiest, nightclubs. Since then Ms. Kirsten has written music for orchestra, chamber ensemble, opera, and for solo instruments. Color, memory, voice, words, and breath are fascinations that are intrinsic to her musical language. She has received awards and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, Fromm Foundation, The MAP Fund, ASCAP, and from the state of Connecticut. The 2013-14 season includes premieres by the Grammy Award-winning eighth blackbird, American Composers Orchestra, Calyx Piano Trio, a solo cello piece commissioned by Jeffrey Zeigler of Kronos Quartet, and a song cycle for the duo TwoSense. Ms. Kirsten is also a poet and librettist and lives just down the street from Pepe's famous pizza in New Haven, CT. She teaches music composition privately and at the HighSCORE Festival in Pavia, Italy. amybethkirsten.com

The Missouri Chamber Music Festival

The Missouri Chamber Music Festival (MOCM) presents its third season of concerts in Webster Groves, June 13, 15, and 17, 2013. MOCM's 2013 Season celebrates the music of Stravinsky and Schubert and features exciting, world-renowned musicians from around the country and St. Louis. Festival Concert tickets are \$20 to \$35 and can be purchased in advance at mochambermusic.org or at the door the evening of the performance. For more information, visit mochambermusic.org or call 314.882.0053.