

For Immediate Release:

On Wednesday, January 25, 2017

ArpaViva Records

offers the national release of **HIEROSGAMOS**,
an album of works by composer

Cindy Cox,

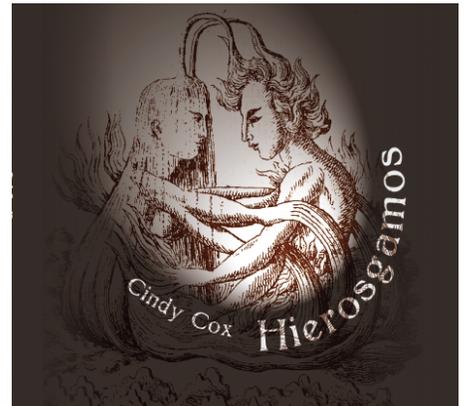
performed by pianists Oni Buchanan, Jenny Q Chai, and Piotr Tomasz



“Her music, in my experience, is always buoyant, puckish, rhythmically alive and crisply engaging.”

– Joshua Kosman, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

On January 25 2017, **ArpaViva Recordings** is proud to present **HIEROSGAMOS**, the new **Cindy Cox** album, in a digital release. This recording is the collection of her most important piano works in performances by pianists Oni Buchanan and the piano duo Jenny Q Chai and Piotr Tomasz, mastered by audio engineer Jay Cloidt.



The blackbird whistling/Or just after (2001) for solo piano, performed by Oni Buchanan

Hierosgamos (2003) for solo piano, performed by Oni Buchanan

Playing a round (2008) for two pianos, performed by Jenny Q Chai and Piotr Tomasz

From Cindy Cox: *“I love the piano. It was my first instrument, and I’ve played since I was eight years old. The physicality of playing, the touch of the keys, and the voicing of sonorities are all really important to me. As both a percussion instrument and one that is capable of incredible resonant harmonies, the piano fires my imagination and spawns innumerable possibilities.”*

In *Hierosgamos: Studies in Harmony and Resonance* (2003), Cox uses the ancient Greek concept of the “hieros gamos” or “sacred marriage” to unify two characteristics of the piano that on first glance seem very different: its tremendous capacity for resonance and a percussive, primarily motoric texture in this large scale set of seven etudes. The recording opens with another work focused on harmony and resonance, *The blackbird whistling/Or just after*. With special pedaling techniques, the piece creates sympathetic vibrations in a kind of aura surrounding the overall sound. In the third and last work in this collection, *Playing a round*, two pianos engage in a witty dialog and stream of musical jokes that play with imitative textures and tuneful canons.

This release is a part of an ongoing series of albums from ArpaViva Recordings that celebrates piano: ***New York Love Songs*** (2010) in which Jenny Q Chai plays the part of both pianist and vocalist; the vibrating glove and live improvisation in ***Kosmogonia*** (2012), by Victoria Jordanova; the power blasting sequencer in ***Phantasmagoria*** (2016), by Michael ZT Rose; and the pianism at its best in ***Hierosgamos*** (2017), by Cindy Cox.

HIEROSGAMOS

Transparent yet complex, both radical and traditional, **Cindy Cox's** music synthesizes old and new musical designs through linked strands of association, timbral fluctuation, and cyclic temporal processes. The natural world, ecological processes, and the concept of emergence inspire many of the special harmonies and textural colorations in her compositions. Many pieces feature technology developed at UC Berkeley's Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT), such as *Pianos*, written for keyboard sampler/piano, large ensemble and live electronics recently premiered by Gloria Cheng and the Eco Ensemble.

Cox is active as a pianist; she has performed her Sylvan pieces, *Hierosgamos: Seven Studies in Harmony and Resonance*, and *The Blackbird whistling/Or just after*. Works with text, such as *Singing the lines*, *The Other Side of the World*, and *Hysteria*, evolved through collaboration with her husband, poet John Campion.

She has received awards and commissions from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Fromm Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Composers Forum, ASCAP, Meet the Composer, and the Gemeinschaft der Künstlerinnen und Kunstfreunde International Competition for Women Composers. She has been a Fellow at the Tanglewood and Aspen Festivals, the MacDowell Colony, and the Civitella Ranieri and William Walton Foundations in Italy.

Recent performances have taken place at Roulette in New York City, the Oriental Arts Center in Shanghai, the Venice Biennale, the Festival de la Habana in Cuba, the Center for New Music in San Francisco, the American Academy in Rome, Carnegie and Merkin Halls in New York, the National Gallery in Washington, the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, the Biblioteca Nacional in Buenos Aires, and on the Los Angeles Philharmonic series. There are three other portrait recordings of Cox's chamber music, and her scores are published through World a Tuning Fork Press (www.cacox.com). A new recording of Cox's string quartets by the Alexander Quartet was released in October 2015 on the Naxos label.

Cox studied composition with Harvey Sollberger, Donald Erb, Eugene O'Brien, and John Eaton at Indiana University, with additional studies at Tanglewood with John Harbison, and at Aspen with Bernard Rands and Jacob Druckman. As a pianist she studied with the famed Mozart and Schubert specialist Lili Kraus. Cindy Cox is presently a Professor and Chair of the Music Department at the University of California at Berkeley.

Oni Buchanan is a poet, pianist, and the founder and director of the Ariel Artists management company, representing soloists and chamber ensembles, and designed for the evolving classical music landscape of the 21st century.

Buchanan toured as a solo pianist for over a decade, with concert programming that was often interdisciplinary in nature, directly engaging the intimate connections between the arts. She frequently performed and commissioned new works, programming them in concert alongside canonical repertoire with the goal of illuminating the fascinating connections/conversations across time between otherwise very different stylistic works. Buchanan has released four solo piano albums. *Hierosgamos* is her fifth commercial release, with two additional albums still forthcoming.

As a poet, Buchanan is the author of three poetry books to date: *Must a Violence* (2012, Kuhl House Press), *Spring* (2008, winner of the National Poetry Series), and *What Animal* (2003, winner of the University of Georgia Contemporary Poetry Series competition).

Based in both Shanghai and Paris, pianist **Jenny Q Chai's** instinctive understanding of new music is complemented by a deep grounding in core repertoire, with special affinity for Schumann, Scarlatti, Beethoven, Bach, Debussy, and Ravel. She is a noted interpreter of 20th-century masters Cage, Messiaen, and Ligeti, and her career is threaded through with strong relationships and close collaborations with a range of notable contemporary composers, including Marco Stroppa, Jarosław Kapuściński, and György Kurtág. With a deft poetic touch, Chai weaves this wide-ranging repertoire into a gorgeous and lucid musical tapestry.

Other notable highlights include her Carnegie Hall debut in 2012, many performances at Le Poisson Rouge (including a 2016 Antescofo-supported program, *Where is Chopin?*), lectures and recitals at the Shanghai Symphony Hall, a featured performance at the Leo Brouwer Festival in Havana, Cuba, and a performance of Philippe Manoury's double-piano concerto *Zones de turbulences* at the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music.

Chai has recorded for labels such as Deutschlandfunk, Naxos, and ArpaViva. In 2010, she released her debut recording, *New York Love Songs*, featuring interpretations of works by Cage and Ives. Her most recent recording, *Life Sketches: Piano Music of Nils Vigeland*, was released in 2014 by Naxos.

The recipient of the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust's 2011 Pianist/Composer Commissioning Project, the DAAD Arts and Performance award in 2010, and first prize winner of the Keys to the Future Contemporary Solo Piano Festival, Jenny Q Chai has studied at the Shanghai Music Conservatory, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and in Cologne University of Music and Dance. Her teachers include Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Seymour Lipkin, Solomon Mikowsky, and Anthony de Mare.

Award-winning **Piotr Tomasz** is an accomplished pianist, educator, and ambassador of Polish culture on four continents. Tomasz earned Master's degrees from the Academy of Music in Krakow, studying under Dr. Andrzej Pikul, and the Juilliard School of Music in New York City, studying under Jerome Lowenthal. Afterwards he returned to his native Krakow and was appointed Vice President of the newly established Piano Classic Association, responsible for the Royal Krakow International Piano Festival and Piano Competition.

In 2010, Tomasz moved to Shanghai, China, and together with contemporary pianist Jenny Q Chai cofounded the new music center FaceArt Institute of Music, which serves as a cultural bridge connecting Shanghai to the rest of the musical world. After winning the highest honor at the Contemporary Music Competition in Warsaw, Tomasz recorded Béla Bartók's *Piano Sonata* for Polish Radio and TV.

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Hierosgamus

1. The blackbird whistling/Or just after (2001) (4:25)

Hierosgamos: Seven Studies in Harmony and Resonance (2003):

2. I. Strong, Joyous (2:55)
3. II Delicate (3:37)
4. III Sonorous (4:18)
5. IV Meditative, Still (5:55)
6. V Playful, but driven (2:45)
7. VI Fleeting (3:11)
8. VII Transcendent (7:32)

ONI BUCHANAN, PIANO

Playing a round (2008)

9. I Nuts and Bolts (1:59)
10. II Machinations (1:31)
11. III Frame Switch (4:39)
12. IV A note to follow sol (2:21)
13. V Coming back (3:15)

JENNY Q CHAI and PIOTR TOMASZ, PIANOS

Sound Engineering, Jay Cloidt

cacox.com

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