



Music

MUSIC REVIEW

# Steiger's violin, riffing among its own echoes, at SICPP



JUSTIN SAGLIO FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Wednesday night in Jordan Hall, the Callithumpian Consort performed works by Rand Steiger, Alvin Lucier, and Tristan Murail.

By [Jeremy Eichler](#) | GLOBE STAFF JUNE 19, 2015

The current parade of intensive festivals has meant a brisk changing of the musical guard in Jordan Hall, with the period twang of the Boston Early Music Festival now giving way to the digitally haloed soundscapes of the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice.

The few listeners zipping across many centuries to attend both events may experience a passing moment of disorientation — aural jet lag? — but the ears adjust quickly, and then one marvels too. Could any two-week stretch of concerts convey so vividly the breadth and diversity of the local music scene?

Wednesday's SICPP concert opened with Alvin Lucier's "Icecles," a restrained but effective exploration of basic intervals shaded microtonally by the clarinet, tuba, and alto flute alongside the piano with its fixed pitches. The work's title nods to the ensemble for which the score was written in 2010 (the International Contemporary Ensemble, or ICE), but its wintry pun was also brought home by the music's spare colorings and slow shifts of shape.

Following the Lucier was Tristan Murail's "Lachrymae," a brief but glowing encounter of the antique with the modern, with music that clearly gestures toward Renaissance and early Baroque vessels but fills them with new wine. In this case, the wine seemed particularly new for Murail, whose signature spectralist style seemed to be on holiday.

The concert's second half was devoted to Rand Steiger's "Coalescence" and "Template 2," large, glittering, exuberant works for mixed chamber ensemble and electronics. In both scores, Steiger, who is composer-in-residence at SICPP this year, captures each player's music-making with a microphone, and digitally manipulates the sound before projecting it back into the hall through eight speakers.

“Coalescence” builds to a high boil through heady servings of individual and small-group virtuosity, sometimes stacked on top of each other, and at other moments deployed in ever-shifting combinations. “Template 2,” a violin concerto in all but name, is cut from the same fabric but exploits new sonic possibilities through the foregrounding of the soloist.

For Wednesday night’s premiere, the violinist Mark Menzies charismatically dispatched the daunting solo part, improvisations and all. Like dancing with one’s shadow, he also nimbly played off the prismatically shifting echoes of his own sound booming through the speakers — all to invigorating effect. Indeed, even with this work’s freshly experimental sound world, it delivered the more visceral rewards of many concertos past.

Here and throughout the night, the members of the Callithumpian Consort, under Stephen Drury’s direction, proved expert and unflappable guides to new terrain.

## **CALLITHUMPIAN CONSORT**

Mark Menzies, violin

Presented by the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice 2015

Stephen Drury, artistic director

At: Jordan Hall, Wednesday

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