

TUE, MAR 26 AT 7:30PM

# Vijay Iyer, Prashant Bhargava and International Contemporary Ensemble



***RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi*, a colorful masterstroke capturing a celebration and a city in a feverish state of spinning and yearning.**

**Commissioned by Carolina Performing Arts**



Vijay Iyer



International Contemporary Ensemble

## PROGRAM

**Lenwood & Other Saints Who Roam the Earth** ..... Steve Lehman  
for two flutes (2011) (b. 1978)  
I. *Ed Blackwell*  
II. *Betty Carter*  
III. *Gary Thomas*  
IV. *Henry Threadgill*

**Ode to Butch Morris** ..... Tyshawn Sorey  
for flute, bass clarinet, violin, and piano (2012) (b. 1980)

**Manifold** ..... Steve Lehman  
for flute, saxophone, clarinet and live electronics (2009, rev. 2011)

## INTERMISSION

 **RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi (2013)** ..... Vijay Iyer  
(b. 1971)

MUSIC PERFORMED BY  
INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE (ICE)

**Adam Sliwinski**, conductor  
**Claire Chase**, flute  
**Eric Lamb**, flute  
**Joshua Rubin**, clarinet  
**Rebekah Heller**, bassoon  
**Gareth Flowers**, trumpet  
**Jennifer Curtis**, violin  
**Kyle Armbrust**, viola  
**Kivie Cahn-Lipman**, cello  
**Cory Smythe**, piano  
**Ross Karre**, percussion  
**Levy Lorenzo**, sound engineer

with **Vijay Iyer**, composer, piano & electronics: (*RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi*)

**Steve Lehman**, composer, saxophone:  
(*Lenwood & Other Saints Who Roam the Earth* and *Manifold*)

**Tyshawn Sorey**, composer, percussion: (*Ode to Butch Morris*)

For **RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi**

Music by Vijay Iyer  
Film by Prashant Bhargava

## Film Credits

A Film by Prashant Bhargava  
**Prashant Bhargava**, director, editor and cinematographer  
**Craig Marsden**, cinematography and live visual design  
**Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Beatrice Ordeix**, performers  
**Anjali Panjabi**, creative producer (India)  
**Sujata Sharma**, art director and assistant director (India)  
**Matt Fagerholm, Ajitpal Singh and Vijay Bhargava**, creative consultants

Commissioned by Carolina Performing Arts  
Produced by Music + Art Management, Steve Cohen and Lauren Snelling

**Lenwood & Other Saints Who Roam the Earth** and **Ode to Butch Morris** were commissioned by ICE through the ICElab program. ICElab is the International Contemporary Ensemble's new model for commissioning, developing and performing new music, designed to nurture the essential composer-performer collaboration through which groundbreaking musical ideas emerge.

ICElab 2012 is made possible through lead support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, alongside generous funding from the Greenwall Foundation, the Creative Capital Multi-Arts Production (MAP) Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, the French American Cultural Exchange, the New Essential Works Program of the Jerome Robbins Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, the Francis Goelst Charitable Trust, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Tyshawn Sorey's participation in ICElab is supported by the Greenwall Foundation.

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Lenwood & Other Saints Who Roam The Earth (2011)**

I began working on this piece by revisiting Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, looking for musical ideas and materials that overlap with my own current preoccupations as a composer. For inspiration, I revisited my personal "flute pantheon," which includes flautists like Gary Thomas, Henry Threadgill, James Spaulding, James Newton and Severino Gazzelloni and composers Claude Debussy, Tristan Murail and Brian Ferneyhough. I also found myself surprised and, at times, very touched by the ways in which musical "offerings" from musicians like Ed Blackwell and Henry Threadgill helped me to bring my own music to life. For that reason, I composed *Lenwood* in five separate movements and dedicated each section of the piece to a musician whom I consider to be a kind of musical saint. Musicians like Ed Blackwell and Henry Threadgill contribute so much to our lives.

– Steve Lehman

### **Ode to Butch Morris (2012)**

In 2001, when I began pursuing a career in music as a composer-performer, the work of the late Butch Morris is that which I have since continued to hold in high regard. When I first heard of Morris' Conduction – a vocabulary of ideographic signs and gestures activated to modify or construct a real-time musical arrangement or composition – I was immediately intrigued by the concept, as it was something that was unfamiliar to me in contexts designed for the creative orchestra. This was a musical situation that was highly challenging for me and countless others who participated in manifold projects directed by Morris, in that although the relationship between conductor and performer seems to be of a hierarchical nature, Morris himself was always interested in the process of “making something together.” For him, this was the most important aspect of the music itself, as opposed to having an opportunity to “take a solo”, although there were soloistic roles involved.

Which brings us to *Quartet for Butch Morris*, inspired by Morris' own compositions *Crucifix Key* and *Oracle*. I was fortunate to be a part of Morris' New York Skyscraper project, a series of concerts that took place during the summer of 2002 at the now-defunct Bowery Poetry Club in downtown New York City's East Village. Having the experience of performing under Morris' baton made me begin to realize that the notated works and spontaneous composition may exist as one sound world – where no genre really exists, though the music itself encompasses many of them. While performing the compositions, it was very clear that we were all performing music written in a particular key. However in each performance, when Morris would use less notated materials in his signals, the tonalities of the compositions would slowly shift and disappear over a long period of time, and would reappear after over an hour of making music together based on those two pieces. There were also some cases where both compositions were performed by several members of the ensemble at the same time, while others were creating information from a previous signal indicated by Morris – which gave the music a feeling of a sort of tonal explosion waiting to happen. *Quartet* largely focuses on the tonal/modal language of the music of Ethiopia, and I believe that the music is of a similar quality. Several pentatonic modes, or *Kiñits*, are interpolated throughout the first and last sections of the composition.

– Tyshawn Sorey

### **Manifold (2009, rev. 2011)**

*Manifold* is a piece designed to create a unique and mutable musical space in which performers are encouraged to assert creative and improvisational agency in a way that remains largely informed by the underlying structure of the composition.

– Steve Lehman

### **RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi (2013)**

*Our desire for you, our dearest Radha, spins us round, sends the blood through our veins and forever draws us to your soft embrace.*

Holi is known around the world as a joyful, chaotic and colorful celebration of springtime in India. To respond to Stravinsky's own famously chaotic work about springtime, we were intrigued by the possible connection with Holi. This festival provides an occasion to reconsider the aspects of ritual and transformation represented in *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

We were particularly interested in the lived and felt reality of individuals on the brink of change: the transformative role of myth in earthly life. Our attention turned to the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh, India, the mythical home of Krishna, the Hindu deity whose youthful flirtations with his beloved Radha (or fondly Radhe) and her friends form one of the origins for the holiday. According to one story, the young, dark-skinned god, annoyed that Radha was so fair, sneaks up on her and her friends, surprising the girls with showers of colored powder, perhaps evening the score.

This impulsive, sexualized (and possibly racialized) act now forms the central ritual of Holi. On that holiday, marking spring's arrival, everyone becomes Krishna and Radha; all participants throw color and get color thrown at them. A pulsing desire to unite with the goddess sends people into a feverish state of spinning and yearning. Revelers enter a state of uninhibited, ecstatic freedom, one that lies hidden for the rest of the year.

In March 2012, Prashant and his film crew traveled to the Braj region, where Holi celebrations last not one day and night, but eight. The cameras captured members of a community in the throes of transformation, turning the seasons of their own lives. Temples fill with devotees, dancing without inhibition, pushing and shoving to receive blessings. Gangs of teenagers loiter on corners with buckets of colorful liquid

and powder waiting to douse those who pass by. Purging fires, expressions of devoutness, and feats of austerity offer a nighttime counterpoint to the daytime celebrations. During these Holi festivities, a single phrase is used to say hello or goodbye, to scream in jubilation, to apologize, to praise God, to get someone's attention, to hail someone, to pay respect: RADHE RADHE. The goddess's presence is thus evoked in nearly every earthly interaction.

As the world has come to hear about a prevailing atmosphere of routine sexualized aggression against women in Indian cities, the episode that ends our work offers a cathartic response. Men, high on intoxicating spirits, make a pilgrimage to Radha's village dressed in vibrant garb from the region of Krishna's playground and equipped with ceremonial shields; as the men boisterously taunt with sexually provocative chants, women await armed with large wooden staffs, which they then use to beat the men with great ferocity.

*RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi* is a journey of devotion for the goddess Radha. Loosely following the episodic template of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, our *Radhe, Radhe* is also a ballet of sorts: a performative encounter between live music and film, between lived experience and myth, the self and the transformed self, winter and spring. We thank Carolina Performing Arts for the opportunity to create this work, and International Contemporary Ensemble for their brilliance and dedication. Oh Radha, you are voluptuous, pure and always forgiving, the source of life itself, our beloved, delightful as a blossoming lotus.

– Vijay Iyer & Prashant Bhargava

### **Prashant Bhargava, film director**

Prashant Bhargava is an award-winning filmmaker and commercial director/designer, described by producer Anthony Bregman as “visionary and soulful,” “masterful” by Roger Ebert and a “humanist and real talent” by Michael Phillips of the *Chicago Tribune*. With his signature “hypnotically beautiful visuals,” “naturalistic storytelling” and a “colorfully vivid” poetic style, Prashant Bhargava stands at the leading edge of independent film and design with his “original storytelling and honest craft.” Bhargava's feature-length directorial debut *Patang (The Kite)*, currently in theaters, is receiving rave reviews, garnering a rare 4 stars from Roger Ebert. *The New York Times* selected *Patang* as a Critics' Pick, celebrating its “lovely,

unforced quality." Hailed as a "masterpiece" by composer Michael Nyman, "reminiscent of Wong Kai Wai" (*Los Angeles Times*), Patang premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and the Tribeca Film Festival, receiving several awards and showcased in over 30 film festivals.

Bhargava's short film *Sangam*, described by Greg Tate of *The Village Voice* as "an elegant and poetic evocation of immigrant angst, memory and haunted spirituality," premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, featured on the Sundance Channel, PBS and Arte/ZDF. Bhargava's filmmaking builds from his pioneering work as a commercial director and motion designer. Known for his intricately layered and lush visuals, Bhargava spearheaded over 100 campaigns for HBO including *The Wire*, *Def Poetry Jam*, *Rome* and *Oz*, and numerous films. Bhargava has designed effects sequences for Alex Rivera's feature *Sleep Dealer* and directed music videos and promos for bands Cornershop, Talib Kweli and Missy Elliot. Notable clients include Accenture, NBC, Woolrich, PBS, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Volvo. Bhargava studied computer science at Cornell University and theatrical directing at The Actors Studio's MFA program.

### International Contemporary Ensemble

The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), described by *The New York Times* as "one of the most accomplished and adventurous groups in new music," is dedicated to reshaping the way music is created and experienced. With a modular makeup of 33 leading instrumentalists performing in forces ranging from solos to large ensembles, ICE functions as performer, presenter and educator, advancing the music of our time by developing innovative new works and new strategies for audience engagement. ICE redefines concert music as it brings together new work and new listeners in the 21st century. Read more at [www.iceorg.org](http://www.iceorg.org)

### Vijay Iyer, composer/pianist

Grammy-nominated composer-pianist Vijay Iyer has been described by *Pitchfork* as "one of the most interesting and vital young pianists in jazz today," by *The New Yorker* as one of "today's most important pianists...extravagantly gifted...brilliantly eclectic," and by *Los Angeles Weekly* as "a boundless and deeply important young star." His working group, the Vijay Iyer Trio, has been called "the great new jazz piano trio" (*The New York Times*) and "the best band in jazz" (*PopMatters*). The trio's albums *Ac-*

*celerando* (2012) and *Historicity* (2009) both topped the Best of the Year lists in *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, National Public Radio, PopMatters.com and *DownBeat*. *Accelerando* was also voted #1 album of the year by *JazzTimes* critics, and *Historicity* won a 2010 Grammy nomination, an *Echo* ("German Grammy") award, and additional album-of-the-year nods in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Detroit Metro Times*, and *The Village Voice* Critics Poll.

In 2012, Iyer received an unprecedented "quintuple crown" in the *DownBeat* International Critics Poll (winning Jazz Artist of the Year, Pianist of the Year, Jazz Album of the Year, Jazz Group of the Year and Rising Star Composer categories); the Jazz Journalists Association's Pianist of the Year award; the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award; the Greenfield Prize; and cover features in *DownBeat* and *JazzTimes*. Other honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, a New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship, the *India Abroad* Publisher's Award, a spot on GQ India's list of "50 most influential global Indians," and numerous composer commissions. His acclaimed collaborations

have traversed the arts, the humanities and the sciences. A committed mentor to emerging artists, Iyer is on faculty at Manhattan School of Music and New York University and directs the Banff Centre's International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music.

### Steve Lehman, composer

Described as "one of the transforming figures of early 21st century jazz," by *The Guardian* (U.K.) and as a "creator of intricately detailed contemporary classical works" by *The New York Times*, Steve Lehman (b. New York City, 1978) is a composer, performer, educator, and scholar who works across a broad spectrum of experimental musical idioms. Lehman's pieces for large orchestra and chamber ensembles have been performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), So Percussion, Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin, the JACK Quartet, and the Talea Ensemble. His recent recording, *Travail, Transformation & Flow* (Pi 2009), was chosen as the No. 1 Jazz Album of the Year by *The New York Times*.

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## /// AFROZ TAJ

# ON HOLI



Many of us are familiar with the common images of the Holi festival: playful clouds of colored powders, smiling faces smeared with rainbow hues, jets of dye from giant syringe-like squirt-guns targeting white-clad revelers. But let's look a little deeper, past the Bollywood bravado. Holi is at heart a celebration of anarchy, when caste, class and gender are turned upside down and the carefully cultivated social order is radically deconstructed.

Holi begins with a sacrificial victim: Holika, sister of the demon king, paid for her brother's hubris by immolating herself in an unsuccessful attempt to destroy her nephew Prahlad. A few days before Holi every crossroad in northern India accumulates a mountain of logs and leaves; traffic wends its way around these until Holi Eve when these burst into blazing bonfires. A thousand times over Holika burns again to drive out Evil and renew the power of Good.

The love-play of Radha and Krishna is another theme central to the history of Holi. In a thousand folk songs Radha pleads with Krishna not to drench her in his colors, not to compromise her modesty. Their erotic ecstasy informs the playful abandon of Holi down the ages, and rehearses the love of the human soul for the elusive divine. Radha is first among many lovers of Krishna, but Krishna can reduplicate himself at will: the ceiling of the Krishna Janambhoomi Temple in Mathura is decorated with paintings of a hundred Krishnas playing Holi with all of the Gopis of Vrindavan. Radha can be angry too: in the town of Barsana in Uttar Pradesh women play Holi by taking up arms against men.

Intoxicating substances contribute to the Holi bacchanal. If you're not careful, you'll be offered marijuana-spiked milk, sweets with a suspicious green tinge, fried dumplings with something that isn't spinach. In the modern streets of India, Holi isn't quite safe. As Mr. Todd discovered in the 2006 film *Outsourced*, unsuspecting tourists who venture into the streets are likely to be specially targeted with dye-filled water-balloons.

India is indeed a land of infinite colors: overwhelming diversity packed into a nation with a population density more than ten times that of the United States. But some of the complexities are more perilous than picturesque. Gender, class and religious differences have led to bloodshed in the recent past and Holi may also be invoked as a metaphor for battle. But the spilling of symbolic blood has a cathartic function. On Holi it's no holds barred, no boundaries respected. Age, class, caste – all are erased in the multicolored melee. It's profoundly significant that color, normally a gauge of status and caste in Indian society, becomes the very weapon by which all distinctions are blurred. For one day India becomes a vast canvas on which a mad painter works his will. So as we celebrate Holi here at UNC, let's invoke the spirit of Stravinsky, and hope that past sacrifices usher in a new era of many colors blending without boundaries, and yes, a little bit of ecstasy.

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*Afroz Taj is a professor of South Asian Studies in the Department of Asian Studies at UNC.*

## /// JOSEPH JORDAN

# ON VIJAY IYER



Prodigy. Genius. Virtuoso.

All could easily describe multi-talented jazz musician Vijay Iyer, whose rare inventiveness, talent and artistry has inspired the genre to grow and expand. While it is easy to define Vijay as a jazz musician – he functions comfortably within the uniquely creative and improvisational tradition – he is also so much more.

A gifted, consummate and complete humanist, he expresses this gift through music. Though the freedom that jazz offers, Vijay's boundless humanism and genuine intellectual curiosity makes him unique among other artists. Add to this his inventive multi-media and genre defying installation work, and you begin to understand why superlatives are essential when speaking of Vijay.

As fate would have it, I became acquainted with Vijay and his work quite by accident. In 2001, while organizing an arts and culture project in Cape Verde, I invited a well-known literary artist and poet to perform as a headliner. He insisted on bringing a jazz ensemble to serve as backup to his spoken word performances and selected Vijay as the keyboardist. The story takes a dozen ridiculous turns, but one of the most interesting and least talked about twists was that the attendees really wanted to hear Vijay and the band more than they wanted to hear the poetry.

At the end of that brief tour, Vijay gave me a copy of his 2001 set *Panoptic Modes*. When I arrived home and played the disc, I was blown away. It was all there! Straight-ahead jazz that was, at times, austere and spare in its presentation but full of meaning beyond the individual and collective notes.

Vijay has an impressive catalogue for such a young artist, but I guess this is the point; it doesn't take much to be prolific, but it is insuperably difficult to be prolific *and* to maintain a universally recognized standard of excellence acknowledged by the jazz world.

Once you hear him perform tonight with International Contemporary Ensemble, hear his new work commissioned by Carolina Performing Arts and see Prashant Bhargava's video that accompanies it, you, too, will likely feel compelled to go deeper into his work. And as a witness to this creative genius, I encourage you to do it. His music will very likely change your life.

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*Joseph Jordan is an adjunct associate professor of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he serves as Director of the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History.*

An alto saxophonist, Lehman has performed and recorded nationally and internationally with his own ensembles and with those led by Anthony Braxton, Vijay Iyer, Jason Moran, and Meshell Ndegeocello, among others. He has published writings and presented lectures on a wide range of topics, including jazz pedagogy, rhythm cognition, and European notions of American experimentalism. He received his doctorate with distinction in Music Composition from Columbia University (2012), where his principal teachers included Tristan Murail and George Lewis.

Lehman has taught undergraduate courses at Wesleyan University, the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, New School University, and Columbia University, and has presented lectures at Amherst College, UC Berkeley, The Berklee School of Music, The Banff Centre, The Royal Academy of Music in London, and IRCAM in Paris, where he was a 2011 research fellow.

#### **Tyshawn Sorey, composer**

Tyshawn Sorey is an active composer, performer, educator, and scholar who works across an extensive range of musical idioms. As percussionist, trombonist, and pianist, he has performed and/or recorded nationally and internationally with his own ensembles and with artists such as Muhal Richard Abrams, Steve Coleman, Butch Morris, Peter Evans, Misha Mengelberg, John Zorn, Vijay Iyer, Wadada Leo Smith, Dave Douglas, Anthony Braxton, Steve Lehman, Tim Berne, and Myra Melford, among many others. Sorey's work has been favorably reviewed in *TRAPS*, *National Public Radio*, *JazzTimes*, *The Village Voice*, *The Wire*, *The New York Times*, *Modern Drummer*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *DownBeat Magazine*.

Sorey has also conducted and participated in various lectures, panel discussions, and masterclasses on improvisation, composition, and critical theory at venues such as the Chamber Music America conference in New York City, International Realtime Music Symposium in Norway, Hochschule für Musik Köln, School of Improvisational Music, Musikhochschule Nürnberg, Birmingham Conservatory of Music in England, The Stone in New York City, Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Cité de la Musique in Paris, and Vallekilde Højskole in Denmark.

As a composer, Sorey has composed up to 170 works to date and received commissions

from Van Lier Fellowship, Roulette, and most recently the International Contemporary Ensemble, whose large-scale work, *Vignette*, recently premiered at Roulette in November 2012.

#### **Adam Sliwinski, conductor**

Adam Sliwinski has built a dynamic career of creative collaboration as percussionist, conductor, and teacher. He specializes in bringing composers, performers, and other artists together to create exciting new work. A member of the ensemble So Percussion (proclaimed as "brilliant" and "consistently impressive" by *The New York Times*) since 2002, Sliwinski has performed at Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Lincoln Center Festival, Stanford Lively Arts, and dozens of other venues in the U.S. In that time, So Percussion has toured Russia, Spain, Australia, Italy, Germany, and Scotland. He has had the opportunity to work closely with Steve Reich, Steve Mackey, Paul Lansky, David Lang, Matmos, Dan Deacon, and many others. Sliwinski has been praised by *The New York Times* for his "shapely, thoughtfully nuanced account" of David Lang's marimba solo "String of Pearls." He has appeared as soloist in many diverse venues, including the International Computer Music Conference, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and at the Joyce Theater in New York for a two-week run of Eliot Feld's *Mandance Project*. He has performed many times with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), founded by classmates from Oberlin College.

In recent years, his collaborations have grown to include conducting. He has conducted over a dozen world premieres with ICE, including residencies at Harvard, Columbia, and New

York University. He has also served as a rehearsal conductor with ICE, preparing them for concerts with Maestri Steven Schick and Susanna Mälkki (Ensemble Intercontemporain). He is one of only a few percussionists ever to complete the Yale School of Music's Doctor of Musical Arts program, where his thesis engaged the percussion music of Iannis Xenakis. He earned his Master's at Yale University with marimba soloist Robert Van Sice, and his bachelor's degree at The Oberlin Conservatory of Music with Michael Rosen.

Sliwinski is co-director of the So Percussion Summer Institute, an annual intensive course on the campus of Princeton University for college-aged percussionists. He is also co-director of the percussion program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, and has taught percussion both in masterclass and privately at more than 80 conservatories and universities in the U.S. and internationally. During the 2011-12 academic year, Sliwinski was a visiting lecturer at Princeton University, where So Percussion was ensemble-in-residence.

#### **International Contemporary Ensemble Staff**

**Claire Chase**, artistic director/CEO  
**Joshua Rubin**, program director  
**Kit Baker**, grants manager  
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