



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tai Renfrow, Production/Ops Manager

trenfrow@presentmusic.org 414-271-0711x3 C: 214.444.9526

PRESENT MUSIC'S ANNUAL MUSICAL MEDITATION ON GRATITUDE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2018 - 5PM

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

October 3, 2018 (Milwaukee, WI) – Present Music's annual **THANKSGIVING** concert continues this year, with its focus on unity and community. Over one hundred performers will sing, play, drum, and recite at this annual meditation on gratitude.

Under the direction of Present Music's Artistic Director, **Kevin Stalheim**, the concert features choral works, performed in collaboration with the **Hearing Voices Ensemble**, **Ronald Reagan IB High School Choir**, and the **Homestead High School Choir**.

In keeping with tradition, the concert will again open and close with the **Bucks Native American Singing and Drumming Group**. The concert also includes the world premiere of *Meditation and Gratitude*, a piece commissioned by Jan Serr and John Shannon, and composed by Turkish-American composer **Kamran Ince**, who will be in attendance.

Other program highlights include **Caroline Shaw's** *From Rivers*, **Karen Beaumont** performing *Litanies for Organ* by **Jehan Alain** on organ, and *Book of Hours* by the young composer **Robert Honstein**, originally commissioned and premiered by Present Music at the THANKSGIVING concert in 2016. The evening will close with a popular tune sung by the audience and performers, followed by the time-honored Friendship Dance.

Reflecting back on the many past performances, Stalheim says "...as my last Thanksgiving concert as Artistic Director, this performance will be especially meaningful to me." His choice of Ince to create the new works was personal as well as artistic.

Stalheim and Ince formed a deep bond over the years, with numerous works commissioned and premiered with Present Music. Ince's Thanksgiving premiere, *Meditation and Gratitude*, will honor Stalheim's final season as Artistic Director. Ince writes that the piece was "written to celebrate, and to show gratitude for, Kevin's many years of immense contributions to new music in the United States and in the world." The text of *Meditation and Gratitude* is compiled from various poems and sayings of **Rumi**, the ancient Persian poet and mystic whose wisdom and teachings transcend ethnic divisions.

Stalheim also chose to revisit a recent work commissioned by Present Music's Commission Club, Robert Honstein's *Book of Hours*. The music takes its inspiration from an artwork stitched by artist and graphic designer Laura Grey. Loosely following the structure of a medieval book of hours, the project reimagines the ancient daily-devotional prayer book as a contemporary work – a large, table-sized book, roughly handstitched in red thread on delicate tissue paper. Honstein explains that viewing the book inspired his music: "My idea was that self-reflection is not always a placid, calm thing. When looking inward we sometimes encounter a volatile and turbulent space: memories, worries, visions, and dreams clash with wide-ranging emotions of great intensity. *Book of Hours* enters this space," explained Honstein. The contemplative work plays off of literary quotes from Shakespeare, Rilke, poetess Jorie Graham, A Band of Horses, and others.

BEFORE THE CONCERT

- **Pre-Concert Talk with Composer Kamran Ince** | Sunday, November 18 at 4pm

Join us at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist Atrium prior to the concert to hear visiting composer Kamran Ince discuss his piece, *Meditation and Gratitude*. This pre-concert talk event is free and open to the public.

SINGLE TICKETS AND SEASON SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single tickets are available for \$25 (Value General Admission Tickets) and *a very limited number of \$55* (VIP Tickets at the front of the cathedral) are on sale now. Student tickets are \$10 with a valid student ID. Tickets are available for purchase by phone and online, as well as at-the-door the day of the concert. Online ticket sales end 24 hours prior to each concert. To learn more and purchase tickets, go to presentmusic.org or call 414-271-0711.

###

The music of Turkish/American composer [Kamran Ince](#) bridges Anatolia and Balkans to the West. The energy and rawness of Turkish and Balkan folk music, the spirituality of Byzantium and Ottoman court music, the tradition of European art music and the extravert and popular qualities of the American psyche are the base of his sound world.

Hailed by The Los Angeles Times as "that rare composer able to sound connected with modern music, and yet still seem exotic", Ince was born in Montana in 1960 to American and Turkish parents. He holds a Doctorate from Eastman School of Music, and currently serves as Professor of Composition at University of Memphis and at MIAM, Istanbul Technical University. His numerous prizes include the Prix de Rome, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Lili Boulanger Prize, and the Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

FACT SHEET

THANKSGIVING

Sunday, November 18, 2018 at 5pm | 4pm Pre-Concert Talk

Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

812 North Jackson Street; Milwaukee, Wisconsin

<http://presentmusic.org/events/thanksgiving-2018/>

Present Music's annual **THANKSGIVING** concert melds tradition with the best of what's new and inspiring. Submerge yourself in the sound of nearly one hundred voices echoing throughout the beautiful Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Be present for the world premiere of Kamran Ince's *Meditation and Gratitude*, written for the

Hearing Voices vocal ensemble and Present Music. Relive the musical tradition of the Bucks Native American Singing and Drumming Group, join hands in the Friendship Dance, and continue your journey with Present Music. This performance is not recommended for children under the age of 10.

This concert is generously sponsored by John Shannon and Jan Serr and funded in part through a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Hi-res media images and logo can be downloaded here: <https://goo.gl/rcr9Hx>

BIOGRAPHIES

KEVIN STALHEIM, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kevin Stalheim is the founder and Artistic Director of Present Music. Committed to commissioning new music and supporting residencies, he has worked closely and extensively with many of the most important composers of our time. Among Stalheim's accolades and honors are a 2012/13 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Alumni Fellow honor, 2011 UWM Distinguished Alumni Award, 2002 City of Milwaukee Arts Board Artist of the Year Award and the 2001 Civic Music Association Distinguished Citizen Award. In addition to serving as Present Music's Artistic Director, Stalheim has served on funding panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Aaron Copland Fund for New Music, New Music USA, Chamber Music America, and the American Composer's Forum. He was formerly a board member for the American Music Center in New York City. Stalheim received a Bachelor of Music Degree from Oberlin College and a Master of Music Degree in conducting from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

TAI RENFROW, PRODUCTION/OPS MANAGER

Tai Renfrow is a San Francisco native who migrated to the Midwest in elementary school and grew up in the Milwaukee area. She received her BFA from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts with a major in stage management and background focus in music. Before returning to Wisconsin, Renfrow was involved in productions with The Dallas Opera, Central City Opera, and Piedmont Opera Theater. In 2017, she served as the Orchestra Assistant with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra for their Argentina/Uruguay tour and she is currently involved as the Equipment Manager for Bel Canto Chorus.

PRESENT MUSIC'S SPRING 2019 CONCERTS:

- **IN THE NEW CHAMBER**
FEBRUARY 21 AND 22, 2019
JAN SERR STUDIO
- **STALHEIMTIME FINALE**
JUNE 1, 2019
PABST THEATER

ABOUT PRESENT MUSIC

Present Music is Milwaukee's internationally acclaimed new music ensemble. Celebrating 37 years of new music, Present Music commissions, performs, records and tours the music of living composers. Over 65 new compositions from around the world have come into existence because of Present Music.

Founded by **Kevin Stalheim**, Present Music works closely with many of the world's most exciting and significant composers while supporting the talents of emerging voices. It nurtures the next generation of composers through its education program, the **Creation Project**. More information: www.presentmusic.org

###