

# B O R A Y O O N

Electroacoustic Composer | Vocalist | Sound Artist

[www.borayoon.com](http://www.borayoon.com)



## EDUCATION

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Ph.D. Music Composition & Interdisciplinary Humanities	Princeton University	2023
M.F.A. Music Composition, Masters of Fine Arts	Princeton University	2016
B.Mus. Creative Writing minor, <i>magna cum laude</i>	Ithaca College	2002

## AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

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- Harvard Music Fromm Foundation Award
- Opera America Discovery Grant for Women Composers
- New York Foundation for the Arts, Music / Sound
- New Music USA | Live Music for Dance
- Barlow Endowment for Music Composition
- New Jersey State Council for the Arts
- Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation
- John Lennon Songwriting Award
- BMI Song Award
- Sorel Organization for Women Composers, Recording Grant
- Arion Music Award
- Asian American Arts Alliance | United Artists Initiative, Music/Sound
- Hermitage Artist Residency Fellowship
- Park Avenue Armory, Artist in Residence
- Ringling Museum, Artist and Scholar in Residence
- Harvestworks Digital Media Center, Arts Residency
- Rolex Mentoring Award, finalist, Brian Eno
- TED Fellowship
- Princeton Music Composition Fellowship
- Princeton Interdisciplinary Humanities Fellowship
- Princeton Diversity & Inclusion Fellowship
- Princeton Council for Science and Technology, Research Grant

## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

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- New Music Gathering, Keynote Speaker/Headlining Performer. Portland State University, 2023.
- Re-opening of Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall (formerly Avery Fisher Hall), home of the New York Philharmonic, 2022.

- Living at the Intersection Symposium, Princeton University, Council for Science & Technology, Interdisciplinary performance, 2018
- Gyeonggi Media Performance Festival, Keynote Performer/Speaker. South Korea, 2017  
Visiones Sonoras, Keynote Performer, CMMAS, Morelia, Mexico, 2017
- TED, Vancouver Convention Center, Featured speaker in TED Fellows showcase, 2014
- National Students of Electronic Music Event, Keynote Speaker/Performer. Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 2017

## **GUEST LECTURES & PANELS**

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- Dartmouth University, Music and Metaphor, Digital Audio Production
- NYU Steinhardt, Music Composition
- University of Austin, Texas, ElectroAcoustic Composition
- New School University, Composition
- Princeton University, Council for Science & Tech, Storytelling with Technology for Performance
- Virtualizing “Embodied” Courses, McGraw Teaching Center, Lewis Art Center, Princeton University
- Stanford University, PreCollege summer course, “Why Music Matters”
- SXSW | South by Southwest’s Experiential Storytelling panel
- Princeton University, In My Studio Women Composers Colloquia, Artistic Practice
- Smith College, Music
- SUNY Purchase, Music Composition + Production
- SUNY Oswego, Music Composition
- Ithaca College, Career Orientation, guest lecture, professional development
- Brooklyn City College, Sound Art, guest lecture
- Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska | panelist
- Native Arts and Culture Foundation, Oregon | panelist
- Church of Ascension, Electing Member of Vestry
- Grantmakers in the Arts Conference | panelist
- Department of Cultural Affairs, New York
- New Instrument for Musical Expression (NIME) Conference, 2018 | panelist
- Tribeca New Music Festival, Advisory Board
- New Music USA, reviewer and panelist
- Jerome Foundation, Arts Fellowship panel
- New York Foundation for the Arts, Advisory Board

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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Reed College, Assistant Professor of Music | Composition and Creative Practice

- Electroacoustic Storytelling
- Musical Dialogues

Princeton University | Classroom / Lecture / Lab / Precept Instruction, Assistant Instructor

- Sound and Place
- Music Theory 105
- Musical Instruments, Cognition, and Perception (Science, Engineering, Math, Music)
- Intro to Creative Art Making, Lewis Center for the Arts 101

Princeton University, Private Instruction

- Composition

New School University, Private Instruction

- Composition, Electronic Music, Voice (classical, cross-genre)
- Songwriting | Music Production | Piano

Ithaca College, Classroom Instruction, Assistant Instructor

- Political Economy of the African Diaspora Music (Politics / Music)

VOICES Choir, Choral Director, Ithaca, New York

- Co-director and co-conductor / accompanist, weekly choral rehearsals, artistic programming, season performance, and community events.

Ithaca College Songwriter's Circle, Director and Founder

- Founder and artistic director, weekly meetings, coffeeshop performances, curation and programming, development, fundraising, promotion, and event production.

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## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE // PUBLISHING IN PERFORMANCE:**

Opera:

- Handmaiden [‘아가씨’], based on South Korean cinema thriller by Park Chan-Wook, winner of Opera America's Discovery Grant for Women Composers.
- Sunken Cathedral | Beth Morrison Projects and HERE Arts | PROTOTYPE Festival

New Media Performance Collaborations:

- PHONO KINETIC – evening-length original multimedia work commissioned by the Experimental Media Performing Art Center, Rensselaer Polytechnic, March 2023.
- Cat's Cradle, a sensor installation /kinetic sculpture / large-scale musical instrument designed with Princeton Laptop Orchestra (PLOrk)
- ((( PHONATION ))) with R. Luke DuBois
- Visual Music with Joshue Ott

Electroacoustic Collaborations:

- Ellen Fullman | Long String Instrument
- Ben Frost | Iceland-based noise/electronic producer
- Armen Ra | thereminist
- Lenka Moravkova, cristal baschet artist
- Vong Pak | Korean traditional dance & drumming
- Sekou Sundiata | spoken word artist, poet
- King Britt, electronic producer, dj
- DJ Spooky | Subliminal Strings, producer, dj
- Kaki King, percussive acoustic guitar

Music for Dance:

- Noemie LaFrance | AGORA II
- Yin Mei Dance | Antonioni in China
- Vangelina Butoh Theater

Visual Art | Fine Art Collaborations

- Ann Hamilton, Sympho | Inspiral, TOWER
- Do Ho Suh, installation artist
- Uram Choe, kinetic sculptor • Aleks Kolkowski, phonograph artist

Music for Film and Media:

- Pachinko, Apple TV+ | Episode 8, Documentary of Zainichi Koreans in Japan
- Many Faces of Seoul, by Gina Kim
- Zen Violence Films | Directed by Paul Moon | 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consort
- An Films, dir. Brock Labrenz
- Toni Dove, filmmaker
- Adam Larsen, filmmaker
- Migration Watch, media site animating the European immigration crisis

Music for Multimedia Theater:

- Wind Up Bird Chronicle | based on the book by Haruki Murakami | Singapore Arts Festival, Edinburgh International Festival
- Lightning at Our Feet | songcycle based on the poetry of Emily Dickinson | in collaboration with Michael Gordon (Bang On A Can) and Ridge Theater

Affiliations:

- Sozo Artists
- American Guild of Musical Artists
- BMI Publishing
- TED Fellows
- Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishing

**New Works Commissions:**

- Alarm Will Sound
- So Percussion
- Ensemble Decipher
- Voices of Ascension
- Metropolis Ensemble
- Sympho Ensemble | ARCO | TOWER
- Brooklyn Youth Chorus
- Modern Medieval Vocal Trio
- Young Peoples Chorus of NYC
- SAYAKA Ladies Consort of Tokyo
- Musica Viva | All Souls Chapel
- 5 Borough Music Festival

- Princeton Laptop Orchestra (PLOrk)
- Claire Chase (flute + electronics)
- Ji Hye Jung (percussion + electronics)
- Brad Balliett (bassoon + electronics)
- Courtney Orlando + Bent Duo | Peabody Now Hear This, new works series
- Spatial Audio Workshop | The Cube | Virginia Tech

## SELECT PRESS

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- Featured in Washington Post [article](#) “23 Classical Music Composers and Performers to Watch in ’23” as part of a new class of artists changing the sound of classical music, 2023.
- National Endowment for the Arts, [Artworks Podcast](#), 2014
- New York Times feature profile: [“A Day of Chants, Bells, A Bike”](#), 2014
- Featured on front-page of Wall Street Journal, [“Playing Cellphones On Stage Has Ring Of Respectability”](#) for unusual instruments in music-making, 2007.

## SCORE PUBLICATIONS, BOOK PUBLICATIONS, RECORDINGS

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### Scores:

- “Semaphore Conductus”, surround-sound choral electroacoustic work with electronics. Boosey & Hawkes, Hal Leonard Publishing. 2008, 2020.
- “Soundfields: Celestine”, published by the Guild of Carillonneurs of North America (GCNA), for solo carillonneur + electronics, 2020.
- “Grand Central”, chamber vocal work, setting poetry by Billy Collins. (5 Boroughs Music Festival Songbook, 2016).
- “Wind of Two Koreas”, a symphonic work for full orchestra. Sozo Mart, 2023.

### Print Publications:

- Essay “Building Sensory Sound Worlds at the Intersection of Music and Architecture”, published by ProQuest.
- *“Singing The Body Electric: The Human Voice and Sound Technology”*, by Miriama Young. Featured chapter and interview. Foreword by Paul Lansky. (Ashgate Books. 2014)
- *“Sound Unbound”*, compiled by DJ Spooky. Foreword by Steve Reich. Featured audio track “gift” in accompanying media. (Published by MIT Press | SubRosa.)
- *New York Artists*, book by Bomi Son, Featured chapter, p. 224. 2014.
- W.W. Norton publication of “The Enjoyment of Music”, 14<sup>th</sup> edition. Fall 2022. Featured media selection: Yoon’s “In Paradisum” feat. chant from *Requiem Mass* from Sunken Cathedral, Innova Recordings, 2014. A musical film sound designed, and performed by Bora Yoon, directed and produced by Brock Labrenz.

### Recordings:

- ( (( PHONATION )) ), solo record, Swirl Records, 2008
- Journal of Popular Noise, vol. 8. By Bora Yoon and Iceland-based producer Ben Frost. Edited by Byron Kalet. 2008.

- NYFA Collection, featured track with fellows of New York Foundation for the Art in Music / Sound. (INNOVA, 2010).
- Sunken Cathedral, solo record. (INNOVA, Label of the American Composer's Forum, 2014).

#### TV, Film, Web, Podcast:

- Apple TV+ *Pachinko*, original music for epilogue documentary. Episode 8.
- Dolly Parton's America podcast, hosted by Radiolab's Jad Abumrad. Episode "Wildflowers", featuring original performance composition "The Houses We Carry Within", 2019
- Migration Watch | Original music for Podcast + Website, 2017.
- Many Faces of Seoul, original music for film essay by Gina Kim, 2009.

## CURATION

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- Divisional Speaker in the Arts, Caroline Shaw workshop masterclass, Reed College, 2023
- Princeton Interdisciplinary Humanities talk series, Co-Organizer, 2018-19
- Ellen Fullman & Theresa Wong residency, Lead Producer, Princeton University, 2018
- In My Studio, Colloquia series, Co-Organizer, 2018
- Princeton Composer Colloquium Series, Co-Organizer, 2015-2016  
Project management, event management, operating budgets, fundraising, documentation, post-production, media publication.

## LANGUAGES

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- Fluent in English, working knowledge speaking and communicating in Korean, Spanish
- Coding languages: basic html, MaxMSP, ChucK

## REFERENCES

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#### *Academic:*

- Daniel L. Trueman, Professor of Music Composition, Princeton University
- Julia Wolfe, Bang On A Can, Associate Professor, New York University
- R. Luke DuBois, Department of Graduate Studies, Associate Professor, NYU Polytechnic, Tandon School of Engineering
- Donnacha Dennehy, Professor of Music Composition, Princeton University
- Steven Mackey, Professor of Music Composition, Princeton University
- Julie Yun, Dean of Diversity & Inclusion, School of Engineering, Princeton University
- Nina C. Young, professor, University of Southern California
- Wendy Heller, Chair of Music Dept, Musicology professor, Princeton University

#### *Industry:*

- Kristin Marting, Artistic Director, HERE Arts
- Kim Whitener, Producer, Kiwi Productions

- Beth Morrison, Producer
- Dennis Keene, Music Director, Voices of Ascension
- Rika Iino, Founder and Lead Producer, Sozo Artists
- Caroline Shaw, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer
- Leilehua Lanzilotti, former music curator of EMPAC, Pulitzer-Prize finalist composer



# B O R A Y O O N

composer | vocalist | sound artist

Bora Yoon is a Korean-American multi-instrumentalist, composer, vocalist, and sound artist who conjures audiovisual soundscapes using digital devices, voice, and instruments from a variety of cultures and historical centuries – to formulate an audiovisual storytelling through music, movement and sound.

Featured on the front-page of the *Wall-Street Journal* for her use of unusual instruments and everyday found objects as music, she activates architectural spaces, acoustics, and evokes what George Lewis described as “a kind of sonic memory garden” – using voice, violin, viola, Tibetan singing bowls, synthesizers, vocoder, Bible pages, bike bells, turntable, walkie-talkies, chimes, water, sonic sundries, and live electronics.

Yoon designs site-specific performance works in historical buildings (where available) to evoke and resonate a place’s acoustic ecology, memory, and sonify a sense of place. Otherwise builds multimedia performance environments within a theater space, akin to opera *Sunken Cathedral* which premiered in NYC’s PROTOTYPE Opera Theatre Now Festival.

Through these interdisciplinary means and idiom, she aims to expand the listening experience to an immersive, sound sculpted environment, to reflect time, history, and a permeability of memory.

As a solo performer she has presented her work at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Nam Jun Paik Art Center in South Korea, Patravadi Theatre in Bangkok, the Walker Art Center, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Smithsonian American Art Museum, John Zorn’s Stone, TED Conferences, and universities across the globe.

She composed and performed the live score for Haruki Murakami’s *Wind Up Bird Chronicle*– an interdisciplinary theatre adaptation, presented and co-commissioned by Asia Society, Baryshnikov Art Center, Edinburgh International Arts Festival, and Singapore Arts Festival.

As a composer, she has been commissioned and written works for Alarm Will Sound, So Percussion, New York Polyphony, Voices of Ascension, Musica Viva, Metropolis Ensemble, Sayaka Ladies Choral of Tokyo, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Young People’s Chorus of NYC, Ensemble Decipher, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra.

Collaborators include Ben Frost, Kaki King, DJ Spooky, R. Luke DuBois, King Britt, late poet Sekou Sundiata, Michael Gordon, choreographers, and filmmakers. Recordings include releases on MITPress/SubRosa, INNOVA, Swirl Records, and the Journal of Popular Noise.

She is a recipient of Music/Sound fellowships through the New York Foundation for the Arts, Asian American Arts Alliance award, New Music USA, TED Conferences, and the Sorel Organization for Women Composers – and has served on the artist advisory board for the New York Foundation for the Arts, served as a panelist for the Jerome Foundation, New York State Council for the Arts, Rasmuson Foundation, Native Arts & Culture Foundation, among others. She is endlessly fascinated by the intersection of space and sound, maps, human Venn diagrams, and the pulleys and strings that hold everything together.

She recently completed her Ph.D doctoral candidate in Music Composition and the Interdisciplinary Humanities at Princeton University, and now currently teaches at Reed College.

[ CV located at end of PDF ]



# A weird road to wonderful

The Festival's eastern season has found a real jewel, says **Libby Purves**

ROBBIE JACK



Bora Yoon leads the fabulous soundscapes and music that run through this world premiere staging

**Edinburgh Theatre**  
**The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle**  
 King's Theatre  
 ★★★★★

A piece of theatre can be as odd, mad, surreal and episodic as it likes, provided it tells a story and makes you care. It can be alien, bilingual, semi-subtitled and cruel, provided it is beautiful. The director Stephen Earnhart's labour of love, a two-hour rendering of a long magical-realist novel by Haruki Murakami, is all of the above. One man near me kept sighing pointedly, but I happily rolled with it all the way. The Festival's eastern season has found a jewel: an asymmetric and strangely cut gem, but one which throws off beams of light.

New readers start here. Toru Okada, played with lovely decent naivety by James Yaegashi, is jobless and stays at home folding laundry. His wife Kumiko has vanished, and so has his cat (called Noboru Wataya, after his rich, smug, fascist politician brother-in-law, though they dislike him and plan to change the cat's name to Mackerel). Toru lives half in mundane modern reality, half in a visionary dreamworld of huge symbols such as dark wells, huge suns and water, evoked by puppetry and shadows and marvellous projection on to the sliding papery walls of his life. Everything relates to the real dilemmas of heart and spirit: his disembodied voice says that the way to see reality clearly is "to get as far away from it as possible". Characters speak partly in

American-accented English, and half in surtitled Japanese. Toru encounters an unsolicited phone-sex caller, a bossy prostitute (Stacey Yen) whose soul was sucked out by the villain, and a freakish teenager obsessed with death. An old soldier who grows flowers at Hiroshima turns up and relates wartime atrocities, hard to take even in surtitles. Bursts of malicious Japanese TV prank-shows echo those unforgotten sadisms. Kumiko reappears, monochrome, projected on the fishtank after the politician's bodyguard has been surreptitiously eating the dried catfood. Fabulous soundscapes and music run through, composed and led (in a wild feather cockade) by Bora Yoon. At one point she plays *Auld Lang Syne*.

But Yaegashi's Toru is a modern Everyman to love, not least in his central fear that he does not truly know his wife because we all have too many "secret rooms" in us to connect properly. The plot finally makes sense, in a shamelessly airport-thriller way. That, and the beauty and emotional honesty beneath the weirdness, is why it works. The bird, by the way, is one whose cry sounds like clockwork. Toru imagines that its job is to wind up the spring of the universe.

**Box office: 0131-473 2000, to Wed. Supported by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation**



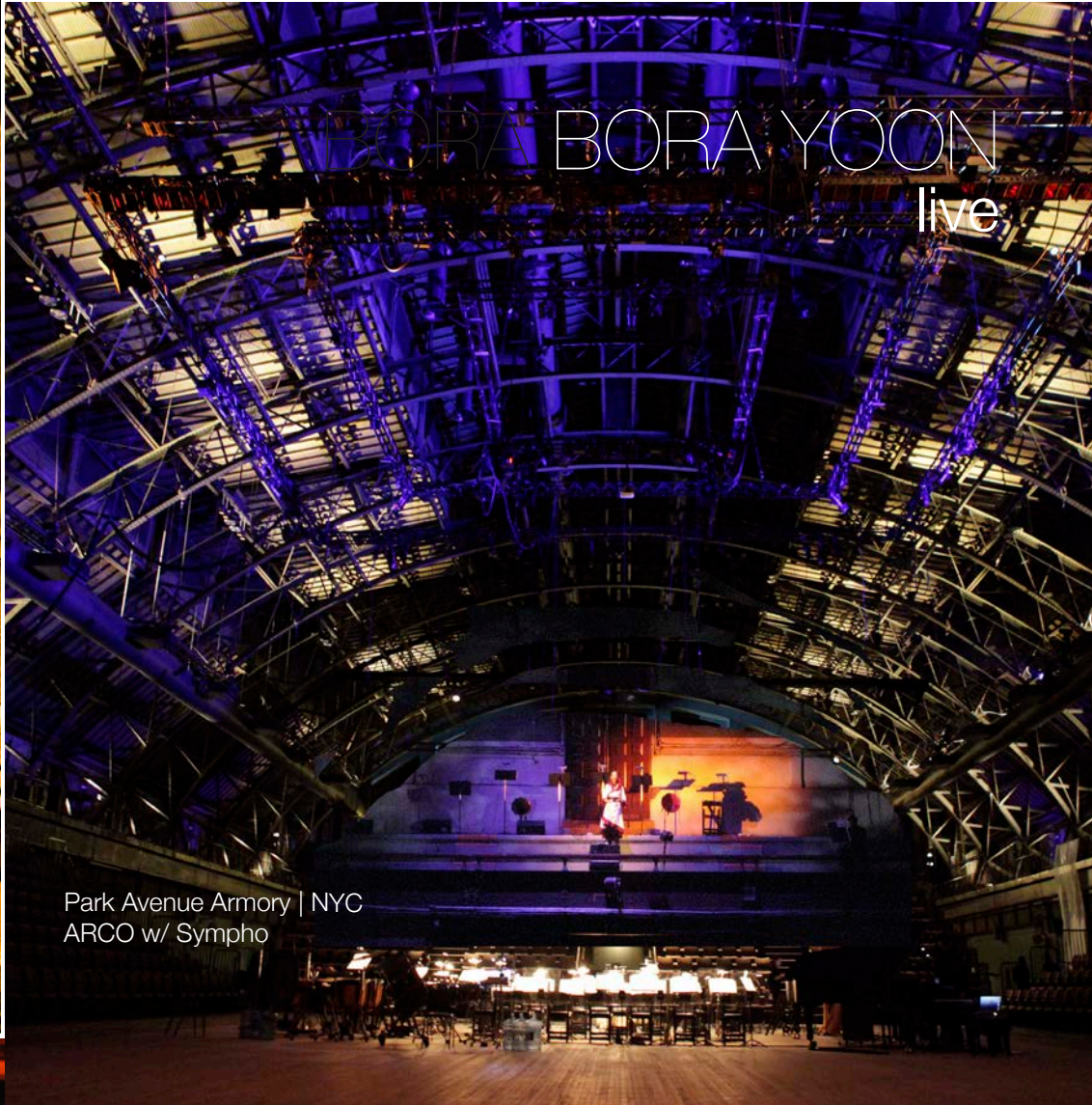
heroic showpiece. But 18th-century echoes remained, with cryptic beauties from Mullova's violin and Barley's cello shadowed by a perverse solo quartet (percussion, accordion, electric zither, prepared piano — the last played by Larcher himself).

Further playful colourings came from the orchestra. Shivering cymbals,

WIND UP BIRD CHRONICLE  
 Edinburgh International Festival  
 Singapore Arts Festival

Directed by Stephen Earnhart  
 Live Original Score by Bora Yoon





# FEDORA BORA YOON live,

Park Avenue Armory | NYC  
ARCO w/ Sympho

Columbia University | NYC  
Semaphore Conductus  
a choral installation sung in surround



Brooklyn Academy of Music | NYC



# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2007 - VOL. CCXLIX NO. 124

## Playing Cellphones On Stage Has Ring Of Respectability

Bora Yoon's Music Career  
Takes a High-Tech Turn;  
Listening for a Special Pong

By AMOL SHARMA

Bora Yoon plays a mean electric violin and has a light touch on the glockenspiel. The 27-year-old contemporary classical musician can jam out on a cellphone, too.

Midway through a recent concert in downtown Manhattan, she flipped open a Samsung phone, held it up against a microphone and began tapping intensely on the keys. She wasn't making a call, but, rather, stringing together a precise series of notes that make up her mobile-phone composition "Plinko."



Bora Yoon

Cellphones are a notorious audience distraction at musical performances—ringing, buzzing and beeping and giving conductors fits. But for some avant-garde electronic artists, cellphones themselves are musical instruments that can be incorporated into rock, hip-hop and even modern classical music.

Household items like washboards, saws and buckets have found their place in music, and electronic instruments that once seemed gimmicky, like turntables and laptops, are going mainstream. So why not cellphones?

Some musicians have already taken cellphone music to an extreme. An Austrian rock band called the Handydandy named itself after the German term for mobile phone, handy. The band, which performs at electronic arts festivals in Europe and elsewhere, has done away with ordinary instruments altogether. Each member of the quintet straps a Sony Ericsson handset around his neck like a guitar and taps away on the buttons, making all the facial and bodily contortions of an Eric Clapton or Carlos Santana while producing very different results.

The group's cellphones, sometimes attached to Styrofoam cutouts shaped like guitars, are linked wirelessly to laptops a few steps away. Pressing keys triggers the nearby computers to play a cacophony of distorted sounds and digital beats. The group refers to its cellphone-powered blur of electronic noise as "Bluetooth Rock," a reference to the popular wireless technology.

Some aspiring DJs and hip-hop artists are beginning to experiment with cellphones, too. In the town of Slough, west of London, a youth center recently began a workshop on "mobile mashups." Using cellphones equipped with special mixing software, students with stage names like MC PanicP-haze learn to splice pieces of existing tunes, add all sorts of electronic effects, and record rap vocals on top.

Tina Palmer, a pop musician who started the classes for the Slough Young People's Centre, says low-income residents in the borough can't afford expensive turntables or laptops with fancy mixing software. For them, souped-up cellphones are the next best thing. The Slough cellphone program is going national this year through other youth centers.

The Chicago Sinfonietta kicked off its 20th season last fall with a "Concertino for Cellphones and Orchestra," a piece built around ringtones. Amplified phones onstage were programmed to play short classical motifs by Brahms and other composers. The orchestra would pick up on the themes and play along. Meanwhile, the conductor got the audience involved. When a green light flashed onstage, the crowd downstairs was instructed to switch on their ringtones and fiddle with the volume; when a red light flashed, concertgoers in the balcony did the same.

Some experts say cellphones are a natural instrument, because the same internal synthesizer that blasts annoying jingles at inopportune moments can also be manipulated for aesthetic purposes. "I'm surprised cellphones are emerging like this, but there isn't any reason they shouldn't," says Geoffrey Wright, director of the computer music program at Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Institute, one of the nation's best-known music schools.

There's even a small technology industry emerging, mostly in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe, to serve the needs of mobile-phone musicians. The phones and other hand-held devices the Slough youth center uses, for example, come equipped with software called miniMIXA, made by the Tao Group. It turns a cellphone into a tiny sound mixer and recording studio.

Ms. Yoon, a Chicagoan, took up piano at the age of 5 and went on to study classical violin and choral singing. After studying music in New York at Ithaca College and making recordings that melded classical music and some of her original songwriting, she got serious about electronic music. And she began to experiment with unorthodox instruments, including the melodica and Tibetan singing bowls.

The cellphone caught her ear for its "old school and wonderfully dated" timbre, she says, like "you're stuck in a calculator or a digital clock from the 1990s." She trained herself to play the cellphone, hooking it up to digital effects that give it an ethereal quality, echoing as though it were in a giant concert hall. She learned to lay one melody over another, creating harmonies and dissonant effects.

Ms. Yoon has incorporated the phone into her solo act, using it alongside her voice and other instruments. She has also collaborated with musicians including Saphala, a tabla player and protégé of Indian legend Zakir Hussain, and DJ Spooky, an avant-garde hip-hop artist and producer. She is picky about her instruments, so not just any phone will do. She insists on playing one particular Samsung model, a 2004 E-105, which she says has a special "pong" tone reminiscent of the "ambient" sound pioneered by British musician and record producer Brian Eno. She buys the Samsung model on eBay as it gets tougher to find in stores. "I need a backup supply," she says.

Ms. Yoon asks her audiences to play along. At her recent show she told concertgoers to whip out their phones and call each other "vociferously." To the untrained ear, the resulting garbled murmur of ringtones didn't sound much like music. But Ms. Yoon says she's trying to take advantage of the fact most phones ring in the "diatonic Western scale of C" and are in the same tuning as Western instruments. That gives some order, she says, to how the sounds of the phone mix with instruments on stage.

"We've all got a little audio source with us," Ms. Yoon says of cellphones. "It's kind of fun to remember that."

Outside Events: A Living Street for John Barry  
China Scouries As Wall-Start Cancels Orders  
Why Flights Are Taking More Time

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

What's News —  
Playing Cellphones On Stage Has Ring Of Respectability  
Bora Yoon's Music Career Takes a High-Tech Turn; Listening for a Special Pong

At Morgan Stanley, A Game of Catch-Up

Florida Tackles Task of Cutting Property Taxes

# WIRED

Adventures in Modern Music



Joan La Barbara

Blonk Yoon



## The Human Voice In A New World

Various venues, New York City, USA

The Electronic Music Foundation's *The Human Voice In A New World* brought together vocalists and artists working with various media in an effort to explore the intersections between the limits of the human voice and those of technologies of sound.

The festival opener was the wondrous brainchild of *Tmema's* Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman, *Messa Di Voce*, a 45 minute piece for two singers, Joan La Barbara and Jaap Blonk, and an image/sound processing software that rendered sound and movement into images. The highly sensitive software captures and analyses the elements of the human voices and, subsequently, reimagines them as visuals on a screen. *Messa Di Voce* took the antiquated concept of madrigalism, or word painting, to its technological extreme: by blending synaesthesia and interactive communication between performers and software, and by using extremely sophisticated modules that projected cartoonish, poignant and spectacular images, *Messa* delivered an icono-choreography of immense precision.

Divided into a few standalone sketches, the composition placed the voice in an environment of childish and unrestrained euphoria. Either solo or as a duet, Blonk and La Barbara frolicked carefree on stage. They either conversed in amphibian-ese as their percussive vowels generated ripples across the screen, or Blonk intoned in some harsh, incomprehensible language while La Barbara's silhouette resembled that of a granulated Tasmanian devil, and sometimes the visual expressionism was simply overwhelming, like when percolating worms of different shapes, mimicking horsy vocals, climaxed in a panorama of interwoven lines and curves. Blonk's solo sketch was characterised by simplicity

and was marked by an existential anxiety more commonly found in silent movies. As a result of his cheek-flapping, he emitted bouncing bubbles that floated upwards on the screen and filled the space above him. Standing in the middle of all this agitation, it was as if he was participating in an underwater Arkanoid game with his quacking like a duck.

Another variation on the concept of word-painting, in a totally different vein, was Joel Chadabe's and Richard Kostelanetz's *Micro Fictions* during the second day. The author, Kostelanetz, read out seven words and the composer, Chadabe, created sonic environments that responded to them. The words freedom, self-improvement, dieting, menacing, deluge, infinity and mesmerizing were recited calmly and with a graceful pace as Chadabe's digital soundscapes ranged from torrents of pulsating electrons (for deluge) to a steady low drone (for infinity).

The next performer, Trevor Wishart, who hadn't appeared in New York for 30 years, started his set with *Vocalise*, a brief improvisational piece for amplified voice. Wishart showed that his technique was not limited to his vocal skills, but it was extended to his spasmodic expressions that contorted his face and radiated through the rest of his body.

Wishart's second and far more ambitious composition, *Globololo*, utilised software to blend different syllable samples culled from radio and TV broadcasts from around the world. As the piece progressed, it became increasingly hard to distinguish between the different samples, and one ended up being surrounded by a raging sea of consonants and vowels. *Globololo* alludes, of course, to glossolalia, and the question arising after the piece ended was, what happens when the world stops making sense? What is there left to say?

The answer resounded during the third and final day, which was by all accounts a curatorial success. Bora Yoon presented (*Phonation*), a multimedia composition for solo performer and real-time video manipulation. The humble and charismatic Yoon manipulated loops that were created on the spot, either by playing the violin, humming a few phrases, or by using her mobile phone as a modified keyboard instrument. She was equipped with a panoply of turntables, radio transistors and an old phonograph speaker which she used as a megaphone during a three-voice antiphonal. Her love for nuanced timbre and her careful use of the space were enchanting attributes of her airy and almost disembodied performance.

From delicate to rousing, the festival ended with a bang, as the zany and ebullient David Moss unleashed his *Voice Box Spectro* in Judson Church. Like a half-demented professor, he stood behind his portable cabinet of curiosities, which was packed with pedals, electronics, small instruments, and sundry objects, all malleable puppets in his hands.

An expert storyteller, Moss recounted various absurdist tales, slipping in and out of character to punctuate the relationship between life and art and to intensify the dichotomy, if any, between the two. His voice sounded assertive, but it also had a suaveness that is characteristic of low-register singers. His performance was a mixed bag of genre-defying vocalisations and of aphoristic gems like "stones are either in your shoes, or in the way. Or, they are the way." He has dubbed his rapid-fire verbal exercises "faster-than-logic communication", which is what he indubitably achieved just before releasing us "into the rest of the universe" and receiving a thunderous applause.

Stefanos Tsigrimanis

# THEME

profile : sound artist

## BORA YOON

STORY BY NEIL SHIBATA PORTRAIT BY DOROTHY HONG

The retired hammers of an abandoned neighborhood piano adorn the living room wall of Bora Yoon's Greenpoint, Brooklyn apartment, a fitting symbol for a sound architect who finds resonance in everyday objects to create her art. "Everything in life has a frequency," explains Yoon. "A lot of things that I'm attracted to soundwise, whether it's stuff that I find in the kitchen or the sound of recycling, offers some kind of timbre. Everything has a pitch to it, so it can all be arranged into music if you just see it the right way."

A classically trained musician, Bora has found that the old school calculator-like sound of her cell phone "offers a different language" than instruments one learns in conservatory. Her innovative use of her Samsung E-105 has led to a front-page feature on her in the *Wall Street Journal*, Korean television spots, and her Samsung-

"Everything in life has a frequency. Everything has a pitch to it, so it can be arranged into music if you just see it the right way."

sponsored Phonation concert in the Allen Room at Lincoln Center, where she used the windows backing the stage to construct music timed with the sunset and in tune with the crepuscular environment. Her song "PLINKO" features layers of echoing cell



phone tones and glockenspiel that create an ethereal landscape that's both harmonic and dissonant.

While her earlier singer-songwriter work has garnered numerous awards, she has opened herself up to more flexibility in the fabrication of analog and digital soundscapes that reject the constraints imposed by set songs and set pieces and demonstrate an acute sensitivity to spatial context. Her sound architecture lends itself well to collaboration, to choreography and film work, most notably designing the live acoustic sound mural for site-specific choreographer Noémie LaFrance's *Agora II* at McCarren Park Pool in Brooklyn, in which each audi-

ence member experienced a unique sound composition based on seat location, and the score for LaFrance's aerial dance piece "Rapture" on the rooftop of the Frank Gehry-designed Fisher Center at Bard College.

A new solo album and US/Korea tour are in the works for '08, as well as a project for the *Journal of Popular Noise*, a choral commission with the Young People's Chorus of New York, and a potential collaboration with Ben Frost of Bedroom Community. And the phonation continues.

# BORA YOON

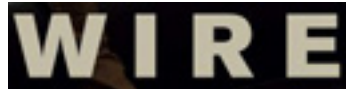
press



*"Equal parts artist, inventor, wearable tech pioneer, and psychoacoustic scientist, Bora Yoon is one of the most exciting creators working in the field of sound and performance today."*



*"exquisite...attractive and deeply personal creations."*



*"nuanced timbre and careful use of space..."  
"enchanting."*



*"..unusual, mesmerizing, and remarkably relatable" –  
National Endowment for the Arts*



*"analog and digital... an acute sensitivity to spatial context."*



*"One of 14 artists who are transforming the future of opera."*



*"magical... resonant."*



*"a pitch-perfect soprano and an architect of sound as spatial experiment... whose sum total is as accessible as it is richly articulated."*



*"operatic and intense, genre-scrambling and iconoclastic... a cut or three above the rest."*



*"totally unique."*

## BORA YOON

select discography



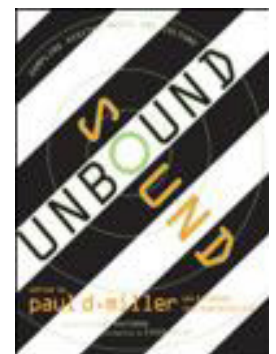
*Sunken Cathedral*  
INNOVA Recordings



*((( PHONATION )))*  
Swirl Records



*Journal of Popular Noise*  
Vol. 3, Issues 7-9  
with Ben Frost (Bedroom Community)



*Sound UnBound*  
by DJ Spooky  
MIT Press / SubRosa  
Foreword by Steve Reich

# B O R A Y O O N

## C U R R I C U L U M V I T A E

### // PERFORMANCE

Lincoln Center | NYC  
Nam June Paik Art Center | South Korea  
Patravadi Theatre | Bangkok, Thailand  
Brooklyn Academy of Music | NYC  
Carnegie Hall | NYC  
Smithsonian American Art Museum | DC  
Park Avenue Armory | NYC  
New Museum of Contemporary Art | NYC  
Brooklyn Museum | NYC  
John Zorn's STONE | NYC  
Ann Hamilton Tower | Sonoma CA (pictured)  
Telfair Academy | Savannah GA  
Casals Hall | Tokyo, Japan  
Walker Art Center | Minneapolis, MN

### // FESTIVALS

Edinburgh International Festival | Scotland  
New Media Performance Festival | South Korea  
Window Into the World Festival | Poland  
UN SOUND Festival NYC  
TED@Cannes | France  
Visiones Sonoras | Mexico  
Park Avenue Armory Tune-In Festival  
New York Electronic Arts Festival  
Intermedia Festival  
MMIX Festival of Interactive Music Technology  
Movement Research Festival  
Bang on a Can Marathon  
Pop!Tech Conference: the Human Impact  
NextWave Festival | BAM, NYC

### // SCORES

Wind Up Bird Chronicle by Haruki Murakami | Dir. by S. Earnhart  
AGORA II, Rapture (in residence) | by Noemie Lafrance

### // COMMISSIONS

ARCO with Sympho | site-specific symphonic work for the  
55,000 sq. ft historic Park Avenue Armory Drill Hall.  
Semaphore Conductus | Young People's Chorus of NYC  
CPS / RPM | Tokyo Ladies' Consort SAYAKA

### // COLLABORATIONS

Luke DuBois | ( (( PHONATION )) ) | live video, visuals  
New York Polyphony | My End Is My Beginning  
Sekou Sundiata | 51st (dream) state  
Ben Frost | Journal of Popular Noise  
Michael Gordon | Lightning at our Feet

### // RECORDINGS

Sunken Cathedral | INNOVA  
( (( PHONATION )) ) | Swirl Records  
The NYFA Collection | Innova  
Journal of Popular Noise | Vol. 3, Issue 8  
Sound UnBound | SubRosa & MIT Press

### // ARTIST RESIDENCY

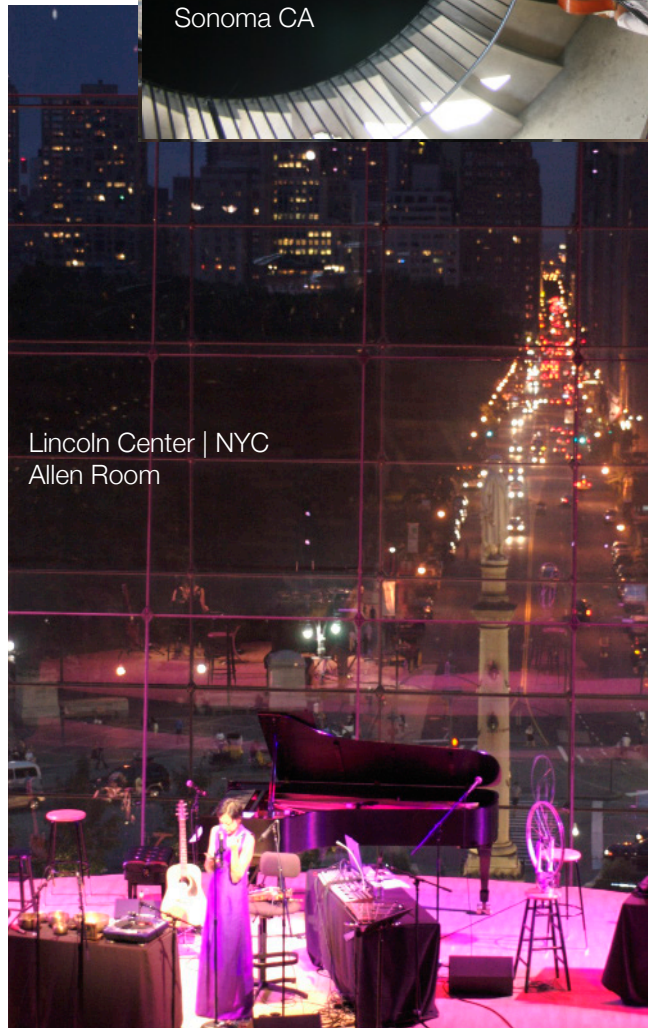
Banff Center for Arts and Creativity  
The Hermitage | Ringling Museum  
Harvestworks Digital Media & Arts | The Body Electric  
League of Musicians & Urban Robots  
Electronic Music Foundation

### AWARDS // FELLOWSHIPS

TED Fellowship  
New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship | Music / Sound  
Sorel Organization for Women Composers  
United Artists Initiative Media Arts Fellowship | Music / Sound



Ann Hamilton Tower  
Sonoma CA



Lincoln Center | NYC  
Allen Room

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cover & p.5: Leslie Van Stelten  
p.4 (clockwise from top left): Julian Defeche Mackler, Mallory Glaser, Laurie Olinder, Young People's Chorus of NYC  
p.9: Amy Eisinger  
p.10: Jocelyn K. Glei (top), Julian Defeche Mackler (bottom)