**Chamber Music @ AEIVA**

**Thursday February 22, 2018**

**5:00 Reception, 5:30 Concert**

Tango Etude No. 3 Astor Piazzolla

(1921-1992)

Lisa Wienhold, flute

Opera with Objects Alvin Lucier

(b. 1931)

Tim Feeney, percussion

Five Melodies, Op. 35 Sergei Prokofiev

Andante (1891-1953)

Animato, ma non allegro

Andante non troppo

Pei-Ju Wu, violin

Chris Steele, piano

The Cold Comfort of Toys\* Matthew Scott Phillips

Pei-Ju Wu, violin

Tim Feeney, marimba

American Kitsch\* Tom Reiner

Lisa Wienhold, flute

Pei-Ju Wu, violin

Tim Feeney, marimba

\*World premiere

*Special thanks to the UAB Department of Music, AEIVA, Birmingham Art Music Alliance, Music Performance Trust Fund, and the UAB Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for making this event possible*

**Program notes**

Inspired by David Levinthal’s photography and esthetic, **The Cold Comfort of Toys**presents a musical look into the use of toys, dolls, and action figures to attempt to come to grips with aspects of the human psyche that are traumatic, uncomfortable, or emotionally exhausting. This piece, like these toys, is not innately any of those things, but seeks rather, to stylize their portrayal in a way that makes these aspects relatable, and capable of being endured.

American Kitsch was inspired by the works of David Levinthal. Many of Levinthal’s work depict tragic themes, yet they are depicted through “kitschy” toys and dolls. American Kitsch is scored for flute, violin, and marimba. The piece moves through pastoral sections, minimalist approximations, and on to nostalgic meanderings. There’s even a short kitschy “modern” section. The “tragedy” in so many of Levinthal’s works is not apparent in American Kitsch. Just like when you first see Levinthal’s art, his pieces seem primitive and kitschy composed of dime store toys and dolls – but then the message of what the artwork is conveying strikes you and you find yourself contemplating whether modern life has become so tragic that it now needs to be represented in cheap toys to lessen the psychological impact. These ideas are amplified when you see Levinthal’s Barbie. He shows how warped sexist ideals and notions about self-image promulgated by our culture are embodied in Barbie. When you see Levinthal’s Mein Kampf you can’t help but notice the kitschy toys while at the same time thinking about the horrendous violence carried out during World War II by the Nazis. You don’t need to know much about Levinthal’s work to appreciate American Kitsch. The piece can easily be enjoyed on its own. You also can’t hear the intention or motivation behind American Kitsch. The piece will either resonate with you or it won’t. It’s the same with modern life and pop culture – there might be some kind of long lasting, deep philosophical message that modern life and pop culture have for us, but what we see on the surface and nothing else more, is often all we get.

**Biographies**

Composer/performer **Tim Feeney** frequently collaborates with experimental musicians and improvisers including the trio Meridian, with percussionists Sarah Hennies and Greg Stuart; pianist Annie Lewandowski; cellist and electronic musician Vic Rawlings; vocalist Ken Ueno, saxophonist Andrew Raffo Dewar; banjo and electronic musician Holland Hopson, and many others.

Within this community, Tim has presented work at experimental spaces throughout the United States, such as the Red Room in Baltimore, Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art, the Knitting Factory New York, and The Stone, as well as the Center for New Music and Audio Technology at UC- Berkeley, the Stanford Art Museum, Mills College, Princeton University, and Dartmouth College. He has recorded for the experimental Caduc, Accidie, Full Spectrum, Sedimental, homophoni, Audiobot, Soul on Rice, lildiscs, and Brassland/Talitres labels.

He was a founding member of the quartet So Percussion, a member of Boston’s Callithumpian Consort, and performed with Rinde Eckert in his Pulitzer-nominated Orpheus X, directed by Robert Woodruff and staged at the American Repertory Theater, the off-Broadway Duke Theatre on 42 nd Street, and the 2008 Hong Kong International Festival.

Most recently, he has performed in quartet and large ensembles with composer and saxophonist Anthony Braxton, with whom he recorded for the Tri-Centric Foundation for release in 2017. Tim is currently Assistant Professor of Percussion at the University of Alabama. http://www.timfeeney.com

**Chris Steele** held previous positions at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as Staff Pianist, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) as both Lecturer of Music Theory and Ear Training, and as Faculty Fellow for the UNCG Grogan College Music Learning Community. At UNCG he studied with Andrew Harley and James Douglass and held assistantships in both accompanying and music theory/ear training. At The Florida State University, he studied with Carolyn Bridger.

An active performer, Steele is a member of the UAB Chamber Trio and has collaborated with members of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. As a proponent of new music, he is a member of the Birmingham Art Music Alliance, and has performed at the Society of Composers Region IV Conference and the Mid-South Chapter of the National Association of Composers Concert. He has also presented lecture-recitals on the late compositional style of Gabriel Fauré, including at UNCG’s biennial Focus on Piano Literature Symposium.

Principal flutist of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra since 1997, **Lisa Wienhold** has also been the principal flutist of the Savannah Symphony Orchestra and the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. She was also the assistant principal and 2nd flutist of the former Alabama Symphony Orchestra. Solo appearances with these orchestras have included Nielson Concerto, CPE Bach - Concerto in d minor, Charles Griffes - *Poeme*, Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto, Bernstein - *Halil*, and J.S Bach - Brandenburg Concertos #2, 4, and 5. Lisa was also a member of the New Hampshire Music Festival Orchestra for 10 seasons.

Born in Germany and raised in Eagle River, Alaska, Lisa received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees as well as an Artist Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory of Music. She attended Interlochen Arts Academy as well. Her major teachers were Robert Willoughby and Timothy Day. Active in education, she is on the faculty of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She has also served on the faculties of Birmingham-Southern College, the University of Montevallo, Samford University, and the University of Alabama. Lisa also maintains an extensive private teaching studio. When not busy with the orchestra or teaching, Lisa is an avid dog fancier, participating in obedience and field retriever competitions with Lea and Fi, her yellow labrador retrievers. They are named for Beethoven’s only opera - Fidelio (Fi) and its heroine - Leonore (Lea).

Violinist **Pei-Ju Wu**, a native of Taipei, Taiwan, has established a performance career as an active chamber and orchestral musician. She joined the first violin section of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in 2013 and is a member of the Des Moines Metro Opera. Prior to moving to Birmingham, Pei-Ju was a member of the San Antonio Symphony, and performed frequently with the Houston Grand Opera, Fort Worth Symphony and Dallas Chamber Symphony. She was the former concertmaster of the Woodlands Symphony and Opera in the Heights. Interested in many genres of music, Pei-Ju toured with the Star Wars in Concert orchestra during its 2010 North America tour and performed with Peter Gabriel's New Blood North America tour.

In 2010, Pei-Ju co-founded Quartus Chamber Players, a Houston-based chamber music ensemble that focused on collaborating with local artists and educational outreach through music. During its 4-year operation, Quartus reached over 2,000 students with its educational program and brought numerous chamber music concerts of varied ensemble settings to the audience of Houston. She was a member of the Hall Ensemble while living in Fort Worth, Texas, and performed frequently with other Texas chamber music groups, such as Aperio, Music of the Americas, Virtuoso String Quartet, Mount Vernon Music and Ensemble 75.

Pei-Ju studied with Kathleen Winkler, Roman Totenberg, Shirley Givens and Rodney Friend, and received her degrees from Boston University and Rice University. She was an adjunct instructor at the Texas Wesleyan University and currently teaches at STEP Birmingham in Birmingham, Alabama.