

VANCOUVER SCULPTURE PERFORMANCE NEW MEDIA IN PUBLIC SPACES BIENNALE →

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Vancouver, Canada. World premiere of Vancouver Biennale commission will launch the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's 2015 – 2016 season.

On September 26 and 28 at the Orpheum Theatre, the Vancouver Biennale brings together JUNO® Award-winning Canadian composer Vivian Fung and the JUNO® Award-winning Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Maestro Bramwell Tovey for the world premiere of *Biennale Snapshots*, a commissioned work inspired by five of the Vancouver Biennale's Open Air Museum public art installations.

Fung says, "[Where words fail, music speaks](#). I chose to pay homage to the Biennale by selecting five different artworks from the exhibition and having each movement be my musical 'snapshot' of the visual piece, allowing the visual to inspire the aural."

Capturing the 2014 – 2016 Vancouver Biennale's theme of 'Open Borders/Crossroads Vancouver' where art transcends borders, Fung has chosen works by artists from China, Brazil, India, and Australia working in different mediums, including *Water #10* by Ren Jun, *Blue Trees* by Konstantin Dimopoulos, *Breath Song* by Sumakshi Singh, *Giants* by OSGEMEOS, and *F Grass* by Ai Weiwei.

Barrie Mowatt, President and Artistic Director of the Vancouver Biennale, says, "Simultaneously international in scope and distinctly Vancouver in flavour, Fung's five-movement, twenty-three-minute Biennale Snapshots transcends the life of the visual artworks themselves. This commission has been ten years in the making since I first met Vivian at a recital in the residency program of Florida's Atlantic Centre for the Arts."

The Biennale, which has installed countless public artworks throughout Metro Vancouver communities since 2005, is



thrilled to expand the realm of its programming while further fulfilling its vision to celebrate the full spectrum of Contemporary art and create opportunities for young art stars on the world stage.

“Thanks to the Canada Council for the Arts and a private foundation, the Biennale’s commission, Biennale Snapshots, marks the beginning of the Vancouver Biennale incorporating live music performance into its exhibition,” says Mowatt. “We are all curious and eager to hear how Vivian has translated a handful of the Open Air artworks into sound. Will these ‘sound portraits’ be edgy, melodious, ephemeral . . . I’m certain that Vivian’s piece will capture our imaginations and cause us to reflect on our perceptions of two- and three-dimensional art.”

Click [HERE](#) for online ticket sales.

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PROGRAM NOTES FOR *BIENNALE SNAPSHOTS*

*italicized paragraphs are courtesy of the Vancouver Biennale

Biennale Snapshots celebrates the Vancouver Biennale’s 2014 – 2016 Open Air Museum installations and is the first musical composition to be commissioned by the Biennale. The twenty-five-minute work is set in five movements, the first and second of which are played without pause. “I chose to pay homage to the Biennale by selecting five different artworks from the exhibition and having each movement be my musical “snapshot” of the visual piece, allowing the visual to inspire the aural.”

1) The work starts with “[Breath Song](#),” inspired by Sumakshi Singh’s work, originally described as a symphony of 108 breath sounds. “I have taken just a few of the breath phrases and magnified them for orchestra, so that the entire movement comprises whispers, breathing into certain instruments, and other ambient sounds reflecting the ephemeral nature of the original. ”

2) “Breath Song” leads directly into “Tree,” inspired by *The Blue Trees* of Konstantin Dimopoulos. “Tree” starts off quietly and gently but gradually builds into large waves of sounds that weave in and out of each other. The second half of the movement grows more violent, reflecting the urgency of Dimopoulos’s mission to bring awareness of global deforestation through his artwork.

3) The third movement, “Graffiti Mashup,” pays homage to OSGEMEOS’s [Giants](#). The movement is a mashup of different musical elements that underlie the colorful street art – quotations of two Brazilian Tropicalia songs, references to hip-hop beats and licks; in general, a rhythmically robust movement. This music is loud, in-your-face, and chaotic – like a hip-hop version of Charles Ives – with elements gradually colliding with each other into a wonderful mess, creating a crazy club-like atmosphere for the orchestra.

4) The fourth movement, labeled “Interludium: Water Rising,” is a short movement that reflects the undulating waves and curves of Ren Jun’s [Water #10](#) sculpture. The beginning is orchestrated to simulate waves flowing in and out, gradually building into lush chords for the entire orchestra. The sound then ascends, all in one gesture from the very bottom to the top, in one big current that ends with the arrival of water gongs.

5) The last movement, “Grass,” reveals the defiant nature of Ai Weiwei’s [F Grass](#). It features loud low bass pedal tones in the brass, counteracted by high, nasal woodwinds. A militaristic fanfare atmosphere is complemented by fast virtuosic passages for strings and woodwinds, releasing the also fleeting and whimsical nature of Ai Weiwei’s work. All elements collide at the end, creating a triumphant close to the piece.

Ai Weiwei is one of the leading artists and cultural figures of our time and consistently displays great courage in placing himself at risk to effect social change through his art. [F Grass](#) is a site-specific installation created for the 2014 – 2016 Vancouver Biennale. The 1,328 interconnected “grass” pieces symbolize the collective and indestructible strength and resilience of ordinary individuals whose unified mass challenges censorship and oppression in China. Inspired by the organic form and fragile beauty of grass, Ai Weiwei created [F Grass](#), using cast iron, an industrial material that will be transformed via exposure to nature throughout all seasons.

ABOUT VIVIAN FUNG

JUNO Award-winning Canadian composer Vivian Fung has a talent for combining idiosyncratic textures and styles into large-scale works, often including influences such as non-Western folk music, gamelan touches, Tibetan chant, and tango music, sometimes in the same composition.

Ms. Fung’s most recent premiere was *The Voices Inside My Head* for three percussion, commissioned by the Bowdoin International Music Festival for its 50th Anniversary. Her other recent commissions include *Violin Concerto No. 2*, commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, which premiered during the TSO’s New Creations Festival in Feb. 2015 with Jonathan Crow, violin; and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Canada.

Notable performances in the 2014-15 season include *String Quartet No. 3*, to be toured by the Dover Quartet as part of their Banff International String Quartet Competition winner’s tour; the European premiere of *Dust Devils* by the Staatskapelle Karlsruhe with Mei-Ann Chen conducting; performances of *Violin Concerto No.1* by the Milwaukee Symphony and violinist Kristin Lee; *Aqua* with the Edmonton Symphony; the West Coast premiere of *Harp Concerto* with harpist Bridget Kibbey and the San Jose Chamber Orchestra; and *Birdsong* at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York.

Ms. Fung’s music has been embraced as part of the core repertoire by many distinguished artists and ensembles around the world. She has received numerous awards and grants, including the 2012 Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, New York Foundation for the Arts’ Gregory Millard Fellowship, among many others.

Born in Edmonton, Canada, Ms. Fung began her composition studies with composer Violet Archer and later studied with Narcis Bonet in Paris, France. She received her doctorate from The Juilliard School in New York, where her mentors included David Diamond and Robert Beaser. She was a faculty member at Juilliard from 2002 to 2010, and currently

lives in San Francisco with her husband Charles Boudreau and their Shiba Inu dog named Mulan and newborn son Julian.

ABOUT THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1919 as a not-for-profit Society and is the largest arts organization west of Ontario, and the third largest symphony in Canada. Performing over 150 concerts annually to 262,000 people, including 50,000 children and young adults, the purpose of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is to enrich and transform lives through music by presenting passionate, high-quality performances of classical, popular and culturally diverse music, creating meaningful engagement with audiences of all ages and backgrounds wherever we perform and developing and delivering inspirational education and community programs.

ABOUT THE VANCOUVER BIENNALE

The Vancouver Biennale is a non-profit charitable organization that celebrates art in public space. Each exhibition transforms the urban landscape into an Open Air Museum, creating globally inspired cultural experiences through the International Residency Program and the award-winning BIG IDEAS education curriculum. The Biennale features internationally renowned and emerging contemporary artists that represent a diversity of cultural perspectives and artistic disciplines including sculpture, new media, performance works, music and film. The objective is to use great art as a catalyst for dialogue, learning, and social action in communities where people live, work, play, and transit. For more information, visit www.vancouverbiennale.com.

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