

## Ann Schaffner



Ann Schaffner was Director of Institutional Research and Improvement at Olin (2001 – 2011) and helped found the College. She received a BA in English and Music from Smith College and an MA in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto. Later she earned an MS in Library Science and an MBA from Simmons College. She was an Associate University Librarian at Brandeis University before joining Olin.

A member of the Vermont Land Trust, the Catamount Trail Association, Habitat for Humanity, and the Hyde Park Community Circle, Ann contributed her skills and energy to causes large and small. Music was always very important to her. As a vocalist, she sang with notable ensembles, including Village Harmony and the Montpelier Gospel Choir. As a listener, she graced virtually every student performance during her ten years at Olin.

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This concert is the second in the Ann Schaffner Concert Series, offered in memory of former Olin staff member Ann Schaffner and made possible through a generous gift by Stu Schaffner.

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## John McDonald Composer/Pianist

Recently described as “the New England master of the short piece” in a recording review, John McDonald is a composer who tries to play the piano and a pianist who tries to compose. He is Professor of Music and Music Department Chair at Tufts University, where he teaches composition, theory, and performance. His output concentrates on vocal, chamber, and solo instrumental works, and includes interdisciplinary experiments.

## John McDonald

### Influences Across Time New Approaches to Old Music

Friday, April 24, 2015 at 3:30 PM

#### Rounce Robble Hobble, Op. 562, No. 22 (2015)

John McDonald

*Here is the sound of thunder [Stanyhurst, 1582: A clapping fyverbolt] to begin a recital of old and new music meeting in the present. The notes used to create this initial clatter come indirectly from Benjamin Cosyn's 'Dorick Prelude.'*

#### Old English Sketchette After Strowgers, Op. 419, No. 2 (2005)

JMcD

*Composed on a few strains from Nicholas Strowgers' Fantasia (ca. 1560-1575), this short sketch was written in about an hour during a California tour in January 2005. It is meant to function as a prelude to performances of the Strowgers piece, but can be played on its own as well. The idea illustrated here is that something new finds nourishment in something old, and we as performers and listeners can access this relationship in recital. This miniature continues a line of short pieces inspired by early English keyboard gems.*

#### Fantasia (ca. 1560-75)

Nicholas Strowgers

#### To Follow Nicholas Strowgers' Fantasia, Op. 446, No. 14 (2009)

*Testimony to the lasting impact that Strowgers' Fantasia has made on me, this afterthought announces three short rhythmic-unison passages with three startling chords. These chords were made by stacking the many occurrences of a three-note motive that holds the opening bars (exposition) of the fantasia together. By taking so many pitches from the Strowgers piece, collecting them, and enveloping them in constant pedal, I attempt to honor the Fantasia by letting its overall harmonic character ring out. The above-described Sketchette, the Fantasia, and this piece can be played as a group, all merging into one another.*

#### Uppon la, mi, re (ca. 1520-1580)

Anonymous

*An anonymous Tudor-period keyboard work with some astonishingly modern features.*

#### Fa, Do, Op. 455, No. 127 (2010)

JMcD

*Up-tempo figures course above a simple two-note ground in this homage to early English compositional techniques for keyboard music.*

#### Stillworth (Fa, Do, Mi), Op. 562, No. 1 (2015)

JMcD

*A tranquil presentation of a three-note motto.*

Cosyn, Op. 429, No. 22 (2007)

John McDonald

Dorick Prelude (I) (ca. 1570-1653)

Benjamin Cosyn

Cosyn, Op. 429, No. 22 (reprise)

JMcD

Benjamin Cosyn (ca. 1570-1653) was first organist of The Charterhouse in London (ca. 1626). This fragmentary piece is influenced by his "Dorick Prelude," and can be performed with it (before and after it as a frame), or alone.

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A Fire's Tale (2008)

D.S. Dabby

'A Fire's Tale' portrays the mercurial nature of fire. Loud bursts of flame, periodic harmonics, bell-like motives, quixotic trills and staccatos interleave with moments of quiet warmth and reflection. Although the work has the quality of a fantasy, it has sections that recur, including a quasi-recapitulation near the end. (MK Schrempel)

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Courant Cromatique (ca. 1600-1625)

Anonymous

Hand-Me-Down, Op. 562, No. 5 (2015)

JMcD

A newly published anonymous courante inspired me to think of a novel way of "wearing" vintage material.

Fantazia (on a Fugue by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck) (1621)

John Bull (1562-1628)

A memorial honoring Dutch composer Sweelinck (Bull's contemporary) upon his death, a thoroughgoing chromaticism connects all the fibers of this substantial piece.

Collecting Olin Endings, Op. 562, No. 15 (2015)

JMcD

Here, I leafed through examples of keyboard music that I chose for a recital at Olin College, seeking imaginative "ending passages." I have altered and then assembled some choice bits into this miniature intended to conclude a recital. The sources include: J. Bull, B. Cosyn, D. Dabby, N. Strowgers, and me (earlier stuff). (02.02.15)

## *Ann Schaffner Concert Series*

*presents*

# John McDonald

## Composer/Pianist



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*April 24, 2015*