Rhode Island Foundation Awards
$25,000 Fellowships to Three RI Composers

Funding gives mid-career composers the resources to hone their craft

PROVIDENCE, RI – Rhode Island composers Shawn Greenlee, Bevin Kelley and Peter Bussigel have been awarded $25,000 fellowships by the Rhode Island Foundation through the Robert and Margaret MacColl Johnson Fellowship Fund. The program is considered to be one of the largest no-strings-attached awards available to composers in the United States.

Since 2005, the fund has provided three artistic fellowships each year, rotating among composers, writers and visual artists on a three-year cycle. The $25,000 awards enable artists to concentrate time on the creative process, focus on personal or professional development, expand their body of work and explore new directions. With this latest round of grants, the Foundation has awarded $750,000 to 30 composers, writers and visual artists.

“These fellowships provide the considerable financial resources necessary to enable artists to invest in honing their craft,” said Daniel Kertzner, the Foundation’s vice president for grant programs. “They echo the value the MacColl Johnsongs placed on the role of the arts in the community.”

The MacColl Johnson Fellows are:

**Peter Bussigel of Providence**

Bussigel will use his fellowship to cover the cost of materials for instrument construction, rehearsals with paid performers, and performances at festivals and other venues.

“My work explores the musical spaces revealed by new technologies” said Bussigel. “I build sound systems for performing and listening to music. I am also interested in the ways in which new technologies change how we process sound. My performances emphasize these relationships by using instruments that are active and often unpredictable collaborators. My videos approach these ideas by simply framing how technical processes muffle and amplify our actions.”

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“Rehearsal time is a luxury in the last-minute world of DIY performance technologies. The time and space to practice with these new systems is often overlooked, but, with a dedicated rehearsal process, performances can move past technological novelty and develop into compelling musical experiences,” he says. “The fellowship will allow me to take involved performances on the road and that exposure will be helpful as I pursue a career that combines creative work and teaching.”

An artist-in-residence and visiting lecturer at Brown University, Bussigel earned a Ph.D in multimedia and electronic music experiments at Brown; an M.A. in sound and video art at New York University; and B.M. in music composition at the University of Michigan.

**Shawn Greenlee of Providence**

Greenlee will use his fellowship to travel to Seoul, Korea, to learn from prominent players, to workshop his compositions and to organize professional recordings and concert presentations of work in progress and finished pieces.

“My aim is to focus on composing for Korean traditional music instruments, including the 12-string gayageum and the stone chime known as pyeongyeong. I will be dedicated to composing work for soloists and ensembles in an experimental context and will look towards new ways in which centuries-old instruments may coexist alongside emerging technologies,” said Greenlee. “My intention is to also seek future funding that will lay the groundwork for my new works to be performed in the United States and to facilitate continued collaborations with Korean performers.”

An assistant professor in the Division of Foundation Studies at the Rhode Island School of Design, Greenlee holds a Ph.D in Computer Music & New Media from Brown University, an M.A. in Computer Music & Multimedia Composition from Brown and a B.F.A. in Printmaking from RISD. A portion of his Fellowship was supported by the Madeline B. Standish Fund.

**Bevin Kelley of Providence**

Kelley will use her fellowship to compose and perform several new works. Performances will be planned for various locations in Providence and throughout Rhode Island, and at the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in Keene, NH. She will also bring the works to cities throughout the United States and internationally.

“The desire to explore musical technology in an expressive and engaging way is what drives my work. I am an electronic music and multimedia composer, performer and sound designer. Incorporating elements of text, video, acoustic and electronic instruments, my multimedia work is centered around a scored musical core, and inspired by the imagined realms of radio plays and speculated science fictions,” said Kelley. “My recent research focuses on compositional strategies for electro-acoustic multimedia ensemble, multimedia adaptations of science fiction texts, and custom controllers for electronic music performance. I am interested in the presence of women and other traditionally under-represented groups within electronic music, historically and in the present moment.”

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“This Fellowship will allow me to take on more ambitious projects and to promote and establish performances of new works for my theatrical music-based electro-acoustic chamber ensemble, The Traveling Bubble Ensemble. Now I can also realize proposed projects for both solo and collaborative works, including collaborations with dancer and choreographer Shura Baryshnikov, installation artist Nora Rabins and writer Brian Evenson,” she said.

A freelance composer, sound design and audio producer, Kelley earned a Ph.D and an M.A. in computer music and multimedia at Brown University, an M.F.A. in electronic music and recording media at Mills College, a B.A. in English at Oberlin College and a B.M. in violin performance at Oberlin Conservatory.

The recipients were chosen by a panel of four out-of-state jurors who are recognized practicing artists and arts professionals. Forty-six applications were reviewed based on the quality of the work, artistic development and creative contributions to the field of music composition, as well as the potential of the fellowship to advance the career of emerging to mid-career artists. Composers from all media and disciplines were eligible to apply.

The panel also named three finalists, who received no cash award: Larry Mauk of Warren, a composer and music teacher and choral director at Pell Elementary School in Newport; Emlyn Addison of Providence, a freelance electro-acoustic composer and singer; and Chris Hampson of Providence, an electro-acoustic composer whose recent work involves synchronized video projections.

Previous recipients of music composition fellowships include Brian Knoth of Providence, who composes music for his own and others’ film, digital video and graphics projects; Dan Moretti, a saxophonist who wrote and produced a project with an Italian traditional orchestra called Piccola Orchestra La Viola; and Daniel Schleifer, a founder of The What Cheer? Brigade, an award-winning 20-piece ensemble that has performed internationally.

Rhode Islanders Robert and Margaret MacColl Johnson were both dedicated to the arts all their lives. Mrs. Johnson, who died in 1990, earned a degree in creative writing from Roger Williams College when she was 70. Mr. Johnson invented a new process for mixing metals in jewelry-making and then retired to become a fulltime painter. Before he died in 1999, Johnson began discussions with the Foundation that led to the creation of the MacColl Johnson fellowships in music composition, literature, and visual arts.

Information about applying for the next round of funding, which will be awarded to writers, will be available on the Foundation’s website after July 1.

The Rhode Island Foundation is the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island. In 2014, the Foundation awarded $34.8 million in grants to organizations addressing the state’s most pressing issues and needs of diverse communities. Through leadership, fundraising and grantmaking activities, often in partnership with individuals and organizations, the Foundation is helping Rhode Island reach its true potential. For more information, visit www.rifoundation.org.

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