



Armen Eliott

With her 23-year Density 2036 project, Claire Chase is commissioning a series of works for solo flute—standard flute, plus its rarer cousins the bass flute (in photo) and contrabass flute—each year until the 100th anniversary of Edgard Varèse’s groundbreaking 1936 flute solo, *Density 21.5*.

Dinuk Sijeratne’s 2011 tabla concerto, with tabla soloist Sandeep Das; the same month, the Symphony Orchestra of India performed tabla master Zakir Hussain’s *Peshkar* concerto while on tour in London, with the composer as soloist. Sitarist Anoushka Shankar has widely performed four sitar concertos by her father, Ravi

American-Iranian harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani leads a new breed of players embracing both ancient and modern, as much in demand for contemporary repertoire as for Bach and Rameau.

Shankar, with orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Lucerne Symphony, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. In April, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra performed Amjad Ali Khan’s *Samaagam*: A Concerto for Sarod, Concertante Group, and String Orchestra, with the composer and his sarod-playing sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash joining him as soloists. Other non-Western traditional instruments featured in recent or upcoming concerts include the Egyptian oud—Joseph Tawadros will perform his own oud concerto with Australia’s

Sydney Symphony in June 2019—and the Argentinian bandoneón, featured in recent concerts by the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra. Meanwhile, George Friedrich Haas’s Concerto Grosso No. 1, co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2017, features a quartet of alphas. Concertos even exist for the Indigenous Australian didgeridoo, most famously one by composer Sean O’Boyle. The Balinese gamelan has been incorporated into works by Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Lou Harrison, and even Benjamin Franklin’s crazy glass harmonica is getting in on the act, with 20th-century works by Bernd Alois Zimmerman and Heinz Holliger as well as recent pieces by German composer Harald Genzmer and American Garry Eister.

And consider the flute, a standard of the modern symphony orchestra. The virtuoso Claire Chase—who also plays the instrument’s far less commonly heard cousins, the bass flute and contrabass flute—is in the midst of a 23-year project called Density 2036, through which she is commissioning an entirely new body of repertoire for solo flute each year until the 100th anniversary of Edgard Varèse’s groundbreaking 1936 flute solo, *Density 21.5*. **S**

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