

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10 October 2023



[Raven Chacon, photo by Neil Santos]

Vancouver premiere of Pulitzer Prize winning piece *Voiceless Mass* by Raven Chacon

Pulitzer Prize winner

VOICELESS MASS - Raven Chacon

November 18, 2023 | 8pm

Artist chat at 7:15pm

Pacific Spirit United Church (2195 West 45th Avenue, Vancouver, BC)

Tickets: \$25 / \$20 (students and seniors)

Tickets on sale now at [Eventbrite](#):

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/voiceless-mass-raven-chacon-tickets-717936165397?aff=oddtcreator>

Vancouver, BC – Vancouver New Music is excited and honoured to present the Vancouver premiere of Diné-American composer Raven Chacon’s 2022 Pulitzer Prize winning piece *Voiceless Mass*, for 12 musicians. Notably, Chacon is the first Indigenous composer to win a Pulitzer Prize for music. With *Voiceless Mass* Chacon has created a story without words and “mass without sung voices in the guise of an organ concerto” (LA Times). The piece creates space for historically “unsung” voices to remake the weighted space of the church. Chacon says of his piece, “[t]his work considers the spaces in which we gather, the history of access of these spaces, and the land upon which these buildings sit. Though ‘mass’ is referenced in the title, the piece contains no audible singing voices, instead using the openness of the large space to

...cont'd p.2/

intone the constricted intervals of the wind and string instruments. In exploiting the architecture of the cathedral, Voiceless Mass considers the futility of giving voice to the voiceless, when ceding space is never an option for those in power.”

The ensemble will be spread throughout Pacific Spirit United Church, creating a spatialized, immersive sound experience for the audience, and the piece will make use of the church’s impressive pipe organ.

Voiceless Mass will be presented along with ...*lahgo adil’i dine doo yeehosinilgii yidaaghi* (for large ensemble), which translated from Navajo means “acting strangely/differently in the company of strangers”.

Details can be found on our website: <https://newmusic.org/raven-chacon-voiceless-mass/>

Raven Chacon is a Pulitzer Prize–winning composer, performer and installation artist from Fort Defiance, Navajo Nation. A recording artist over the span of 22 years, Chacon has appeared on more than eighty releases on various national and international labels. His 2020 Manifest Destiny opera Sweet Land, co-composed with Du Yun, received critical acclaim from The LA Times, The New York Times, and The New Yorker, and was named 2021 Opera of the Year by the Music Critics Association of North America. Since 2004, he has mentored over 300 high school Native composers in the writing of new string quartets for the Native American Composer Apprenticeship Project (NACAP). Chacon is the recipient of the United States Artists fellowship in Music, The Creative Capital award in Visual Arts, The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation artist fellowship, the American Academy’s Berlin Prize for Music Composition, the Bemis Center’s Ree Kaneko Award, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists Award (2022) and the Pew Fellow-in-Residence (2022).

ABOUT VANCOUVER NEW MUSIC

Supporting creativity, innovation, curiosity and a multiplicity of voices and ideas, Vancouver New Music is committed to curating practices, not only works, and embracing the rhizomatic expansion of current modes of sound and music creation. Founded in 1973, Vancouver New Music regularly commissions and premieres new works by Canadian and international composers, presents an annual festival that focuses each year on a theme within the new music landscape and explores the interaction of contemporary music with other disciplines such as theatre, installation, and media arts. Other activities include lectures and workshops with visiting artists, community presentations, and other sound-, art-, and new-music related community events, such as Soundwalks. <https://newmusic.org>

MEDIA CONTACT

Vera Gamboa, vera@newmusic.org | T: 604.633.0861

Vancouver New Music gratefully acknowledges the support of The Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Heritage through Arts Presentation Canada, The Province of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council and Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, The City of Vancouver and Stir Vancouver.