



MIT Names Cellist Maya Beiser Inaugural Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at the Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST)

Beiser to collaborate with faculty on three new performances in MIT's Sounding Series, and present master classes with MIT students

Cambridge, MA, January 31, 2017 -- The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) announces cellist Maya Beiser as the inaugural Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at MIT's Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST). Beiser has captivated audiences worldwide with her virtuosity, eclectic repertoire, and relentless quest to redefine her instrument's boundaries—all qualities that resonate with the mission of MIT's CAST to create opportunities for art, science, and technology to thrive as interrelated modes of exploration, knowledge, and discovery. The arts have been an integral part of MIT since its founding, and in recent years, have been further strengthened through the CAST's artist residencies and initiatives, which the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has supported since CAST's inception in 2012 and through a recent renewal grant, extended its funding through academic year 2020. The endowment of this new artistic residency demonstrates the ongoing and essential nature of the Mellon Foundation's commitment to the arts at MIT.

As the inaugural Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist, Beiser will collaborate with MIT faculty and students to investigate ways to advance her artistic practice with new technologies. She will also perform three concerts as part of *MIT Sounding* -- the new music series curated by Evan Ziporyn, CAST Faculty Director, which integrates the avant-garde sounds of traditional instruments and practices with cutting-edge composition and technology to present various visions of a new, evolving music that defies genre. Both original members of the musical group Bang on a Can, Beiser and Ziporyn are longtime collaborators and these concerts follow their latest collaboration *Uncovered* (2015).

The first concert on March 3 features a new arrangement by Ziporyn of David Bowie's complete final album, *Blackstar*, set as a cello concerto for Beiser and the Ambient Orchestra. The second performance will occur as part of the AUDIBLE component of the MIT CAST symposium "Being Material", taking place on April 22. Beiser & Ziporyn will perform their classic multi-cello collaboration, *Kebyar Maya*, originally commissioned in part by the MIT Council for the Arts performance, in combination with stimulated self assembling materials developed by Skylar Tibbits, assistant professor and Co-Director of the MIT Self Assembly Lab. Beiser's residency will then culminate in a performance in Fall 2017 of Lou Harrison's Concerto for Violin and American Gamelan with Beiser on cello and members of MIT's Gamelan Galak Tika performing on Harrison's original instruments, in honor of the composer's centennial.

“It is such a great honor to be coming to MIT, a remarkable institution where creativity and innovation are so vividly celebrated across all disciplines -- art, music, science, and technology -- in a way that aligns perfectly with my own artistic values and pursuit and with what I am exploring in my art,” Beiser said. “I look forward to meaningful collaboration with MIT’s faculty and students as we embark together on what I know will be a memorable and influential year. I am grateful to the Mellon Foundation for recognizing the importance of bringing independent artists, such as myself, into the academic environment.”

“Maya’s entire career has been about expanding the idea of what it means to be a ‘classical’ musician, and a cellist,” said Evan Ziporyn Professor MIT Music Theater Arts and Faculty Director of CAST. “She approaches performance with rigor but also with risk, openness, and joy. She’s not afraid of what she doesn’t know, and she’s not afraid to ask questions or approach absolutely anyone - exhibiting a vibrant intellectual curiosity that is fundamental to the character of MIT. So I think it’s a perfect fit.”

A key part of MIT CAST’s artist residencies is the opportunity for artists to experiment and explore new technologies that stretch the boundaries of their respective practices. During her time at MIT, Beiser will research, exchange ideas and collaborate with Evan Ziporyn Professor MIT Music Theater Arts and Faculty Director of CAST, Skylar Tibbits co-director of the MIT Self-Assembly Lab and Assistant Professor in the department of Architecture, and Eran Egozy of the MIT Music Technology Lab, as well as with students in classes and workshops integrating music, technology, and film.

Additional details on each of Beiser’s residency performances follow below.

CONCERTS BY MAYA BEISER: INAUGURAL MELLON DISTINGUISHED VISITING ARTIST AT THE MIT CENTER FOR ART, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Second Annual Terry and Rick Stone Concert

David Bowie’s *Blackstar*

March 3, 2017 / 7:30 pm

MIT Kresge Auditorium, W16, 48 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/blackstar-featuring-maya-beiser-tickets-31124825190>

The first performance will feature a new arrangement by CAST Faculty Director Evan Ziporyn of *Blackstar*, David Bowie’s 25th and last album. Beiser will perform this cello concerto with a 60-piece orchestra in the second annual Terry and Rick Stone Concert in the *MIT Sounding* series. The program will also include a new arrangement of Erik Satie’s *80 Gymnopedies* and Ziporyn’s *Frog’s Eye*. During this concert, a new app, NoteStream, a Real-Time Program Note Service, will be available for the first time. The app is being developed at the MIT Music Technology Lab, led by professor Eran Egozy, MIT alumnus and founder of Harmonix, the creator of Rock Band and Guitar Hero, in collaboration with MIT students. NoteStream provides audience members with rich media (text, images, animations) delivered to their mobile phones at precisely timed moments during the live performance. Through this smartphone app’s real time streaming of engaging images and facts about the performance, first-time listeners can receive guided messages

that help them focus their attention on musically important moments and experienced listeners can gain new insights into familiar works and can follow along to excerpts from the music score.

CAST Symposium “Being Material” Audible Concert

April 22, 2017 / 8:00 pm

MIT Kresge Auditorium, W16, 48 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Tickets: <http://arts.mit.edu/events-visit/symposia/being-material/>

In April 2017, Beiser will return to MIT to perform as part of the concert “Audible” that concludes the MIT CAST Symposium “Being Material” April 22. The concert will include Beiser and other musicians wearing sensors as they perform a tribute to the late composer Pauline Oliveros, a pioneer of electronic music. The sound of Beiser’s cello in this concert will stimulate self assembling materials developed by Skylar Tibbits, assistant professor of architecture and Co-Director director of the MIT Self-Assembly Lab.

Concert with Gamelan Galak Tika, Gamelan Si Betty, Sarah Cahill & Evan Ziporyn

Fall 2017

Tickets and more information coming soon

The culmination of the residency will include a final concert in Fall 2017 which celebrates the centennial of Lou Harrison’s birth and will include Beiser on cello in collaboration with performers playing Lou Harrison’s famed Gamelan Si Betty and Old Granddad #4 Gamelan. Musicians from the group Gamelan Galak Tika, pianist Sarah Cahill & Evan Ziporyn will perform and Ziporyn will compose a new work to premiere at this concert.

ABOUT MAYA BEISER

Maya Beiser defies categories. Passionately forging a career path through uncharted territories, she has captivated audiences worldwide with her virtuosity, eclectic repertoire, and relentless quest to redefine the cello's boundaries. A featured performer on the world's most prestigious stages including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, BAM Next Wave Festival, Kennedy Center, London's Southbank Centre, Sydney Opera House, Beijing Festival, Big Ears Festival, and the Barbican's Sound Unbound, she has collaborated with a wide range of artists across many disciplines, including Tan Dun, Brian Eno, Philip Glass, Osvaldo Golijov, Steve Reich, David Lang, Louis Andriessen, Shirin Neshat, Robert Woodruff, and Bill Morrison, among others. Her discography includes ten solo albums, and her latest album *TranceClassical* was released in July 2016 and debuted at No. 1 on the Apple Music classical chart. In 2015, Beiser performed a program at MIT built around her acclaimed album *Maya Beiser: Uncovered* – a collection of re-imagined classic rock in arrangements by Evan Ziporyn – which also topped the classical music charts making the number one spot on both Amazon and iTunes. Maya Beiser is a 2015 United States Artists (USA) Distinguished Fellow; her 2011 TED Talk has been watched by close to one million people. She was a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars and is a graduate of Yale University. For more information, visit www.mayabeiser.com.

ABOUT THE MIT SOUNDING SERIES

The 2016-17 MIT Sounding Series is produced by the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) Visiting Artists Program and MIT Music and Theater Arts. Curated by Evan Ziporyn, Faculty Director of CAST, this season of Sounding integrates the avant-garde sounds of ancient instruments and traditional practices with cutting-edge composition and technology to present various visions of a new, evolving music that defies genre. Sounding.mit.edu

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ART, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A major cross-school initiative, the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) creates new opportunities for art, science and technology to thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge and discovery. CAST's multidisciplinary platform presents performing and visual arts programs, supports research projects for artists working with science and engineering labs, and sponsors symposia, classes, workshops, design studios, lectures and publications. The Center is funded in part by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Evan Ziporyn is the Faculty Director and Leila W. Kinney is the Executive Director.

Since its inception in 2012, CAST has been the catalyst for more than 50 artist residencies and collaborative projects with MIT faculty and students—20 cross-disciplinary courses and workshops, four concert series and numerous multimedia projects, lectures and symposia. The visiting artists program is a cornerstone of CAST's activities, which encourages cross-fertilization among disciplines and intensive interaction with MIT's faculty and students.

HISTORY OF VISITING ARTISTS AT MIT / RECENT ARTISTS

Since the late 1960s, MIT has been a leader in integrating the arts and pioneering a model for collaboration among artists, scientists and engineers in a research setting. CAST's Visiting Artists Program brings internationally acclaimed artists to engage with MIT's creative community in ways that are mutually enlightening for the artists and for faculty, students and research staff at the Institute. Artists who have worked extensively at MIT include Mel Chin, Olafur Eliasson, Rick Lowe, Vik Muniz, Trevor Paglen, Tomás Saraceno and Anicka Yi. As CAST's inaugural Visiting Artist, Saraceno initiated ongoing collaborations with researchers in Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, which have generated a master's thesis and three senior projects to date, and his large-scale installations and aerosolar projects are inspiring further research into bio-inspired building materials and simulations of atmospheric turbulence and ozone depletion. Pedro Reyes is the inaugural Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology, currently teaching a course and developing a new work during his residency at MIT.

ABOUT THE ARTS AT MIT

More than 70 percent of incoming freshmen have prior training in the arts, and nearly 50 percent of all MIT undergraduates enroll in arts courses each year. The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify MIT's motto—*mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

For more information, visit arts.mit.edu

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