

Ecce Ensemble, In Residence At Kendall Square's Le Laboratoire, Closes Season With Sharp Visuals

May 18, 2017 By [Keith Powers](#) 



Le Lab sounds like a great place for the audience of John Aylward's music.

“You think about [the audience] a lot when you’re working at Le Lab,” Aylward says of the Kendall Square installation and performance space, formally known as Le Laboratoire. “You’re working for a new generation — one that might be interested in contemporary music, but essentially is interested in the contemporary experience.”

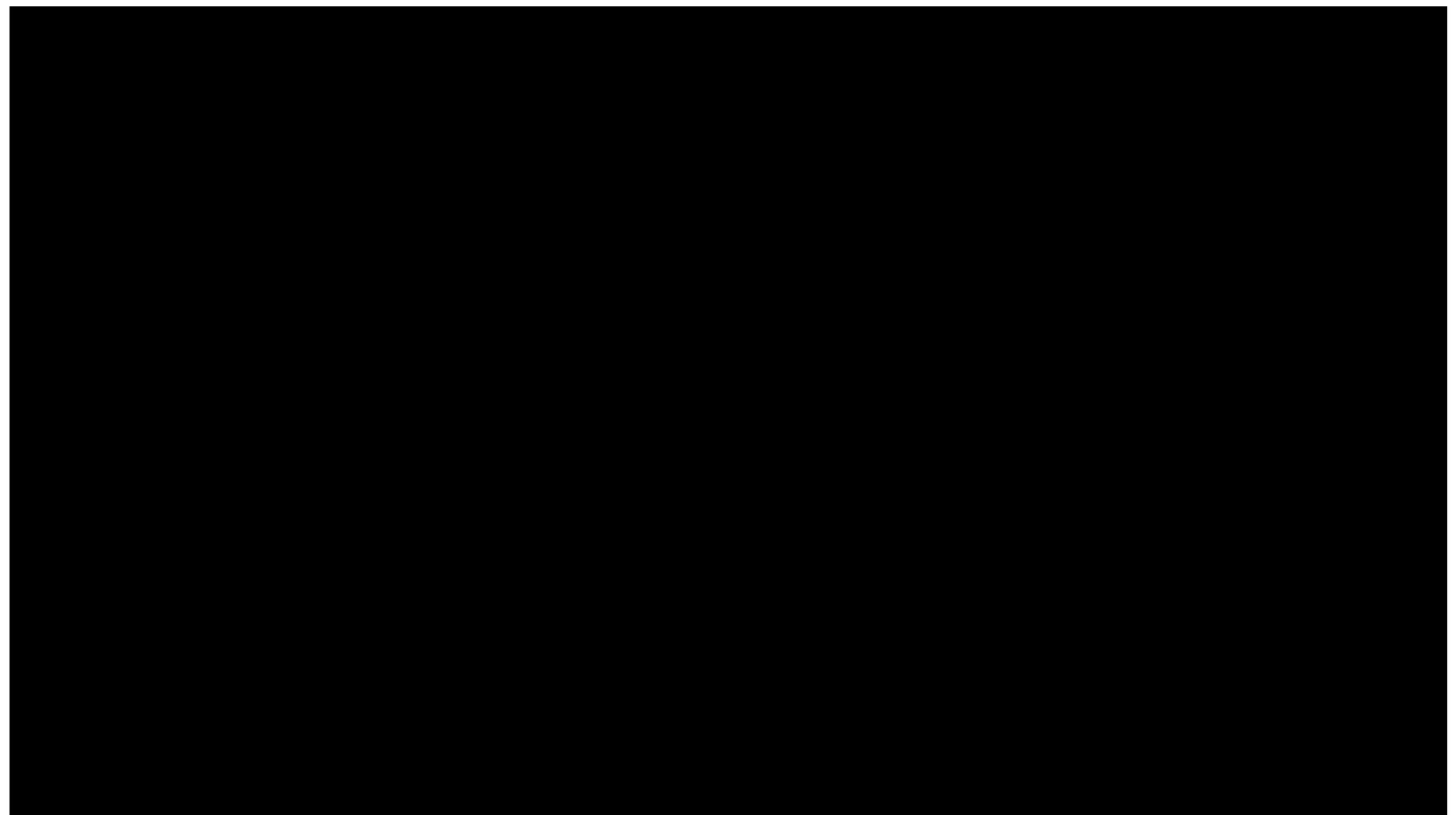
Aylward’s small instrumental group, [Ecce Ensemble](#), in residence at Le Lab for two years, closes out this season with a performance this Friday, May 19, that features both Aylward’s music and the works of French composer Philippe Hurel.



Composer Philippe Hurel. (Courtesy S. Falcinelli)

Hurel's music — the center of the avant French spectralist movement, a compositional technique that uses computer synthesis to discover musical timbres — continues a year-long set of concerts celebrating similar composers. Jean-Baptiste Barrière and Franck Bedrossian were the focus of previous concerts.

Two of Hurel's homages are part of the program: "Pour Luigi," commemorating Luigi Polla, an influential Swiss gallery owner, along with "Ritornello — In Memoriam Luciano Berio."



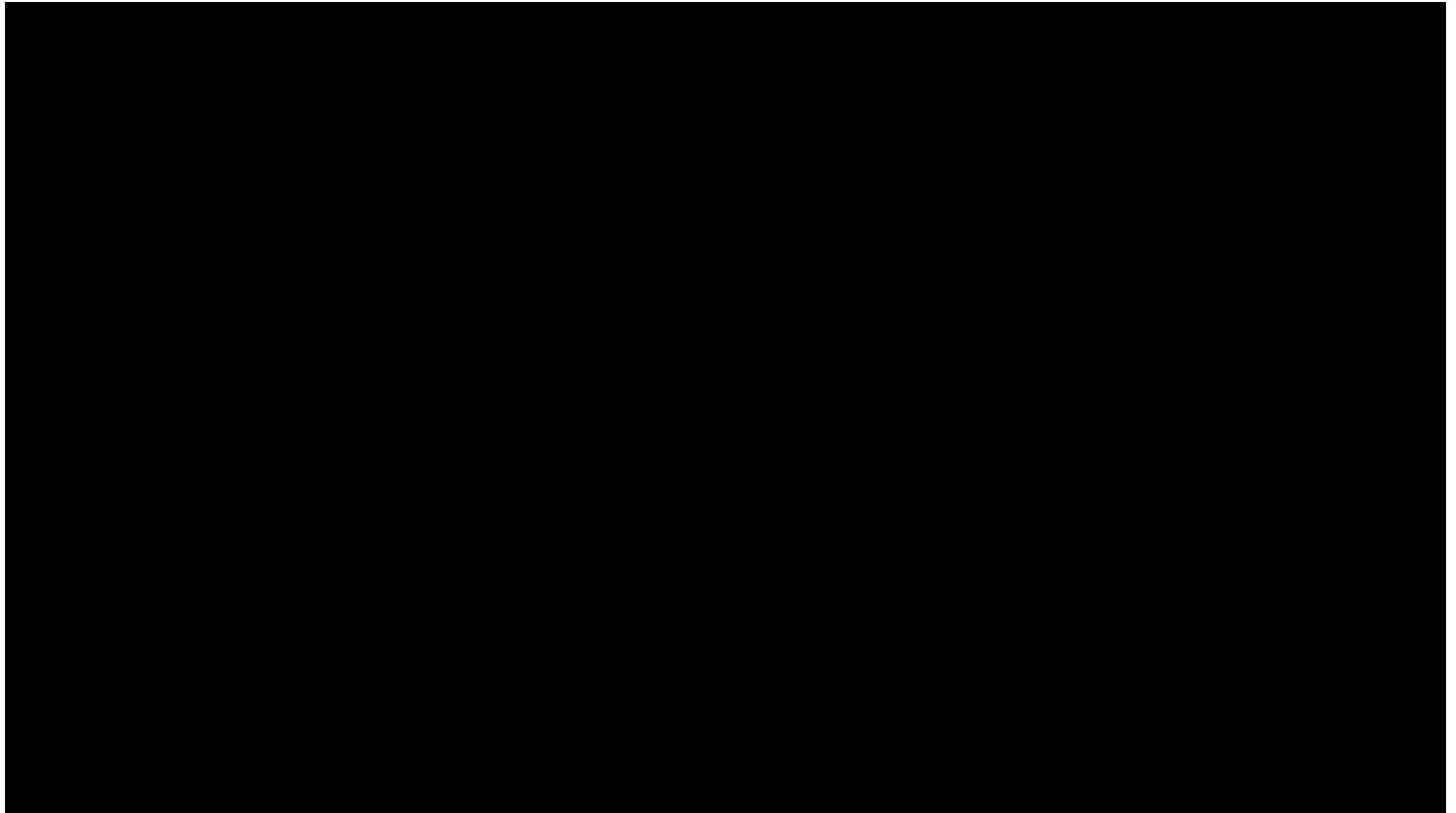
Aylward's 2009 work, "Daedalus," is on the program as well, along with a new work that is also memorial: "Angelus Novus." The piece — for soprano, small ensemble, dancers and visuals — pays tribute to his former teacher, the late composer Lee Hyla. Its multidisciplinary approach directly addresses Aylward's ideas about contemporary audiences.

"I'm interested in making the artistic experiences relevant to my own

generation,” he says. “There is a healthy curiosity in this generation. They are my peers, and in their own fields they are making their own contributions.”

“They present a responsibility,” he says of his audience. “They’re in tech. They’re in medicine. They love the arts, but they want to enjoy it on their own terms. I think they want a more visceral experience.”

For Aylward, creating that experience requires a jump from the compositional process to the performance one.



“In the studio, I’m thinking inward,” he says, “plumbing my own depths. But then you have to toggle that afterward, toward an experience that communicates.”

It was Hyla’s work “Lives of the Saints” that started Aylward on the path to “Angelus Novus.”

“I taught with Lee at our Etchings festival in France,” he says, referring to the summer compositional workshop that Ecce runs each year. “Later, I came across ‘Lives of the Saints.’ When I heard that, I knew it was something I wanted to do.”

Hyla’s work creates psychological portraits of characters from religious texts. “I saw in that piece some kernel I wanted to explore, essentially creating pastiche texts, and choreographing them in a unified way,” Aylward says.



The concert also incorporates the current exhibition in Le Lab — “Life in Picoseconds.” “It’s part of Millimetre, an artist collective from Paris,” Aylward says. “They’ve created a large screen with fans running that move particles around the screen. That creates a moving image, which will provide the

backdrop to the performance.”

Designer Steven Taylor contributes visuals for “Angelus,” and Colin Gee does the choreography. “It started with songs, and then the visuals, and now a dance component,” Aylward says. “It’s becoming a kind of ballet, and I think that next year, I can form it into a deeper choreographic experience.”

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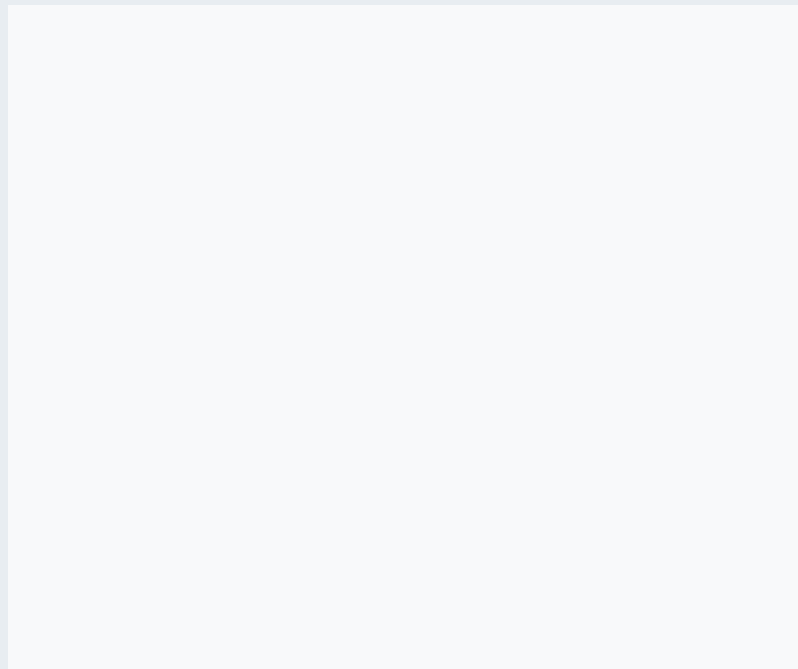
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