



# EAR TAXI FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY NEW MUSIC CHICAGO

# THE COMPOSER'S VOICE

[www.EarTaxiFestival.com](http://www.EarTaxiFestival.com)

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## WELCOME LETTER

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**Dear Friends,**

It is with great excitement that we welcome you to Ear Taxi Festival 2025, the largest contemporary concert music festival in the Midwest, presented by New Music Chicago. From October 3 through November 2, we will gather 507 performers and 210 composers (725 artists total) across 27 venues to present over 60 hours of music. Together, we bring to life the creative energy that defines Chicago as a hub for contemporary concert music.

Many have asked: what is contemporary concert music? We believe it's not a single answer, but an invitation to explore. Each artist, work, and performance offers its own response—shaped by lived experience, cultural tradition, and bold vision. We hope the music you encounter encourages you to find your own answer and keep listening. For us, it starts with creating space for today's composers to share what they're saying now—hence our theme: The Composer's Voice.

This year marks a new chapter. Alongside large-scale performances, we've expanded our focus on the human voice and commissioned more composers than ever. By partnering with new institutions, we're broadening the circle and welcoming both longtime champions of new music and first-time listeners.

The festival unfolds in many of Chicago's beloved arts spaces—including the Harris Theater, Logan Center, Kehrein Center, Constellation, Epiphany for the Arts, and more. From large concerts to intimate sets, we invite you to experience new music in ways that are expansive, accessible, and inspiring.

We're proud to present 71 world premieres and 8 Midwest premieres, including our opening concert with Bella Voce performing *Lost Objects* by Bang on a Can, theatrical shows from Mucca Pazzo and Fulcrum Point, and intimate performances by Nick Zoulek, Arcomusical & Krissy Bergmark, and Crossing Borders Music. We're especially proud to partner with the Chicago Philharmonic for the world premiere of *Invictus*, a new piano concerto by Stacy Garrop for Marta Aznavoorian, and the Midwest premiere of *An African American Requiem* by Composer-in-Residence Damien Geter, featuring the Apollo Chorus.

At the festival's heart is our historic commissioning initiative—the largest in Illinois history. Twenty-two new commissions will premiere in our Composer Showcases, alongside six micro-grant commissions, giving voice to both emerging and established composers. From Marybeth Kurnat's *Birdsong* using texts from children at Terezin, to John Dorhauer's work based on a statement from Justice Sotomayor, to Justin Weiss' settings of poetry by Robin Wall Kimmerer—these commissions tell powerful, diverse stories.

Ear Taxi Festival 2025 is New Music Chicago's most ambitious production yet, made possible by our community's generosity and vital support from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Driehaus Foundation, Paul Angell Family Foundation, New Music USA, Aaron Copland Fund, Cliff Dwellers Foundation, Illinois Arts Council, and Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs. Their support enables us to direct over 90% of our budget to programming, with 77% funded through partners, foundations, corporations, and government aid—underscoring our commitment to sustaining the artists at the core of this festival.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all who've contributed time, talent, and resources. From generous donors and volunteers to our incredible performers and composers, this is a collective achievement. Special thanks to our Advisory Committee, to Augusta Read Thomas—whose 2016 vision launched Ear Taxi Festival—and to the leadership of Tim Corpus (Executive Director), Justin Peters (Production Manager), Zoe Markle, New Music Chicago President Ben Zucker, and the many volunteers who embody the festival's spirit.

Whether you're attending one concert or experiencing the full month, we invite you to explore, listen deeply, and celebrate with us. Ear Taxi Festival 2025 is for you—for the curious listener, the passionate supporter, the new explorer. Together, we will shape a future where every voice is heard.

With gratitude and excitement,

**LaRob K. Rafael**, Artistic Director & **Amy Wurtz**, Curatorial Director



**VIEW FULL  
SCHEDULE  
ONLINE**

New Music Chicago  
EIN: 05-0627751  
1820 W Fletcher St.  
Chicago, IL 60657



[earthaxifestival@newmusicchicago.org](mailto:earthaxifestival@newmusicchicago.org)

New Music Chicago acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council and Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

Digital Program Book Edition 5.1 ©New Music Chicago

[www.EarTaxiFestival.com](http://www.EarTaxiFestival.com) **3**



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

**JB PRITZKER**  
GOVERNOR

June 24, 2025

New Music Chicago  
2051 West Farwell Avenue  
Chicago, IL 600645

Greetings!

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I am pleased to welcome everyone gathered for the Ear Taxi Festival presented by New Music Chicago. This occasion offers an exciting opportunity for everyone in attendance to celebrate a shared appreciation for contemporary classical music. I commend the work you have done to help make Illinois a stronger and more enjoyable state.

Since it was first hosted in 2016, the Ear Taxi Festival has grown to become the largest contemporary classical music festival in the Midwest. This year's festival will highlight over 300 artists in over 50 hours of programming at venues across Chicagoland. Illinois is proud to have enjoyed your service to our state. As you reflect on your accomplishments, I urge you to make plans for the future of your association that will build on your past successes. I am grateful for all the ways your organization has supported a strong future for Illinois.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I offer my best wishes for this enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker", written in a stylized, cursive script.

Governor JB Pritzker



## MISSION & STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

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Ear Taxi Festival '25 acknowledges that music institutions have historically overlooked artists and composers of the global majority, often prioritizing a predominantly white, Eurocentric, and male narrative. This exclusion marginalizes voices that are essential to the full scope of contemporary music's story. We are committed to challenging this systemic inequity by intentionally amplifying and celebrating the contributions of underrepresented creators, ensuring their work takes its rightful place in shaping the future of our art form.

**Collaboration with Community Partners:** Our mission is to expand perspectives about what "new music" is by cultivating authentic community partnerships, and championing transparency in every aspect of our festival which requires mutual respect and shared values. We are engaged in active listening, honoring cultural traditions, and ensuring that partnerships reflect equity and co-creation rather than extraction. Our hope is to foster long-term relationships that uplift the broader Chicago community while enriching the contemporary music ecosystem.

**Financial Structure:** Our budgeting, artistic compensation, and organizational funding are guided by principles of equity and impartiality. We are dedicated to clear communication and transparent financial reporting that showcases a commitment to equitable pay for all contributors and the responsible allocation of resources that benefit the Chicagoland area through this quadrennial festival.

**Open Dialogue:** Ear Taxi Festival values dialogue as a cornerstone of growth and understanding. We actively seek feedback from artists, audiences, and community stakeholders to ensure our work remains accountable and relevant. Through public forums, artist talks, community discussions and post-performance surveys, we aim to create a safe space where all voices are heard, fostering a culture of shared learning and continual improvement.

### *Ear Taxi Festival 2025 Leadership*

## LAND RECOGNITION

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Chicago is part of the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes like the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox also called this area home. Located at the intersection of several great waterways, the land naturally became a site of travel and healing for many tribes. American Indians continue to call this area home and now Chicago is home to the sixth largest Urban American Indian community that still practices their heritage, traditions, and care for the land and waterways. Today, Chicago continues to be a place that calls many people from diverse backgrounds to live and gather. Despite the many changes the city has experienced, our American Indian, Ear Taxi Festival and New Music Chicago communities see the importance of the land and this place that has always been a city home to many communities and perspectives.

— American Indian Center of Chicago

Find out on whose ancestral lands you reside:

<http://native-land.ca/>

### **Learn more about land acknowledgements:**

<https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>

<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

<https://usdac.us/nativeland>

**NEW//MUSIC**  
CHICAGO

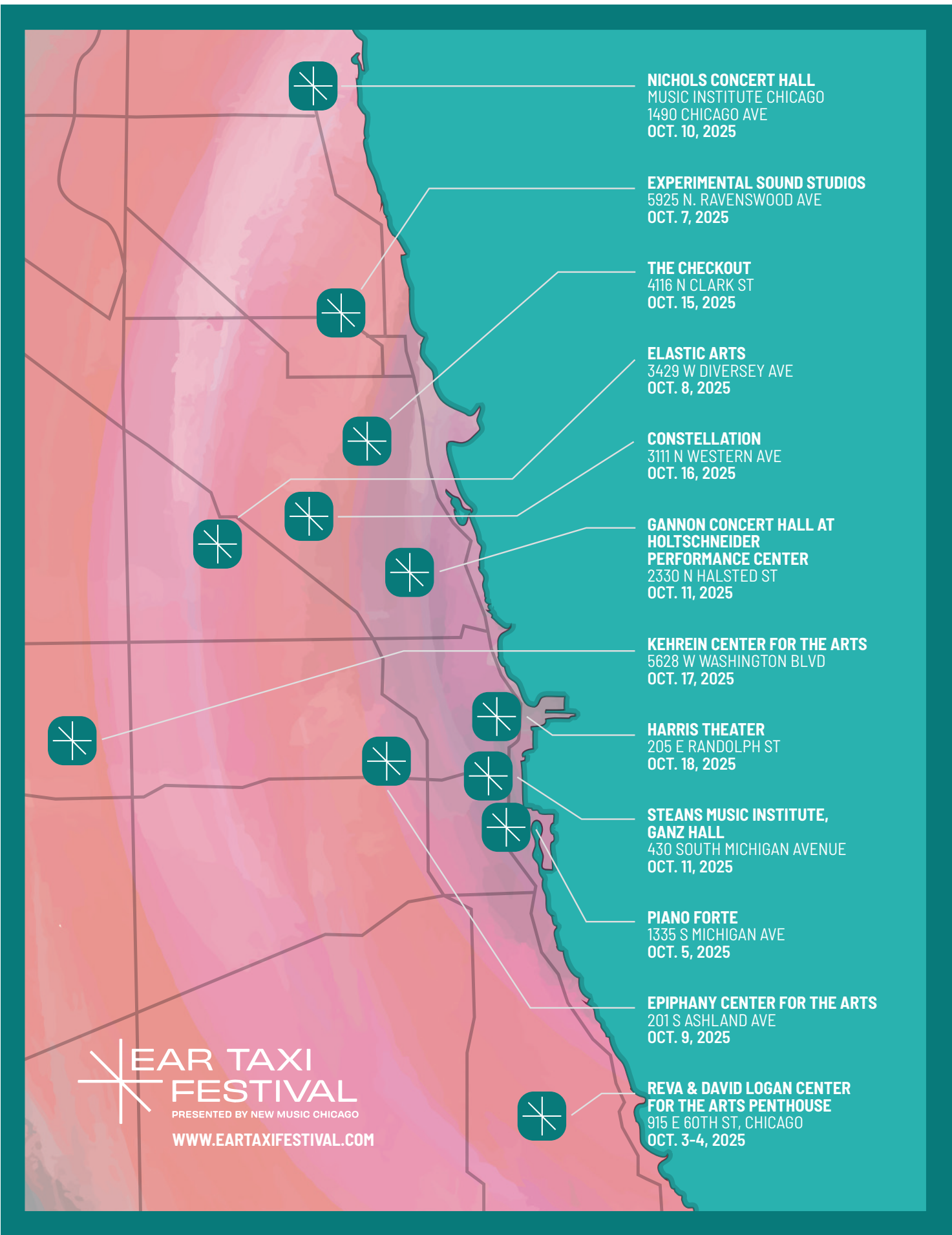
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EIN: 05-0627751  
1820 W Fletcher St.  
Chicago, IL 60657

 EarTaxiFestival

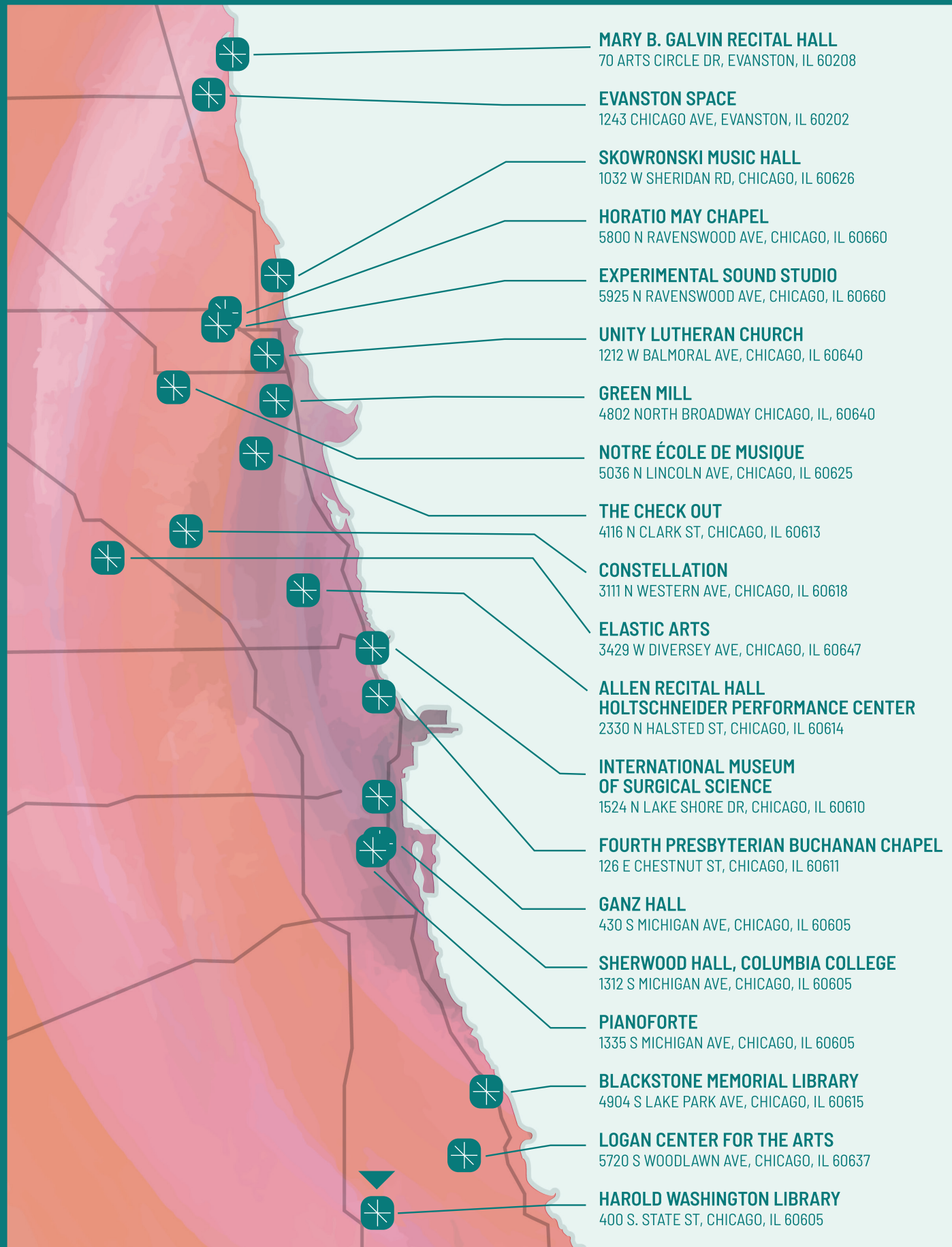
[eartaxifestival@newmusicchicago.org](mailto:eartaxifestival@newmusicchicago.org)

[www.EarTaxiFestival.com](http://www.EarTaxiFestival.com) **5**

EAR TAXI FESTIVAL MAP (OCT 3 - 18)



## EAR TAXI FESTIVAL MAP (OCT 19 - NOV 2)





## FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

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### **Bella Voce present "Lost Objects"**

Friday October 3, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts Performance Hall

### **Chicago Composers Consortium // Caroline**

### **Jesalva // Shannon McGinnis & Corrine Costello //**

### **Constellation Men's Ensemble**

Saturday October 4, 2025, 2:00 P.M.

Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts Penthouse

### **Composer Showcase Featuring Quintet Attacca**

Saturday October 4, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts Penthouse

### **Crossing Borders // La Caccina // Holocene**

Sunday, October 5, 2025, 2:00 P.M.

PianoForte

### **Sonic Speculations in the Documents of Postwar Japanese Art**

Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Experimental Sound Studios

### **Alyssa Arrigo and Leila Bowie McClenahan // Black Moon Trio**

Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Elastic Arts

### **Ase // Nick Zoulek // Ty Bouque**

Thursday, October 9th, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Epiphany Center for the Arts

### **Career Conversations with Christopher Tin**

Friday, October 10, 2025, 2:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

DePaul University CDM 243

### **Check It Out: The benefits of getting your music into libraries**

Friday, October 10, 2025, 4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Regenstein Hall of Music: Master Class Room

### **Composer Showcase Featuring Kaia String Quartet**

Friday, October 10, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Nichols Concert Hall, Music Institute Chicago

### **William Ferris Chorale & DePaul University present "The Lost Birds"**

Saturday, October 11, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Gannon Concert Hall at DePaul University

### **Fonema Consort // Arcomusical & Krissy Bergmark // Stare at the Sun**

Sunday October 12, 2025, 2:00 P.M.

Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University

### **Music Community Networking**

Sunday, October 12, 2025, 5:30 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Roosevelt University, Room 763

### **Composer Showcase Featuring Ravinia Steans Music Institute**

Sunday October 12, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University

### **Dissolving Paradigms**

Monday, October 13, 2025, 1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Online Webinar

### **The Pleiades Improv Jam**

Monday, October 13, 2025, 7:00 P.M.

The Checkout

### **Demystifying Contracts for Creatives with Odell Mitchell**

Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Online Webinar

### **Flannau Duo + Quijote Duo // Picoso**

Wednesday, October 15, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

The Checkout

### **Composer Showcase Featuring Lakeshore Rush**

Thursday, October 16, 2025, 8:30 P.M.

Constellation

### **Chicago Fringe Opera present operas by Soper, Baiocchi, and Barnes,**

Friday, October 17, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Kehrein Center for the Arts

### **Chicago Philharmonic & Apollo Chorus present "Invictus" & "An African American Requiem"**

Saturday, October 18, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Harris Theater for Music & Dance

### **Ensemble Dal Niente: Hard Music, Hard Liquor**

Sunday, October 19, 2025, 8:30 P.M.

Constellation

### **Michael Hall: Stories at the Blackstone**

Monday, October 20, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

Blackstone Memorial Library



**Fulcrum Point New Music Project**

Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 7:00 P.M.  
Fourth Presbyterian Buchanan Chapel

**Rising**

Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 7:00 P.M.  
Horatio May Chapel

**The Magnificent Misdeed**

Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Experimental Sound Studio

**Mark Nagy's Station Four**

Thursday, October 23, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Elastic Arts

**Alarm Will Sound: Sinfonietta**

Friday, October 24, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Logan Center for the Arts

**6Degrees Composers**

Friday, October 24, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Sherwood Hall, Columbia College

**Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble**

Friday, October 24, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Mary B. Galvin Recital Hall

**Ryan De Ryke & Daniel Schlosberg**

Friday, October 24, 2025, 8:00 P.M.  
PianoForte

**DePaul Faculty Artist Series: Christopher Jones and  
Osnat Netzer**

Saturday, October 25, 2025, 3:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall, Holtschneider Performance Center

**pNeXT Ensemble**

Saturday, October 25, 2025, 4:00 P.M.  
Unity Lutheran Church

**Roosevelt University CCPA Contemporary****Ensemble: Lemuria**

Saturday, October 25, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University

**Daniel Baer**

Sunday, October 26, 2025, 4:00 P.M.  
PianoForte

**Cosmia opera collective: moth songs ii: thresholds**

Sunday, October 26, 2025, 8:30 P.M.  
McClintock Choral and Recital Room

**Chicago Bagatelles Project**

Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 7:00 P.M.  
International Museum of Surgical Science

**Vanishing Point**

Thursday, October 30, 2025, 6:00 P.M.  
Harold Washington Library

**Benjamin Sung & David Kalhous**

Friday, October 31, 2025, 7:00 P.M.  
Skowronski Music Hall

**Threads of Time**

Saturday, November 1, 2025, 5:00 P.M.  
Notre École de Musique

**Grand Trio Accord**

Saturday, November 1, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
The CheckOut

**Northwestern University Chorale**

Saturday, November 1, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Mary B. Galvin Recital Hall

**Green Mill All-Stars**

Sunday, November 2, 2025, 4:00 P.M.  
Green Mill

**Mucca Pazza: Running Out of Space**

Sunday, November 2, 2025, 7:30 P.M.  
Evanston SPACE

**SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY**

Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago's robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

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### **Sonic Speculations in the Documents of Postwar Japanese Art**

Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 5:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.

Experimental Sound Studios | 5925 North Ravenswood Ave, Chicago, IL 60660

Sonic Speculations in the Documents of Postwar Japanese Art introduces a sound world little known outside Japan: Japanese artists working with sound in galleries and public spaces to interrogate artistic practice and social relations during the cultural and political upheavals of postwar Japan from the 1950s to 1970s.

### **Career Conversations with Christopher Tin**

Friday, October 10, 2025, 2:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

DePaul University CDM 243 | 243 South Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60604

Grammy award-winning composer Christopher Tin will talk to local students about work as a composer, including his piece “The Lost Birds” being performed by the William Ferris Chorale and DePaul University Ensemble 20+.

### **Check It Out: The benefits of getting your music into libraries – a guide for the entrepreneurial composer**

Friday, October 10, 2025, 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Regenstein Hall of Music: Master Class Room | 60 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

Libraries are excellent partners for the entrepreneurial composer. In this collaborative discussion, librarians Marci Cohen and Greg MacAyeal will describe the many benefits of library/composer partnerships.

### **Music Community Networking**

Sunday, October 12, 2025, 5:30 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

Roosevelt University, Room 763 | 430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

Join the community and meet your fellow music makers for some fun pre-show networking. Get to know your fellow composers, performers, and music lovers.

### **Dissolving Paradigms**

Monday, October 13, 2025, 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Online Webinar

Join the Ear Taxi Festival Artistic Director LaRob K. Rafael in another great discussion in the series “Dissolving Paradigms”.

### **The Pleiades Improv Jam**

Monday, October 13, 2025, 7:00 P.M.

The CheckOut | 4116 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60613

Ear Taxi Festival and Pleiades join forces to present a specially curated house band for the event, followed by our signature Pleiades Jam Session. The jam is open to all participants, with advance sign-up available to ensure space and avoid exceeding capacity.

### **Demystifying Contracts for Creatives with Odell Mitchell**

Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Online Webinar

Lawyers for the Creative Arts joins Ear Taxi Festival for a special discussion all about contracts for creatives. Odell Mitchell III brings his expertise to present best practices for artists when contracting or being contracted.

## SUPPORT THE FESTIVAL

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Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

- The first festival, in 2016, featured 54 world premieres with performances over six days.
- The 2021 festival took place over six days and featured more than 350 musicians reaching over 9,000 listeners.
- The 2025 festival is poised to bring together audiences from across Chicagoland and the Midwest with four weeks of curated programming plus two weeks of community-organized performances including:
- 700+ artists through performance organizations and freelance, including instrumentalists, vocalists, composers, and crews.
- 71 world premieres and 8 Midwest premieres

### When you make a contribution to the Ear Taxi Festival, you help us:

- Support Emerging Artists: By funding performance opportunities, commissions, and professional development, we're committed to nurturing the next generation of trailblazing composers and performers.
- Expand Community Engagement: Our workshops, interactive events, and outreach programs connect people of all ages and backgrounds with contemporary music, sparking creativity and fostering connection.
- Present New and Diverse Voices: We are dedicated to featuring music that reflects the diversity of our city and our world. Your gift will help us showcase voices that too often go unheard.

**Your tax-deductible donation supports artists, festival operations, and ensures the success of future Ear Taxi Festival presentations. Thank you for helping us shine a national and international light on the Chicago music community.**



Photography by Forestt LaFave from the Ear Taxi Festival launch on October 4, 2024.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025, 7:30 PM

Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts, Performance Hall  
915 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL, 60637

ANCHOR PERFORMANCE

Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, and David Lang | *Lost Objects* ^  
Libretto by Deborah Artman

^ Midwest Premiere Performance

Pre-concert talk led by Doyle Armburst

PERFORMERS:

Conducted by Andrew Lewis

Bella Voce Chorus

Soloists:

Hannah De Priest, soprano  
Ryan Belongie, countertenor  
Luke Lemmeier, countertenor  
Ben Zucker, DJ

Soprano

Cynthia Spiegel  
Kirsten Hedegaard  
Carolyn Dalmonte  
Eleanor Walters  
Allison Selby Cook

Alto

Natalie Holz  
Nora Engonopoulos  
Sheetal Heinert  
Gabrielle Timofeeva

Tenor

J. Alfredo Jimenez  
Michaël Hudetz  
Tim Lambert  
Oliver Camacho

Bass

Dominic German  
Matthew Hunt  
Alberto Mantovano  
Ed Frazier Davis

Bella Voce Sinfonia

Violin 1

Michael Gurevich  
Lori Ashikawa  
Pascal Innocenti  
Phoebe Gelzer

Violin 2

Ann Duggan  
Kenichi Kiyama  
Brandi Berry Benson  
Henry Zheng

Viola

Ben Wedge  
Heather Boehm  
Danny Seidenberg

Cello

Anna Steinhoff  
Jill Kaeding

Bass

Jerry Fuller  
Phillip Serna

Harpsichord

Sun Chang

Timpani

Brandon Podjasek

Trumpet

Lena Console  
David Kjar

Flute

Anita Rieder  
Linda Pereksta

Oboe

Geoffrey Burgess  
Erica Anderson

Bassoon

Keith Collins

Horn

John Schreckengost  
Dan O'Connell

Electric Ensemble

Jesse Langen, guitar  
Brian Courage, bass guitar  
Justin Peters, percussion  
Vijay Tellis-Nayak, synthesizer  
Ben Zucker, DJ

The 2025 Ear Taxi Festival begins with a powerful invitation to listen deeply. Bella Voce, one of Chicago's most beloved and adventurous vocal ensembles, opens the festival with *Lost Objects*, a contemporary oratorio by Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, and David Lang—the visionary founders of the Bang on a Can collective.

*Lost Objects* is a genre-bending work that fuses the sonic textures of Baroque music with a modern sensibility, layering choral writing, a period-instrument orchestra, electronics, and poetic text into a seamless meditation on memory, ritual, and the artifacts of modern life. With harpsichord, string ensemble, and subtle electronic enhancements, the piece feels simultaneously ancient and futuristic—sacred and secular, intimate and expansive.

This haunting and evocative work reflects on the things we've lost—objects, relationships, identities—and the ways we grieve, remember, and carry them forward. Through its bold juxtapositions and expressive clarity, the work offers a poignant reflection on how sound can help us make sense of a fragmented world.

*Lost Objects* sets the tone for this year's festival theme, *The Composer's Voice*, by illustrating how composers today are not only redefining musical language but also responding directly to the emotional and cultural landscape of our time. As Bella Voce gives voice—literally and figuratively—to this moving piece, we welcome both new and returning audiences to explore what “new music” means when past and present collaborate.

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## PROGRAM NOTE

*Lost Objects* is a musical exploration of the meaning of memory. With the spine of a Baroque oratorio layered with the muscle of modern times, it is a powerful monument to the loss of people, things, rituals, ideas.

In their second major collaborative performance project, genre-defying composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe teamed up with polyphonic writer Deborah Artman to work a strange and beautiful alchemy of text and sound. In the 2001 world-premiere performance in Dresden, Germany, the Baroque virtuosity of the legendary Concerto Köln was challenged and stretched by the hard-edged electric Bang on a Can *Lost Objects* Ensemble and the avant-turntables of DJ Spooky. In the same way that oratorios such as Handel's *Messiah* were intended to be staged, the three vocal soloists and 30-voice chorus of *Lost Objects* inhabit a mythic and beautiful stage world. The world-premiere production was semistaged by the acclaimed, award-winning director François Girard (*32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*, *The Red Violin*).

*Lost Objects* is a haunting, hallucinatory and humane music theater piece for Baroque orchestra, rock ensemble (electric guitar, electric bass, keyboard and drums), live DJ remix, solo voices, and choir. The unique weave of sounds combines the resonance of animal gut and wood with the ethereal blend of soprano and countertenor voices mixed with the edgy force of amplified rock instruments and drums. “*Lost Objects* is a prayer hall, a hymn but also an invention,” writes Ms. Artman. “There is a narrative, somewhat sacred, but it is a fractured meditation. In the tenuous and hurried climate of the times we live in now, *Lost Objects* asks us to pause and consider the grace bestowed upon each thing, person, animal and idea, the ordinary and the not-so-ordinary lost objects of our shared and vanishing culture.”

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## NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I first heard *Lost Objects* on Seth Bousted's program “Relevant Tones” on WFMT driving home from a rehearsal several years ago. Actually, I heard just the first movement, “I Lost a Sock,” and was captivated. At first I didn't know exactly what I was hearing. But then Seth came on and explained that it was from an oratorio written for Baroque orchestra, chorus, two countertenors, a soprano, an electric ensemble of guitar, bass guitar, percussion, and synthesizer, and a DJ. It was written by Bang On a Can composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe with texts by Deborah Artman.

I knew this was something Bella Voce must do, given our focus on both period performance practice of Renaissance and Baroque music and our devotion to new music, especially by living composers. We often contrast such works on the same program but this—this!—was all of that wrapped up in one. I couldn't believe my luck and am still grateful to Seth to this day.

I immediately bought the CD and had the chance to listen straight through on a long drive by myself. Each movement hit me like a thunderclap. I kept thinking, “How can they top this?” and then the next movement was so different and engaging and startling that I was almost in a state of disbelief. At one point I had to pull the car over and weep tears of joy and fascination. It was a musical revelation of the kind I had not experienced since my youth.

# LOST OBJECTS

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libretto by Deborah Artman  
(music by Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe)

## 1. I Lost a Sock

I lost a sock.  
I lost an umbrella.  
I lost a sock.  
I lost a tooth.  
I lost my teeth.  
I lost a leg.  
I lost my dog.  
I lost an earring.  
I lost my father.  
I lost my voice.  
I lost my ticket.  
I lost the keys.  
I lost the map.  
I lost my wits.  
I lost my way.  
I lost my tongue.

I lost my heart.  
I lost faith.  
I lost weight.  
I lost my hair.  
I lost my hand.  
I lost my eye.  
I lost my house.  
I lost my tongue.  
I lost my name.  
I lost my book.  
I lost my glasses.  
I lost my ring.  
I lost the store.  
I lost the farm.  
I lost a sock.  
I lost the eggs.

I lost my cow.  
I lost my memory.  
I lost my teeth.  
I lost my color.  
I lost my hair.  
I lost my sight.  
I lost my way.  
I lost my balance.  
I lost my mother.  
I lost my shoe.  
I lost the business.  
I lost my carpet.  
I lost my language.  
I lost my god.  
I lost my pants.  
I lost my tan.

I lost his number.  
I lost my desire.  
I lost weight.  
I lost my body.  
I lost water.  
I lost the water.  
I lost the tree.  
I lost the directions.  
I lost the car.  
I lost the combination.  
I lost the wood and the matches.  
I lost the candles.  
I lost my knife.  
I lost my gun.

I lost my boots.  
I lost my daughter.  
I lost my nerve.  
I lost my son.  
I lost my edge.  
I lost my wife.  
I lost my blanket.  
I lost my man.  
I lost my toy.  
I lost my anger.  
I lost my joy.  
I lost my cynicism.  
I lost my fear.  
I lost my land.  
I lost my resistance.

## 2. Acoustic Aphasia

I hear the sound coming from your mouth,  
but I do not understand the words.  
Can you repeat after me: A B C D E F G.

## 3. Passenger Pigeon

Passenger pigeon  
was once one of  
the most numerous  
birds on earth  
Thousands of pigeons  
carrying messages of blood  
carrying messages of sport  
carrying messages of loss  
carrying messages of life  
No matter how long it is gone  
No matter how far it has flown  
the bird  
will always come home.



#### 4. When Any Man

When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord,  
you shall bring your offering of cattle from the herd or from the flock.  
If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd,  
he shall offer a male without blemish.  
He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering,  
and it shall be accepted for him.  
Then he shall kill the bull  
before the Lord.  
And Aaron's sons the priests shall present the blood,  
and throw the blood round about against the altar.  
And he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces.  
And Aaron's sons the priests shall lay the pieces,  
the head and the fat  
in order upon the wood that is on the fire upon the altar,  
but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water.  
And the priest shall burn the whole on the altar  
as a burnt offering,  
an offering by fire,  
a pleasing odor to  
the Lord.

If the whole congregation of Israel commits a sin,  
when the sin which they have committed becomes known,  
the assembly shall offer a young bull  
for a sin offering  
and bring it before the tent of meeting.  
Then the bull shall be killed  
before the Lord,  
and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood  
and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord  
in front of the veil.  
And he shall put some of the blood on the horns  
of the altar which is in the tent of meeting,  
and the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar  
and all its fat he shall take from it and burn upon the altar.  
Thus shall he do with the bull  
and they shall be forgiven.

The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it.  
It shall not go out.

It shall not go out.

#### 5. I Found My Enemy's Ox

I found my enemy's ox  
I found my brother's ox  
I found my neighbor's ox  
on my property.  
It had run away.  
I could not hide from it  
or pretend it wasn't there.  
I took it back to my enemy.  
Again it ran away  
and again I returned it.  
Again it ran,  
and when my neighbor moved away  
and the ox still came,  
I took the ox to my home  
until my brother enemy came.  
I do this with his ox  
and any lost thing of my brother's.  
I cannot withhold my help.  
I cannot hide myself.

#### 6. Fw:Fw: Please Look

Missing child.  
Please look, then forward on.  
I am asking you, begging.  
Please forward this email to everyone.  
I have a daughter named Chelsea.  
She has been missing since 4 PM.  
If you know anything  
If you see anything  
If you hear anything, please.  
All prayers are appreciated.

## 7. Lost Thing

Lost thing

These things must be proclaimed:

Fruit in a vessel, a vessel by itself  
Money in a purse, a purse by itself  
Heaps of fruit  
Heaps of coins  
Homemade loaves of bread  
Fleeces of wool from a craftsman  
Jars of wine  
Jars of oil

These things must be proclaimed  
for the owner has not lost hope.

## 9. Not Our Darkness (Loss of Meaning)

It's not our darkness that we fear  
not our darkness that we fear  
but our light

our darkness that we fear  
our light

our darkness we fear  
light

darkness fear  
light

fear  
light

## 11. Amelia, Flying

Amelia  
Where are you?  
Amelia  
Somewhere flying  
Somewhere in the heavens  
Where are you?  
Amelia  
Somewhere

## 8. Two Are Holding

Two are holding onto a garment.  
This one says: I found it.  
This one says: It is mine.  
This one says  
This one swears that no less than half is his.  
This one says  
And they will divide it.

## 10. We Were Enveloped

We were enveloped  
by a thin mist  
that obscured the view  
and made one world  
of snow and sky--

a scorching mist,  
if you can imagine  
such a thing,  
more burning than bright sunshine...

A working torch  
Emergency flares  
A working torch  
Emergency flares  
An ice ax was found later

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Bella Voce

Since its founding in 1983 under the name His Majestie's Clerkes, Bella Voce has delivered unique, disciplined choral performances to live audiences in the Chicago area, earning recognition as a leading ensemble within early music and historical performance practices. Over time, as the ensemble's repertoire expanded, a name change was in order and the group became Bella Voce in 2001. For over forty years, Bella Voce has cultivated the living tradition of choral music from the earliest chant to contemporary creations. Its wellspring is in the works and performance practices of the European Renaissance and Baroque traditions, and modern masters who invoke or innovate within those traditions. On several occasions over the course of its history, Bella Voce collaborated with Chicago-area period-instrument ensembles (including Ars Antiqua, The Callipygian Players, and Rook) to perform seminal works that require vocalists and instrumentalists. In 2018, the Bella Voce Sinfonia was formed to advance Bella Voce's mission and artistic vision. This period-instrument orchestra comprises some of the finest world-class period-instrument players in the midwest.

### Andrew Lewis

Andrew Lewis is artistic director of Bella Voce and the Bella Voce Sinfonia, music Director of the Elgin Master Chorale, Director of Music & Choirmaster at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Evanston, Artistic Director of Opus 327 NFP, and Lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Theatre & Music. Mr. Lewis was Assistant Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and has been a guest conductor with the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus. He has appeared on several occasions as a guest conductor with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Lewis's performances with Bella Voce, the Elgin Master Chorale, and the Elgin Symphony have been broadcast nationally on WFMT 98.7.

### Ben Zucker

Ben Zucker engages in acts of creative juxtaposition and speculation as a composer, audiovisual artist, and multi-instrumentalist. Acclaimed as a "master of improvisation" (IMPOSE Magazine), and "more than a little bit remarkable" (Free Jazz Blog), they have contributed to experimental music scenes across North America and the UK with "stirring compositions...built on a lifetime of musical curiosity" (Chicago Reader), as well as albums, multimedia situations, and frequent performances on vibraphone, brass, voice, and electronics. They currently live in Chicago, working as a freelance musician, lecturer, curator, and President of New Music Chicago.

### Hannah De Priest

Hannah De Priest is a fearless performer especially renowned for her "masterful" (Olyrix) performances of Baroque repertoire. Consistently described as a "standout" and praised for her "bright, ideally-focused sound, allied to a probing expressive intelligence" (Chicago Classical Review), the young soprano enjoys a fast-rising career in North America and Europe. Recent highlights include debuts with the Wrocław Baroque Orchestra (Bach's Johannes-Passion), the Innsbruck Early Music Festival (Gilde, L'amazzone corsara), and her Kennedy Center debut with Opera Lafayette (Serpina, La servante maîtresse). She has performed lead roles across multiple productions with the Boston Early Music Festival. Her 2025-26 season includes three operatic tellings of the Orfeo myth: Gluck's Orfeo (Amore, Music of the Baroque), Jacopo Peri's Euridice (Dafne, Haymarket Opera), and Monteverdi's Orfeo with Ars Lyrica Houston (Proserpina). She also returns to the Boston Early Music Festival for her first title role with the company in Provenzale's La Stellidaura vendicante. On the concert stage, she will perform Bach's Christmas Oratorio with the Washington Bach Consort, Handel's Messiah with the St. Louis Bach Festival, and headline a concert and tour of Handelian cantatas with Les Délices. Her debut solo album with the ensemble is set to release in Spring 2026.

### Ryan Belongie

Countertenor Ryan Belongie's operatic engagements have included Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Atlanta Opera, Boston Baroque, Chicago Opera Theater, Festival Napa Valley, Haymarket Opera Company, Long Beach Opera, Opera Bergen, Opéra de Montréal, St. Petersburg Opera, Tulsa Opera, West Edge Opera, and Wolf Trap Opera. Concert appearances include Alabama Symphony, Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Dallas Opera Orchestra, Elmhurst Symphony, Grand Rapids Symphony, Grant Park Music Festival, Il Complesso Barocco, Kansas City Symphony, Leipzig Baroque Orchestra, Lexington Philharmonic, Music of the Baroque, San Diego Symphony, San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Utah Festival Opera, and Utah Symphony. He has been heard on Chicago's WFMT in performances with Music of the Baroque in addition to a solo recital on the network's series, "Live from WFMT," and has appeared on PBS across the United States in A Renaissance Christmas. Belongie is an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program and the Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera.



## Luke Lemmeier

Countertenor Luke Lemmeier is actively engaged as a singer in the Chicagoland area. Luke currently sings with Bella Voce and in the Choir at St. Chrysostom's Episcopal Church in the Gold Coast. Luke has previously sung with Bach in the City, common pulse, Chicago Choral Artists, Chicago Bach Week Festival, Early Music at the Barn, and has been engaged as a cover soloist with the Grant Park Music Festival. Luke was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions District Winner. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music.

## Bang On A Can

Bang on a Can is dedicated to making new music. Since its first Marathon concert in 1987, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found. With adventurous programs, it commissions new composers, performs, presents, and records new work, develops new audiences, and educates the musicians of the future. Bang on a Can is building a world in which powerful new musical ideas flow freely across all genres and borders. Bang on a Can plays "a central role in fostering a new kind of audience that doesn't concern itself with boundaries. If music is made with originality and integrity, these listeners will come." (The New York Times)

Bang on a Can has grown from a one-day New York-based Marathon concert (on Mother's Day in 1987 in a SoHo art gallery) to a multi-faceted performing arts organization with a broad range of year-round international activities. "When we started Bang on a Can, we never imagined that our 12-hour marathon festival of mostly unknown music would morph into a giant international organization dedicated to the support of experimental music, wherever we would find it," write Bang on a Can Co-Founders Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe. "But it has, and we are so gratified to be still hard at work, all these years later. The reason is really clear to us – we started this organization because we believed that making new music is a utopian act – that people needed to hear this music and they needed to hear it presented in the most persuasive way, with the best players, with the best programs, for the best listeners, in the best context. Our commitment to changing the environment for this music has kept us busy and growing, and we are not done yet."

Projects include the annual LONG PLAY (Brooklyn) and LOUD Weekend (MASS MoCA) festivals; the People's Commissioning Fund, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the Bang on a Can All-Stars, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA – a professional development program for young composers and performers led by today's pioneers of experimental music; Asphalt Orchestra, Bang on a Can's extreme street band that offers mobile performances re-contextualizing unusual music; OneBeat, an acclaimed exchange program for American and International musicians; cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers and more. Bang on a Can has also launched an extensive public digital archive, CANLAND, including recordings, videos, posters, program books, and more.

Each new Bang on a Can program has evolved to answer specific challenges faced by today's musicians, composers and audiences, in order to make innovative music widely accessible. Bang on a Can's inventive and assertive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.

## Doyle Armbrust

Noted as "a well-connected pillar of the Chicago new-music scene" by The New York Times, violist Doyle Armbrust is a founding member of the multi-Grammy-nominated Spektral Quartet. Motivating his work are the twin beliefs that 1) Curiosity should be the only prerequisite for a captivating musical encounter, and 2) For a musical encounter to be relevant, it must immediately connect to what it means to be alive today.

This creed threads through his professional writing, found within the pages of Time Out Chicago, Chicago Magazine, and Crain's Chicago Business, as well as program books at the Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati Symphonies.

Doyle is currently violist for new-music supergroup The Grossman Ensemble as well as host and creator of The Society of Disobedient Listeners pre-concert discussion series at UMS on the University of Michigan campus.

He is conspicuously proud to serve on the board of directors for D-Composed, a Black ensemble based in Chicago and driven by a mission to uplift and empower society by providing a platform for exceptional Black music.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2025, 2:00 PM

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Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts, Penthouse  
915 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL, 60637

### TAXI CONCERT

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#### Chicago Composers' Consortium with Brag Jungwirth: Talking to Heart

Elizabeth Start † | *Talking Object Songs*

Laura Schwendinger † | *Composer's Companions*

Kyong Mee Choi † | *Breathe Life III*

Kathleen Ginther † | *There Will Come Soft Rains\**

Stephen Ferre † | *L'enchantement du bois (excerpts)\**

Lawrence Axelrod † | *Bruit d'un Coeur*

#### Caroline Jesalva: out of context

Erez Dessel † | *Trial of the Righteous Mother\**

Aaron Kaufman-Levine † | *CorrelationAdmirationRamificationOccupation\* ‡*

Caroline Jesalva † | *Transubstantiation*

#### Shannon McGinnis: Anything but a Dream

Gabrielle Rosse Owens | *The Water is Wide (from Three Folk Songs)*

Behzad Ranjbaran | *Three Persian Songs*

Kyong Mee Choi † | *Anything but a dream\**

Jodi Goble | *Ode to the Sea (from Heart of the World)*

#### Constellation Men's Ensemble: pouring from empty cups

Robert Maggio | *Interlude I. Manhood in the 21st Century*

Gregory W. Brown | *Twilight Hours*

Maggio | *Interlude II. Refrains & Misconceptions*

Samara Rice | *Election Syndrome*

Maggio | *Interlude III. A Life Just Like Their Fathers'*

Gregory W. Brown | *Two Shores*

Nicholas Cline † | *I had a white room*

Rob Redei | *No Longer Mourn*

Alex Berko † | *cardinal directions: north, south, east, west*

Ephraim Champion † | *empty cup\**

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

### PERFORMERS:

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#### Chicago Composers Consortium

Brad Jungwirth, baritone

Lawrence Axelrod, piano

Amos Gillespie, saxophone

Elizabeth Start, cello

Amy Wurtz, piano

**Caroline Jesalva**, violin and voice

**Corinne Costell**, soprano

**Shannon McGinnis**, piano

#### Constellation Men's Ensemble

Matthew Brennan, baritone

Conor Broaders, bass

Chuck Chandler, tenor

Matthew Cummings, tenor

James Judd, tenor

Ian Martin, baritone

Dorian McCall, bass

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

Pouring from Empty Cups explores what it means to keep giving when you have nothing left. In a world marked by political anxiety, emotional fatigue, and a constant demand for resilience, Constellation Men's Ensemble offers a program that confronts the quiet toll of survival.

Featuring selections from Robert Maggio's Man Up / Man Down, Alex Berko's cardinal directions, Samara Rice's searing Election Syndrome, and the world premiere of Ephraim Champion's empty cup, this performance reflects on numbness, vulnerability, and the human need for connection. Through new music and collective expression, Constellation creates space for reflection—and the possibility of renewal amidst mounting challenges.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### Chicago Composers' Consortium with Brag Jungwirth: Talking to Heart

CCC's program is centered around works written for baritone Brad Jungwirth at a concert given by the Chicago Composers' Consortium eleven years ago. The texts are varied in language and emotional content, at turns wry and humorous, searching, gentle and powerful. These four works are balanced by instrumental compositions showcasing members of the CCC who are also accomplished instrumentalists – Amos Gillespie, saxophone and Elizabeth Start, cello.

With this concert, they welcome back Stephen Ferre, one of the founding members of CCC, who has lived away from the Chicago area for many years but is happily now returned.

### Caroline Jesalva: out of context

'out of context' began as a commissioning project in the summer of 2023 to explore new approaches and experimental methods of 'violin playing'. Violinist Caroline Jesalva met many composer-improvisers who were drawing from 20th century composers while imbuing their works with language from their respective traditions: free jazz, bebop, performance art, punk etc. The problem was that they had not found opportunities to have their pieces performed! This program features those works, encouraging creative ways of violin playing and highlighting the innovative and composed music of improvisers.

### Shannon McGinnis: Anything but a Dream

Shannon McGinnis' program weaves together folk memory, mystic contemplation, and cross-cultural resonance through the voices of four contemporary composers. Gabrielle Rosse Owens sets the timeless ballad "The Water is Wide" against a sparse, haunting backdrop. Behzad Ranjbaran's "Three Persian Songs" offer lush settings of classical Persian poetry. Kyong Mee Choi's "Anything but a dream" invites deep listening through meditative, philosophical text. Jodi Goble's Ode to the Sea closes the set with aching simplicity. Together, these works explore longing, identity, and the enduring human impulse to sing across boundaries.

### Constellation Men's Ensemble: pouring from empty cups

Pouring from Empty Cups explores what it means to keep giving when you have nothing left. In a world marked by political anxiety, emotional fatigue, and a constant demand for resilience, Constellation Men's Ensemble offers a program that confronts the quiet toll of survival. Featuring Alex Berko's cardinal directions, Samara Rice's searing Election Syndrome, and the world premiere of Ephraim Champion's pouring from empty cups, this performance reflects on numbness, vulnerability, and the human need for connection. Through new music and collective expression, Constellation creates space for reflection—and the possibility of renewal amidst mounting challenges.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago's robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

# TALKING OBJECTS ELIZABETH START

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## I. MOUSTACHE

Hair on top is white, but I'm  
as dark as thirty—  
a relic, a reminder. Eyes.

cheeks, and the other hangers-on  
are in decline. Only  
words have kept their resonance.

So, words, remember I'm  
the formal awning under which  
you signal for a cab

the well-trimmed doorman, bowing  
slightly, ushering you out.  
If things go well, I'll look on

as your slippery diphthongs  
warm the room, as you tuck  
a metaphor in among the shrimp

and grape leaves. I like  
the way you stroke me with your  
consonants, but before

the evening's gone, you'll slip  
back to stories  
from another neighborhood

where once, in church,

you threw yourself away

and spoke in tongues. I wish

I'd known you then, your open

vowels and silences,

the ledge of your bare lips.

## II. NEGATIVE SPACE

Where the body isn't - that's how  
dancers know me. Sculptors bend  
their clay and steel against

my emptiness. Somehow, though I'm  
not giving it a thought, I nudge  
a shadow from a twist

of bronze or change the way  
a breast and elbow size  
each other up. Writers like to wrap

white space around their wit,  
but I'm not white,  
nor bound or folded. I'm your

zero with its circumference  
erased, an abandoned building  
once the building's gone. Let's say

a heavy childhood event  
has bent your life, shaped  
what you've become. Now you find

it never happened. Nothing  
there at all. That's me.

## III. MOUSETRAP

My parents were mousetraps  
and my grandparents, an ancestry  
of wood and wire. I knew my trade.

You should have seen me half  
a century ago. Cocky. Build a better  
mousetrap, someone would say.

I'd look him in the eye. Some things  
are what they are, I'd say.  
Can you build a better guillotine?

The blade falls—gravity with an edge.  
Want to try a circular saw?  
That was the way I talked back then.

Now I waste here on the shelf  
behind the d-CON. No offspring,  
end of the line. Still, after midnight,

I can feel my wire go taut  
against the headboard, my curled  
hips ready, I wait,

pretend to sleep. When something chews  
the cheese between my legs,  
everything I've stored

breaks free. The job is done,  
done right. I draw a breath, lean back,  
sleep out the night.

- Text by Conrad Hilberry



## THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS KATHLEEN GINTHER

---

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree  
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

- Text by Sara Teasdale

## BREATHE LIFE III KYONG MEE CHOI

---

Breathe Life

Not for greed  
Not for grief

Breathe life  
For life and for light

Only when you breathe for life  
You will know when to let go

Breathe life  
For grace and for gratitude

- Text by Kyong Mee Choi

# BRUIT D'UN COEUR

---

## I. (Bruit d'un Cœur) from Migration des Forces

On se penche dehors  
vers un vague ailleurs;  
c'est ce monde encore  
dont on meurt.  
Être ce vent cette nuit,  
comme cela reposerait  
du silence, du bruit  
qu'un cœur fait.

One leans outside  
toward a vague elsewhere;  
it is this world again  
from which one dies.  
To be this wind this night,  
resting like that  
from the silence, from the sound  
that a heart makes.

## II. (Il ne se repose jamais) from Migration des Forces

Parmi nous il ne se repose jamais,  
car en chaque mouvement que notre cœur fait  
il devine et reconnaît  
l'insuffisance.

Among us it never rests,  
because in each movement that our heart makes  
it guesses and recognizes  
insufficiency.

Parmi les anges il ne trouve non plus de repos,  
car ils murmurent toujours comme l'eau  
par abondance.

Among the angels, it does not find rest either,  
because they murmur constantly like water  
in abundance.

## III. 37: Ciel Valaisan from Les Quatrains Valaisans

Comment notre cœur lorsqu'il vibre  
a-t-il tant besoin  
que tout un ciel de loin  
lui donne des conseils d'équilibre.

As soon as it vibrates, how does our heart  
need so much  
that a whole far-off heaven  
gives it counsels of equilibrium.

Mais ce ciel depuis toujours  
a de nos cris l'habitude;  
ami de la terre rude,  
il en adoucit le contour.

But this heaven has forever  
been used to our cries;  
friend of the raw earth,  
it softens the contour.

## IV. (Partons) from Migration des Forces

Partons, partons! Vois-tu, les nuages  
lasissent là-bas un arrière-plan ouvert:  
sous des clartés de nacre, c'est la plage,  
le bord d'argent d'un continent en fer.  
Partons, élançons-nous vers la trouée,  
un coup de cœur vaut bien un coup de tête;  
et faisons la conquête  
de l'étendue si rarement avouée.

Let's leave, let's leave! Look, the clouds  
leave an open background over there:  
beneath the brightnesses of mother-of-pearl is the beach,  
the silver edge of an iron continent.  
Let's leave, let's throw ourselves toward the abyss,  
an intense fleeting passion is well worth a sudden impulse;  
and let's make the conquest  
of the vastness so rarely admitted.

- Text by Lawrence Axelrod

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## RAINER MARIA RILKE

---

The Water is Wide (traditional)  
The water is wide, I cannot cross o'er.  
And neither have I wings to fly.  
O give me a boat that can carry two, and both shall row.

I leaned my back against some oak,  
Thinking he was a trusty tree;  
At first he bended and then he broke.  
So did my love prove false to me.

Three Persian Songs  
English text used by the permission of the translator, Esmail Ranjbaran  
Poverty (Ahmad Shamlu 1925-2000)  
I am tired of a suffering  
that is not mine.  
I have sat on the soil  
that is not mine.

I have lived with a name  
that is not mine.  
I have cried from a pain  
that is not mine.

I was given life from a pleasure  
that is not mine.  
I will give up my soul to a death  
that is not mine.

It is Night (Nima Yushij 1895-1959)  
It is night - a damp night and the soil  
has given up its color.  
The wind, the cloud's infant, from the mount  
has rushed to me.

It is night. Like a swollen body, the warm hair has stood.  
That is why a lost traveller cannot see his way.

With its warm body, the long desert  
- like a corpse in its grave, tight -  
is like my burnt heart.  
Or my tired body, that is burning from the fever's phantom.

It is night - yes, night.

The Windows (Mehdi Akhavan-Sales 1928-1990)  
We, like two windows face to face.  
Each informed of the other's words.  
Each day greeting, asking, and laughing.  
Each day the appointment for the next day.

Neither the sun bewitched, nor the moon enchanted.  
Curse travel! That which was done, it did.  
Now my heart is broken and tired.  
For one of the windows is closed.

Anything but a dream (Kyong Mee Choi)  
The piece is dedicated to Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, whose book, "I Am That", has influenced many people globally.

I woke up from a dream,  
seeing I am in a dream.

I dreamed of a living,  
seeing only a dream has lived.

I dreamed of being alive,  
seeing only dreaming is alive.

Memories at a halt; feelings lingered.  
Thoughts shattered and dreams returned.

Over and over,  
seeing but not seeing,  
Yet,

Every dream of dreams  
brings me nothing but a silver lining -

Awakening from a dream,  
I see anything but a dream.

Ode to the Sea (Winifred Ellerman 1894-1983)  
How shall I fashion the heart of my song?  
Where the storm-blown, song-silvered seabirds sail,  
swept along on the desolate curve of a windswayed wave.

Oh, I will pierce thy soul's most secret cave.  
Laugh not, song-wingèd Sea, thou shalt not fly from me.

My hand's upon thy robe of azure air,  
and my wind-sandalled feet  
shall prove them tempest-fleet  
until I grasp the tresses of thine hair.

Until I seize thy locks, all dream-in-wrought,  
Mingle my unsung melodies with thine.  
Till all they veiled thought  
and foamborne harmonies are mine.

(Prose translations by the composer)

## INTERLUDE I: MANHOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

---

I should use my platform as the dominant gender  
to uplift and support the movements of marginalized groups:  
feminism, Black Lives Matter, anti-racism  
I am confident in myself and my sexuality.  
I am emotionally mature.  
I respect boundaries.  
I challenge gender roles  
I am authentically myself.  
I am allowed to cry.  
I can be a caretaker.  
I can be a homemaker.  
I can be a high-heeled, tattooed, glitter bombed, wig wearing, defiance of Dads gone-by.

— Text sourced from various anonymous individuals

## TWILIGHT HOURS

---

I  
The colors of the rainbow are fading in the silent  
and distant West, and the heartache of  
twilight trembles within my aching breast.

For the light of my love has faded like sunbeams  
in the West, and the color of twilight will  
tremble forever in my breast.

II  
I think of thy kindness often, when lonesome I feel  
and cold, I have not forgotten our childhood,  
nor your loving words of old.

And still my sweetest songs of life are floating  
in dreams to thee, like whisperings at eventide,  
across a clouded sea.

III  
We two are sitting in the bark, and listen to the  
wavelet's play, the shore is melting in the  
dark, day's echoes silently decay.

Oh life, with all thy hopes so fair, wilt thou  
too float away, like visions rising in the  
air that greet the parting day!

IV [this section is omitted in the music]  
She stands amidst the roses, and tears dart from her  
eye that like the fragrant roses her soul  
must fade and die.

He stares at the twilight ocean on the shore of a  
foreign land, a faded rose is trembling  
within his soft white hand.

V  
The rushes whisper softly, the sounds of silence wake,  
large flowers like sad remembrance float  
on the dark green lake.  
Were life but like the waters, so bright and calm  
and deep, and love like floating flowers  
that on the surface meet.

VI  
The naked trees of autumn grope shivering through  
twilight's gloom, athwart the whispering branches  
its dying embers loom.

I dream of life's defoliation, as I watch with  
silent dread, leaf after leaf departing, like  
hopes long withered and dead.

- Text by Sadakichi Hartmann



## INTERLUDE II: REFRAINS & MISCONCEPTIONS

---

I should man up.  
I should be stoic.  
I should be strong.  
I should be a protector.  
I should be big and brave.  
I should be competent.  
I should have it all together.  
I should pretend I don't need any help.  
I should be able to do it on my own.  
I should be able to deal with everything on my own.  
I should be able to handle anything.  
I should be a great lover.  
I shouldn't express affection.  
I should have an insatiable appetite for sex.  
I shouldn't be emotional.  
I should have sex, money and power.  
I shouldn't be weak.  
I shouldn't break down.  
I shouldn't cry.  
Emotions are scary, weak, and problematic.  
I am ashamed about being seen doing therapy.  
The thought of going to therapy and crying with another person is scary.  
I am going to try other solutions first: isolation, substance use, aggression.  
We all cheat.  
We all want sex.  
We are only nice to you so we can sleep with you.  
We can't express our feelings.  
We have no feelings.  
We are the opposite of women.  
We cannot handle successful women.  
We are mama's boys.  
We have it easy.  
We don't experience pressure.  
We love fixing things.  
We are sloppy.  
We live for sports.  
We like violence.

- Text sourced from various anonymous individuals

## ELECTION SYNDROME

---

- 1. Palpitations:** panic begins with an increasing heart rate. The "pah" syllable should begin with a plosive airy sound. It is a slightly pitched sound.
- 2. Ahhhhhhh:** a melody on the vowel sound 'ah" quickly glissandos into a scream and ends with a low vocal fry.
- 3. No:** after the screaming you are out of air. It is time to breathe. Three singers spend this section "frantically breathing in and out." Unconscious communication sabotages your calm. You feel out of control.
- 4. Idioms:** Heart misses a beat. Bundle of nerves. Butterflies in stomach. On the edge of one's seat. Ignorance is bliss. Hold your breath. On pins and needles.
- 5. Conquer:** You have the ability to conquer You are not alone. I am not alone. We are not alone. We'll get through this together. We have the ability to conquer.

- Text by Samara Rice

## INTERLUDE III: A LIFE JUST LIKE THEIR FATHERS'

---

"I will work my ass off at a job that I hate  
for a boss that I hate,  
who's an idiot,  
but I will work hard,  
I will pay my taxes.  
And in return for that,  
like my daddy before me and my grandfather before him,  
I will be able to support a family by myself,  
and I will be able to buy a house by myself."  
So this is the bargain they feel like they wanted,  
and it's gone;  
they can't do it.  
And they feel like they've been betrayed.  
And now they have to talk about gender-neutral bathrooms?  
And now they have to talk about same-sex marriage?  
Their heads are exploding.  
It's not that they're against these reforms;  
they're completely bewildered.  
They don't know what to do  
I think we do ourselves a great disservice  
if we don't pay attention,  
not to the opposition  
but to the anguish that comes  
from being so bewildered by the extent and the rapidity of this change.  
If we don't pay attention to that,  
we will lose them.

- Text from Michael Kimmel, in an interview with Bill Moyers, May 9, 2008

## TWO SHORES

---

My little boat can  
only go so far.  
The coiled rope  
unwinds from  
the dock to just  
about midway  
across the lake—  
the point where  
the trees on the other  
shore unblur—  
before the horn  
cleat catches.

The tether is a a  
voice, two  
voices, a need  
that is a weight,  
a rope or hook.  
Back on shore  
the voices grow  
toes and elbows,  
scramble to be  
held, kissed, to lift  
wet faces to my  
mouth. To hold  
them is to hurt  
with joy. Bodies  
still small enough  
I can gather both in  
my butterflied skirt.

But whose were  
the cries from the  
other shore my  
muscles burned  
for as I rowed?

- Text by Maggie Dietz from *That Kind of Happy*

## I HAD A WHITE ROOM

---

"I was born in Syria. I had a big, big home.  
My grandmother got me a toy — I remember that.  
I had a white room; it had a closet.  
The closet had a lot of clothes in it.  
I had a lot of toys in Syria.

I can't remember coming here.  
My mother draws pictures.  
When I started school here, they gave me a toy and lots of notebooks.  
I have almost filled the notebook.

My caravan here is all white.  
My father wants to make one for me and my brother to sleep in.  
I feel safe — I don't know why."

- Text from Lubna, a refugee child in Syria

## NO LONGER MOURN

---

No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell;  
Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,  
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,  
If thinking on me then should make you woe.  
O, if (I say) you look upon this verse,  
When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,  
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
But let your love even with my life decay,  
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,  
And mock you with me after I am gone.

- Text from Sonnet 71 by William Shakespeare

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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## CARDINAL DIRECTIONS

---

north  
one nation,  
fatherland,  
semi-visible,  
mythology  
and artifice  
for all

west  
this land was made for golden spines  
of sandstone, every water drop  
a talisman, each curve of wind  
a chisel sent to document the hours  
thirst prolonged, the fractured earth  
unpolished vagrant dust set out to calcify  
a home within the knuckles of my hands

east  
while we slept, the sea resumed  
its melancholy drone, and wept;  
sisters of phaethon; tarrying  
your amber tears to posit  
in the dusk like resin amulets  
of grief laid out to mend  
my hyperborean  
blue heart

south  
lone star, would I were steadfast  
as a merle of sleepless birds  
amassing on the power lines  
above west alabama street,  
and flocking, with eternal beaks  
ajar, shepherds for floods to  
allocate us temporary shores

- Text by Rūta Kuzmickas

## EMPTY CUP

---

It's not in my nature  
to allow sadness to take me,  
to make room for loneliness, or to give space to anguish.  
Yet, there are slower days  
or silent stretching nights  
when every corner of my shadow  
self comes out to play.  
My mind, on wine and silence,  
is a dark playground with creaking swings,  
swaying rhythmically on a still day  
and silver slides that seer skin in the sun  
and catches on unsuspecting edges.  
It's a merry-go-round moving faster,  
filled with screams and sickness rising —  
a dark, empty playground with only me  
standing, waiting to be picked last.  
A storm brews above me in the sky.  
The dust swirls at my feet below.  
There's a trickle of blood at my knee.  
I don't remember falling down.  
I can't catch my breath.  
I feel that shoulder blade itch of fear  
that the stretching years will only be more of the same

- Text by Crystal Jackson's poem *Thoughts Fueled by Wine & Silence*, published on Medium.com November 10, 2019.



## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Brad Jungwirth

Brad Jungwirth has been described by critics as “a muscular baritone with an evocatively dark instrument” and has been praised for his “dulcet and lyrical” voice and “no-holds-barred intensity.” He recently made his subscription concert debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Louis Langrée, performing Schönberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw*. These concerts were broadcast throughout the Ohio area, and recorded for digital release. He returned to the Cincinnati Symphony as soloist for concerts of music from Hollywood musicals for their summer Pops series in 2015. Recent operatic performances include the Prophet in the Chicago-area premiere of Nico Muhly’s opera *Dark Sisters* with the Third Eye Theatre Ensemble, his role debut as Don Pizarro in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* with the 2014 Shippensburg Music Festival conducted by Robert Trevino, Escamillo in Bizet’s *Carmen* with Michigan’s Soo Opera Theater and in the Peter Brooks’ adaptation, *La tragédie de Carmen*, for Chicago’s CUBE Ensemble.

### Chicago Composers’ Consortium

The Chicago Composers’ Consortium is a grass-roots organization of composers dedicated to creating new music in Chicago. We are a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization formed in 1988 and incorporated in 1989. Since then c3 has organized scores of concerts, invited many distinguished composers, and collaborated with several musicians and ensembles, creating unique musical events. What has set the consortium apart from other contemporary music organizations has been its composer-generated collaborative projects. As a presenter of contemporary music in the Chicago area, the consortium has found new ways to introduce Chicago to what is new in music.

[c3composers.org/wordpress3/](http://c3composers.org/wordpress3/)

### Caroline Jesalva

Caroline Jesalva is a violinist-vocalist traversing the worlds of improvisation, composition, collaboration, and experimental music. Her musical dreams take shape through experimental theater, glossolalia, poetry, song-writing, and free jazz. Her creative works have been seen at Elastic Arts, Experimental Sound Studio, Comfort Station, Color Club, and the Hungry Brain. Passionate about new music, she has had the pleasure of collaborating with A Far Cry, Callithumpian Consort, YellowBarn Young Artists, Bang-on-A Can, and Black House Collective.

[carolinejesalva.com](http://carolinejesalva.com)

### Shannon McGinnis

Pianist Shannon McGinnis has been recognized for partnerships with some of the brightest stars in the classical vocal music world. Her playing has been described as “excellent” (Opera News), “strong and supportive” (Chicago Tribune), and “boldly projected, characterful, and delicately nuanced” (Chicago Classical Review). Recent highlights include appearances as official pianist for the Joyce DiDonato Master Classes at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute (broadcast on medici.tv); debuts with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and San Francisco Performances; recitals with soprano Nicole Heaston, recorded live at the Ravinia Festival and broadcast on WFMT; with soprano Olivia Boehm, as part of the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series; and a recital with Grammy-award winning tenor Karim Sulayman (spring 2024). A passionate champion of art song, McGinnis is a co-founder of Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, where, as Director of Education, she pioneered and oversees organization’s tuition-free Vocal Chamber Music Fellowship. In summer 2023 McGinnis was appointed as Interim Associate Dean of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, where she has served on the faculty since 2016. As Associate Professor of Opera and Director of Opera programs, McGinnis oversees CCPA’s undergraduate and graduate opera curricula, as well as the highly selective Professional Diploma in Opera program. During her tenure at CCPA, McGinnis has maintained a sought-after vocal coaching studio, from which her students go on to earn coveted spots in graduate schools and elite training programs in the United States and abroad. McGinnis holds the DMA in Accompanying and Chamber Music from the University of Michigan, as a student of Martin Katz. She is a recipient of the Emerging Artist Award in Music by the School of Music, Theatre and Dance Alumni Society Board of Governors, and is a co-recipient (as a founder of Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago), of the Christopher Kendall Award.

[shannonmcginnispiano.com](http://shannonmcginnispiano.com)

## Corinne Costell

Corinne Costell is a soprano from Port Jefferson Station, New York who is currently enjoying her fifth year in Chicago. She most recently finished her time with the Chicago Opera Theater/Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University Professional Diploma and Young Artist Program. During her time at COT, Corinne premiered the role of Ivy in *The Cook-Off*, part of the Vanguard composer program alongside Shawn Okbeholo, composer, and Mark Campbell, librettist. Previously, Corinne performed as Wren #1 in *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* while also covering the role of Sara Turing in the same production in March 2023. She also “winningly played”\* the role of Emmie in *Albert Herring* in January 2023, while also covering the role of Miss Wordsworth in the same production. Additionally, Corinne premiered the role of Phoebe in *The Beekeeper*, composed by Wang Lu and libretto by Kelley Rourke with the Chicago Opera Theater in March 2022. She has covered multiple roles with the Chicago Opera Theater, such as Micaëla in their September 2021 production of *Carmen*, and Yan the elf in Mark Adamo’s *Becoming Santa Claus* in December 2021. She has already been invited back by the Chicago Opera Theater to be the Soprano Soloist/The Vendor in the production of *The Nose* by Dmitri Shostakovich in December 2023. Most recently in 2024, Corinne premiered a new opera entitled *Wet Dirt* as the lead role of Deer with Thompson Street Opera. Additionally, Corinne performed in concert works with both CAIC in their spring lieder lounge, as well as performed her first Carmina Burana as the soprano soloist with the Naperville Chorus. Corinne is excited to bring new roles to life in upcoming contemporary works during her time here in Chicago.

[corinnesings.com](http://corinnesings.com)

## Constellation Men’s Ensemble

Constellation Men’s Ensemble (CME) is a Chicago-based vocal group dedicated to creating distinct performances in unique spaces, empowering the next generation of singers through educational engagement, and expanding the repertoire for tenor/bass vocal music by commissioning new works from both emerging and established composers. In 2016, CME founded our new music series NOVA—“New. Original. Vocal. Art.” NOVA seeks to capitalize on their mission of commissioning new works and expanding the repertoire for tenor/bass voices. In 2022, NOVA V premiered works dealing with the theme of humanhood including our largest commission to date, Robert Maggio’s *Man Up/Man Down*, exploring how masculine identity takes shape in our evolving world; how our personal histories of family, race, religion, education, status, exposure, geography, etc. affect the formation of our identities. The interludes in today’s program are pillars from that larger work. *Man Up/Man Down* was released on Constellation’s debut album in 2023 with Sono Luminus Records. Most recently, CME commissioned Eric Malmquist and premiered his large work *Open, Clear, and Free* in 2024, detailing the storied history of green space in Chicago. Since 2019, Constellation has begun partnering with other local nonprofits to raise awareness and funding for impactful organizations to the Chicagoland community through their Community Uplift Partnership. Organizations to date include Chicago Park District, Center On Halsted, Boys & Girls Club of Metropolitan Chicago, Fostering Dignity, and the Alzheimer’s Association of Illinois. CME has partnered with Music of the Baroque’s Strong Voices program to bring their music and passion to students within Chicago Public Schools. Workshop performances focused on careers in music, the joy of community through singing, and the multitude of ways that music can remain a part of your life after high school. CME is the 2019 winner of the American Prize in Choral Performance, professional division. [constellationensemble.org](http://constellationensemble.org)

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2025, 7:30 PM

Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts, Penthouse  
915 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637

COMPOSER SHOWCASE

Composer Showcase Featuring Quintet Attacca

Damien Geter † | *I Said What I Said*  
John Dorhauer † | *Perpetuity*\*

text taken from Nicholas Vincent’s translation of the Magna Carta (1215) and Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s dissenting opinion in Donald J. Trump v. United States (2024)

Marybeth Kurnat † | *Birdsong* \*(from *The Terezin Suite*), anonymous text  
Alex Taylor † | *if you* \*, text by H.D.  
Shane Cook † | *bloom* \*, text by Leela Srinivasan  
Gillian Rae Perry † | *three months (after)* \*, original text  
Carl Schimmel † | *Towns of Wind and Wood*

- I. Town Afloat in the Night
- II. Golem Town
- III. Dog Breath Town
- IV. Town of Sticks and Cudgels
- V. Thunderhead Town
- VI. Town of the Open Casket
- VII. Town of the Scent of Daybreak
- VIII. Town in the Willow on the Moon
- IX. Town of the Smallest Cyclone

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer

PERFORMERS:

Quintet Attacca

Jennifer Clippert, flute  
Erica Anderson, oboe  
Barbara Drapcho, clarinet  
Collin Anderson, bassoon  
Jeremiah Frederick, horn

Vocalists

Chiemerie Obianom, baritone  
Jordy Vargas, tenor  
Katherine Petersen, soprano  
Quinn Middleman, mezzo-soprano  
Karlos Piñero-Mercado, tenor

Quintet Attacca is a wind quintet dedicated to dynamic, engaging performances. For this concert, they are joined by Chiemerie Obianom, baritone, Jordy Vargas and Karlos Piñero-Mercado, tenors, Katherine Peterson, soprano, and Quinn Middleman, mezzo-soprano in five new works. John Dorhauer’s work offers a commentary on our modern approach to executive privilege and the roles and responsibilities of our highest leaders by juxtaposing text segments of the Magna Carta with Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s dissenting opinion in Trump v. United States. Shane Cook’s work, *Bloom*, will use nature imagery as an analogy for how we grow into identities at points in our lives, while the instruments provide a colorful, blossoming backdrop that exemplifies the idea of growing/blooming. Marybeth Kurnat’s *Birdsong* uses text based on an anonymous child’s poem written during the Holocaust. Gillian Rae Perry’s work, inspired by the passing of her father, explores themes of grief as part of a shared human experience. Alex Taylor’s *if you* is a musical setting of the first part of H.D’s long poem *Eurydice*, a powerful retelling of the “Orpheus myth” from the perspective of Eurydice.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### Damien Geter

I Said What I Said is a phrase that was coined by TV personality NeNe Leakes but also is a colloquialism in the Black community to emphasize a point – usually one that was mentioned (often repeatedly) a time before. I Said What I Said for wind quintet uses musical phrases in repetition to symbolize the continuous conversations Black people have about their (our) experiences living in the world, and how we must constantly defend ourselves against those whose equity lens is tainted.

### John Dorhauer

Perpetuity contemplates the role of a society's leader, what responsibility that leader has to their society, and how much authority their society should entrust to them. By juxtaposing two very different text sources written 800 years apart – the Magna Carta (1215) and Justice Sonia Sotomayor's dissenting opinion in *Donald J. Trump v. United States* (2024 – the Trump immunity case) – this piece examines the ways in which our views on this dilemma have evolved or stayed static over time. Perpetuity was commissioned by Ear Taxi Festival 2025 and was written specifically for Quintet Attacca and baritone vocalist Chiemerie Obianom.

### Marybeth Kurnat

The Terezin concentration camp was unique for its high concentration of artistic and musical people. The camp is notably remembered for the prisoners' performances of Verdi's Requiem and its use in Nazi propaganda to mask Holocaust atrocities. Despite the awful conditions, prisoners maintained their humanity through creative expression. After its liberation in 1945, over 200 poems and drawings by Jewish children were discovered – many of whom perished in Auschwitz. *Birdsong*, written anonymously, emerges as a powerful testament to hope, gratitude and resilience, embodying a child's ability to preserve their spirit through art in the face of unimaginable darkness.

### Alex Taylor

if you is a musical setting of the first part of H.D.'s long poem *Eurydice*, a powerful retelling of the "Orpheus myth" from the perspective of Eurydice.

Here *Eurydice* – represented by the soprano – is embedded in a gnarled, thorny, recursive structure – a woodwind underworld that doubles back on itself, returning to old hopes and dreams, resentments and regrets.

H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) is a hugely important literary and cultural figure whose influence is only now beginning to be appreciated, not only as a poet but also as a queer and feminist icon.

### Shane Scott Cook

Originally conceived as a celebration of self-discovery through the metaphor of a blooming flower, bloom was meant to honor the journeys of self-acceptance many of us in the LGBTQ+ community embark on at different points in our lives. But as I worked on the piece, repeated attacks on queer people by the United States government, especially legislation aimed at erasing trans and gender-nonconforming identities, shifted my focus.

After an executive order seeking to ban gender markers beyond those assigned at birth, I asked my collaborator, Leela, to help create a text affirming that our differences deserve recognition, whether or not governing bodies acknowledge them. Leela responded with an origin myth: each human begins as a seed, already destined to grow into a unique plant. As you cannot tell an apple tree to start producing oranges, people are meant to be who they are from the beginning.

The poetry gave me much to work with musically. After an instrumental introduction from the quintet, the ensemble and vocalist begin the myth together on a unison pitch. I view the unison pitch as "the seed". Gradually, the texture blossoms into rich harmonies and echoing fanfares, culminating in a declaration that our existence cannot be defined by bureaucracy.

I hope this piece reminds audiences that embracing yourself, with all your quirks and individuality, is a beautiful, worthwhile act, and that communities made up of people who are different from one another are not only stronger, but also richer and more beautiful for it.



## Gillian Rae Perry

The text for this piece comes from a poem that I wrote three months after my father passed away. When someone dies, time is split: there's the time before the person died, and the time after. Grief causes time to feel different: it speeds up and slows down, back and forth, in and out, days turn to months turn to years. Throughout the piece, I utilize repetition and timbral blending to express the feeling of being submerged in time and in grief. We all grieve, at some point or another. It is a heartbreaking part of the human experience. It is my hope that through writing about and expressing my own grief openly and earnestly, I am able to create a space where all of us who grieve can feel connected.

## PERPETUITY

---

Know that we at the prompting of God  
And for the health of our soul and the souls of our ancestors  
Have given and granted to the archbishops, abbots, priors, earls,  
barons,  
and all of our realm these liberties written below  
to hold in our realm in perpetuity.

In ev'ry use of official power the President is now a king above the law.  
Today's decision to grant former Presidents criminal immunity  
In perpetuity  
Reshapes the institution of the Presidency.  
It makes a mockery of the principle,  
foundational to our Constitution and system of Government,  
that no man is above the law.  
Today's Court has replaced a presumption of equality before the law  
With a presumption that the President is above the law for all his official acts.  
The Court now confronts whether a former President  
enjoys immunity from federal criminal prosecution.  
The majority thinks he should, and so it invents an atextual,  
ahistorical, and unjustifiable immunity that puts the President above the law.

Perpetuity, perpe-perpetuity, perpetu-tuity  
Perpetuity, President, perpe-Presi-tuity-dent, Pre-petuity, Pre-sident  
Perpetuity, Perp-impunity, break them with impunity, in perpe-punity  
Perpetuity, immunity, future immunity, perp-immunity  
Impunity, Presidential immunity, in perpetuity  
Perpetuity, immunity is in consistent with text, history,  
and established understandings of the President's role.

The Court effectively creates a law-free zone around the President,  
Upsetting the status quo that has existed since the Founding.  
We wish and grant that all cities and all ports  
are to have all their liberties and free customs.  
In contrast to the king,  
No sheriff or baliff of ours  
The President should be subject to "personal responsibilities" for his actions  
Is to take anyone's horses or carts to make carriage.  
Under the majority's rule,  
We grant to them for us  
A President's use of any official power  
That neither we nor our heirs will seek anything  
for any purpose,  
by which the liberties  
even the most corrupt, is immune  
by which the liberties contained in this charter  
is immune from prosecution.  
Might be infringed or damaged.  
Is immune from prosecution.  
Is immune  
In perpetuity.

This majority's project will have disastrous consequences  
for the Presidency and for our democracy.  
With fear for our democracy, I dissent, I dissent, I dissent!  
We furthermore grant and give to all the freemen  
of our realm for ourselves and our heirs in perpetuity  
the liberties written below  
to have and to hold to them and their heirs from us and our heirs  
in perpetuity.

- Text by Sonia Sotomayor

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## BIRDSONG (FROM THE TEREZIN SUITE)

---

He doesn't know the world at all  
Who stays in his next  
and doesn't go out.  
He doesn't know  
what birds know best  
Nor what I want to sing about,  
That the world is full of loveliness.

When dewdrops sparkle in the grass  
And earth's flood with morning light,  
A blackbird sings upon a bush  
To greet the dawning after night.  
Then I know how fine it is to live.

Hey, try to open up your heart  
To beauty; go to the woods someday  
And weave a wreath of memory there.  
Then if the tears obscure your way  
You'll know how wonderful it is  
To be alive.

- Text by Anonymous (c.1942-1944)

## IF YOU

---

So you have swept me back,  
I who could have walked with the live souls  
above the earth,  
I who could have slept among the live flowers  
at last;

so for your arrogance  
and your ruthlessness  
I am swept back  
where dead lichens drip  
dead cinders upon moss of ash;

so for your arrogance  
I am broken at last,  
I who had lived unconscious,  
who was almost forgot;

if you had let me wait  
I had grown from listlessness  
into peace,  
if you had let me rest with the dead,  
I had forgot you  
and the past.

- Text by H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)

## BLOOM

---

every human being starts off as a seed;  
the end of each story still yet undefined.  
these seeds do not ask the earth for too much;  
simply a place to be held in kind.

some water in the air – a gesture, a touch  
might soak through, and the seed knows who it will be;  
who it's always been, an ancestry governed  
by forces much stronger than bureaucracy.

enzymes and decisions begin to take hold–  
anchored to earth by developing root,  
the seeds begin journeys of exquisite growth;  
heading up to the light, they begin to shoot.

though our progress may look like it's being undone,  
and it will be long till the last ones are freed,  
but erasing our names won't erase our bodies–  
try as you might, we can't turn back to seed.

– Text by Leela Srinivasan

## THREE MONTHS (AFTER)

---

It's been three months since I saw you  
It's been three months since I heard you breathe  
It's been three months

Somehow it's May  
I don't know  
When  
Things started to get a little better  
When I was able to  
Sleep through the night  
For the first time  
Since those quiet nights  
In February  
Maybe I haven't slept since then

It's been three months

Time is relentless  
Time is cruel  
It does not wonder or wait  
It presses on

I feel frozen still  
Part of me is stuck there

Three months ago  
I'm still there  
And the world has walked on  
Without  
Me

I'm still sitting across from you  
Watching you breathe  
Hearing my sister  
Crying beside me  
Whispering your name

Somehow it's May  
I still hear her  
I still hear you  
I still see it happen  
I still wonder if  
You knew  
I was there  
Breathing,  
Too

It's been three months and I  
Still  
Keep forgetting  
That  
You're  
Gone.

- Text by Gillian Rae Perry

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Quintet Attacca

Founded in 1999, Quintet Attacca is one of Chicago's most dynamic chamber music ensembles. Grand Prize Winner and Wind Division Gold Medal Winner of the 2002 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the quintet spent 2006-2009 as the Chicago Chamber Musicians' Professional Development Program Ensemble. Quintet Attacca is also proud to be in residence at the Music Institute of Chicago, offering performances, family programming, chamber music coaching and individual lessons. Quintet Attacca is an ensemble dedicated to bringing the unique sound of the wind quintet to all types of audiences: to this end, the quintet has played in venues across the Midwest, with extensive programming in Chicago. Quintet Attacca has reached audiences from Italy (at the 2003 Emilia Romagna Festival) to New York (at the Schneider Concerts Series at the New School) to concert halls all over Chicagoland as well as many live broadcasts on WFMT. Recent performances have included the First Monday Series at the Chicago Cultural Center and a residency with Chamber Music Society of Detroit. Priding itself on its innovative programming, Quintet Attacca enjoys presenting concerts that are both accessible and cutting-edge. Programs have included works that reflect the Classical and Romantic eras, as well as jazz and Latin influenced works and pieces by many of today's leading composers. Additionally, five works have been written for the quintet: David Smooke's *Trompe L'oeil*, Collin Anderson's *Tangram*, Rami Levin's *Dancas Brasilieras* and *Portrait*, and Dana McCormick's *Two Episodes for Wind Quintet*. To create balanced and entertaining programs, QA combines the challenges of today's most intriguing works with gems from the past.

### John Dorhauer

John Dorhauer ([johndorhauer.com](http://johndorhauer.com)) is a composer, educator, and performer from Chicago. A nine-time recipient of ASCAP Plus Awards, John's music has been recorded/performed by International Contemporary Ensemble, Chicago Composers Orchestra, Latitude 49, Timothy Munro, The New Collaborative, Orion Ensemble, Fifth House Ensemble, University of Nevada- Reno New Music Ensemble, Elmhurst University Percussion Ensemble and New Music Collective, Origin of Animal, and his own jazz band, Heisenberg Uncertainty Players (HUP). In recent years, John has received grants from Illinois Arts Council Agency and the 3Arts Arts for Illinois Relief Fund. HUP released an album of John's original music called *Gradient* in 2020, and they hold monthly residencies at Wicker Park's Phyllis' Musical Inn and the Chicago Magic Lounge. Recent projects for HUP include performances featuring John's arrangements of The Beatles' *Abbey Road*, Led Zeppelin's *Houses of the Holy*, Heart's *Dreamboat Annie*, Wings' *Venus And Mars*, and Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here* albums; a historical retrospective of boy band music; an all 90's show; a heavy metal-themed show; and *We Tear Down Our Coliseums*, which is a nine- movement multi-media suite in which each movement is written as an homage to a baseball stadium that has been destroyed. In 2021, HUP performed at Ear Taxi Festival, in which they premiered John's eight-movement suite *Functions*. As an educator, John has served as adjunct faculty at Elmhurst University for the past 13 years, where he has taught classes in music theory, composition, and popular music studies. His classes and ensembles include multiple levels of music theory, Orchestration, Composition Seminar, The Beatles, History of Rock, New Music Collective, and Popular Music Ensemble. John also teaches private lessons in trumpet and composition to students ranging from elementary school to college. As a trumpeter, John performs in numerous jazz, rock, and classical ensembles around Chicago, including Shout Section Big Band, Fort Frances, and Schaumburg Youth Symphony Orchestra.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago's robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.



## Marybeth Kurnat

Illinois-based composer Marybeth Kurnat (b. 1987) is a rising voice in modern choral music. Her debut work, *Epitaph For A Romantic Woman*, was premiered by the St. Charles Singers in October 2021. Her SATB work, *I, Lover*, was the 2021-22 winner of True Concord's Stephen Paulus Emerging Composers' Competition. She premiered her work, *The Lagoon*, as a Composition Fellow for the 2023 PREMIERE|Project Festival. She has premiered 15 works from 2023 to 2024. Described as "transcendent" and "otherworldly," Marybeth's compositional voice is strongly influenced by her musical roots as a jazz saxophonist – most clearly illustrated in her colorful, adventurous harmonic vocabulary and uniquely fluid command of rhythm. She has received especially high praise for her piano writing. Her compositional influences include Brad Mehldau, Wayne Shorter, Jacob Collier, Rollo Dilworth, and Ivo Antognini. Her arranging portfolio also includes music for jazz ensemble, concert band, chamber music, string orchestra, and commercial a cappella. Marybeth earned a B.M.E. from Northern Illinois University, where she studied voice with Diane Ragains and saxophone with Steve Duke. She has spent 14 years in public schools, and currently teaches middle school band and AP music theory for the DeKalb School District. She is a District 8 Representative for ILMEA, and was a Student Composition Workshop clinician at the 2024 ILMEA All-State Festival. She is currently pursuing her M.A. in Composition at Washington State University. In addition to teaching and composing, Marybeth writes poetry and maintains an active performance schedule as a choral singer and soprano soloist in the greater Chicago area. She regularly appears with the St. Charles Singers, Chicago Choral Artists, and the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus. She is a member of ACDA, AGMA, ILMEA, and ASCAP. Her music can be found on MusicSpoke and in Graphite Publishing's *Compose Like a Girl* Series.

## Alex Taylor

Alex Taylor (b. 1988) has been commissioned and performed by prominent artists in his native New Zealand and abroad, including Orchestra Wellington (NZ), Enso Quartet (US), Ensemble U (EE), Ensemble Proton Bern (CH), Susan Narucki (US), Justine Cormack (NZ), Steven Schick (US) and the Tanglewood Music Center (US). He has received a number of awards, including the 2012 SOUNZ Contemporary Award, the 2013 CANZ Trust Fund Award, and a 2016 New Zealand Arts Foundation New Generation Award. Past residencies include the NZSO National Youth Orchestra Composer-in-Residence, Caselberg Trust Creative Connections Artist-in-Residence, and Composition Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center. With collaborator Simon Ingram he was a co-finalist for the 2020 SOUNZ Contemporary Award for their work for orchestra and painting machine *Assemblage*.

Alex recently completed his Ph.D. in Composition at the University of California San Diego under the supervision of Lei Liang, and currently teaches Theory and Composition at Illinois State University. Previously he studied English Literature and Music at the University of Auckland, completing a Masters in Composition with First Class Honours under the supervision of Eve de Castro-Robinson and John Elmsly.

Alex's compositional work often explores interactions between seemingly disparate materials, especially between old and new musics. His output includes works for orchestra, chamber music, music for theatre, and concertos for flute (with soloist Abigail Sperling) and bassoon (with soloist Ben Hoadley). He has also worked extensively with vocalists, having composed several substantial song cycles: *Poema de La Siguriya Gitana*, *Sea Gods*, *Dryad*, and *Agee Songs*, as well as an opera, *The Last Delirium of Arthur Rimbaud*.

As well as composing, Alex is also a multi-instrumentalist, writer and music educator. He has written about music for the *Pantograph Punch*, *Radio New Zealand*, and *Canzona*, taught at Unitec, the University of Auckland, UC San Diego, and regularly gives pre-concert talks for the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. He served for six years on the committee of CANZ, the Composers' Association of New Zealand, and co-convened the Nelson Composers Workshop in 2014 and 2015. He was the artistic director of the *Intrepid Music Project*, and co-directed the performance group *hearsay* with Eve de Castro-Robinson. Alex has performed across a range of vocal and instrumental genres, including as lead vocalist for the *Blackbird Ensemble*, and as the *Sorceress* in his own recomposition of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with Frances Moore's *Unstuck Opera*.

Alex's music has been recorded on the Rattle label, including releases by NZTrio (*Lightbox*, 2015), Sarah Watkins and Andrew Beer (*11 Frames*, 2019), and Henry Wong Doe (*Perspectives*, 2023), as well as his own solo releases *Dryad* (2023) and *The First, the Fool* (2015) on bandcamp.

## Shane Scott Cook

Shane Scott Cook (b. 1994) is a composer, performer and songwriter whose work focuses on nature, loss, community and connection. A compelling up-and-coming voice in new music, his work draws from his eclectic musical upbringing as a classical percussionist, jazz singer, folk enthusiast and musical theater aficionado, with works commissioned by Del Sol String Quartet, Duo Cortona, Salastina, LYNX Project, Chicago Choral Artists, New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, and Hindustani vocalist Saili Oak. Currently, Shane serves as Teaching Artist-in-Residence with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music in Boonville, California for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, developing new curriculums in percussion, piano, composing and songwriting for public school students. He is a 2024-25 Sounds Promising Young Composer Fellow with Salastina, who premiered his work *sky, and sea, and stone* in September 2024. Recent projects include a work for Del Sol Quartet, a song cycle for Duo Cortona, and the premiere of his song cycle for high voice and chamber orchestra, *The Distance Between*, by soprano Lindsay Kesselman and UT Austin's New Music Ensemble in March 2024. Outside of classical music, recent projects include contributing orchestrations to pop star Halsey's summer 2023 orchestra shows, string quartet arrangements for Orchid Quartet's string of Los Angeles singer-songwriter showcases and digital releases, and developing a jukebox musical using the music of Alabama Shakes with playwright Selena Deer. He is also writing and recording songs for his solo singer-songwriter project, with plans to release an EP in early 2025.

## Gillian Rae Perry

Gillian Rae Perry is a composer and songwriter whose work explores the relationships between mental health, childhood, the subconscious, and dream worlds. She was the Vanguard Emerging Opera Composer with Chicago Opera Theater for the 2022-2024 seasons.

In 2023, Perry won the Ravinia Breaking Barriers Call for Scores, allowing her to have her orchestra piece, *I'm Sorry to My Body*, rehearsed and performed by the Chicago Philharmonic. In addition to the Chicago Philharmonic, Perry's work has been performed by the Tennessee Valley Music Festival Orchestra, the Mostly Modern Orchestra, Euclid Quartet, Aperture Duo, and members of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. In 2018, she was awarded a Composition Fellowship with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; she was a Composer Fellow for both the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 seasons. Perry has recorded and 2 songwriter albums as well as 2 classical records. Her songs have been described as "speaking from the heart" (Sinusoidal Music) and her classical record, *Lost Children*, was deemed "beautiful, audacious, surprising and thought-provoking" by Music Web International. Perry graduated from Southern Methodist University with degrees in both music composition and film and is greatly influenced by art forms outside of music – such as film, dance, and theatre. An avid poetry reader and writer, Perry is also influenced by text and how text can interact with music in both spoken and unspoken ways. Perry holds an MFA in music composition from The California Institute of the Arts.

## Chiemerie E Obianom

Hailing from Nnewi, Anambra State, Chiemerie E Obianom began his musical journey in Nigeria, where he excelled both academically and musically. His talent was evident in his early years as he actively participated in his parish choir and mastered various musical instruments. Recognized for his exceptional vocal abilities, he earned a coveted spot in the Musical Society Of Nigeria Diploma course, sponsored by the MTN Foundation. Under the mentorship of Sir Emeka Nwokedi, he graduated with honors, winning competitions and earning accolades. Currently studying at Roosevelt University, Chiemerie continues to pursue his passion for music while sharing his expertise through vocal lessons and community engagement.

## Jordy Betancourt-Vargas

Nicaraguan tenor, Jordy Betancourt-Vargas, is an artist to watch. Passionate about new music and opera, Jordy most recently premiered a scene from Inna Onofrei's opera, *Ara the Beautiful* with the Cleveland Composers Guild. He has also performed the role of The Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* by Engelbert Humperdinck with the Pittsburgh Festival Opera. Jordy holds a Master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University, where they were seen as Ethan in Kamala Sankaram's *Looking at You* and Claudio in Hector Berlioz's *Beatrice et Benedict*. In 2023, they made their Pittsburgh Opera Chorus debut in Mozart's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*. In recital, they have used their platform to uplift works that exist outside of the standard repertoire, with a focus on the historical presence of queerness in music. Jordy has also commissioned art songs by Nicaraguan composers with texts by Nicaraguan poets, which will be a lifelong project to broaden the catalogue of Nicaraguan music. Jordy is currently based in Chicago, IL.

## **Katherine Petersen**

Katherine Petersen is an engaging Soprano specializing in the performance of 21st Century repertoire for Voice and Saxophone. Her recent collaborations with Decho Ensemble include an ensemble residency at Ohio University (2023), performances at the International Congress of Voice Teachers in Vienna (2022), the International Saxophone Symposium (2020), and an ensemble residency at Ohio University (2023) and the Lionel Hampton School of Music at the University of Idaho (2019). You can find Decho Ensemble's recently released, self-titled album on Youtube, Apple Music, and Spotify. Dr. Petersen is Assistant Professor of Voice at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago where she teaches Pedagogy, Repertoire Seminar for Voice, Studio Voice and Diction for Singers. She holds a MM in Pedagogy and Performance from Westminster Choir College and a DMA in Voice Performance from Ohio State University.

## **Quinn Middleman**

"Praised for her "fine, warm mezzo-soprano voice,"" Quinn Middleman is known as an ""animated musical storyteller."" She looks forward to 2024-25 engagements including returns to Annapolis Opera as Berta/Il barbiere di Siviglia and Haymarket Opera as Mary Cleofe/Resurrezione, and a debut with Opera Montana in her signature role as The Witch/The Mother/Hansel and Gretel. She will also premiere Ros a Crean's Werifesteria with the PICOSA Ensemble and solo in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Cleveland Suburban Symphony Orchestra. Quinn has recently appeared with Utah Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Opera, Utah Opera, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Opera Birmingham, Madison Opera, Op ra Louisiane, Des Moines Metro Opera, Music Academy of the West, OPERA Iowa, Crested Butte Music Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Central City Opera, St. Petersburg Opera, and Tanglewood Music Center. She holds a master's degree from Northwestern University, and received bachelor's degrees in both Oboe Performance and Vocal Arts from the University of Southern California.

## **Karlos Pi ero-Mercado**

Puerto Rican tenor Karlos Pi ero-Mercado (they/them) is a Chicago-based performer known for the "sensitivity and earnestness" of their "strong, clear tenor" Parterre Box. Karlos is a recent alumnus of Chicago Opera Theater's Young Artist Program. They are passionate about new music and introducing Latine art song, especially the music of Puerto Rico, to mainstream audiences. Pi ero-Mercado is an alumnus of the music fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. They received their Bachelor of Music from the University of Central Florida and their Master of Music from CCPA at Roosevelt University, studying under countertenor Mark Crayton.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2025, 2:00 PM**

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PianoForte

1335 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

## **TAXI CONCERT**

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### **Crossing Borders: Chicago Composers: The Next Generation World-Premiere**

Thomas “Blind Tom” Wiggins, arr. AJ Isaacson-Zvidzwa | *March Timpani*

Kennedy Bosley † | *Moonlit River*

Camryn Blair † | *August*

Lady Teodora Gibson † | *Dead of Night Revelations*

Raine Ramirez † | *Staccato*

Morgan Wash † | *[Untitled]*

Myshona Phillips † | *Tango Conmigo*

Catherine Blair † | *A Sudden Dream*

Emigdio D. Lais † | *Question Mark*\*

Lady Teodora Gibson † | *Sunlight's Dance/Shadow's Embrace*\*

Andy Franco † | *Wane* \*

Kennedy Bosley † | *All That Is Love* \*

Daniel Bernard Roumain † | *Klap Ur Handz from String Quartet #5 (“Rosa Parks”)*

### **La Caccina: Weird Sisters**

Stefan Kalmer, arr. Carling FitzSimmons † | *When shall we three meet again?*

Katerina Gimon | *Siren Song*

Traditional American, arr. Krauss, Harris, and Welch | *Didn't Leave Nobody but the Baby*

Arne Mellnäs | *Aglepta*

Hannah Cai Sobel | *Oread* \*

Darius Lim | *A Puppet's Dream*

Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez, arr. Megan Fletcher † | *The Ballad of the Witches' Road*

Mist Þorkeldsdóttir | *Spinna Minni*

Ysaye M. Barnwell | *Breaths*

Melissa Dunphy | *Wild Embers*

Stacey V. Gibbs | *The Mysteries* \*

Devon Cole, arr. Emily Drum | *W.I.T.C.H.*

### **Holocene:**

Tania Rubio | *Grito Silente del Mar*

Shi-An Costello † | *Night music*

I. Order

II. Time

III. Harmony

IV. Counterpoint

V. Resonance

Emma Hospelhorn | *The Universal Energy is About to Intervene in Your Life*

Megan DiGeorgio † | *seed/quiescence*

George Crumb | *Vox Balaenae*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

## PERFORMERS:

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### Crossing Borders

Caroline Jesalva, violin  
Sarah Kim, violin  
Wilfred Farquharson, viola  
Lindsey Sharpe, cello  
Elijah Hawkins, rapper

### Holocene

Dalia Chin, flute  
Isidora Nojkovic, cello  
Phoebe Wu, piano

### La Caccina

Sarah Fisk, soprano  
Megan Fletcher, soprano  
Carling FitzSimmons, soprano  
Alana Grossman, soprano  
Nyandeng Juag, mezzo-soprano  
Madeleine Woodworth, mezzo-soprano  
Stephanie Schoenhofer, mezzo-soprano  
Eden Hensel, alto

“Chicago Composers: the Next Generation” celebrates the work of composers in the Crossing Borders Music Young Composers Project.

In the project, youth from music programs in North Lawndale and Garfield Park receive weekly composition lessons and write a piece for the Crossing Borders Music string quartet. Hear their fresh, new approaches to an age-old genre!

Plus, hear music commissioned by Crossing Borders Music of emerging African-American composers including brand new works by Jessica T Carter and more.

Join La Caccina for Weird Sisters and hear stories of witches, magic, and powerful women. Throughout history, women who possessed deep knowledge in subjects like botany, physiology, and medicine were condemned as witches. This concert sets the record straight, celebrating the power of those knowledgeable women and harnessing the magic that lives within us all.

Expanding brings focus to the voices of the living and inanimate that exist in our shared world. Featuring the premiere of The Universal Energy is About to Intervene in Your Life, by Emma Hospelhorn, Holocene is joined onstage by the composer herself as vocalist. Vox Balaenae by George Crumb, inspired by an early recording of the voices of whales, immerses listeners in the sense of nature’s powerful and impersonal forces. Works by Tania Rubio, Megan DiGeorgio, and Shi-An Costello explore the everyday and remarkable features that make up our environment, including shadows, the subjectivity of time, intimacy, and deterioration.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Crossing Borders Music

Crossing Borders Music is a multicultural organization of color that shares the stories and music of those whose voices are suppressed because of race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, other identity, or related trauma. We do this through free, accessible programs in community spaces in service and affirmation of our communities and collaborators. The mission of Crossing Borders Music is to use music to promote the dignity of people from all cultures. Founded in 2011, Crossing Borders Music has become a leading, critically acclaimed interpreter of chamber music by composers from under-represented cultures. Crossing Borders Music was a Headline Artist at the African Festival of the Arts, a Resident Arts Organization at the Chicago Cultural Center, and has been presented by the Old Town School of Folk, Montréal’s Society for the Research and Promotion of Haitian Music (SRDMH), United World College of South East Asia, and at Chicago’s Symphony Center through the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s African American Network. Crossing Borders Music has been featured on NBC-5 and ABC-7 Chicago News, on WFMT, on WBEZ, in the Chicago Tribune, and as a Critic’s Pick in TimeOut Chicago. Through a grant from the Sparkplug Foundation, Crossing Borders Music recorded a world premiere album of original chamber music with the composer, Grammy-nominated sitarist Gaurav Mazumdar, which was released in 2023 on Ropeadope Records.

[crossingbordersmusic.org](http://crossingbordersmusic.org)



## Holocene

Holocene is a Chicago-based music ensemble made up of Phoebe Wu (pianist), Dalia Chin (flutist), and Isidora Nojkovic (cellist). Holocene means “entirely new”, and is also the geological time period we are currently in. The ensemble performs contemporary classical and genre-bending music, welcoming listeners into the communal, grounding, and timeless experience of live new music. Active soloists and collaborators in the vibrant Chicago music scene and beyond, the members of Holocene originally met while performing in the Midwest Graduate Music Consortium in 2022. The trio was brought together by a shared passion for creating genuine connection between people, music, and place. Holocene is a Chicago-based music ensemble made up of Phoebe Wu (pianist), Dalia Chin (flutist), and Isidora Nojkovic (cellist). Holocene means “entirely new”, and is also the geological time period we are currently in. The ensemble performs contemporary classical and genre-bending music, welcoming listeners into the communal, grounding, and timeless experience of live new music. Active soloists and collaborators in the vibrant Chicago music scene and beyond, the members of Holocene originally met while performing in the Midwest Graduate Music Consortium in 2022. The trio was brought together by a shared passion for creating genuine connection between people, music, and place.

isidoranojkovic.com  
phoebewupiano.com  
daliachin.com

## La Caccina

La Caccina champions and performs diverse, innovative repertoire for women’s voices to engage audiences and inspire the next generation of collaborative musicians. The ensemble finds its namesake in Francesca Caccini, a prolific Baroque composer known for her virtuosic musicality and beautiful singing voice. Following in Caccini’s footsteps, the singers of La Caccina bring a wide range of expertise to the ensemble, enabling them to easily adapt to a variety of musical styles—from Renaissance madrigals to South African folk songs, and from contemporary pop songs to classical masterworks such as Vivaldi’s Gloria in D and Britten’s A Ceremony of Carols. Since their founding, La Caccina has collaborated with symphony orchestras, bluegrass trios, actors, and poets, and has commissioned and premiered over a dozen works by composers including Marie-Claire Saindon, Timothy C. Takach, Augusta Read Thomas, Matthew Harris, and Melissa Dunphy, among others. No matter the music, La Caccina’s expressive, emotional singing highlights the versatility of the treble voice and brings musical excellence, integrity, and honesty to every performance.

lacaccina.org

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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Elastic Arts  
3429 West Diversey Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647

TAXI CONCERT

Alyssa Arrigo and Leila Bowie McClenahan

Living Sounds: A Celebration of Chicago Composers  
Shawn E. Okpebholo † | *Mi Sueño: Afro-Flamenco*  
George Flynn † | *Chicago Poets Sing*

- 1. Flowers and Fences
  - 2. Modigliani's thought
  - 3. But silently
  - 4. Division Street, Halloween Night
  - 5. Sonnet to Beings of the Year 1 Million A.D.
- Stacy Garrop † | *Repair the World*  
Stacy Garrop | *Smile, O Voluptuous cool-breathed earth*  
Stacy Garrop | *Teeny Tango*  
Stacy Garrop | *To Music*  
Clara Frantzen † | *Train, Facing\**  
Tim Corpus † | *At the Edge\** ‡

Black Moon Trio

Convergence: Health Equity in a Changing Climate  
Eric Ewazen | *Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano - I. Andante teneramente*  
Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate | *Oshta*  
Marc Mellits † | *Black Moon*  
TJ Cole | *Drifter*

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer  
‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

PERFORMERS:

Alyssa Arrigo, piano  
Leila Bowie McClenahan, voice

Black Moon Trio  
Khelsey Zarraga, violin  
Parker Nelson, horn  
Jeremy Vigil, piano

Living Sounds: A Celebration of Chicago Composers is a powerful recital exploring resilience through music. Featuring pianist Alyssa Arrigo and vocalist Leila Bowie McClenahan, the program highlights works by contemporary Chicago composers. Pieces like Stacy Garrop's *Repair the World* and Shawn Okpebholo's *Mi Sueño* reflect on tragedies like the Highland Park shooting and the COVID-19 pandemic. George Flynn's *Chicago Poets Sing* engages with provocative social themes, while lighter works, including tangos and Garrop's *To Music*, uplift the spirit. The recital also includes world premieres by Tim Corpus and Clara Frantzen, celebrating Chicago's vibrant and resilient musical voice.

Research demonstrates that clean air, water, and access to the outdoors are vital to human health. So if nature is a necessity for everyone's health and well-being, why is it so hard for some people to access it? What are the consequences?

Throughout this 90-minute performance, audiences will watch and listen to the lived experiences of members of communities affected by environmental racism and health inequities and their interconnections through music, illustration, and videography.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Alyssa Arrigo

Alyssa Arrigo is a freelance pianist in the Chicagoland area and former collaborator with such companies as Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Fringe Opera and Civic Orchestra. As an adjunct faculty member at Moraine Valley Community College she teaches private piano instruction, Music Appreciation and the Music History sequence for music majors. She is also on faculty at Concordia College in Oak Park, IL, where she teaches private piano instruction and Music History. Alyssa is a graduate of the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. While completing her Master's Degree, Alyssa worked as an opera coach and rehearsal pianist for the IU Opera Theater. Alyssa received her Bachelor's Degree in piano performance from the Chicago College of Performing Arts with a minor in music theory. Ms. Arrigo is an avid collaborator. In 2011 she was seen with tenor Andrew Lunsford at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. She continues to collaborate with Chicago area vocal and string studios. Alyssa lives in Lockport with her husband, two kids and their pet turtle. If she didn't play piano, Alyssa would be a mandolin player in a bluegrass band (she has a mandolin and will learn to play it "one day").

[arrigopiano.wordpress.com](http://arrigopiano.wordpress.com)

### Leila Bowie McClenahan

Calling Chicago home, Leila Bowie McClenahan has made her mark as a soloist throughout the region and abroad performing both in concert and on the operatic stage. Local highlights include making her Orchestra Hall debut as a soloist in "Beyond the Score: Strauss' Ein Heldenleben" with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, appearing as First Lady in Mozart's The Magic Flute with Chicago Opera Theater and as a recipient of the Lynne Harvey Music Scholarship from the Musicians Club of Women. Other exciting local projects include several World Premieres and CD recordings with composer, George Flynn, performing the works of composer Kyong Mee Choi, as a soloist in Mozart's Requiem with the Marion Philharmonic Orchestra, singing Strauss' Vier Letzte Lieder with Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra, and as a guest soloist with both the Elgin and Waukegan Symphony Orchestras. She is an advocate for contemporary composers and has appeared in recital presenting wide-ranging repertoire. Leila is an adjunct voice faculty member at Moraine Valley Community College. Outside of making music with her friends, she serves as a full-time Realtor, Mom, and partner, who loves to garden, thrift, and dabble in stained glass art.

[liskermusic.org/leila-bowie](http://liskermusic.org/leila-bowie)

### Black Moon Trio

Black Moon Trio is committed to collaboratively affecting positive change in communities through chamber music. We reimagine the breadth of a horn, violin, and piano trio by showcasing underrepresented voices in our artistic programming and original commissions, inspiring young musicians and non-musicians alike through captivating educational programs, and connecting community members through the arts. By engaging with diverse audiences, youth, and artists of every type, Black Moon Trio works to prove that classical music is for everyone. Black Moon Trio was founded in 2022 by Parker Nelson, Jeremy Vigil, and Khelsey Zarraga. Each rooted in musical, cultural, and community organizations across the region, Parker, Jeremy, and Khelsey aim to continue making classical music available and relevant to everyone. Harnessing the experience from years of professional chamber music performance, music-making in social service settings, facilitating workshops at universities, and developing curriculum for youth in schools and community development through music, Black Moon Trio is excited to provide a classical music experience that resonates far beyond the reverberations of a final chord. With a commitment to featuring the voices of composers of color and women composers, building educational opportunities for all ages, and working with artists of other disciplines, Black Moon Trio actively develops programs featuring newly composed works and designed for audiences new to the concert experience.

[blackmoontrio.com](http://blackmoontrio.com)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025, 7:30 PM

Epiphany Center for the Arts  
201 South Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60607

TAXI CONCERT

Ty Bouque: Nestbuilder

Liza Lim | *The Angel of Lamentation*  
Evan Johnson | *2 rückenfiguren (i)*  
Michael Finnissy | *New work\**  
Evan Johnson | *2 rückenfiguren (ii)*  
Timothy McCormack | *nestbuilder*

Nick Zoulek: Enter Branch

Nick Zoulek † | *Enter Branch*  
Nick Zoulek | *Depths II*  
Nick Zoulek | *From All of Our Love This Was Lost*  
Nick Zoulek | *Grit*

Ase: Moments in Time

John Bitoy † | *Moments in time \**

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer  
‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

PERFORMERS:

Ty Bouque, voice

Nick Zoulek, saxophones, vocals

Ase

John Bitoy, piano  
Kevin King II, sax  
Jeremiah Hunt, bass  
Frank Morrison, drums  
Jessica Morrison, vocals

The voice weaves itself a home as it faces itself; as it turns round; as it fails; as it protests; as it grieves. hermetic privation, vulnerable. the dead inside, ventriloquy. song from before song, song at its limit.

Nick Zoulek’s Worlds of Brass, Breath, and Reeds explores the saxophone as a biofeedback mechanism, blending voice, breath, and technology for a maximalist solo performance. The concert features works from Zoulek’s new album, Enter Branch, along with his 2016 release, Rushing Past Willow.

Ase’s music is largely improvised, technically classical in some parts, and slightly influenced by numerous cultural traditions. Each piece is about a moment in time that I think is important either in composer John Bitoy’s personal life, or a historical event that has influenced his view on reality.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Ty Bouque

Ty Bouque sings in various solo, ensemble, and opera configurations around the world. (Highlights include The Kennedy Center, The Barbican, Copenhagen Opera Festival, ECLAT, Gaudeamus, Maerzmusik, and Klangspuren.) Elsewhere, Bouque writes about opera: its slippery histories, its sensual bodies, and the work of mourning for a dead genre. (Writing can be found at VAN Magazine and TEMPO, in a forthcoming book from Lyrebird Press, and, less formally, on Substack.) Bouque lives in Chicago.

tybouque.com

### Nick Zoulek

Nick Zoulek is at the forefront of performer/composers who are expanding the possibilities of the saxophone. Wrote The Wall Street Journal, "Zoulek's performance, on saxophones in every range, is stunningly virtuosic, whatever the genre.... Circular breathing yields rapidly undulating, swirling figures that seem unstoppable. Overblowing produces...fascinating chordal figures, as well as evocations of electronic timbres and feedback." A musician of "pure mindfulness and talent" (PopMatters), Zoulek builds entire worlds out of breath, brass, and reeds. His intuitive playing and commanding technique have earned him admirers from across the musical spectrum. His upcoming album Enter Branch highlights collaboration, featuring S. Carey from Bon Iver, Grammy-winning spoken-word artist J. Ivy, the ~Nois saxophone quartet, and others. Zoulek's artistic practice encompasses performance as a soloist and chamber musician, composition, visual media, and audio production. As a classical saxophonist, he has commissioned and premiered more than 100 works for saxophone, including pieces by Martin Bresnick, Shelley Washington, Ted Hearne, Emma O'Halloran, and Aaron Kernis. Although he is a sought-after interpreter of contemporary music, Zoulek's own recordings offer the purest view of his artistry. After earning an undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, he went to Paris, where he studied avant-garde repertoire Jean-Michel Gury and improvisation with legendary bassist Joëlle Léandre. He subsequently received his DMA in Contemporary Music from Bowling Green State University. Zoulek currently lives in Chicago, where he performs, composes, and hones his visual practice through his media production company, NZMEDIA.

nickzoulek.com

### Ase

Ase is a multi genre experimental sound group that fuses classical, jazz, and everything adjacent to create a sound experience that challenges an audience to redefine preconceived notions about the philosophy about music and life. John Bitoy is an Afro-Dominican pianist and composer from Chicago, known for his work as both a soloist and collaborative pianist. Recent performances include Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the South Loop Symphony and Symphony of Oak Park. He has played in prestigious venues such as the Eastman Theatre, Chicago Symphony Center, Jay Pritzker Pavilion, and Perelman Theater. An advocate for new music, John has premiered and recorded works by Steve Wallace and performed compositions by Marcus Norris, Tyshawn Sorey, and Davóne Tines. As a chamber musician, he has appeared at the Gateways Music Festival, Boston Celebrity Series, and Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, among others. In addition to his classical engagements, John is committed to highlighting the works of composers from the African Diaspora. He also explores jazz, having performed with Sigur Rós on their 2019 U.S. tour and showcased his own compositions at Epiphany Center, the Jazz Showcase, and Andy's Jazz Club.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2025, 7:30 PM

Nichols Concert Hall at Music Institute of Chicago  
1490 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201

COMPOSER SHOWCASE

Composer Showcase Featuring KAIA String Quartet

- Amos Gillespie † | *Shadow Effect*
- Ros a Crean † | *to cradle empty air\**, text by Christina Ramirez
- Lee Kesselman † | *I No Longer Pray\**, lyrics by Chelan Harkin
- Ty Bloomfield † | *Cicadian Rhythms\**, original text
- Justin Weiss † | *Hold out your hands and listen to the rain\**, Robin Wall Kimmerer
- Graham Meyer † | *Sappho, Woven\**, text by Sappho

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer  
‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

PERFORMERS:

KAIA String Quartet

- Victoria Moreira, violin
- Naomi Culp, violin
- James Kang, viola
- Hope Shepherd DeCelle, cello

Vocalists

- Laura Strickling, soprano
- Michelle Areyzaga, soprano
- Hayley Fox, soprano
- Naomi Brigell, mezzo-soprano
- Grace Ryan, mezzo-soprano

KAIA String Quartet is joined by Laura Strickling, Michelle Areyzaga, and Hayley Fox, Sopranos, and Naomi Brigell and Grace Ryan, Mezzo Sopranos to present five new works by Illinois-based composers Ros a Crean, Lee R. Kesselman, Ty Bloomfield, Justin Weiss, and Graham Meyer, alongside a work written for KAIA Quartet by Amos Gillespie. Texts for the program range from Sapphic verses interwoven with music by Graham Meyer, to original texts created by Ty Bloomfield. Ros a Crean writes a song cycle about recovery from abuse and trauma through a hopeful lens. Justin Weiss writes music based on Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, exploring elements of nature, time, memory, and collective experience. Lee Kesselman's work explores the life-wise ways outside of traditional prayer that evoke the Holy. "Shadow Effect" was written for the Kaia String Quartet by Amos Gillespie and based on selected poems by Sor Juana In es de la Cruz. Gillespie drew on the baroque music of Sor Juana's time period to illustrate how wisdom from past eras can be used to benefit modern times.

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## PROGRAM NOTES:

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### Amos Gillespie

"Shadow Effect" was written for the Kaia String Quartet and based on selected poems by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. The first section titled "Let us Pretend" is about being skeptical of those who boast knowledge. The second section titled "The Original" is about recognizing the mind's natural will for good, i.e. dreams being the effort of the mind to sort things out, or art being the imprint of the mind's effort to make all that is 'good' the greater importance in life. The third section titled "You Foolish Men" is about disgust in others that was caused by the accuser/observer. Since the messages in these poems were so relevant to today, I drew on the baroque music of Sor Juana's time period to illustrate how wisdom from past eras can be used to benefit modern times. The title "Shadow Effect" refers to constructive childhood impulses that we have before ego sets in, ego that often covers up who we really are. If we can find truthful messages from childhood as individuals, then we can do the same in society from earlier eras, as is the case with the words of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

### Rosáa Crean

"Thursday Morning" was composed during a period when the author was quietly extricating herself from an abusive relationship. The work reflects the emotional discipline required to maintain calm and composure in the face of danger. "fair warning" explores the longing for safety—a space where honesty, vulnerability, and trauma can coexist with love. It imagines a relationship built on mutual gentleness and understanding. "perfidia" was written in the aftermath of an emergency C-section and a subsequent surgery, during early motherhood and deep emotional isolation. In a house filled with quiet responsibilities, she felt invisible. These poems emerge from a desire for something more—for a life where softness is not punished, and where emotional presence is welcomed. Through them, the poet seeks not just survival, but the possibility of healing, connection, and being loved with curiosity and care.

### Lee R. Kesselman

"I No Longer Pray" is a musical meditation which explores the personal search for meaning. At first, the poet says she 'no longer prays' — but as she describes how she does search for meaning, she begins to realize that perhaps these are new forms and styles of prayer for her after all. In form, the piece alternates passages for strings alone with those for voice and strings, in a way of lyrical rondo-thinking. Each new texture reflects a new mode of personal spirituality.

### Ty Bloomfield

"The fleeting transience of life"

— Matsuo Bashō

### Justin Weiss

The text for Hold out your hands and listen to the rain draws on passages from Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, and explores the many topics on nature about which she writes: the varied temporal frameworks of nature, the interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants, and mushrooms, and the role that nature plays in our memory, whether that is individually, collectively, or across generations. I found Kimmerer's writing incredibly captivating as she brings her experience as an indigenous scientist to create deeply lyrical, vivid, and empathetic descriptions of many environmental worlds and our relationships to it. The sound worlds of Hold out your hands and listen to the rain feature passages of lush, yet delicate, heterophonic lines, warm chords, and shimmering lyricism passed throughout the ensemble and textures of various rhythmic energies to create an array of shades of time that we experience. Hold out your hands and listen to the rain was written with admiration and gratitude to Robin Wall Kimmerer and the Ear Taxi Festival.

## Graham Meyer

The ancient poetry of Sappho is known to modern-day readers only in fragments. Scholars estimate she wrote 10,000 lines of poetry; 650 survive.

"Sappho, Woven" knits together Sappho's fragments, where melodic lines run from the mezzo-soprano, singing Sappho's words in English translation, through the string quartet, playing the lost poetry wordlessly. The voice of Sappho's powerful speaking I haunts all the musicians, making visitations through the singer and the strings, a phantom presence flitting in and out of the listening world.

The piece does not claim to complete Sappho's fragments. Instead, it uses their incompleteness as an artistic element. The suggestive can be as sexy as the explicit. The loss of Sappho's work is tragic, but beauty can be mined even from that loss itself.

## THURSDAY MORNING

---

walk confidently when you leave;  
remember to smile and be patient with your heart's rate  
of recovery.  
speak graciously as you stumble and clutch at  
the possibility of peace;  
never flinch.  
sing softly while the water runs and your day begins  
behind closed doors and a sleepless pall;  
walk confidently when you leave.

fair warning

there will be moments of weakness;  
i want you to know this, up front.  
there will be days when i come and fall at your feet  
to beg or demand that your arms protect me, if only  
from myself.  
there will be awkward, brazen bouts of fear;  
i want to prepare you for the inevitable.  
there will be nights when i cradle empty air  
and pace a rhythm of the many failed attempts  
at grace.  
there will be quiet moments of hope;  
i want to assure you of the sweet and serene.  
there will be long afternoons during which i will  
be yours; slow hours in which you will, for a short space,  
be mine.

perfidia

i write of the sky and inquire of those who share it with me  
how they would describe it,  
if pressed.  
no one seems to mind responding, though in  
the tone usually reserved for children who must soon  
be sent to bed.  
"it is too much, it is a gift, it is beautiful and  
full of nothing."  
i write of the heart and ask no one  
who has known mine  
how they would describe it -  
my theory being: such mutability and capacity  
means little  
when compared to something like the sky.

- Text by Christina Ramirez

## I NO LONGER PRAY

---

I no longer pray—  
now I drink dark chocolate  
and let the moon sing to me.

I no longer pray—  
I let my ancestors dance  
through my hips  
at the slightest provocation.

I no longer pray—  
I go to the river  
and howl my ancient pain  
into the current.

I no longer pray—  
I ache, I desire,  
I say “yes” to my longing.

I no longer pray as I was taught  
but as the stars crawl  
onto my lap like soft animals at nighttime  
and God tucks my hair behind my ears  
with the gentle fingers of her wind  
and a new intimacy is uncovered in everything,  
perhaps it's that I'm finally learning  
how to pray.

- Text by Chelan Harkin

## CICADIAN RHYTHMS

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The cry of the cicada  
Gives us no sign  
That presently it will die.  
The Cry of the Cicada

- Text by Matsuo Basho

## HOLD OUT YOUR HANDS AND LISTEN TO THE RAIN

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“Hold out your hands and let me lay upon them a sheaf of freshly picked sweetgrass, loose and flowing, like newly washed hair. Golden green and glossy above, the stems are banded with purple and white where they meet the ground. Hold the bundle up to your nose. Find the fragrance of honeyed vanilla over the scent of river water and black earth and you understand its scientific name: *Hierochloe odorata*, meaning the fragrant, holy grass...Breathe it in and you start to remember things you didn't know you'd forgotten.”

- Text by Robin Wall Kimmerer  
Texts are excerpts taken from Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

## SAPPHO, WOVEN

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[Fragment 118]

Speak to me, divine strings! Distort us not, transmute, become a voice!

[Fragment 31]

God, he is so fortunate, that  
Whoever man close to you, he  
Reposed near you, listening to you  
Speaking sweetly

And laughing so bewitchingly—  
My heart palpitates in my breast;  
Any moment I look at you  
All words arrest

Because my tongue has been shattered—  
At once a thin fire runs under  
My skin and my eyes cannot see  
And my ears whirl.

Sweat pours down me, trembling takes me  
Whole, I turn green, greener than mead-  
ows, and it seems to me that I  
Am all but dead.

But all is bearable . . .

[Fragment 38]

You burn me

[Fragment 96]

. . . felt that you're  
Like a goddess, notorious,  
And in your song was her pleasure.

Now, among Lydians, she is  
Gleaming, as when the sun descends  
And rose-fingered moon compasses

All the stars. Her beacon extends  
Equally to the salty sea  
And to the flower-lavish lands.

And the dew spills beautifully,  
Blooming the roses, the chervil  
Tender, the melilot sunny.

Often she drifts, musing gentle,  
She remembers Atthis, and longs,  
And longs—you gnaw her fragile soul.

. . . equal to the ravishing  
Forms of goddesses . . .  
. . .

. . . Eros . . .  
Aphrodite pours out nectar



From gold . . .

. . . hands, Persuasion . . .

. . .

. . .

. . . aim of covetous . . .

. . .

. . . into desire I shall come

[Fragment 48]

You came and I was lunatic—  
I flared with lust; you cooled my mind

[Fragment 105]

As the sweet apple turns red on a high bough—  
The highest bough, so high the pickers forgot it;  
No, not forgot—they couldn't quite touch it.

As hyacinth is—in the mountains—that shepherd  
Men with their feet trample flat. On the ground  
The purple blossoms . . .

[Fragment 146]

Neither the honey nor the bee for me

[Fragment 168b]

Sunk are the moon and Pleiades.  
Midnights and anytimes pass by.  
I lie alone.

- Text by Sappho

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### KAIA String Quartet

KAIA String Quartet is dedicated to inspiring and connecting with audiences through dynamic performances of classical string quartet repertoire while championing the rich music of Latin American composers. With a commitment to cultural exploration, they bridge traditions and celebrate underrepresented voices. Praised by DownBeat for “beautifully blurring the lines between jazz, classical, Latin, and world music,” KAIA has performed across the U.S. and abroad, with highlights including collaborations with jazz vocalist Paul Marinaro, a tour of Uruguay and Argentina culminating at Buenos Aires’ Teatro Colón, and appearances at Rendezvous Arts Festival, Rush Hour Concert Series and the Chicago Jazz Festival. KAIA was the first ensemble-in-residence at WFMT, where they produced broadcasts, citywide concerts, and the educational video series KAIA Kids. Equally dedicated to education, KAIA teaches through Ravinia’s ReachTeachPlay, Classical Music Chicago’s Young People’s Concerts, and DePaul University’s Community Music Division.

### Laura Strickling

Two-time GRAMMY® award nominee for Best Classical Vocal Solo Album for 40@40 (2024) and Confessions (2022), soprano Laura Strickling was recognized by The New York Times for her “flexible voice, crystalline diction, and warm presence.” Celebrated for her work performing and promoting art song, with an emphasis on new additions to the canon, she is the host of SongCycle – a podcast covering all things song – has been featured twice in Classical Singer Magazine, curated The NewMusicShelf Anthology of contemporary art songs for soprano, and has performed recitals and presented masterclasses and lectures with art song and chamber music organizations, music festivals, and universities around the world. Her, “powerful and expressive voice across a large range, her variety of timbre and character,” (Classical Scene), make her a welcome guest soloist for a range of opera, oratorio, concert, and chamber works – from Bach to Britten and beyond.

### Michelle Areyzaga

“Praised for her “radiant and all-encompassing soprano” (Chicago Tribune), Michelle Areyzaga performs a diverse range of orchestral, oratorio, opera, and chamber repertoire. As a “consummate vocal actress” (Fanfare), she is held in high regard throughout the United States and abroad for her “appealing, expressive soprano” (New York Times). Highly respected for her work as an avid chamber musician and recitalist, Michelle has been a repeat guest of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the New York Festival of Song, the Avalon String Quartet, The Lincoln Trio, and has been a member of the Chicago Ensemble since the beginning of her career. Ms. Areyzaga is artist faculty at Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University and Loyola University Chicago. Michelle is passionate about guiding and inspiring her private voice students through her knowledge of vocal literature, technique, and her training as a life coach.”

### Hayley Fox

Hayley Fox is a versatile soprano making waves in new works and classic repertoire alike. As someone who is passionate about championing new American repertoire, she performed the role of The Girl in Remedios Varios by Carlos Carillo and Stephanie Fleischmann with the COT Vanguard Initiative in its world concert premiere. Previously with the Vanguard initiative, she premiered the role of Emily in The Weight of Light by Gillian Perry and Marcus Amaker to critical praise. Hayley has worked with Chicago Opera Theater, The Glimmerglass Festival, Wolf Trap Opera, and the Chicago College of the Performing Arts. Her upcoming roles include Elle in La Voix Humaine at CCPA and she will sing Laetitia and cover Mimi at Opera Company of Middlebury in 2025.

## Naomi Brigell

Naomi Brigell, mezzo-soprano, has been praised as “expressive, athletic and strong-voiced” for her performances with companies such as Des Moines Metro Opera, Nashville Opera, Opera Saratoga, Dayton Opera, Opera in the Heights, and Opera Naples. Role highlights include Hänsel, Cherubino, Olga (Eugene Onegin), and Nica (Charlie Parker’s Yardbird).

As an advocate for contemporary opera, Naomi is often contracted for world premieres and workshops, including performances with Chicago Fringe Opera, the Decameron Opera Coalition, Thompson Street Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater. On the concert stage, she has appeared as a soloist with the Dayton Philharmonic, Palm Beach Symphony, Bach Collegium Fort Wayne, and the Salt Creek Song Festival.

Alongside performing, Naomi works with the non-profit From the Top to support young musicians and promote musical accessibility. An avid avocational tap, ballet, and jazz dancer, she lives in Chicago with her partner, literary translator Kevin Gerry Dunn, and their three-legged cat, Champion.

“Captivating with [her] vocal power and lush sound” (W. Kromash, Evanston Roundtable), young mezzo soprano Grace Ryan is a national award winning artist, hailing originally from Chicago. She is pursuing her Masters of Music in Voice Performance at the University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, studying with acclaimed tenor Stanford Olsen. She most recently performed as Hänsel in University of Michigan’s mainstage opera, *Hänsel und Gretel* (Humperdink). She received her degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education at DePaul University in Chicago in 2024, where she studied with tenor Scott Ramsay. Most recently, Grace was the first place recipient of Opera Grand Rapids’ Vanderlaan Prize and the first place recipient of Fox Valley Orchestra Voice Competition. She also was honored to receive an Encouragement Award in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition in the Illinois district in 2023. Outside of the world of opera, Grace has a strong background in musical theatre and dance, and has a passion for education and sharing the fine arts with the next generation.

## Rossá Crean

Multimedia artist Rossá Crean (they/them) jokingly says they “create strange things that they like to appreciate when they are by themselves, eating raw cookie dough in a dark closet,” but in truth, their music has been referred to as being “funny...and virtuosic” (Classic Concert Nova Scotia), having “exceptionally different, outstanding quality” (Download), and music that “stirs you deep, undertones of humanity” (Access Contemporary Music). Composing and creating music with a focus on the evocative and lyrical, they began their professional career as a Bass- Baritone, specializing in avant-garde and Contemporary Classical music, many of which were their own compositions. While pursuing their Masters at Illinois State University in Composition, they have studied with Stephen Taylor, David Feurzeig, and Nancy Van de Vate. They have trained in several vocal styles, including rock, opera, sean-nós (traditional Gaelic singing), and Indian and Middle Eastern vocal ornamentation. As a person with synesthesia, Crean occasionally creates projects that focus on their own neurological responses between sound, color, and emotional states. Their chromesthesia was a creative tool in the creation of the Edward Gorey partnering art installation entitled “Summerland: A Ghost Story,” a collaboration with visual artist Ken Gerleve. It has most recently been featured in their American Prize winning opera, “The Great God Pan,” where the prepared piano was notated with specific color designations for each note of a pitch class Crean saw as representing the other world that threatened the moral existence of humanity in the original story on which it was based. Their one-act opera “The Times Are Nightfall,” a queer sequel to “Don Giovanni,” premiered at Opera America in July 2018. Their most recent commission, “The Priestess of Morphine,” a monodrama in song cycle style, was commissioned and premiered by the International Museum of Surgical Science in Chicago in June 2019, and will be released as a recording with Navona/Naxos Records in 2021. Rossá’s most recent opera “The Harbingers,” an a cappella performance about several harbingers of death convening on Halloween night to decide the fate of a recently-departed soul, premiered on Halloween Night 2019 at Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. As a painter, Crean specializes in what they call “liminal abstract” works. Crean considers their chromesthesia as a tool that puts them in a liminal space between mind and body. Most of their paintings consist of acrylic paint with massive amounts of water. “I love the chaos that water brings to a work. I never know what I am going to be putting on the canvas at the beginning,” Crean says, “but the element of water also encourages adaptability, and I love it when I feel like I can co-conspire with my own synesthesia and creativity to create something I never expect. It is like my own personal teamwork within me.” Crean has done development work with MoMA, and has been a resident artist at Lakeside Inn in Lakeside, MI, Illinois State University, and Loyola University Museum of Art. A prolific collaborator, Crean has received commissions from and worked with numerous artists, including The Mozart Players at Oberlin College, the International Museum of Surgical Science, clarinetist Andrew Hudson, bassist Gahlord Dewald, The New Consort, and the Lynx Project. Their musical work has also been featured on Skope TV, Much Music, Fuse TV, and Comcast OnDemand. A staunch advocate for queer and gender equality, Rossá founded the “Rossá Crean Presents” performance series in Chicago, Illinois, which showcases emerging BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ composers and performers. For more information on Rossá and their work, please go to [www.rossacrean.com](http://www.rossacrean.com).

## Lee R. Kesselman

Composer Lee R. Kesselman is best known as a composer of vocal works, including opera, music for chorus, chamber music and solo songs. Large vocal works include the opera *The Bremen Town Musicians* (commissioned by Opera for the Young with libretto by James Tucker), *The Emperor's New Clothes* (a choral opera), *Measuring the Holy* for SATB, children and orchestra, *Shona Mass* for voices and African percussion, and *Infinity in the Palm of Your Hand*, a symphony for treble chorus and orchestra, and *Praise to the Light of the World* for men, women, SATB and symphonic band. *The Bremen Town Musicians* has been performed over 350 times for schoolchildren in Wisconsin, Illinois, Tennessee and Texas. Kesselman has written numerous pieces for instrumental ensembles, including *O lente, lente currite noctis equi!*, *CG*, and *Love Song for a Common Destiny* for string orchestra, *Metallum* and *Bei Mir* for percussion ensembles, and works for various combinations of solo piano, violin and piano, cello and bass, violin and bass, and *Duo Mythologique* for flute and string bass. His extended works for solo voice and instruments include *JOLERE* for soprano and string quartet (and dance), *FACES* for soprano and piano, *In the Garden of Love* for soprano and piano, *LOVE PHASES* for baritone and piano, *Prairie Epitaphs* for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano, and *CIRCLES* for soprano, string bass and piano. Kesselman has been commissioned to write for children's choirs, middle school, junior school, high school, college, community, church, and professional ensembles. Boosey & Hawkes, Roger Dean Music, Lawson-Gould Music Publishers, Colla Voce, Carl Fischer Music, Hal Leonard and G. Schirmer have published many of Mr. Kesselman's choral works. He is published by North Star Music (vocal) and Trevco Music (double reeds). His compositions and arrangements are also available through [www.kesselmanpress.com](http://www.kesselmanpress.com) and [www.MusicSpoke.com](http://www.MusicSpoke.com). He served as a long-time choral editor for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers. A complete listing of his works can be found at [www.kesselmanpress.com](http://www.kesselmanpress.com)

## Ty Bloomfield

The music of composer and conductor Ty Bloomfield is characterized by its intimate and patient soundscapes, jazzy undertones, hidden melodies, and emotional complexity. His recent works, focused on conveying social dynamics, have been based on topics such as companionship, love, competition, and hostility. He has also had the fortune to collaborate with and be performed by artists such as the JACK Quartet, Unheard-Of//Ensemble, clarinetist Berginald Rash, Lati2de, saxophonist Noah Stoker, and percussionist Xin Yi Chong among many others. His music has been showcased at the International Clarinet Association's New Music Weekend, Dublin Chamber Music Festival, and RED NOTE Music Festival. Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, IL, Bloomfield is currently a Dorothy Greenwald Fellow at the University of Michigan where he is pursuing a graduate degree (MM) in music composition. He holds a bachelor's degree (BM) from Illinois State University. His principal teachers include composers Bright Sheng, Michael Daugherty, Carl Schimmel, and Roger Zare.

## Justin Weiss

Justin Weiss is a composer and conductor whose music has been described as "lush, colorful" (Cleveland Classical) and full of "rustling energy" (Hyde Park Herald). His music explores the perception of time, energy, and transformation through textural play and melodically driven lyricism. Much of Justin's recent work has been focused on the relationship between visual arts and sound. Justin's work has been recognized with a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Prix Langage Musical from Les Écoles d'Art Américaines de Fontainebleau, the Walter E. Aschaffenburg, and awards and recognitions from institutions such as ASCAP, Society of Composers, Inc., and The American Prize, Tribeca New Music, and YoungArts. Justin's music has been performed internationally by ensembles including Quatuor Diotima, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Grossman Ensemble, TAK Ensemble, ~Nois Saxophone Quartet, Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble, and Sandbox Percussion Quartet. Justin is the co-executive/artistic director and conductor of new Chicago-based contemporary music ensemble, Mycelium New Music, as well as the co-director of the University of Chicago New Music Ensemble and has premiered dozens of pieces internationally. Justin studied at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the Royal Academy of Music in London, and is a PhD Candidate at the University of Chicago where he studies with Augusta Read Thomas.

## Graham Meyer

Graham Meyer is a journalist and musician based in Chicago. In his journalistic life, he has been covering local arts, culture, and dining for the past 20 years. His classical-music coverage has appeared regularly in Chicago magazine—where he was the classical-music stringer for 10 years—Crain's Chicago Business, and I Care If You Listen. His concert reviews have appeared in Chicago Classical Review and Bachtrack. He has previewed arts events in several newsletters and magazines, most recently in the weekly column The Big Ticket for Crain's. In the dining sphere, he has reviewed restaurants for Chicago magazine and Crain's and for many years was one of the co-authors of Chicago magazine's Dish newsletter, winning a City and Regional Magazine Award in 2014. Other publications his work has appeared in include the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, Rotarian magazine, and the websites of WBEZ and WFMT. As a musician, he specializes in vocal music. He currently sings baritone in the semiprofessional choir Vox Venti, an ensemble dedicated to recently composed music, especially by composers of historically excluded demographics. Vox Venti programmed his own arrangement of the French Advent carol "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" in its first holiday concert in December 2022. His setting of the John Keats sonnet that begins "When I have fears that I may cease to be" for SSAA chamber choir won a composition competition conducted by the San Francisco-based chamber choir Musae and was recorded on their album Five. Beyond journalism and music, he constructs crossword puzzles. His puzzles have appeared in the Los Angeles Times, the New York Sun, National Wildlife magazine, and other places. He also plays competitive bridge with his teenage daughter.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago's robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2025, 7:30 PM

Holtzman Performance Center, Gannon Hall at DePaul University  
2330 North Halsted Street, Chicago, IL 60614

ANCHOR PERFORMANCE

William Ferris Chorale performs music by Chicago composers

Ben Zucker † | *Aneroidal*  
Augusta Read Thomas † | *Become the Sky*  
Stacy Garrop † | *The Solitude of Stars*  
Ayanna Woods † | *Close[r], now*

Conversation with Christopher Tin

Christopher Tin, Composer  
LaRob K. Rafael, Ear Taxi Festival Artistic Director

Christopher Tin | The Lost Birds ^

- 1. Flocks a Mile Wide
- 2. The Saddest Noise
- 3. Bird Raptures
- 4. A Hundred Thousand Birds
- 5. Wild Swans
- 6. Intermezzo
- 7. Thus in the Winter
- 8. There Will Come Soft Rains
- 9. All That Could Never Be Said
- 10. I Shall Not See the Shadows
- 11. In the End
- 12. Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer

PERFORMERS:

William Ferris Chorale

Christopher Windle, conductor

Katie Buzard	Amber Farish	Charles Cooney	Conor Broaders
Alex Olsavsky	Lily Lansdell	Brett Potts	Philip Courington
Allison Selby Cook	Cassidy Smith	Sean Watland	Dorian McCall
Lydia Walsh-Rock	Madeleine Woodworth	Enrico Bellomo	Mark Haddad

Ensemble 20+

Michael Lewanski, conductor

Toby Elliott, percussion	Edith Samuelsson, violin 1	Julia Seabron, viola
Milo Paperman, percussion	Benjamin Mora Neira, violin 2	Julianna Bray, cello
Kseniya Sushkevich, harp	Nicole Kwasny, violin 2	Francisco Garay, cello
Haydn Jones, violin 1	Darren Carter, viola	Adam Wang, bass

Themes of memory, environmental awareness, and artistic legacy take center stage in this reflective and visually rich program, presented by the William Ferris Chorale and DePaul Ensemble 20+. The evening opens with a curated selection of choral works performed by the William Ferris Chorale, each chosen to illuminate this year’s Ear Taxi Festival theme: The Composer’s Voice.

At the heart of the program is *The Lost Birds*, a striking and cinematic oratorio by Grammy-winning composer Christopher Tin. This elegy to extinct bird species mourns the devastating consequences of human activity on the natural world while celebrating the fragile beauty of the creatures we have lost. Scored for choir and orchestra, Tin’s work fuses classical tradition with soaring filmic lyricism, connecting the grandeur of nature with urgent modern themes of conservation.



During intermission, join composer Christopher Tin and Ear Taxi Festival Director LaRob K. Rafael for a special on-stage conversation exploring the work's inspiration, creative process, and the role of music in addressing global issues.

Blending environmental advocacy with artistic innovation, this performance invites students, educators, media composers, and curious listeners to reflect on how music can document, challenge, and change our world. The *Lost Birds* reminds us that the composer's voice can echo long after the final note—serving as a call to action, a tribute, and a timeless record of what we hold dear.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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This evening's set of solo works sung by the William Ferris Chorale demonstrate the incredible diversity of vocal compositional styles in Chicago, today. The set itself is also thematically tied. Ben Zucker's *Aneroidal* explores pressure through a variety of vocal colors. The soundscape expands and contracts, building and releasing tension. This tension gives way to Augusta Read Thomas's vibrant burst of color, *Become the Sky*. Premiered by WFC in 2024, the brilliant dabs of color bring the openness of sky into the concert hall, bursting forth from the tension of Zucker's work. Stacy Garrop's *Solitude of Star* lets us linger in the air, as the calm vastness of the night sky envelops us. Finally, we are transported back to earth by Ayanna Woods's driving and earnest *close[r]*, now. Her rhythmic counterpoint brings us out of the night sky, drawing us into the importance of life and community – and live vocal performance, the very thing celebrated by this year's EarTaxi Festival.

–Chris Windle

### Ben Zucker

"Aneroid gauges are based on a metallic pressure-sensing element that flexes elastically under the effect of a pressure difference across the element..." (Wikipedia, "Pressure Management")

## THE LOST BIRDS

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### 1. Flocks a Mile Wide

"Flocks a Mile Wide" is an ode to the passenger pigeon, a bird that was once so numerous that giant flocks would blacken the skies for days as they flew overhead. Their migrations were a breathtaking sight for the 19th-century traveler—large clusters would form undulating masses that swooped and swerved across the sky, much like the murmurations of starlings still visible today. That magnificent spectacle—of hundreds of thousands of birds carving out organic forms in the sky—serves as the inspiration for the "Flocks a Mile Wide" theme, and the entire story arc of *The Lost Birds*.

The passenger pigeon flourished until the end of the 19th century, when advancements in technology—notably the railroad and refrigerated boxcar—turned these bountiful flocks into a ready supply of cheap meat that could be hunted almost anywhere and shipped to rapidly growing urban centers. Within a few short decades, through a combination of deforestation and good old fashioned hunting rifles, their population crashed. What was once the most numerous bird in the world—with some estimates placing their numbers as high as 5 billion—rapidly went extinct, and the last wild passenger pigeon was shot and killed by a boy with a BB gun in 1900. The saga of the passenger pigeon, as well as the extinctions of four other North American bird species, is the basis for a series of bronze statues by sculptor Todd McGrain entitled *The Lost Bird Project*, along with an accompanying documentary by Deborah Dickson. Alongside the album *The Lost Birds*, these form an interconnected suite of artistic works that explores extinction through the three disciplines of sculpture, film, and music.

### 2. The Saddest Noise

"The Saddest Noise" is a setting of Emily Dickinson's poem "The Saddest Noise, the Sweetest Noise". It begins the story of *The Lost Birds* in spring: the season of birth and renewal, and a time of year when bird songs flood the skies. But what is ordinarily a joyous sound is now riddled with loss, as the songs of the remaining birds remind us of the ones we've already lost. Dickinson's reflections on the birds' songs—at once tuneful, but tainted with melancholy—inspired my musical language for *The Lost Birds*. Heavily influenced by the vernacular of the 19th-century, the work is both pastoral and romantic, with lyrical melodies and soaring strings. But for all its romanticism and loveliness, there remains a sense of loss that permeates the music: for though the melodies we can still hear are sweet, it is the ones that are lost that we truly wish to hear.

### 3. Bird Raptures

One of the most common pairings of birds in literature is the lark and the nightingale. The lark, with its cheery morning song, represents day—while the nightingale's lonesome song summons the night. But while most 19th-century poets chose to exalt the radiant skylark, Christina Rossetti fixated instead on the nightingale. And in her poem "Bird Raptures", she envelops it in language of nocturnal sensuality. Awakened by the moon (a symbol of femininity), with repeated entreaties to forestall the dawn, Rossetti adopts the voice of lovers who want the night to never end. (See: *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III, Scene 5.)

But Rossetti's Anglo-Catholic faith was never far in her writings, especially in her latter years. And the title of her poem—"Bird Raptures"—imparts a touch of religious ecstasy to her worship of the nightingale. For this reason, my setting of her poem starts as a hymn—a simple chorale, where all the singers' voices move in tandem to harmonize a melody. But as the song progresses, the voices become less synchronized, and gradually start to resemble the individualized movements of birds in a flock. Voices begin lingering, singing a few extra melismatic notes after the rest of the ensemble lands on a resolved chord. Individual singers break from the ensemble, tugging at their nearest neighbors to follow, as if by magnetic attraction. Soon, the entire chorus and orchestra starts to resemble a murmuration—where individual birds have their own flight paths, but the overall movement of the flock stays contained as a harmonized organism. This flock circles and circles, building in intensity until climaxing on the words 'silent, sweet and pale'—a rapturous exaltation of the night.

### 4. A Hundred Thousand Birds

Sprightly and magical, "A Hundred Thousand Birds" is a setting of Christina Rossetti's poem by the same name. It's a celebration of the nightingale: the bird most adored by Romantic era writers as a symbol of mother nature herself. A summer bird, its nocturnal song was imbued with mystical qualities, both transformative and intoxicating. And in Rossetti's poem, which contrasts the single nightingale with the hundred-thousand daylight birds, its lonesome qualities epitomized the Romantic idea of the solitary artist in nature.

My setting of the piece is inspired by English folk song, employing both the simple melodic structure and modal harmonies associated with pastoral music. Using the vernacular of folk songs helps place *The Lost Birds* firmly in the context of the late 19th-century: a golden age of folk music preservation, when musicologists in England and North America criss-crossed their countrysides, transcribing and cataloging folk songs in towns and villages everywhere. It is this same era when rapid industrialization and the rise of cities first started reshaping the natural environment with disastrous consequences, leading us down our current path of widespread loss of biodiversity.

### 5. Wild Swans

*The Lost Birds* is a musical memorial to extinct bird species. But it also carries a darker message: like the metaphor of the canary in the coal mine, the extinction of birds is a preface to the extinction of humans. And thus the album is split into two halves: the story of the loss of birds, followed by the story of the loss of humankind. "Wild Swans", a setting of a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay, ends the first half of *The Lost Birds*. Told from the point of view of the poet, it starts with the sound of bird cries: gradually approaching from a distance, until they pass overhead, triggering feelings of longing. After an instrumental interlude, and the narrator's impassioned declaration of freedom, the song ends as it started—with the cries of wild swans receding into the distance, foreshadowing their demise. The migration of swans signifies autumn; and in turn, autumn signals the gradual fading of nature. But beyond their seasonal association, swans themselves have a storied place in literature, often imbued with magical properties. Across myths and legends from every culture, no other bird is transformed into a human as frequently as a swan is—thereby reinforcing the notion that the extinction of birds is synonymous with the extinction of humans. But folklore has also given us the metaphor of the 'swan song'—the final work of an artist or musician before their death. It comes from the ancient belief that the swan is a bird that stays silent its entire life, only to sing a beautiful song just before it dies. "Wild Swans" is thus the emotional heart of *The Lost Birds*—one final, impassioned cry, before the birds' songs recede into the long silence of extinction.

## 6. Intermezzo

Reprising the theme of *Flocks a Mile Wide*, "Intermezzo" is an ode to the last passenger pigeon to die in captivity. Named "Martha", she lived in a Cincinnati zoo all by herself until her death in 1914. Her story, and the stories of many similar birds who were the last of their kind, follows a familiar trajectory: the lone survivor of the species sings their song, desperately searching for a response, only to be greeted by silence. And as she gives her final performance, her melancholy song trails away, diminishing with anguish, and ultimately fading into an eternal silence. The song is now lost forever.

Today the passenger pigeon is one of the most spectacularly tragic examples of human-induced ecological collapse. It serves as a warning that if we could wipe out the most populous bird in the world with nothing but 19th-century hunting technology, how much damage can we now do in the 21st century? "Intermezzo" marks the start of the second half of *The Lost Birds*—one in which the focus is no longer on the extinction of birds, but instead on the extinction of humankind.

## 7. Thus in the Winter

We are now in a cold, bleak winter; and the absence of birds is best expressed through the lens of the lonely tree, who witnessed the gradual disappearance—one by one—of the birds that used to sing from its boughs. To capture the desolation of this imagery, taken from Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem "What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why", I adopted a musical approach inspired by the simple monophony of plainchant. Stark, isolated melodies gradually evolve and intertwine, until their woven layers adopt the contrapuntal shape of a Renaissance madrigal. More and more voices join the chorus, their motion overlapping like birds forming a flock, until all at once their calls reach a climax on the word 'cry'—a plaintive echo of the final bird cries in "Wild Swans". The movement finishes with harmonic ambiguity, followed by an immediate, uninterrupted transition into the next movement. In the same way that species die out in the real world, the end chapters often come in quick, brutal succession.

## 8. There Will Come Soft Rains

A setting of one of my favorite childhood poems, "There Will Come Soft Rains" is inspired both by the apocalyptic WWI context in which it was originally written, but also by Ray Bradbury's short story of the same name. Originally published by Sara Teasdale in 1918, it was introduced to a world in which humans, for the first time, could see palpable examples of their own extinction—both through the terrible human cost of the Great War, but also from the 1918 flu pandemic.

The poem portrays a post-human world: one in which society has crumbled, and mother nature has established a new order, indifferent to the extinction of humankind. It is only in such an imagined world where robins and swallows might still sing their songs, which suggests the unthinkable—that perhaps the only way in which the earth can ultimately thrive is for it to be rid of humans.

Following a thunderous instrumental interlude representing an extinction event, we have a 'transfiguration' moment: where echoes from previous movements drift through in a primordial state, like a feverish dream on a dying person's deathbed. The movement ends on a wispy, minor-key evocation of the "Flocks a Mile Wide" theme; a distant memory of the life that once thrived around us.

## 9. All That Could Never Be Said

With a simple melody inspired by children's songs, "All That Could Never Be Said" is a setting of Sara Teasdale's poem "In the End". Showcasing her signature pairing of nihilism and pastoral beauty, the poem is an exploration of regret: it suggests that the consequences of our inaction are final and absolute. There are no second chances to speak up or to act, and all our missed opportunities will be lost to us until we're reunited with them in death. In the context of extinction, it mirrors the concept of 'tipping points' in environmental science— thresholds that, should we cross them, will be irreversible.

My setting re-imagines the text as a simple children's melody, recasting the entirety of *The Lost Birds* as a fable. And just like in the story of "The Grasshopper and the Ant", the moral of the story is that our inaction in the face of slow extinction will ultimately doom us.

## 10. I Shall Not See the Shadows

"I Shall Not See the Shadows" is based on Christina Rossetti's poem "When I Am Dead My Dearest". Written from the point of view of the deceased, it portrays death at its most indifferent—unnoticed, unheralded, unremembered. It also suggests that forgetting is also a form of extinction—that the finality of species lies not in the death of its last remaining members, but in the failure to preserve their memory.

We are currently in an epoch known as the sixth mass extinction—and estimates show that the current rate of extinction, caused almost wholly by manmade factors, is anywhere from 1000 to 1,000 times faster than the normal baseline. And despite the high-profile collapse of many species like the passenger pigeon, the majority of extinctions happen quietly. My setting of Rossetti's poem brings back a climactic reprise of "The Saddest Noise", to signify rebirth and the return of spring.

## 11. In the End

"In the End" serves as a coda to the story of The Lost Birds, and is a reprise of "All That Could Never Be Said". This time, however, the musical range of the piece contracts, and one by one the singers stop singing until we're left with a solitary voice trailing out to silence. If The Lost Birds is a fable—where the moral of the story is a warning against inaction in the face of extinction—then the ending of the story is now ambiguous. It remains to be seen whether we will be able to forestall our own demise.

## 12. Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

"Hope Is the Thing with Feathers" is a setting of the Emily Dickinson poem by the same name. It serves as an epilogue—a final reprise of the "Flocks a Mile Wide" theme, but now set for voices. It suggests that while the passenger pigeon's song may be lost forever, we can at least honor and preserve its memory with our own songs. We thus end The Lost Birds on a note of hope.

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## BECOME THE SKY

Become the sky.  
Take an axe to the prison wall.  
Escape.  
Walk out like someone suddenly born into color.

The light which shines in the eye is really the light from the heart.

– Text by Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

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## SOLITUDE OF STARS

no text

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## CLOSE[R], NOW

the point of ease is a window.  
dream-fathom—  
hone the dexterity of love.  
the mask/ a [path] through  
come back/ come back to  
life.

– Text by Charles McNulty.

"Commentary: The show must go on. Why the theaters contemplating coronavirus should close, now." Los Angeles Times, 11 March 2020.)

# THE LOST BIRDS

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## The Saddest Noise

Adapted from a poem by Emily Dickinson

Commissioned by Swagata “Ban” Banerjee, one-half of the duo Ban Brothers, in dedication to their late dad Sukumar Banerjee, an unsung musical genius.

Between the March and April line—  
That magical frontier  
Beyond which summer hesitates,  
Almost too heavenly near.  
The saddest noise, the sweetest noise,  
The maddest noise that grows and grows,—  
The birds, they make it in the spring,  
At night’s delicious close.  
The saddest noise I know.  
It makes us think of all the dead  
That sauntered with us here,  
By separation’s sorcery  
Made cruelly more dear.  
It makes us think of what we had,  
And what we now deplore.  
We almost wish those siren throats  
Would go and sing no more.  
An ear can break a human heart  
As quickly as a spear,  
We wish the ear had not a heart  
So dangerously near.

## Bird Raptures

Adapted from a poem by Christina Rossetti

Commissioned by Ulf Jonsson.

The sunrise wakes the lark to sing,  
The moonrise wakes the nightingale.  
Come darkness, moonrise, every thing  
That is so silent, sweet, and pale:  
Come, so ye wake the nightingale.  
Make haste to mount, thou wistful moon,  
Make haste to wake the nightingale:  
Let silence set the world in tune  
To hearken to that wordless tale  
Which warbles from the nightingale  
O herald skylark, stay thy flight  
To-morrow thou shalt hoist the sail;  
Leave us to-night the nightingale.  
For a nightingale floods us with delight.

## A Hundred Thousand Birds

Adapted from a poem by Christina Rossetti  
Commissioned by Piotr Michalak.

A hundred thousand birds salute the day:

—

One solitary bird salutes the night:  
Its mellow grieving wiles our grief away,  
And tunes our weary watches to delight;  
It seems to sing the thoughts we cannot say,  
and to set them right;  
Until we feel once more that May is May,  
And hope some buds may bloom without a blight.  
A hundred thousand birds salute the day:

—

One solitary bird salutes the night:  
This solitary bird outweighs, outvies,  
The hundred thousand merry

-making birds

Whose innocent warblings might make us wise  
Would we but follow when they bid us rise,  
Would we but set their notes of praise to words  
And launch our hearts up with them to the skies.

## Wild Swans

Adapted from a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay  
Commissioned by Jay Han in honor of those who gave him the courage to soar.

Cry...  
I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over.  
And what did I see I had not seen before?  
Only a question less or a question more;  
And what did I see? No less, no more, and  
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying wild.  
Come over the town again,  
trailing your legs and crying!  
I looked inside my  
Tiresome heart, forever living, forever dying,  
House without air, I leave and lock your door.  
Forever more I leave you.  
Wild swans, come over the town again,  
trailing your legs and crying!

## Thus in the Winter

Adapted from a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay  
Commissioned by David Byard in celebration of the creative spirit.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,  
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,  
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
I only know that summer sang in me  
A little while, that in me sings no more.  
But the rain is full of ghosts tonight,  
that tap and sigh upon the glass  
and listen for reply,  
And in my heart there stirs a pain  
For unremembered birds again  
That will not wake at midnight with a cry.



## There Will Come Soft Rains

Adapted from a poem by Sara Teasdale

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;  
And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,  
Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;  
Not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.  
Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree  
If mankind perished utterly;  
And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.  
(The sunrise wakes the lark to sing...  
Between the March and April line...  
One solitary bird salutes the night...  
I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over...  
Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree...)

## All That Could Never Be Said

Adapted from a poem by Sara Teasdale

Commissioned by Dr. Timothy M. Hsia for the ecologists and educators at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, who continue to help us understand the past, present, and future of our planet's astounding biodiversity.

All that could never be said,  
All that could never be done,  
Wait for us at last  
Somewhere back of the sun;  
All the heart broke to forego  
Shall be ours without pain,  
We shall take them as lightly as girls  
Pluck flowers after rain.  
All that could never be said,  
All that could never be done,  
Wait for us at last  
By the sun.

## I Shall Not See the Shadows

Adapted from poems by Christina Rossetti and Emily Dickinson

Commissioned by Agapella (Singapore) in commemoration of its 20th anniversary.

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.  
I shall not see the shadows,  
I shall not feel the rain;  
I shall not hear the nightingale  
Sing on, as if in pain:  
And dreaming through the twilight  
That doth not rise nor set,  
Haply I may remember,  
And haply may forget.  
Between the March and April line—  
That magical frontier  
Beyond which summer hesitates,  
Almost too heavenly near.  
The saddest noise, the sweetest noise,  
The maddest noise that grows and grows,—  
The birds, they made it in the spring,  
At night's delicious close.  
The saddest noise I know.

## In the End

Adapted from a poem by Sara Teasdale

Commissioned by Dr. Timothy M. Hsia for his goddaughter, Ms. Isla Chow.

All that could never be said,  
All that could never be done,  
Wait for us at last  
Somewhere back of the sun;  
And when they are ours in the end  
Perhaps after all  
The skies will not open for us  
Nor heaven be there at our call.  
After all that was never done.

## Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

Adapted from a poem by Emily Dickinson

Commissioned for the Centennial Celebration for the Palo Alto High School Campus.

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,  
And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.  
I've heard it in the chilliest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.



## December 6: Constellations

Michael Harrison  
Eric Dudley  
Judah Adashi  
Kerensa Briggs  
Arvo Pärt

## February 21: Planets

Alexandra Olsavsky  
Missy Mazzoli  
Ayanna Woods  
Leanna Kirchoff  
Michael McGlynn

## May 9 & 10: Rivers

Antoine Brummel  
Majel Connery  
Ben Zucker

**Expect to hear the unexpected**

visit [williamferrischorale.org](http://williamferrischorale.org) for tickets and information

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### William Ferris Chorale:

Chicago's leading voice in new music, WFC seeks to redefine "choir." At the forefront of Chicago's contemporary music scene for over 50 years, and with over 200 premiere performances, WFC expands choral repertoire, and audience experience, through the performance of living composers. Our concerts and music create new connections with the world around us, connecting audiences, composers and artists through dynamic, evocative music. Led by Artistic and Music Director Christopher Windle, WFC breaks barriers and innovates the art of choral singing.

### Ensemble 20+

DePaul Ensemble 20+ performs a wide range of repertoire, showcasing the works of living composers, pieces from the latter half of the 20th century, and contemporary compositions. Composed primarily of School of Music students, the ensemble rehearses, performs, and studies a broad repertoire spanning from the early 20th century to the present. Ensemble 20+ collaborates with a wide range of composers and performers, including DePaul University faculty and students, Chicago-based composers, and artists from across the nation and around the world. The ensemble is dedicated to exploring the dynamic and evolving landscape of contemporary composition and musical expression. By fostering collaboration and mutual respect among performers, composers, and audiences alike, it nurtures a vibrant and supportive musical community that thrives on creativity, engagement, and imagination.

### Christopher Tin

Christopher Tin is a two-time Grammy-winning composer of concert and media music. His music has been performed and premiered in many of the world's most prestigious venues: Royal Albert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Hollywood Bowl, the United Nations and Carnegie Hall. Performers include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Metropole Orkest, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and US Air Force Band, alongside Washington National Opera, Danielle de Niese, Ewa Plonka and Frederica von Stade.

His song "Baba Yetu", a Swahili setting of The Lord's Prayer originally written for the video game Civilization IV, is a modern choral standard, and the first piece of music written for a video game ever to win a Grammy Award. It's been licensed for use by groups ranging from Premier League Football to the Vatican. Two different contestants performed it in the same season of America's Got Talent. It was even a question on the legendary game show Jeopardy!

His debut album, the multi-lingual song cycle Calling All Dawns, won him a second Grammy in 2011, and his follow-up release The Drop That Contained the Sea debuted at #1 on Billboard's classical charts having premiered to a sold-out audience at Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium. His next album To Shiver the Sky also debuted at #1, and was funded by a record-breaking Kickstarter campaign that raised \$221,415. The Lost Birds, a collaboration with acclaimed British vocal ensemble VOCES8, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2023 and has been heard live across Europe, the US, Asia and Australia. He is also an in-demand collaborator, working with musicians across a wide-range of genres: Lang Lang, VOCES8, Danielle de Niese, Lara Downes, Alan Menken, BT, and Danny Elfman, to name a few.

In 2024 Tin was invited by Francesca Zambello (director) to compose a new ending for Puccini's Turandot at Washington National Opera. Writing in collaboration with librettist Susan Soon He Stanton (playwright and screenwriter/producer of Succession) the run at the Kennedy Center was sold out, played to standing ovations and was adored by the artists, audience and critics alike.

Tin is signed to an exclusive record deal with Universal under their legendary Decca label, published by Concord and Boosey & Hawkes, and is a Yamaha Artist. He works out of his own custom-built studio in Santa Monica, California.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2025, 2:00 PM

Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University  
430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

TAXI CONCERT

Fonema: Cartografía de los Anhelos

Darlene Castro † | *Desire Paths*  
Juan Campoverde † | *Los Lugares del Deseo*  
Michele Abondano | *Just an attempt to dissipate*  
Carlos Zárate † | *a fact of ours\**

Arcomusical

Gregory Beyer † | *Berimbau Sextet no. 2, "Traíra"*  
David M. Gordon † | *Cantifractus Psalmodicus\**  
Krissy Bergmark ‡ | *Indra Looks to the Sky\**  
Matt Ulery † | *Emigre and Exile*  
I. Mother Harp  
II. Tongues  
III. Bottomless  
IV. Ephemeral Stream  
V. Heart in Fist  
VI. The Only Thing You Can Do is Jump

Stare at the Sun

Nicholas Cline † | *A Strategy for Confrontation*  
Ayanna Woods † | *Close[r], now*  
Matthew Recio † | *Holdfast*  
Ted Hearne † | *Privilege*  
Edie Hill | *We Bloomed in Spring*  
Joanne Metcalf | *The Sea's Wash in the Hollow of the Heart*  
Alissa Voth † | *The spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words*  
Alex Berko † | *O Me! O Life!*

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer  
‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

PERFORMERS:

Fonema Consort

Nathalie Colas, soprano  
Dalia Chin, flutes  
Emily Beisel, clarinets  
Joe Bauer, string bass  
Sam Rowe, guitar  
Yulia Block, percussion

Arcomusical

Krissy Bergmark, guest tabla soloist  
Matt Ulery, guest bassist and composer  
Gregory Beyer, berimbaus  
Raychel Taylor, berimbaus  
Ethan Martin, berimbaus  
Matthew Schneider, berimbaus  
Noel Streacker, berimbaus  
Elena Ross, berimbaus

Stare at the Sun

A.J. Keller, conductor  
Chuck Foster, collaborative pianist  
Dell Mitchell, percussion

Soprano

Anna Joy Buegel  
Sarah Fisk  
Alana Grossman  
Kate Lee  
Molly Phelan  
Rachel Sparrow

Alto

Emily Amesquita  
Carolyn Boudreau  
Mallory Harding  
Renata Herrera  
Chelsea Lyons  
Gabrielle Timofeeva Lopez

Tenor

Matt Cummings  
Paul Hunter  
Jesus Alfredo Jimenez  
Benjamin Martin  
Russell Pinzino  
Ryan Townsend Strand

Bass

Tabes Bridges  
Ari Carrillo  
Michael Follis  
Zachary Kurzenberger  
Ian Martin  
Ian Morris

The program "Cartografía de los Anhelos" is deeply ingrained in poetry and timbre. Ranging from dense textures to thin, thread-like sounds, it depicts desire, deep longing, and the search for new paths—or the return to familiar ones, as Darlene imagines in her work. Each piece builds a map of strong desires and relationships with the elements each composer explores, such as word, timbre, poetry, image, and tangible places—drawing both performers and audience into a dreamlike state.

Arcomusical's cutting-edge program, "Spirits in Exile," includes world premieres by tabla virtuoso Krissy Bergmark and iconoclastic composer David M. Gordon, as well as Afro-Cuban sacred music and masterpieces by Matt Ulery and Gregory Beyer. The question of where spirit can reside in an increasingly troubled world animates this program that surges with haunting, pulsing, and raging new sounds for the unmistakably beautiful sound of Arcomusical's unique sextet of berimbaus.

"Midwestern Tongues" is a retrospective featuring works that Stare at the Sun has commissioned, premiered, or workshopped, as well as a couple other pieces by midwestern composers we have previously championed. Highlights of the program include Matthew Recio's "Holdfast," which explores the agony of physical separation and the phenomenon of skin hunger; Alyssa Voth's "The spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words," a rhapsody on the Pentecostal practice of speaking in tongues; and Ted Hearne's "Privilege," which abstractly explores the causes and repercussions of socioeconomic inequality.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Fonema Consort

Fonema Consort commissions, performs, and records new and experimental music that explores the limits of the human voice in a radical chamber setting. Known for their "enthusiastic embrace of daring new music" (Chicago Reader), Fonema is driven by a fascination with pieces that foster rich interplay of voices and instruments characterized by a vibrant viscosity. The ensemble is highly committed to presenting works by Latin American composers to US audiences and encouraging musical and cultural exchange between these regions. Fonema Consort was founded in 2011 by singer Nina Dante and composers Pablo Santiago Chin and Edward Hamel. Since its founding, the ensemble has premiered over 50 works, and traveled widely across the US and increasingly in Latin America. National performance highlights include appearances with the Americas Society (NYC) the Mexican Consulate's Mexican Cultural Institute (Washington DC), National Sawdust (New York City), the Chicago Cultural Center, the Latino Music Festival (Chicago), WFMT's Thirsty Ear Festival (Chicago), the Frequency Festival (Chicago), the 113 Composer's Collective (Minneapolis), and many more. Fonema Consort has held residencies and given performances at Columbia University, Oberlin Conservatory, Harvard University, Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, UC Berkeley, New England Conservatory, and many others. Fonema Consort is a recipient of a FACE grant (2013), an Aaron Copland Fund for Music grant (2016), two Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation grants (2016 and 2017), and two Amphion Foundation grants (2018 and 2019).

[fonemaconsort.com](http://fonemaconsort.com)

### Arcomusical

Arcomusical is an ensemble with a unique mission...reimagining the Afro-Brazilian berimbau through powerful chamber music. The ensemble commissions, collaborates, arranges and composes new works that generate spellbinding and uniquely beautiful musical performances. Their repertoire ranges from solos to sextets to concerti.

[arcomusical.com](http://arcomusical.com)

### Stare at the Sun

Named one of Chicago's "new ensembles you should know" by WFMT, Stare at the Sun is a professional mixed-voice chamber choir dedicated to curating music by living composers, with an emphasis on commissioning new works from Chicago-based composers. Stare at the Sun provides a unique outlet for local composers to have their work performed at the highest level by virtuosic singers. They aim to engage artists and the public with issues of social responsibility and the complexities of living in the 21st century. Stare at the Sun has premiered works by Ted Hearne, Lansing McLoskey, Alex Berko, Alissa Voth, Matthew Recio, and Nicholas Cline, and has curated works by Evelin Seppar, Ted Hearne, David Lang, Caroline Shaw, Per Nørgård, Karin Rehnqvist, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Tõnu Kõrvits, Edie Hill, Ēriks Ešenvalds, Hans Abrahamsen, Missy Mazzoli, Judith Bingham, Judith Weir, Arvo Pärt, Kevin Puts, Eric Whitacre, Joanne Metcalf, Paweł Łukaszewski, Gabriel Jackson, Kile Smith, and Michael Gilbertson.

[stareatthesun.org](http://stareatthesun.org)

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University  
430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

## **COMPOSER SHOWCASE**

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### **Composer Showcase Featuring the Ravinia Steans Institute**

Blair Boyd † | *The Hermitess*\*, text by Alyx Chandler

Andrei Skorobogatykh † | *Paradoxical Ode*\*, text by James Clerk Maxwell

Liza Sobel Crane † | *Worth*\*, text by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Eric Malmquist † | *Hawk Hour*\*, text by Mark Turcotte

Bradley Robin † | *Bliss*\*, text by Maggie Gautier

Asher Sizemore † | *Everyone Dies in the Gender Reveal Apocalypse*\* text by Asher Sizemore, Kevin Whiteneir

Paul Novak † | *youth*\*, text by Victoria Flanagan

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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### **Ravinia Steans Institute Performers**

Sabrina Langlois, soprano

Joanne Evans, mezzo-soprano

Brent Funderburk, piano

Ear Taxi Festival is proud to partner with Ravinia's Steans Institute to present Sabrina Langlois, soprano, Joanne Evans, mezzo-soprano, and Brent Funderburk, piano for an evening of freshly composed art songs. Paul Novak's "youth" sets a text by Chicago-based poet Victoria Flanagan and explores ghosts and haunting as a metaphor for queerness and trauma. Liza Sobel Crane's work "Worth" focuses on social media and how it affects users' body image. Bradley Robin's "bliss" charmingly explores recovering from the loss of innocence when a child's knowledge of the world is realized. Blair Boyd writes music for a series of poems about a woman who has decided to leave society and be alone.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

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### Blair Boyd

The text for *The Hermitess* comes from a series of poems by Alyx Chandler about a woman who has decided to leave society and be alone. I was immediately drawn to Alyx's poems, even before learning of our shared background as Southern transplants. Alyx and I both moved far away from our childhood homes around the same age, and these poems grapple with learning who you are apart from the place you have always known. The first poem, "Home of the Hermitess", features shorter fragments, as the speaker seems to be stringing together who she is. There is space and hesitancy, which I have tried to incorporate into my setting of the poem. Contrastingly, more momentum is generated in my setting of "Lacuna," as the phrases of the second poem seem to run together, colliding.

### Andrei Skorobogatykh

The *Paradoxical Ode*, written by Maxwell in 1878 shortly before his death, was dedicated to his close friend, Scottish physicist Peter Tait. The three poems echo passages from Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* while exploring the human soul, the universe, and the role of science.

Mathematical and physical terms appear throughout as allegories, reflecting ideas shared between Maxwell and Tait. In the opening poem, for example, "My soul's an amphicheiral knot" refers to a topology term for a knot that can be deformed into its mirror image. Many similar scientific and philosophical images run through the work.

Distinct from most poetry of the time, it avoids familiar metaphors, romantic sentiment, and images of nature or everyday life. Instead, it uses the language of science in a metaphorical way to express complex philosophical ideas. This rare blend of science and poetry continues to fascinate me and has inspired me to bring its unique voice into music.

### Liza Sobel Crane

I first came across Ella Wheeler Wilcox's work when writing my song cycle *The Year*. There were so many poems that I easily could compose numerous cycles based on her poems.

In *Worth*, I grouped two Wilcox poems that discuss how a person is characterized through handling hardships and overcoming adversity. In the first song "Worth While," Wilcox discusses how it is easy when everything goes one's way. It is how one handles challenges that defines a person. The song begins with a seemingly simple dance like baseline that becomes more complex, representing the speaker's challenges.

I especially related to the second song "I will be worthy of it" because the speaker discusses preserving despite numerous failures. In particular, Wilcox states that despite the speaker's failures, they are still worthy of achieving success and should still strive towards their goals. Wilcox's titular line "I will be worthy of it," becomes a mantra to inspire self-confidence and perseverance.

### Eric Malmquist

Mark Turcotte (Turtle Mountain Band Anishinaabe), is the current Illinois Poet Laureate and longtime resident of Chicago. This poem highlights the alienation from nature people experience in a bustling, noisy, dirty city. His writing vividly paints the sights and sounds of a morning rush – city dwellers can perhaps also imagine the smells. As a former fellow resident of the neighborhood of Rogers Park, these locales are intimately familiar to me, as are the fleeting glimpses of natural world – the Lake down the street, and a hawk hovering in the breeze.

### Bradley Robin

*Bliss* is a whimsical journey celebrating the difficulties and rewards of deep emotional work in the quest for love and peace. Set to the words of poet Maggie Gautier, the piece traverses moments of vulnerability, resilience, and joy, drawing listeners into a world where transformation is both internal and external. I've had the pleasure of working with Maggie for several years, and her expansive, emotionally rich writing has continually inspired me. I'm grateful to Ear Taxi for the opportunity to bring this epic poem to life through music.

### Asher Sizemore

Some say that transgender people will destroy the world. Gender reveal parties have already made some decent attempts at it. What if they joined forces?

## Paul Novak

youth is an exploration of ghost stories as an inherently queer genre, imagining haunting as a metaphor for queer trauma.

### THE HERMITESS

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#### I. Home of the Hermitess

learning to leave  
peels back a part of yourself  
like a woodpecker holing trees I growl of rot  
of honeycrisp apples  
too many for me to eat  
the blunt edge of autumn shadowing me a core  
of sweet  
I drink juice from a carton  
skin apples in the evening  
forget my face  
there's wellness in anchoring to a place  
or so they tell me

#### II. Lacuna

I am diligent I am praying  
for sound, Hermitess  
are the good-smelling days gone?  
the glow of words wipe me out  
like you I have an aloneness  
that peels off my thoughts my bark  
my taste for more an urge I hang  
unto guilt an ancient weapon I wield  
and am unwielded by catharsis  
a sudden seed I crack with my teeth  
pines wind-twisted a storm banging at my door oh, good this time a sound  
that isn't mine

- Text by Alyx Chandler

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To Hermann Stofkraft, Ph.D.  
A Paradoxical Ode  
After Shelley

I

My soul's an amphicheiral knot  
Upon a liquid vortex wrought  
By Intellect in the Unseen residing,  
While thou dost like a convict sit  
With marlinspike untwisting it  
Only to find my knottiness abiding;  
Since all the tools for my untying  
In four-dimensioned space are lying,  
Where playful fancy intersperses  
Whole avenues of universes;  
Where Klein and Clifford fill the void  
With one unbounded, finite homaloid,  
Whereby the Infinite is hopelessly destroyed.

II

But when thy Science lifts her pinions  
In Speculation's wild dominions,  
I treasure every dictum thou emittest;  
While down the stream of Evolution  
We drift, and look for no solution  
But that of the survival of the fittest.  
Till in that twilight of the gods  
When earth and sun are frozen clods,  
When, all its energy degraded,  
Matter in æther shall have faded,  
We, that is, all the work we've done,  
As waves in æther, shall for ever run  
In swift-expanding spheres, through heavens  
beyond the sun.

III

Great Principle of all we see,  
Thou endless Continuity!  
By thee are all our angles gently rounded;  
Our misfits are by thee adjusted,  
And as I still in thee have trusted,  
So let my methods never be confounded!  
O never may direct Creation  
Break in upon my contemplation,  
Still may the causal chain, ascending,  
Appear unbroken and unending,  
And, where that chain is lost to sight  
Let viewless fancies guide my darkling flight  
Through Æon-haunted worlds, in order infinite.

$\frac{\partial p}{\partial t}$

- Text by James Clerk Maxwell

# WORTH

---

## 1. WORTH WHILE

It is easy enough to be pleasant  
When life flows by like a song,  
But the man worth while is the one who will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong.  
For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with the years,  
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth  
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent  
When nothing tempts you to stray,  
When without or within no voice of sing  
Is luring your soul away;  
But it's only a negative virtue  
Until it is tried by fire,  
And the life that worth the honor on earth  
Is the one that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,  
Who had no strength for the strife,  
The world's highway is cumbered to-day -  
They make up the sum of life;  
But the virtue that conquers passion,  
And the sorrow that hides in a smile -  
It is these that are worth the homage on earth,  
For we find them but once in a while.

## 2. I will be worthy of it

I may not reach the heights I seek  
My untried strength may fail me,  
Or, half-way up the mountain peak,  
Fierce tempests may assail me.  
But though that place I never gain,  
Herein lies comfort for my pain -  
I will be worthy of it.

I may not triumph in success,  
Despite my earnest labor;  
I may not grasp results that bless  
The efforts of my neighbor;  
But though my goal I never see,  
This thought shall always dwell with me -  
I will be worthy of it.

The golden glory of Love's light  
May never fall on my way;  
My path may always lead through night,  
Like some deserted by-way;  
But though life's dearest joy I miss  
There lies a nameless strength in this -  
I will be worthy of it.

In this city time unwinds in unnatural ways. It doesn't fly. It trips. It passes in coughing fits. It doesn't have enough soul to tick tock tick. It spits and spews under the rusty fenders of all these cars going nowhere fast. It's bad for the body. Even here at the corner of Sheridan and Pratt, the lake and its waves only a block away, I cannot measure my own dying. Instead, this taxi pants at the traffic light. Instead, this bus, the Outer Drive Express, lodges in my ventricle. Instead, this city breaks my clock.

On my good leg I wobble between the I-pods wearing all those heads, wearing the same 2.8 million faces. Some idiot calls this a river of humanity but rivers don't move like this. It's not natural. I stagger past the café that wasn't here yesterday, won't be here tomorrow. Past the liquor store that will be here forever, lubricating the gears and all their broken teeth. I lurch past the rows of trees. Gnarled sticks attacked by choking leaves. I pause near the playlot, listen to the skippers and skaters sing, *the city is a meadow and the people are the sheep, the city is a meadow and the people are the sheep*. I grin. Below the Red Line tracks a squad car screams up against the wall to people already up against the wall. I give away a dollar to a man who says, god bless, cuz he does not know god has nothing to do with my dollar.

In Loyola Station I give more money to the turnstile. It says nothing as I catch the current. I crawl up the escalator, 90 miles per hour, swivel to the end of the platform at 95. There I linger in a shadow that drapes itself across my eyes. I catch my breath, I stand upright. Above me the shape of a hawk drowns out the rush of the next ten trains and with its beating wings reaches out to stop the sky.

- Text by Mark Turcotte  
(first appeared in *Brute Neighbors: Urban Poetry, Prose and Photography*, 2011)

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# I WANTED

---

I wanted to believe in Santa Clause  
And that something good would happen after kissing a frog

I want to believe that people are good  
And that there's plenty of love and there's plenty of food

I want to believe that there's part of a plan  
And that I've always done the best that I can

I want to believe that my heart's desire  
Will be strong enough and flamed into fire

I want to believe that I will know peace  
The kind that passes all understanding and gives me relief

I want to believe that if I show up and try  
That I will be rewarded, or is that pie in the sky?

The days that I wake up and wonder what's wrong  
Get instantly corrected when I write down a song

The angst that I feel is sometimes a bore  
As I sit in abundance and still want for more

I keep hearing that before I was born was a path  
And that all my suffering is self-imposed wrath

I'm bored with thinking with trying to uncover  
What's mine to do and I miss my mother

I know that the terror, the trauma the strife  
Makes for a scattered and confusing life

Until it's decided once and for all  
That I have a calling and I've answered the call.

The truth is I didn't know until I knew  
As much as I thought what it is I should do

As I took away the toys, the distractions, the stuff,  
As I sat in the silence of being enough

I started to consider that the path is mine alone  
And what and who I am goes down to the bone

I don't have to question every single move  
I don't have to try to fit into the groove,

My job, my only job is to love my neighbor as myself  
And that means I have to love me like nobody else

I have to take steps, one moment at a time  
To build the kind of life that I want to find

Can I love so deeply that I embarrass myself  
Can I love the love of somebody else

Can I stop wondering what I've done wrong  
Can I be fully anchored in my own unique song

The thoughts and feeling are universal I believe  
We all need to be needed, We all need to grieve

Can I be honest just to myself  
And not ask permission from anyone else

Can I talk freely and discover what's true  
Can I open my heart up to you?

Somedays are random and a memory flashes  
There were triumphs and heartbreaks and emotional crashes

Time has flown and yet it's right here,  
It's nearly the ending of another year

I'm sitting in a comfortable home  
I'm twenty feet from someone I've known

Someone who loves me and it's true I love him  
I'm amazed at the places we both have been

And here we are, with gray hair and some scars  
Building a life that we can call ours

It's not our first life, our second, our third, but whose counting  
It's a miracle we're together with the hurdles we're surmounting,

Maybe, just maybe, the key to all of this  
Is to show up in each moment and breath in what might be bliss.

- Text by Maggie Gautier



# EVERYONE DIES IN THE GENDER REVEAL APOCALYPSE

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Note: The following text is included for reference; the piece is meant to be experienced without advance knowledge of it.

Family and friends have gathered on a spring day to announce their baby's gender. The father has built a bomb that will release either blue or pink smoke. Dad asks if the crowd is ready, and they all say woo. He says, three, two, one and triggers the bomb.

Nothing happens. Some in the crowd say oop and chuckle lightly. Dad doubles down, triggering the bomb again, and again, and again.

A deep rumble grows from the belly of the earth. The ground shakes lightly, then violently until the earth cracks open. Unsuspecting partygoers fall in. Screams fill the air as the abyss spouts blue smoke; it swirls up and covers the sun. The sky darkens into camo print, and countless Bass Pro Shops pyramids break out of earth. A howling wind unleashes the suffocating odor of Axe body spray.

The men convulse. Their eyes bulge as their arms transform into AR-15 rifles. Their heads pop off and roll away. From their neck-stubs grow new heads, all with crew cuts, orange hunting beanies, and furrowed brows.

Wives and children fall into the trench, but the men feel only competitiveness and bloodthirst.

They waddle in squiggly patterns and swing their assault-rifle arms up and down, barking orders at each other and arguing until their faces are red and sweaty. They proclaim that they can love and protect the women while never crying, because that is for women, little girls, and sissies.

With a deafening crack of lightning, the blue smoke turns pink. The sky is now blue gingham print, and the aroma of apple pie wafts through the breeze. Doves and little chickadees appear, cheeping, cooing, and carrying in cartoon laundry. The women's wails of terror are interrupted when their heads leap from their bodies and are replaced exclusively with white versions with perfectly bouncing JonBenét Ramsey curls. Their pristine heads are cocked coquettishly to the side as they strut around, enforcing demureness and a version of mindfulness.

Those who fail the demureness test are put in an oven. Those who remain are radiant exhibitions- moisturized, tall, thin, in full makeup and dress, and completely silent.

The smoke, to everyone's dismay, changes to a disgusting chartreuse, just the most toxic shit you've ever seen. Strange people scuttle up from the earth like enormous cockroaches. Some of their heads are shaved on one side, and they sport chokers. Others have smeared eyeshadow and glitter all over their bodies. Thousands of cigarette stores burst out of the ground, and extend far beyond the dark horizon. The air is acrid with poppers and video cleaner. It begins to snow ketamine.

The earth is transformed into Smart Bar on Queen night, and everyone is sweaty. They have no feet- only creepers. Building-sized sound systems fall from the sky, and blare SOPHIE and Eusexua.

The heterosexuals who have resisted the urge to throw themselves into the earth's chasm see the quote-unquote men putting on makeup, curling their hair, wearing high heeled shoes, wearing dresses, swaying their hips, dancing erotically, provocatively, and they shout "kill 'em. Kill 'em dead, throw them out of the city, personae non gratae, memento mori"

But the quote-unquote men are too slippery to be caught. They fly around in satanic acrobatic swings. The men, rocking back and forth in the fetal position cry "I will not be gay... I won't be one of them! ... I just WON'T!"

They go still, put their fingers to their chins, and say, "But I will pay to fuck them." :)

The straights grow more confused and agitated, scampering and foaming from their mouths.

The women's curls deflate into teal pixie cuts, their legs and armpits sprout hair, and they are just WAY too loud. The Euthanasia Oven swings open, and out come the unmindful, the non-demure ones, shriveled, old, and green. They soar from the ground on broomsticks and cackle, terrorizing the men with soy-based impotence hexes.

Under these spells, the men's assault-rifle-arms flop into leather cross body bags. Their hair becomes long and scraggly, and their feet are Birkenstocks. They rant hysterically about how they practice demiromantic heteroflexible kitchen table polyamory but only as long as their partners are assigned female at birth and they read and understand bell hooks so what do you say what do you say what do you say do you want to come back to the conversation pit what do you say?

The gay demons laugh until their sides hurt. They poison the rivers and oceans with gay cyanide, and now all who wish to stay hydrated are damned to eternal faggotry. The "women" refuse to cook and clean- the world degrades into squalor and starvation. The few remaining "men" on earth with the will to reproduce can't achieve an erection, let alone find a partner to witness the ordeal. The queers roar with laughter until they weep.

The plague sweeps across the plains, mountains, and oceans. Hundreds of miles away, old white generals and politicians are too busy painting their nails and giggling to notice that someone entered the nuclear codes and pressed the button, mistakenly thinking it was a password to a yaoi database. Automatic retaliatory systems trigger a chain reaction, and billions are lost as bombs rain down on the world.

The oceans and rivers boil until they are dry. The animals are vaporized and charred. The oxygen itself is consumed by hellfire across every corner of the earth. Everyone dies.

- Text by Asher Sizemore and Kevin Whiteneir

## GHOST STORY

---

Youth is velvet, a blue caldera: clear  
in hindsight. We swore  
to linger, slowdance the names we gave ourselves  
over a stranger's perfect teeth: Modesty,  
Defiance, Peril, Ache. We swore  
to stay quick on the draw, bad-block courtiers,  
tragic entourage. We, the born-wrong,  
we, the disremembered. Youth is forever  
like this: In the basement precinct, a city  
made of shelves, air fresheners, evidence boxes.  
Names written out in the government way: APB;  
hoodie with hair sample; pine-scented hate crime:  
all things can be made pretty. Youth is like this:  
no one forgets by trying to forget. We call ourselves  
Gem, Endearred, and Rapture. Youth is like this.  
It must be: We purple our knees in eulogy  
of ourselves, so that someone else may be touched.

- Text by Victoria Flanagan

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Ravinia's Steans Institute

We are an artist development program for the next generation of classical and jazz musicians.

Our world-renowned fellowship programs empower emerging professional classical pianists and string players, classical singers, composers, and jazz instrumentalists to refine their craft, collaborate with peers, and elevate their musicianship to new heights.

The tuition-free experience at Ravinia includes housing and meals, plus instruction from a world-class faculty of headlining artists and scholars. Performance opportunities include a mix of public master classes with renowned guest artists, concerts programmed from repertoire chosen by fellows, and concerts curated by the Steans Institute's faculty.

The Steans Institute provides more than artistic training: we are a community where talent meets opportunity, and passion becomes performance.

### Sabrina Langlois

Sabrina Langlois is an emerging Haitian-American soprano celebrated for her versatility and dynamic presence on stage. A champion of new works, she made her mark as a soprano soloist in the world premiere of Omar's Journey, a chamber opera by Rhiannon Giddens, at the Ojai Music Festival. Sabrina has also performed premieres of innovative operas, portraying Penelope in Kay Rhie's Quake and Dr. Veronica Vera in the workshop production of The Grand Hotel Tartarus by Grammy Award-winning composer Richard Danielpour.

Sabrina's operatic repertoire spans a variety of roles, more recently, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, and Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*. Equally comfortable in art song and concert repertoire, she was invited as a fellow at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute for Singers in 2022 and 2024. An advocate for art song, she enjoys presenting compelling programs that resonate with both seasoned audiences and newcomers alike.

Sabrina holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Miami and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of California, Los Angeles.

## Joanne Evans

London-born mezzo soprano Joanne Evans is a graduate of the Merola Opera Program, and of the residencies at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Britten Pears Young Artist Program, Fondation des Treilles and the Festival d'Aix en Provence where she was awarded Le Prix des Amis for Voice. Recent and upcoming performances include appearances at the Aldeburgh Festival, a role debut as Dorabella with Opera San Jose, a recital with Ravinia Festival x Ear Taxi Festival, and a European tour with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Joanne most recently appeared as Flora in Annapolis Opera's production of *La Traviata*, a role that she will be reprising at Opera San Jose next year. As a Fellow at Music Academy of the West in 2022, Joanne sang the role of Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and was named winner of the Marilyn Horne Song Competition. Further awards include a first prize win in the Handel Aria Competition and awards from the Dallas Lone Star Competition and the Gerda Lissner Foundation. [www.joanne-evans.com](http://www.joanne-evans.com)

## Brent Funderburk

One of the nation's most promising collaborative pianists, Brent Funderburk is also fast becoming known as a recitalist, coach, and music director. Having served as pianist and music director of the Metropolitan Opera's nationwide "Rising Stars Concert Series" tour, he anchored the 2022 world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center Theater which was broadcast nationally on PBS Great Performances. He has graced Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the Chicago Cultural Center, the Arts Club of Washington, and other distinguished recital venues. A faculty member of the Schmidt Vocal Institute, he has performed art songs at festivals including Carnegie Hall's "Marilyn Horne Song Celebration" and "The Song Continues," the Ravinia Festival, and Music Academy of the West. His discography includes five complete albums, and he has been featured on radio broadcasts by Sirius XM, New York's WQXR, Chicago's WFMT, and Minnesota's MPR. A graduate of Wisconsin's Lawrence University and New York's Juilliard School, where he was a staff pianist in the Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts, Funderburk coaches at the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, DePaul University, and Northwestern University, while maintaining a private coaching studio in Chicago, IL.

## Blair Boyd

Blair Boyd is an American composer whose highly energized compositions engage with physical movement and the perception of time. Her works have been performed throughout the U.S. and internationally, including Cheltenham Music Festival (U.K.), impuls Festival (Austria), and HighScore New Music Festival (Italy), as well as broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Recent commissions include *O Spirit of the Living God* for SSAB chorus for Mars Hill Presbyterian Church in celebration of its bicentennial. Her piece for trumpet and vibraphone *Shapes and Echos* was commissioned in 2022 by Kenken Gorder and is featured on his upcoming *NüToots* album. In 2020 Boyd composed *Shadows through the Lattice* for pianist Slade Trammel to commemorate the centennial of the 19th Amendment and her family's historical connection to guaranteeing women's right to vote. In the same year, Boyd provided the score for a production of *Hamlet* in her hometown in Tennessee, marking her first foray into incidental music. Boyd holds degrees from the University of Tennessee (BMus), the University of Bristol (MA), and recently completed her doctoral studies at Cardiff University under the supervision of Prof. Arlene Sierra. As a 2019-2020 Britten-Pears Young Artist, she developed a new work for the Aldeburgh Festival (U.K.) under the guidance of Colin Matthews and Mark-Anthony Turnage. In 2018 her string quartet *Juncture* was selected for presentation in masterclass with Helmut Lachenmann. She has also studied with Judith Weir and Kenneth Hesketh on summer festival courses. As a strong advocate of music by women, Boyd co-directed *Illuminate Women's Music*, a touring concert series that presents forgotten historical works alongside new commissions from 2017-2022. In 2023 she was a semi-finalist for Ravinia's Breaking Barriers Festival Call for Scores, receiving mentorship from Augusta Read Thomas and Clarice Assad.

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## Andrei Skorobogatykh

Andrei Skorobogatykh (b. 1992) is a Russian-born composer, pianist, and organist from Moscow currently residing in Bedford, IN. His early musical education was connected with a famous long tradition of Gnnessins musical institutions - Gnnessins Music College (high school) and Russian Gnnessins Academy of Music, both graduated with honors in 2011 and 2016 respectively. After moving to the US in 2018, Andrei completed a Master's Degree in Composition at Syracuse University and Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with cognate in Organ Performance. Andrei is the Director of Music in St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Bedford, IN. His compositions were performed by the following ensembles and soloists: Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra, Russian Gnnessins Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra, Moscow Conservatory Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra "Resonance", Illinois Modern Ensemble, Society for New Music CNY, Moscow Cello Quartet, Verona Quartet, Akropolis Reed Quintet, Ritual Action Trio, Anna Polovinkina (soprano), Katherine Skafidas (soprano), Natalia Abryutina (organ), Lana Stafford (flute), Rakhadin Yarmetov (piano). "My style can be called romantic since I attach great importance to the emotional component and psychologism. The complex, coloristic harmonies of my music are largely inspired by Scriabin, Myaskovsky, and especially Messiaen. The areas that interest me most are organ music and orchestral compositions. Recently, I have also rediscovered for myself the old-new expressive possibilities of melody and wrote a lot of vocal music. Since 2022, I have completed two cycles of art songs based on poems by Russian poets Alexander Kuprin and Boris Ryzhiy, wrote 2 choirs based on poems by Sarah Teasdale, and the song "Music" based on a poem by Walter de la Mare. Finding the poetry for a new song is always a challenge. I still believe in the classical harmony of the rhymes and the musical sense of the word choice, but I try to find new original, interesting images and themes. In this sense, the Paradoxical Ode by James Maxwell is a great find that combines romantic sophistication of poetic technique with futuristic, esoteric imagery."

## Liza Sobel Crane

Liza Sobel Crane is a Chicago based composer and soprano. Her compositions are often influenced by current social issues. Recent inspirations include anxiety and stress in today's society, the negative impact of social media and its links to depression and suicide, sexual assault, neurodiversity, and other health issues, including the Covid-19 pandemic. Venues her music has been performed in include Carnegie Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, Symphony Space, Bang on a Can, Aspen Festival, Creative Lab, Aldeburgh Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Norfolk New Music Workshop, Brevard, and Bowdoin. Performers that have played her music include: Orchestra of St. Luke's, Minnesota Orchestra, Ensemble Dal Niente, Spektral Quartet, Thalia Quartet, Cygnus Ensemble, Third Coast Percussion, Nouveau Classical Project, and Ekmeles. Liza was a Fulbright scholar to the UK. As a singer, Liza performs standard and new repertoire, and numerous composers have written pieces for her. Most recently, she performed the world premiere of her opera, I DID, DID I? with the Zafa Collective at the Poetry Foundation in Chicago. This season, she also performed George Crumb's Apparition at Constellation as part of Chicago's Ear Taxi Festival. Liza studied at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music (DMA), Rutgers University's Mason Gross Conservatory (MA); Cornell University (BA with honors), and Manhattan School of Music. For more information, please see her website, [lizasobel.com](http://lizasobel.com).

## Eric Malmquist

Eric Malmquist (b. 1985) writes earnestly heartfelt and engaging music. He draws on a deep love of early music and modern influences to produce works that are focused and emotional. He has been commissioned and performed by the Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, Baroque on Beaver Island, Chicago Composers Orchestra, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, tubist Scott Tegge, historical keyboardist Charles Metz, historical flutist Leighann Daihl Ragusa, Chatter, Constellation Men's Ensemble, the International Chamber Artists, the Newberry Consort and the Wicker Park Choral Singers. Recent performances include City Music with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras Accelerando Strings; Open, Clear & Free, a 25-minute men's choir cycle on parks for Constellation Men's Ensemble; A History of Fatherhood in Sante Fe and Albuquerque with Chatter; and a concerto grosso for Baroque on Beaver Island entitled Great Lake Music. His Tuba Sonata has been performed by Gene Pokorny of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Scott Tegge of Gaudete Brass. A passionate composer of art song, his works have been performed by Grammy-nominated tenor Nick Phan, Grammy-nominated soprano Laura Strickling, early music specialists Ellen Hargis and Josefien Stoppelenburg, and soprano Ariana Strahl. Ariana premiered his orchestra song set Let Me Sing with the Chicago Composers Orchestra in 2019. His commissioned work Prairie Music for CYSO was featured on Chicago's Ear Taxi Festival in October 2016 and at Midwest Clinic in December 2016. CCO and WPCS co-commissioned and performed Blemish'd Muse, a twenty-minute work for choir and orchestra, in 2016. His song cycle If You Travel Far Enough was the very first commission of the ICA, and was featured on Live from WFMT in 2015. Michael Hall premiered his Sonata for Viola and Piano in 2014, and Gaudete Brass premiered his Three Preludes in 2013.

## **Brad Robin**

Composer, pianist, programmer, improviser, sound and media artist Brad Robin creates and performs integrating numerous genres including classical, jazz, electroacoustic, experimental, and popular mediums, as well as traditional and experimental intermedia theatre. Often while merging media into the world of theater, dance, and video, his music produces visceral experiences integrating musical and naturally occurring sounds and images. The music swirls, bites, and caresses, creating an immersive experience for performers and audience. His music has been performed at national and international festivals including ICMC, SEAMUS, and NYCEMF. His recent piano works, *Shimmer and Spread*, won 1st and 2nd place respectively and have been performed in the 2023 and 2022 Golden Key Piano Composition Competitions in Vienna. His live piano improvisations album, *Release*, is available through Naxos on the Centaur label, and Universal Edition distributes his scores. Robin's principal teachers were Joel Hoffman, Joseph Klein, and Christopher Trebue Moore for instrumental music, and Jon Nelson and Chris Mercer for electronic music. He has done workshops at Juilliard with Dalit Warshaw and Evan Fein. He currently teaches at DePaul and Northwestern Universities in Chicago.

## **Asher Sizemore**

Asher Sizemore is a composer and performer based in Chicago. Her music originates from her background as a producer, songwriter, and performer. Her music synthesizes her interests in electronic, pop, rock, classical, and experimental music. She draws inspiration from queer culture, fashion, and literature. Asher regularly performs and records as a multi-instrumentalist and vocalist. As a participant in the Chicago DIY music scene, she advocates for the expansion of performances into non-traditional venues. She writes and performs in a collaborative project with Jennifer Femme, Zhuzh Girls. She has studied with Mark Engebretson, Alejandro Rutty Lisa Bielawa, and Christopher Wendall Jones. She has worked with ensembles and performers such as the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra, the Red Clay Saxophone Quartet, Present~Continuous, 2+1 Trio, and Matt Haimovitz. Her works have been performed at Colorado State University, La Universidad Nacional de La Plata, and in Marfa, Texas. In 2020, she was commissioned by Matt Haimovitz to write a piece for the Primavera Project. Her composition, *Six Graces*, was featured on Matt Haimovitz's Grammy-Nominated Album *Primavera I: The Wind*, and was published by Oxingale Music in 2023.

## **Paul Novak**

The "spellbinding" (Washington Post) music of Chicago-based composer Paul Novak immerses listeners in shimmering and subtly crafted musical worlds full of color, motion, light, and magic. His recent projects engage with dreams and memory, queer identity, climate change and the natural world, and psychosomatic illness. Novak has received commissions from American Composers Orchestra, Balourdet Quartet, Orchestra of St. Luke's, ASCAP and Society of Composers, Inc., Music from Copland House, Lynx, Quatuor Lontano, the Boston New Music Initiative, Blackbox Ensemble, and Kinetic Ensemble, among others. His recent collaborators include the Austin Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, Reno Philharmonic, the U.S. Army Band, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, DanceWorks Chicago, Sandbox Percussion, Ekmeles, Quince Ensemble, Decoda, InfraSound Ensemble, Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, Dmitri Atapine, Quatuor Diotima, LIGAMENT Duo, and Tribeca New Music. In 2024, Novak was selected for the top prize from both the ASCAP Morton Gould Composer Awards and the BMI Composer Awards; other recent honors include a Barlow Commission and Underwood Commission, and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, SCI/ASCAP Competition, Red Note Competition, League of Composers/ISCM, Lake George Music Festival, and National Association of Composers of the USA. He has received fellowships from Aspen, Norfolk, Copland House, Millay, and I-Park, and was featured in the Washington Post's "23 for '23: Composers and Performers to Watch this Year," where he was praised for his "impressive range and restless energy" in a catalog spanning "lithe, elastic vocal pieces...vibrant orchestral works...and evocative etudes for string quartet." Novak's recent projects include collaborations with poets, visual artists, dancers, choreographers, and a spoken word artist.



The CheckOut  
4116 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60613

TAXI CONCERT

Flannau + Quijote: Hammer & Bow

Jorge Amado † | *...y se apaga la vida...* ‡  
Ben Zucker † | *Burnt, yet* \*  
Shawn Decker † | *PROXIMITY*  
Sixto Franco † | *Estudio Ritmico* \*  
Alex Temple | *Sugarhocket*  
Xenia St. Charles Iris Llyllyth | *Won't Swim, Can't keep swimming*

Picosa

Valerie Coleman | *Hair, Cloth, and Thread I. Mom's Wisdom; II. AR/JW*  
James Stephenson † | *Persephone*  
Benjamin Horne | *I Remember You*  
Shawn E. Okpebholo † | *Redlin[ing]*

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer  
‡ Micro-Grant Awardee

PERFORMERS:

Flannau Duo + Quijote Duo

Kyle Flens, percussion  
Jonathan Hannau, piano  
Juan Horie, cello  
Sixto Franco, viola

Picosa

Peter Ferry, percussion  
Jennie Oh Brown, flute  
Andrea R. DiOrio, clarinet  
Elizabeth Brausa Brathwaite, violin  
Russell Rolén, cello  
Daniel Schlosberg, piano

Hammer & Bow features the Flannau Duo and Quijote Duo, bringing together viola, cello, piano, and percussion in a unique exploration of co-creation and unifying musical forces. The concert features premieres of new compositions by Jorge Amado, Ben Zucker, and Sixto Franco. This program explores many aesthetics and moods, catering to a wide variety of listeners.

Picosa's program explores transformative struggles through diverse musical perspectives. Coleman's "Hair, Cloth, and Thread" voices Black ancestry through Clark's textile art. Stephenson's "Persephone" reimagines mythological battles and internal conflict. Horne's "I Remember You" portrays dementia's journey from confusion to recognition. On "Redlin[ing], the central work of the program," Okpebholo writes: "This piece represents my musical response to the discriminatory practice of 'redlining.' I aimed to portray the perpetuating cycles of poverty and segregation resulting from such systemic injustices. To explicitly tie the work to Chicago, the composition's vibe is also informed by the iconic 'red line' on the L system."

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Flannau Duo

The Flannau Duo ( Flens+Hannau ) is a dynamic, new music loving, tour-de-force ensemble combining piano, percussion, electronics, improvisation, and absurdism. Flannau Duo is: Jonathan Hannau (piano), and Kyle Flens (percussion). Jon and Kyle first performed together as part of the 2021 Thirsty Ears Festival. Shortly after they schemed to create an official identity for themselves solely out of puns and hybrid names. The duo takes pride in eclectic programming, not adhering to any specific musical aesthetic. Flannau Duo performs in the Chicago area and beyond exploring a multitude of sounds, styles, and moods from composers and artists from every musical corner. The duo is the recipient of a 2023 Chicago DCASE individual artist grant. New Music specialists and chamber music enthusiasts, Juan Horie (cello) and Sixto Franco (viola) have joined forces to form the Quijote Duo, a formation that strives to create spaces for innovation and experimentation through collaboration. With a combined experience in many fields including theater, education, composition, concert music and arts management, the Quijote Duo has been expanding the limits of the performative arts and the relationship between artist, performance and audience. Based in New Orleans, Quijote duo is committed to supporting emergent composers resulting in numerous premiers in its short existence. They have performed at the Ear Taxi Festival, Thirsty Ears Festival, Project 88 Music Academy, and the Frequency Series at Constellation.

flannauduo.com

### Peter Ferry

Peter Ferry is an acclaimed percussion soloist known for reimagining classical performances through contemporary repertoire and innovative collaborations. He has performed numerous percussion concerti and given TEDx talks. His collaborations include work with choreographer Nick Pupillo and glass artist Carrie Fertig. Ferry serves as Artistic Director of Artistic Planning with Alarm Will Sound and is an Eastman School of Music alumnus.

### Picosa

Picosa is a mixed chamber ensemble specializing in contemporary classical music. The conductor-less group performs at venues including the Chicago Cultural Center, Ear Taxi Festival, and Constellation Chicago, with live broadcasts on WFMT. They maintain residencies at Elmhurst University and North Central College. The ensemble actively champions Chicago composers and has premiered numerous works, including Redlin[ing] by Shawn Okpebholo through a Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning grant. Their Composer-in-Residence, Jonathon Kirk, regularly contributes original compositions and orchestral transcriptions to their repertoire.

picosamusic.com

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025, 8:30 PM

Constellation  
3111 North Western Avenue, Chicago, IL 60618

COMPOSER SHOWCASE

Composer Showcase Featuring Lakeshore Rush

Xavier Beteta † | *Xib'nelab'*\*, text by poet Humberto Ak'abal

- I. Q'at q'ij (Hour)
- II. Xibinel (Spirit)
- III. Xa ne k'ut (As Long As)

Ethan Dymit † | *Kinderstucke*\*, traditional texts  
Natasha Bogojevic † | *Threnody of Hope*\*, text by Clare Harner  
Amos Gillespie † | *Musics* (2018)

- I. Rhythmic, syncopated
  - II. Scherzo, Minimalist
  - III - IV. Steady, driving; dance-like
- Angel Bat Dawid † | *Voice from the Catacombs*\*, text based on William Demby's novel  
Ephraim Champion † | *grace*\*, text by Joy Harjo

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer

PERFORMERS:

Lakeshore Rush

Erin Kendall Murphy, flute  
Laura McLaughlin Lingle, clarinet  
Janice Lee, violin  
Christopher Ferrer, cello  
Elena Doubovitskaya, piano

Vocalists

Ryan Alexander, baritone  
Angela De Venuto, soprano  
Christina Bernardoni, mezzo-soprano  
Emily Venturella, soprano  
Julian Otis, tenor

Lakeshore Rush is a mixed chamber ensemble joined by five dynamic vocal soloists as they premiere works by Xavier Beteta, Ethan Dymit, Natasha Bogojevic, Angel Bat Dawid and Ephraim Champion. The works range in scope from Bojojevic's work "Threnody of Hope", written for the victims of gun violence everywhere, to Beteta's work, sung in the Mayan language Quiché, Champion's piece in the setting of Joy Harjo's poetry, Dymit's score based on fairy tales and nursery rhymes, and Dawid's work based on William Demby's existential novel "The Catacombs."

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## PROGRAM NOTES

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### Xavier Beteta

This work is based on three poems by Guatemalan Quiché poet Humberto Ak'abal. The text is in Quiché, an indigenous Mayan language of Guatemala. The work deals with the idea of "Xib'nelab" (espantos, spirits). In the indigenous cultures of Guatemala, the spirits live hand in hand with the living, they appear and disappear, they bring messages and create meaning, this aspect of understanding the world fascinates me. With these songs, I try to convey the somberness and magical feeling of living in a world that believes in the supernatural.

The first song "Q'at q'ij" (Hour) starts with the opening of a door into a new world. This world introduces us into an indigenous celebration marked by rhythmic gestures that emulate drums. This celebration is all of a sudden interrupted by "the hour of the spirits" which has a somber tone that tries to encapsulate the feeling of a premonition. The second song "Xibinel" (Spirit) is a sort of canzonetta that depicts a Spirit or specter taking a bath in a pond. The constant eighth-notes in the rhythm depict the idea of water. The third song, "Xa ne k'ut" depicts our modern, fast world, where information changes constantly. Yet, within this modern world there is a message embedded in the roots, depicted at the end of the song, "not everything is lost, as long as there be spirits, it is a signal that there is something."

### Ethan Dymit

After graduating college I took on two separate jobs: one in the childrens section of my local library, and another teaching music to young kids at a small music school. As time went by, I wondered how I could share the music that I love to these kids in a way that they might relate to. This piece revolves around several children's songs, including "Skinnamarink," "Twinkle Twinkle," and "The Clean Up Song," and envelops them in jazz, classical, and pop flavors to bridge the gap between my interests and the burgeoning musical palettes of kids. It sets the text of child poet Hilda Conkling's "About My Dreams," a beautiful poem about the yearning to share her inner world with the children around her. Its also a message to my fellow adults to find our inner child and embrace the wonders of a world we haven't visited in a long time.

### Natasha Bogojevic

"Threnody of Hope" is a poignant musical tribute dedicated to the victims of gun violence. With firearms constituting a significant part of global civilian weapon ownership—over 393 million in the United States alone—and a tragic tally of over 48,000 firearm-related deaths in 2022, this composition seeks to bear witness to the pain, loss, and ongoing grief caused by mass shootings and gun violence.

Inspired by a desire to honor those whose lives have been unjustly taken, the piece employs the powerful symbolism of a well-known funeral poem, "Immortality," often associated with the words "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep." Rather than a religious mass, I wanted to create this work as a human and artistic reflection, utilizing the opening and closing stanzas as an arioso cantabile. At the same time, the middle section of the poem, whispered by the ensemble and the sprechstimme of the Baritone, represents the voices of victims.

Musically, "Threnody of Hope" intertwines textures and materials inspired by various cultural mourning practices, created through extensive research into global burial songs and poetic expressions of loss. Nonverbal sounds and melismatic singing are drawn from diverse mourning traditions worldwide, emphasizing the universal nature of grief and remembrance. By incorporating these elements, the work aims to reflect the rich tapestry of human mourning and to foster a sense of connection and healing.

The piece aspires to be a conduit for peace and hope, harnessing the transformative power of music to honor victims, support their families, and advocate against gun violence. It is a testament to the belief that, through art, we can uplift silent voices and foster societal change, aspiring ultimately to a future free from such tragedies.

The poem "Do not stand at my grave and weep" was written by Clare Harner in 1934. It was first published in the December 1934 issue of The Gypsy poetry magazine under the title "Immortality," with Harner's name and location, "Topeka, Kan." Despite this clear attribution, the poem has often been misattributed to Mary Elizabeth Frye. Frye, a florist from Baltimore, claimed authorship in 1983, stating she wrote it in 1932 to comfort a young German Jewish girl named Margaret Schwarzkopf, who was unable to visit her mother's grave. However, this claim has been disputed, and research has confirmed that Harner's 1934 publication predates Frye's assertion.

## Amos Gillespie

Musics was written for the Gillespie Chamber Quartet and represents a mix of contemporary music styles, all blended together like looking through a kaleidoscope. The idea is that there is no definition of what contemporary classical music is today other than that it uses acoustic instruments and is primarily written out. Stylistically, anything is possible and as long as the piece is fused together, it works!

## Angel Bat Dawid

The Catacombs is a pioneering novel by Black American author William Demby, published in 1965. Set in Rome during the early 1960s, it portrays Bill Demby, an African-American expatriate and art historian navigating his post-WWII experiences. The narrative follows his attempts to write a novel about Doris, an actress working as Elizabeth Taylor's handmaiden during the filming of Cleopatra. Doris's passionate affair with an Italian count becomes central to Demby's story, leading him on an existential exploration of truth and fiction amidst the decade's social upheaval.

Composer Angel Bat Dawid utilizes Sonata form, incorporating scales and patterns from Yusef Lateef's "Repository of Scales And Melodic Patterns". This fusion blends Egyptian motifs, Hollywood glamour, and jazz influences to pay homage to Black artistry and the golden age of cinema.

## Ephraim Champion

grace" began as a sketch that somehow felt like the word itself. I set it aside, but when asked to compose for Lakeshore Rush, I returned to it. Writing about grace felt essential — not because I believe one piece of music could fix our world, but because the need for grace feels all the more urgent, articulating something we desperately need amid a climate of division and unease in America today.

The piece sets "Grace" by Joy Harjo, the first Native American U.S. Poet Laureate (2019–2022) and a groundbreaking voice in American literature. Drawn from her 1990 collection In Mad Love and War, "Grace" weaves memory, hardship, and survival through rich imagery of wind, winter, animals, and laughter. The music mirrors these moments—stanza by stanza—shifting from tension to soaring lyricism, reflecting Harjo's experience as a Native woman navigating dispossession and resilience, ultimately discovering "grace" as a fragile promise of hope and balance.

While I can't relate to Harjo's exact experiences of struggle growing up as a Native American woman in the Midwest and being among the first Native writers to be accepted into Iowa's famed MFA program (along with her friend, Darlene "Wind", to which the poem is addressed to), the poem resonated with me as an African-American, also having come from dispossessed people, sometimes finding myself navigating the "stubborn memory" Harjo and Wind did in search for grace. My hope is that this work honors her poem and vision, inviting reflection to listeners, and hopefully comfort and optimism for a better future, a future in which we all think and extend more grace to others.

And even if the "next season" is "worse", I hope you don't give up that "epic search for grace." It's worth it to keep looking. As Harjo said:

We have seen it.

## XIB'NELAB'

---

Q'at q'ij  
Tik'il chaq'ab pa nik'aj kaj:  
q' at q'ij rech xibinelab

Hour  
Night stopped in the middle of the sky:  
hour of spirits.

-----  
Xibinel  
Chi uwach ri k'wa' rech saq kotz'ij,  
tik'ibal ri aq'ab chi uwach,  
jun xibinel katinik  
jun mul k'ut man xopan taj,  
xqachomaj che wene xkamik.

-----  
Spirit  
In the pond of white flowers,  
in the middle of the night,  
a spirit was taking a bath.  
One time, he didn't come  
we thought he had died.

-----  
Xa ne k'ut  
Man ronojel ta tzaquinaq,  
are we k'o xibinel  
retal che k'a k'o ri' ri jastaq...

-----  
As Long As  
Not everthing is lost;  
as long as there be spirits  
it is a signal that there is something...

- Text by Humberto Ak'abal

## ABOUT MY DREAMS

---

I find my pillow full of dreams.  
they have wings, they are quick, they are sweet.  
Help me tell my dreams  
to the other children,  
so that their bread may taste whiter,  
so that the milk they drink  
may make them think of meadows  
in the sky of stars.  
Help me give bread to the other children  
so they will remember what they knew  
before they came through the cloud.  
let me hold up my silver cup  
for them to drink,  
and tell them the sweetness  
of my dreams.

- Text by Hilda Conkling

## IMMORTALITY

---

Do not stand  
    By my grave, and weep.  
I am not there,  
    I do not sleep—  
I am the thousand winds that blow  
I am the diamond glints in snow  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle, autumn rain.  
As you awake with morning's hush,  
I am the swift, up-flinging rush  
Of quiet birds in circling flight,  
I am the day transcending night.  
Do not stand  
    By my grave, and cry—  
I am not there,  
    I did not die.

- Text by Clare Harner, The Gypsy, December 1934

## VOICE FROM THE CATACOMBS

---

This is a day in March,  
here in Rome  
It is 9'o Clock In the Morning.

The Sun has finally come out,  
and my Rotella Collages'  
have begun to dance  
like gorgeous jungle flowers.

I sit here at my desk,  
waiting for Doris to Come  
Doris to Come...

With her approval  
I'm writing a novel about her  
I know that she has spent the night  
with the Count  
and I am waiting for her to come tell me all about it in detail.  
In detail  
In detail  
In detail.....

In the mean-time I read my newspapers.  
Other people collect stamps  
or matchboxes,  
or raise chinchillas,  
or invent games based upon  
Euclidean logic.

I see no reason then,  
why all of my friends  
find it eccentric  
or a waste of valuable time,  
(time always time,  
and who among us knows what time  
always time really is?)

I experience  
so much pleasure in  
reading some fourteen or  
fifteen Italian  
newspapers every day.

At Last  
She has come!

Doris Bursts into the room  
like an explosion of  
sunflowers.

As always her astonishing night-club dancing vitality  
intimidates me.

In her stormy fresh- minted presences my SOUL  
shrivels and becomes clerk-like and shabby.

When Doris comes,  
the atomic balance of my dusty book-lined studio  
is upset:

my inner ear hears the crackling  
minute magnetic explosions  
My inner eye sees the colorless flames  
shimmering around her body..

Then it is that I am  
suddenly filled with

An almost overwhelming desire (ancestral?)  
to escape the uncomfortable present  
and take to the forest..  
take to the forest  
and hunt  
and be hunted.

Doris laughs and the dust particles  
giving aural substance to the sun rays  
churn and mill about  
like a storm of migrating birds.

She tosses her shawl on my table  
a newspaper falls to the floor.  
She plops down on my cracked leather armchair,  
and crosses her long forest tapered legs  
Doris Says...

"Oh these Italians!"  
These Italians men!  
...its all the fault of these Latin lovers  
It's all the fault of these Italian Men...!  
Italian men...!"

My heart has begun to pound,  
uncontrollably again  
and my voice rises shrilly as I add:

(Cadenza Recitative)  
"You spent the night with the Count, didn't you"  
Tell me about it-did something go wrong?"

"Did something go wrong?  
the professor want to know" she says cruelly.  
At the same time her Cleopatra eyes  
blaze furiously...  
blaze furiously...  
blaze furiously.

(Doris is one of Elizabeth Taylor's hand maidens  
in Twentieth Century Fox Cleopatra  
now being filmed in Rome  
and though on several occasions I have tried to persuade her not to,  
she insists on wearing the grotesquely exotic  
but I must admit for her strangely appropriate make up  
she wears for the cameras.

her hair-do too is authentically ancient Egyptian  
a black lacquered cone of spider webs  
a magical fertility symbol floating  
floating  
detachedly over the mask-like beauty of her  
enchanted nut brown monkey face  
monkey face..  
monkey face  
the mask-like beauty of her enchanted nut brown  
monkey face..)

- Text by William Demby  
Sonata for William Demby's Novel  
"The Catacombs"



## GRACE

---

I think of Wind and her wild ways the year we had nothing to lose and lost it anyway in the cursed country of the fox. We still talk about that winter, how the cold froze imaginary buffalo on the stuffed horizon of snowbanks. The haunting voices of the starved and mutilated broke fences, crashed our thermostat dreams, and we couldn't stand it one more time. So once again we lost a winter in stubborn memory, walked through cheap apartment walls, skated through fields of ghosts into a town that never wanted us, in the epic search for grace.

Like Coyote, like Rabbit, we could not contain our terror and clown our way through a season of false midnights. We had to swallow that town with laughter, so it would go down easy as honey. And one morning as the sun struggled to break ice, and our dreams had found us with coffee and pancakes in a truck stop along Highway 80, we found grace.

I could say grace was a woman with time on her hands, or a white buffalo escaped from memory. But in that dingy light it was a promise of balance. We once again understood the talk of animals, and spring was lean and hungry with the hope of children and corn.

I would like to say, with grace, we picked ourselves up and walked into the spring thaw. We didn't; the next season was worse. You went home to Leech Lake to work with the tribe and I went south. And, Wind, I am still crazy. I know there is something larger than the memory of a dispossessed people. We have seen it.

- Text by Joy Harjo (1951)  
For Darlene Wind and James Welch  
(From *In Mad Love and War* © 1990 by Joy Harjo. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.)

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Lakeshore Rush

Lakeshore Rush is an integral part of the Chicago community, the city they call home. Their priority is to present music by living composers and forgotten chamber music masterpieces. Over the past ten years the ensemble made appearances at the Chicago Symphony Center, WFMT – Chicago's classical radio station, Ear Taxi Festival, Chicago Cultural Center, the PianoForte Foundation, Fulton Street Collective, Garfield Park Conservatory, Constellation, and the Thirsty Ears Festival – Chicago's only classical music street festival. Lakeshore Rush is an active member of New Music Chicago, and has commissioned several works by local established composers, including works by Beth Bradfish, Seth Boustead, Griffin Candey, Kyong Mee Choi, Amos Gillespie, Jonathan Hannau, Marc Mellits, Logan Rutledge, Laura Schwendinger, and Roger Zare. Lakeshore Rush maintains an ongoing relationship with the Merit School of Music by providing special educational programming for audiences aged 5 – 14, and has presented workshops at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Other career highlights include premiering their first feature length film score written by composer Seth Boustead titled *Dreaming Grand Avenue* in 2020. Commissioning and premiering a film from Alina Markina and Mario Bosca, *Curved Silence* in 2022 – a cinematic music video of Lakeshore Rush performing *Curved Silence* by Beth Bradfish, featuring the City of Chicago as a narrative element of the film. Their debut album, *Lakeshore Rush: Moving Parts*, came out on Albany Records TROY 1896 in 2022. The ensemble was featured in Lawrence Axelrod's album *5X4: Quartets for Various Instruments*, released in 2023 on Ravello Records. A review in *Gramophone Magazine* described their performance as 'exquisitely rendered'.

The ensemble is named after a previously endangered grass that has recently revitalized the shores of Lake Michigan, and commits itself to environmental stewardship in its programming. Past seasons included partnerships with the Honnold Foundation, a nonprofit working to advance solar energy access all over the world, the Alliance for the Great Lakes, a nonprofit formed to conserve and restore the freshwater resources of the Great Lakes through public engagement and policy promotion, and for their 10th Anniversary Season "One Small World" they reached beyond environmental stewardship and connected with broader social issues, partnering with UNICEF where a portion of their ticket sales were donated to UNICEF at the conclusion of the season.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago's robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

## **Amos Gillespie**

Amos Gillespie's music has been described as "well-crafted work in the vein of American Classical" by Chicago Classical Review and "upbeat and modern, with accessible accents" by Jazz Weekly. His music has been heard on WFMT and WDCB in Chicago, WQXR in New York City and on PBS. His work spans a wide range of genres including chamber and orchestra concert music, jazz, as well as music for film, theater and dance. His music has been commissioned and performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Black Oak Ensemble, Kaia String Quartet, Attacca Woodwind Quintet, Yarn/Wire, Lakeshore Rush, Barkada Saxophone Quartet, Access Contemporary Music (ACM) and the Chicago Composers Orchestra, among others. He was recently awarded a Fulbright Specialist grant to teach and perform at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary. During this visit he performed music from his recent album, "Unstructured Time", along with other faculty originals and standards. Additionally, music he wrote that was inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Emil Bach House is now included in the PBS series, Songs About Buildings and Moods. As a saxophonist he has performed with Gustavo Cortinas, Angelo Hart, Joel Styzens and Taimur Sullivan, and has performed live on WFMT, WGN, the Pritzker Pavilion and the Green Mill among others. He has two minors in piano performance, a MM in composition and a BM in saxophone performance. He currently teaches at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

## **Ryan Alexander**

Ryan Alexander is an artist and activist whose work spans art song, musical theater, and film. A former special education teacher and college administrator, his creative projects are shaped by a commitment to education and social justice. In 2024, he premiered *The Tale of Bea*, a multimedia work written by Meg Huskin that honors his grandmother's life as a Jewish immigrant in a segregated Chicago. He originated the role of Dr. Penrose in the off-Broadway reading of *Wesley* and has performed with Peabody Opera Theater. Ryan recently launched Project Poetic Justice, a poetry and music program at the DC Jail, resulting in 10 new compositions for voice, piano, and synthesizer. A champion of new music, he performs with the Cerberus and Dualis Ensembles and will participate in the 2025 Source Song Festival. Ryan recently relocated to Chicago and looks forward to joining its vibrant musical community.

## **Angela De Venuto**

Praised for her versatility and range, lyric-soprano Angela De Venuto is emerging as a formidable presence in the world of Classical music. Some recent credits include, soloist in Beethoven No. 9 with the Lake Forest Civic Orchestra, Mozart concert soloist with The Intermezzi Ensemble, world premiere of Flo in *The Eleanors* by Jodi Goble, her role debut as Musetta (*La Bohème*) with The Savannah Voice Festival, and as the title role of Alice Riley (Michael Ching) under the baton of Andrew Bisantz. This season, she will make her debut with the Opera Festival of Chicago covering the role of Fiora in Montemezzi's rarely performed *L'Amore dei Tre Re* and in concert. Angela has performed as soloist under the baton of Maestro Marin Alsop singing *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* by Villa-Lobos, with Ensemble 20+, the Metropolis Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul's Chamber Orchestra of Evanston, and DePaul University's Symphony Orchestra.

## **Christina Bernardoni**

Chicago mezzo-soprano Christina Bernardoni's opera credits include: Aunt Cecilia March (*Little Women*), Ruth (*The Pirates of Penzance*), La Voix (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Elizabeth Proctor (*The Crucible*), La Badessa (*Suor Angelica*), The Announcer (*Gallantry*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) Zita (Gianni Schicchi), Olga (Eugene Onegin), and Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*). Concert soloist credits include: the little match girl passion (David Lang), *The Gonzales Cantata* (Melissa Dunphy) singing Orrin Hatch, *Messiah* (G.F. Händel), *Requiem* (Maurice Duruflé), *Gloria* (Antonio Vivaldi), and *Stabat Mater* (G.B. Pergolesi). Christina recorded a new opera by Chicago composer Paul Scherer where she originated the role of Mrs. Memorall in *In Venice*. Christina gave North American premieres of two pieces: *Artemisia*, by British composer Paul Ayres and *Hum*, by Swiss composer Marc Neufeld. Additionally Christina has received numerous awards for competitions and scholarships, including the American Prize for Professional Women in Opera and the London Opera Guild.

## **Emily Venturella**

Emily Venturella is a soprano currently pursuing her DMA at the University of Illinois, under the tutelage of Professor Yvonne Redman. Emily earned her Master of Music degree from the University of Kansas where she studied with Drs. Julia Broxholm and Genaro Mendez. Emily also holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and attended the Boston Conservatory. As a performer, Emily specializes in art song and chamber music. An avid performer of new works, she premiered the role of Julianne in Landlocked Opera's production of *The Murderess* in 2023, which subsequently became a finalist for the 2024 American Prize in Opera. She has also worked extensively with Felipe Hoyos-González in the creation of works for computer and soprano. Together, the two are founding members of the Huitaca Ensemble, a recent winner of the Presser Graduate Music Award.

## Julian Terrell Otis

Julian Terrell Otis a creative vocalist, improviser and composer is known for bringing fresh perspective, nuance, and “high drama” to the contemporary music world. He has performed with the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Imani Winds, Nicole Mitchell’s Black Earth Ensemble, and Steven Schick. Most notably he created the role of Male Vocalist in George E. Lewis’ Opera Afterword and is exploring the vocal music of Julius Eastman. Julian’s goal is to integrate music, dramatic instincts and experiential elements to create moments for contemplation and social action amongst his audiences. He is so grateful to be apart of Angel Bat Dawid’s Tha Brothahood, an ensemble dedicated to continuing the legacy of Great Black Music.

## Natasha Bogojevic

Natasha Bogojevic has been named a competitive Fulbright Scholar award recipient for the 2024-2025 academic year. She will spend the year sharing her expertise internationally, teaching and researching at the University of Arts, Serbia. Natasha, an award-winning and internationally acclaimed composer and pianist, has earned global recognition for her highly original, passionate, and imaginative pieces. Her music, which spans symphony orchestras, various chamber ensembles, choral and vocal pieces, multimedia works, ballet, and scores for theatre and film, has captivated audiences worldwide. Notably, she showcased her versatility by appearing as an actress and composer in the recent film *Gray in White and Black* (Amazon Prime Video). She has received numerous awards, including the National Public Radio, International Rostrum of Composers, Festival Expresiones Contemporaneas, Opera Contempo, Joseph Jefferson, and New Music Chicago, and received honorable mentions at the prestigious USA MACRO Competition, American Prize Competition, and NYC Contemporary Music Symposium at Columbia University. Not only a prolific composer and pianist, Natasha has also dedicated herself to educating generations of musicians in Europe and the U.S. She has been a part of the musicianship faculty at the DePaul University School of Music since 2003. Born and educated in the former Yugoslavia, she started her teaching career as a professor of composition at the University of Arts in Belgrade. In 1995, during the brutal civil war and break up of Yugoslavia, she immigrated to the U.S. where she continued to pursue her musical journey. Her music has been commissioned and presented at major festivals and concerts on four continents. Notable recent performances include ISCM World New Music Days 2024 in Faroe Islands (Lapland Orchestra), “Ex/Odus of Joy” – chamber opera commissioned by SKGG (Slovenian Chamber Musical Theatre), based on the story “Diary of a Migrant” (Ljubljana, Slovenia), European Festival of Experimental Music (led by Pierre Schaeffer), IRC (International Rostrum of Composers, Paris, France), Beyond Biography, Gaudeamus, New Music in Middleburg, STIFT (Netherlands); International New Music Festivals (Slovakia), Concerts for Peace (Japan); Music Forum (Ukraine); Arrai Music Festival (Canada); Versicherungskammer Bayern (Germany), Mikhail Shemiakin Foundation in St. Petersburg, DOM in Moscow, (Russia), International Festival of Music & Visual Arts «BLACK BOX» in Tashkent, (Uzbekistan), Electroacoustic Festival in Athens (Greece), Music and Silent Film Festival and Composers Concordance in New York, The Chicago AIDS Quilt Songbook, Annual International Women’s Electroacoustic Project, Portland Chamber Music Festival and Princeton Symphony. Her biography appeared in several books, including “European Musical Heritage” by Jim Samson, “Parallel Histories” by Dr. Ivana Medic, “And the World of Woman in Classical Music” by Dr. Anne K. Gray.

## Ephraim Champion

Ephraim Champion is an active composer (stage & screen) and musician based in Chicago, Illinois. His music has been praised as “strongly individual,” “compelling,” and “distinctive” by the Chicago Classical Review. In 2021, Gaudete Brass premiered Ephraim’s work, *Scenes from South Shore*, Chicago, at the Ear Taxi Music Festival in Chicago. The following year, Ephraim showcased his talents with *Humanhood*, premiered by Constellation Men’s Ensemble for their fifth annual NOVA concert series. In 2023, Ephraim’s promising career was solidified when he was selected as the second annual Hearing in Color/La Caccina Young Composer-in-Residence. During this residency, he wrote *All Things Sublime* and *Colossal* for the virtuosic women’s acapella ensemble, La Caccina, and *A Stone of Hope (Martin’s Song)* for the Music Institute of Chicago’s annual MLK Celebration Concert, featuring the talents of multi-Grammy nominated pianist, Marta Aznavoorian. The same year, he joined Slightly American Productions as their resident film composer, scoring the short films *Girls in the Back of the Club* and *Rejection is God’s Protection*. Ephraim’s music made its international debut with the world premiere of his *Suite* for the F Horn & Tenor Saxophone at the 2023 World Saxophone Congress in Spain. Shortly after, The Yamaha Tuba Duo (featuring Tuba extraordinaire, Sérgio Carolino) commissioned Ephraim to write his next work, *The Spectacle*, which premiered in Fukuoka, Japan in March of 2024. In August, Ephraim’s piece, *Vicariously Through You*, was recorded as part of the upcoming *Project Encore, Vol. 2* album, commissioned by world-renowned classical saxophonist, Timothy McAllister. Outside of music, Ephraim enjoys writing, watching movies/TV, and spending time with his amazing wife, Kianti, and their two adorable Yorkies, Heath & Ginger.

## Ethan Dymit

Ethan Dymit (b. 2001) is a composer, guitarist, and arranger from Wheaton, Illinois, known for his dynamic and contemporary sound. His music draws from across genres, eras, and traditions to create a sound that engages with the past and looks to the future. He has studied composition under such names as Carlos Carrillo, Reynold Tharp, and Jim Pugh, and has written for performers like the Mivos Quartet, Adib Young, Ritual Action, the UIUC Concert Jazz Band, and the Blueshift Big Band. He has studied guitar with Larry Gray and has performed across the Midwest in various groups and genres, and currently teaches guitar privately. Ethan obtained his Bachelor's in Music Composition from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. When not writing or performing music, Ethan loves cooking, taking care of his plants, and watching science fiction films.

## Xavier Beteta

Guatemalan-American composer Xavier Beteta was born in Guatemala City where he studied piano at the National Conservatory with Consuelo Medinilla. At age 18, he was awarded the first-prize at the Augusto Ardenois National Piano Competition and third-prize at the Rafael Alvarez Ovalle Composition Competition in Guatemala. He continued his piano studies in the United States with Argentinean pianist Sylvia Kersenbaum and with Ukrainian pianist Sergei Polusmiak. He also attended master-classes with pianists Massimiliano Damerini and Daniel Rivera in Italy. Xavier has performed in different venues in the United States, Europe and Latin America and has been a soloist with the Guatemalan National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Augusto Ardenois, and the Camellia Symphony in Sacramento. As a composer, Xavier did most of his studies privately with Rodrigo Asturias. In 2013 he won the Silver Medal at the fourth International Antonin Dvorak Composition Competition in Prague. Xavier studied music theory at the University of Cincinnati where his thesis was ranked no. 4 in the National Best-Seller Dissertation List. He obtained his Ph.D. in composition at the University of California San Diego where he studied with Roger Reynolds, Philippe Manoury, and Chinari Ung. His compositions have been performed in diverse festivals such as Festival Musica in Strasbourg, France, Darmstadt Composition Summer Courses in Germany, June in Buffalo, SICPP in Boston, Opera Theater Festival of Lucca, Italy and by ensembles such as Accroche Note, Ensemble SoundScape, Ensemble Signal conducted by Brad Lubman, UCSD Palimpsest, the Mivos Quartet, Formosa Quartet, The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players under Steven Schick, the Guatemalan National Symphony and the Camellia Symphony. Xavier also holds a law degree from Salmon P. Chase College of Law and his diverse interests include art law, copyright, poetry, and tango. He is currently an Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Wheaton College and is the Vice-President of New Music Chicago and part of the board of the Chicago Symphony Latino Alliance.

## Angel Bat Dawid

Angel Bat Dawid is a Black American composer, bandleader, educator, DJ, recording artist, producer, and multi-instrumentalist. Her acclaimed debut album, *\*The Oracle\** (2019), examines contemporary Black life and has received accolades from leading publications including Pitchfork, Rolling Stone, and The Guardian. Renowned for her dynamic performances, Angel has premiered and composed significant works such as "Requiem for Jazz" and "Peace: A Suite for Yoko Ono's Skylanding." She leads the ensemble "Tha Brothahood" and the all-women's group Sistazz of the Nitty Gritty, with their live album featured in NPR Music's "Best Albums of 2020." As an educator, she teaches her "Great Black Music" course at Old Town School of Folk. She is also clarinetist with Damon Locks' Black Monument Ensemble, and hosts a monthly show on NTS Radio. Honored in Pitchfork's "25 Next" list in 2022 and named The Chicago Tribune's "Chicagoan of the Year," Angel has graced stages at prestigious events such as Newport Jazz Festival, Montreal Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall and festivals in Europe & Japan. She also scored for season 2 of Terence Nance HBO series "Random Acts of Flyness", highlighting her impactful contributions to contemporary music. Additionally, Angel serves as the 2024 Artist in Residence at Northwestern University's Black Arts Consortium. "Music is a language, you see, a universal language." - Sun Ra

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Kehrein Center for the Arts  
5628 West Washington Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60644

ANCHOR PERFORMANCE

Ear Taxi Festival and Chicago Fringe Opera present Soper, Baiocchi, and Barnes

Kate Soper | *Here Be Sirens* (excerpt) ^  
Regina Harris Baiocchi † | *No One's Child* ^  
Jasmine Barnes | *On My Mind*

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer  
^ Midwest Premiere Performance

Texts will be projected onstage

PERFORMERS:

Chicago Fringe Opera

Directed by George Cederquist

Felicia Patton	Benjamin Burney	Katherine Petersen	Elizabeth Shuman
Dana Campbell	Juwon Tyrel Perry	Jonathan Zeng	Molly Clementz
Jade Dashá	Dorian McCall	Timothy Bostwick	Emily Cox
Eunice Ayodele	Adonis Claybourne	Sarah Thompson Johansen	Ashley McKinstry

Music Director & Conductor	Catherine O'Shaughnessy
Stage Director   <i>Here Be Sirens</i>	Katherine Coy
Stage Director   <i>On My Mind</i> & <i>No One's Child</i>	Tor Campbell
Costume Designer	Madeleine Shows
Prop Designer	Annaleigh Stone
Lighting Designer	Michelle Torishnyak
Stage Manager	Jo Chalhoub
Assistant Stage Manager	Nina Kasman
Pianists	Elsa Harris and Otto Vogel

In this compelling triptych of short operas, Chicago Fringe Opera brings together three vital and visionary voices in contemporary music: Kate Soper, Regina Harris Baiocchi, and Jasmine Barnes. Each composer offers a distinct lens into the human condition—through myth, memory, and emotional resilience—resulting in a dynamic evening of theatrical storytelling that exemplifies the 2025 Ear Taxi Festival theme: The Composer's Voice.

Kate Soper's "Here Be Sirens" is a bold and genre-blurring meditation on myth, desire, and female agency. Blending modern opera with spoken word and philosophical inquiry, the work reimagines the sirens of ancient lore as self-aware women grappling with their voices, their fate, and their power.

Regina Harris Baiocchi's "No One's Child" is a poignant exploration of identity, abandonment, and grace. Baiocchi's music, rich with spiritual and gospel influences, uplifts a story rooted in personal struggle, yet resonant with universal emotion and the search for belonging.

Jasmine Barnes' "On My Mind" closes the evening with an intimate reflection on friendship, and the power of community. With lyricism steeped in jazz and soul traditions, Barnes crafts a work that is both tender and emotionally resonant—reminding us that healing often begins in connection.

Together, these three operas challenge, captivate, and celebrate the diversity of compositional expression in our time. This performance is a triumphant affirmation that the future of opera is expansive, inclusive, and boldly female.

## PROGRAM NOTE

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### Here Be Sirens

"Here Be Sirens" is a phrase used as cartographical notation on medieval maps, scrawled over uncharted water to signify dangerous unknowns. It is also the name of an opera in which these creatures struggle to investigate their own convoluted origins, desires, sorrows and fears through the one medium they control utterly: song.

### No One's Child

Regina Harris Baiocchi's No One's Child is a one-act chamber opera about Harlem Renaissance literati Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Charlotte "Godmother" Mason. Baiocchi wrote the libretto and music for 7 roles, 13 arias, 2 poems, dance, SATB choir, piano, cello, and drums. No One's Child features a play, "High Time," within the opera. Baiocchi's opera received support from National Endowment for the Arts, Lila Wallace Foundation, and Art Institute of Chicago. This 30-minute, Ear Taxi Festival performance includes 7 arias. © 2025: RHB, ASCAP; full opera: circa 75-90 minutes.

## BIOGRAPHIEES

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### Chicago Fringe Opera

Called Chicago's "alt-opera company" (John von Rhein, Chicago Tribune), Chicago Fringe Opera (CFO), now in its twelfth season, is dedicated to presenting innovative vocal works with an emphasis on contemporary music, engaging with a diverse Chicago community through intimate and immersive performance experiences, and empowering local artists.

### Kate Soper

Kate Soper is a composer, performer, and writer whose work explores the integration of drama and rhetoric into musical structure, the slippery continuums of expressivity, intelligibility and sense, and the wonderfully treacherous landscape of the human voice. Described by The New Yorker as "one of the great originals of her generation," her large-scale works include the monodramas "Voices from the Killing Jar" and "IPSA DIXIT" and the operas "Here Be Sirens," "The Romance of the Rose," and "The Hunt." She is a co-director of the Wet Ink, a new music ensemble dedicated to seeking out adventurous music across aesthetic boundaries.

### Regina Harris Baiocchi

Regina Harris Baiocchi writes notes and words to fill vessels called music, poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Regina is driven by her curiosity to create art that is informed by research, speaks to diverse audiences, and moves people.

Regina's catalogue includes compositions for woodwinds, brass, percussion, strings, orchestra, keyboard, multi-media, choral, sacred, jazz, opera, art songs, and pop tunes. Her music has been performed by members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Philharmonic, US Army Band, American Guild of Organists, Chicago Brass Quintet, Gaudete Brass Quintet, Milwaukee Brass Quintet, Lincoln Trio, Avalon String Quartet, and other acclaimed artists.

### Jasmine Barnes

Jasmine Arielle Barnes stands at the forefront of contemporary music as an Emmy Award-winning composer and celebrated vocalist whose influence resonates across the globe. Renowned for her extraordinary skill in vocal composition, Barnes navigates a rich tapestry of genres, formats, and instrumentations, creating a unique and compelling musical presence.

Barnes' recent projects showcase her creative synergy with Poet Laureate Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton. Highlights include the highly anticipated world premiere of *She Who Dared* (Chicago Opera Theater), as well as the world premieres of *On My Mind* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis) and *Revise?* (Apollo Chamber Players). Additionally, Barnes' *Kinsfolk*, a concerto for wind quartet, debuted at Carnegie Hall before touring select renowned symphonies across the nation. Most recently, Barnes created a composition for wind quintet, commissioned by Patagonia Winds, as well as a choral and orchestral composition set to Langston Hughes' texts, commissioned by the Seattle Choral Company.



## Deborah D.E.E.P Mouton

Deborah D.E.E.P Mouton is an award-winning literary artist, director, performer, and the first Black Poet Laureate of Houston, TX. She authored *Newsworthy* (Bloomsday Literary, 2019) (translated into German, *Berichtenswert*, Elif Verlag, 2020), *Black Chameleon* (Henry Holt & Co., 2023), which won Best Nonfiction Book through the Texas Institute of Letters (2024). Mouton contributed writings for *Glamour*, *Texas Monthly*, and ESPN's *Andscape*.

This 3-time TedX presenter and international performer has been the keynote speaker for the Texas Library Association and the Texas Association for Literacy and Education, among others performing for crowds upwards of 37,000 people - including the Leipzig in Autumn Festival as an ambassador for the City of Houston.

A former Resident Artist with American Lyric Theater, Rice University, and the Houston Museum of African American Culture, her most recent works include a children's book (*Hush Hush Hurricane*, Kokila) and an opera at The Kennedy Center.

## MOLLY CLEMENTZ

Ensemble | On My Mind, Peitho | Here Be Sirens

Described by Opera Today as possessing a “wonderfully rich tone, gleaming top notes, and a vibrant lower register,” mezzo-soprano Molly Clementz brings versatility and depth to both classical and contemporary repertoire. She has performed nationally and across Europe, with companies including Pacific Opera Project, Opera Santa Barbara, and Chicago City Opera. A former Mosher Studio Artist, her roles include *Mercédès* (*Carmen*), *La Ciesca* (*Gianni Schicchi*), and *Cherubino* (*Le nozze di Figaro*). In the realm of new music, she has premiered works by Paul Scherer, Joseph Turrin, and Jeremy Gill. Based in Chicago, Molly is a standing company member with the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company and the Lira Ensemble, artist-in-residence at Loyola University. She recently appeared as the alto soloist in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* and will reprise one of her favorite roles, *Hänsel* in *Hänsel und Gretel*, this summer with Chicago City Opera.

## SARAH THOMPSON JOHANSEN

Ensemble | On My Mind, Phaino | Here Be Sirens

Sarah Thompson Johansen is a Chicago-based soprano and actor whose work spans opera, theater, and experimental performance. Local/regional performances include work with Thompson Street Opera Company, Skylight Music Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre, Facility Theatre, and 5th Wave Collective. Recent appearances include *The Soul* in Rosáa Crean's *The Harbingers* and the “Greek Chorus” quartet in Nkeiru Okoye's *We've Got Our Eye on You*. Passionate about new music and adventurous storytelling, Sarah delights in collaborative, boundary-blurring projects. Apart from performing, she is an aspiring urban agriculturalist and chicken keeper. Sarah is delighted to be making her debut(s) with Chicago Fringe Opera and the Ear Taxi Festival.

## ELIZABETH SHUMAN

Polyxo | Here Be Sirens

Elizabeth Shuman is excited to join the Chicago Fringe Opera cast of *Here Be Sirens* as the slightly unhinged Siren Polyxo. She's that soprano who networks like it's her job and has a knack for finding herself in new works. Recent gigs include playing Annie in *Annie* and *Joshua*, debuting a baroque aria about the Kennedy Expressway at The Green Mill (yes, really), and her favorite role yet—Senator Patrick Leahy in *The Gonzales Cantata*. Originally from Colby, Kansas (motto: “The Oasis on the Plains,” which worked better before they added giant aluminum palm trees to the truck stop), Elizabeth now lives in Chicago with her kids and a bunch of chickens her kids named after Greek goddesses.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY



Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago's robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

## **DORIAN MCCALL**

Langston | No One's Child

Dorian McCall, bass-baritone, has been mentioned by the New York Times for “his rich lows” and by Musical America as “[benefitting] from his freely produced bass-baritone and his winning stage presence.” Noted for his vibrant and robust timbre, the dexterity of McCall's instrument also lends itself well to Baroque and Bel Canto. This season has included a return to ensemble work with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Constellation Men's Ensemble, Chicago Symphony Chorus, and the William Ferris Chorale. Last season, “the star of the show was unquestionably the magnificent Dorian McCall as the Pirate King. This comes as no surprise as last year he was an amazing Sir Despard Murgatroyd in Ruddigore. McCall's portfolio is enviable: he is a fine singer, actor, comedian and dancer, combining these skills to create a performance that was engaging, flamboyant and hilarious... McCall's attractive and plump voice has a rich, dark resonance that rests beautifully on the ears.” That and a debut as Colonel Pickering in *My Fair Lady* kept Dorian particularly occupied.

Stay tuned to @finally\_Dorian for news regarding recitals and cabarets in the Chicagoland area; He is excited to contribute to the rich artistic landscape on his own terms! He has performed for several seasons with the Chicago Symphony, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Music of the Baroque, and Grant Park Music Festival choruses and currently studies with mezzo-soprano Victoria Livengood.

## **FELICIA PATTON**

Zora | No One's Child

(From her website) Felicia hails from the South side of Chicago. Growing up with blues, jazz, and gospel all around her, it's no wonder she was drawn to music. She honed her chops in churches, and schools, earning two Master's degrees in music. She did all of this while paying her dues singing at venues all around Chicago and within the United States.

## **KATHERINE PETERSEN**

Charlotte | No One's Child

Katherine Petersen performs regularly with Lyric Opera Unlimited, Folks Operetta, Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, and Chicago Opera Theater. Recent roles include Gonda van der Loo, *The Girl in the Train*; Rose Maybud, *Ruddigore*; Margot, *Die Kathrin*; Bessie Throckmorton, *Merrie England*; Brigitta, *Iolanta*; Contessa, *Marriage of Figaro*; Sylva Varescu, *Csardas Princess*. Concert repertoire highlights include *Les Illuminations*, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Knoxville: Summer 1915*, *Bachianas brasileiras No.5*, and *Messiah*. Katherine is a member of Decho Ensemble, specializing in the performance of 21st Century repertoire for Voice and Saxophone. Their self-titled album can be found on Youtube, Apple Music, and Spotify.

## **EUNICE AYODELE**

Lyric | On My Mind

Mezzo-Soprano Eunice Ayodele received her M.M in Vocal Performance from Bowling Green State University where she studied under Myra Merritt and her B.A. from Aurora University. With over a decade of experience in performance, she is at home in a range of styles, including opera, musical theatre, jazz, rock, R&B, and blues. In addition to performance, Eunice has been teaching voice and piano for several years now. She believes music training should take place in a setting in which the student can learn about them self and about their music ability. In her teaching, Ms. Ayodele guides her students to discover their unique sound, technique, and theory through a variety of exercises and musical styles. By the end of a student's time with her, she hopes they not only discover what their unique sound is, but also who they are as a musician and a person.

Ms. Ayodele is an active soloist and has recently finished work with the Toledo Opera Chorus. Some of her operatic roles include: Ino in *Semele*, Kathrine from *L'ivrogne corrigé*, Carmen from *Carmen*, and Dido from *Dido and Aeneas*. Her musical theatre roles include: Motormouth Mabel from *Hairspray*, Matron Mama Morton from *Chicago*, and The Witch from *Into the Woods*.

## **BENJAMIN BURNEY**

Ensemble | No One's Child

The tenor, native of Youngstown, Ohio, has performed locally in his hometown and internationally from the Caribbean Islands to Estonia.

Benjamin was a Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship recipient allowing him to study opera in Milan, Italy. He was named a winner of the Montpelier Arts Center Recital Competition, and a First Prize Winner for the Charleston International Music Competition.

Benjamin is pursuing his Professional Diploma in Opera at Roosevelt University CCPA. He received his M.M. Vocal Performance degree from Roosevelt University CCPA, and his B.M. Vocal Performance degree from Anderson University (IN).

## **ADONIS CLAYBOURNE**

Ensemble | No One's Child

Adonis Claybourne (he/him) is a man who has always wanted to be a performer ever since he was a wee boy. Ever since his first musical in high school he discovered his passion for musical theatre! You might've seen him recently in Uptown Highland Park's Hairspray (Duane/Ensemble).

You may have also seen him as : Dr. Scott (Rocky Horror) Ricky/Ensemble (Wedding Singer) and Gangster #2 (Drowsy Chaperone) all from the company Surging Film & Theatrics! And some of his favorite credits also include: Jack Stone (Reefer Madness, Towle Theatre) El Gallo (The Fantasticks, Beverly Arts Center) Sonny LaTerri (Grease, Beverly Arts Guild) and Tommy Boy (Newsies, Oak Lawn Park District Theatre). Adonis wants to give big special thanks to his friends both old and new for being so supportive and loving!

## **JADE DASHÁ**

Lyric | On My Mind

This year, soprano Jade Dashá has been seen in production with Thompson Street Opera (Pemphredo: We've Got Our Eye On You-Okoye) and Wilmington Concert Opera (Sounds Like Pearls- virtual recital). In 2023, Jade was a Smith Young Artist with Cedar Rapids Opera singing Miss Jones in the world-premier of Charlie and the Wolf, which toured local schools. She has also had the pleasure of working with Opera Steamboat and Chicago Fringe Opera, and was a 2023 Studio Artist with Central City Opera. In Summer 2022, Jade was a studio artist with Opera Neo covering Arminda in Mozart's La Finta Giardiniera and Dalinda in Handel's Ariodante. Previously, Jade covered Grace Alumond in Chicago Opera Theater's world-premier production of Quamino's Map, and sang Dew Fairy in Evanston Chamber Opera's production of Hansel and Gretel.

Jade has been recognized with several awards, including being named an Encouragement Winner at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Illinois District in 2020. She additionally received the Casa Italia Josephine L. LiPuma Vocal Scholarship and the Musicians Club of Women Farwell Trust Award in the same year. During her undergraduate years, Jade was selected as the 2018-2019 Mason Young Artist with the Imperial Symphony Orchestra.

When Jade is not singing she might be; researching various esoteric topics, looking at pictures of cats, doing yoga, thrifting, cooking, barista-ing or chatting with her loved ones.

## **JUWON TYREL PERRY**

Ensemble | No One's Child

Juwon Tyrel Perry (he/him/his) is a Chicago transplant by way of Arkansas and a proud member of The ACADEMY at Black Box Acting. Recent credits include: Ragtime and Billy Elliot (Music Theatre Works); Jeffrey and Marcus, and the Secret of Sweet (Pride Arts); Madagascar (Marriot Lincolnshire); Sugar in our Wounds (First Floor Theater); At The Wake of A Dead Drag Queen (Story Theatre); and Ragtime (Griffin Theatre). Juwon also holds a BFA from Columbia College Chicago in Musical Theatre Performance.

## DANA CAMPBELL

Zora | No One's Child, Melodee | On My Mind

Soprano Dana Campbell made her professional debut with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra and has since been a guest artist with Virtuosi di Toronto, Toronto Classical Singers and Talisker Players, and a featured artist with the West Suburban Symphony, Southwest Symphony Orchestra, and Kenosha Symphony Orchestra.

With Toronto Operetta Theatre, she sang the title role in the Canadian première of Gonzalo Roig's zarzuela *Cecilia Valdes*. For the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ms. Campbell appeared in their revered productions of *Porgy and Bess*, and understudied the role of Addie Parker in their production of *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*. With Maestro Robert Treviño and his Millennium Chamber Players, she undertook, among others, the roles of Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Mimi in *La Bohème*. Ms. Campbell appeared in concert in Austria, under the baton of Edoardo Müller, and reprised Mimi in Italy for Maestro Joseph Rescigno. Ms. Campbell is a member of the celebrated Adrian Dunn Singers, and performs frequently with the South Shore Opera Company of Chicago, including turns in two of that company's acclaimed productions: as Rachel Ross in *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, and as Claire in *Troubled Island*. Other operatic favourites include Donna Elvira and Countess Almaviva, both for Summer Opera Lyric Theatre, Micaëla for American Chamber Opera, and Violetta for South Shore. Ms. Campbell is thrilled and honoured to have worked with her friend and colleague Khary "K. F. Jacques" Laurent, singing the role of Maddalena on his exciting OperaTronic project: *L'Assassino*, for Resonance Works Pittsburgh.

Fizz & Ginger marks Ms. Campbell's third engagement with Chicago Fringe Opera, previously appearing on the company's staged recital program *Chicago Currents*, and as understudy in Jake Heggie's *Two Remain: Out of Darkness*, taking the stage on opening night as Krystyna Zywulska.

## TIMOTHY BOSTWICK

Ensemble | On My Mind

Timothy Bostwick is a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in Performance and Literature with a cognate in Musicology. His dissertation, *The Nightingale's Voice: Exploring Jenny Lind as a Proto-feminist*, explores the famed singer as an example of a woman that transcended societal norms in Victorian England. In addition, Mr. Bostwick has been awarded the Kate Neal Kinley Fellowship.

Additionally, as an avid performer, Mr. Bostwick, baritone, has been applauded as an "impressive and impactful voice" in *Hansel und Gretel* and described in his role as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* as "Pure comic joy." Recently, he returned to his alma mater, Drake University, to perform the title role in Verdi's *Falstaff* and the titular role in Gianni Schicchi at Eastern Illinois University. Having lived in New York City, he performed roles including Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Schaunard in *La Bohème* with Amore Opera and Germont in *La Traviata*. Once back in the Midwest, he has continued to perform including Chucho in *Lucrezia (Bolcom)*, Father in *Hansel and Gretel* and recently debuted the role of Saul in the new opera, *The Psalm of Silence*. This summer he will make his debut at Opera Quad Cities as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*\* and at Landlocked Opera as Sherlock Holmes in *A Certain Madness*.

Mr. Bostwick also has a busy recital schedule, next year he will return to Drake University to perform a Clara Schumann recital to celebrate her life and contributions to music.\* Previously, he has performed Wolf's *Italianisches Liederbuch* and his American Art Song recital, *Songs of Democracy*. Other roles include: Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Barone di Trombonok in *Il Viaggio a Reims*, Top in *The Tender Land*, Marullo in *Rigoletto*, and the title roles in Gianni Schicchi and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He returned to Des Moines as Escamillo in *Carmen* to the Opera Project Des Moines and as Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Sugar Creek Opera.

In addition, Mr. Bostwick holds degrees from Drake University and The Conservatory of Music of Brooklyn College.

## JONATHAN ZENG

Ensemble | On My Mind

An avid proponent for arts education and vocal instruction, Jonathan has served as an adjunct faculty member in the Preparatory Department at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and has maintained a robust private voice studio. He teaches voice at Loyola Academy on the north side of Chicago. Jonathan received a BA in Music Education from the School of Music at Western IL University and an MM in vocal performance from the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music (CCM). For more info, visit [www.JonathanZeng.com](http://www.JonathanZeng.com) or follow on Instagram: @jonathan.zeng

## CATHERINE O'SHAUGHNESSY

Music Director | Here Be Sirens, On My Mind, No One's Child

Catherine O'Shaughnessy is a rising orchestra and opera conductor in the United States and abroad. Her performances have earned rave reviews from the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Classical Review ("great skill, alertness and sensitivity"), and Vocal Arts Chicago ("resourcefulness...scrappiness and...fierce concentration"). Avidly committed to Chicago's dynamic musical scene, she is currently the Creative Director and Conductor of Chicago Fringe Opera as well as the Assistant Conductor of Opera Festival of Chicago. Further, Catherine has appeared conducting productions at Chicago Opera Theater, DePaul University, and North Park University. In 2020, she proudly helped produce the Decameron Opera Coalition's *Tales From a Safe Distance*—winner of the "Best Collaboration" award from 360° of Opera—which makes innovative use of technology to reimagine this art for challenging new circumstances.

As a guest conductor, Catherine made her New York debut conducting Antonio Salieri's *La Cifra* with the dell'Arte Opera Ensemble. She also led a production of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in Freiberg, Germany (Mittelsächsisches Theater) and conducted *Don Giovanni* and *La Traviata* in Orvieto, Italy (Teatro Mancinelli). In 2013 she conducted the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra at a sold-out performance in Tchaikovsky Hall, and in 2017 she guest-conducted the Piccadilly Symphony Orchestra (Manchester, UK). Catherine holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral and opera conducting from Arizona State University, where she was a student of William Reber and Timothy Russell.

## KATHERINE COYL

Stage Director | Here Be Sirens

Katherine (Kat) Coyl is a professional intimacy and fight director based out of Chicago. Her work includes multiple world premieres in both opera and dance. Her most recent work includes *Lenora* (Intimacy and Fight Director) at Chicago Opera Theater, *Breaking the Wave* (Assistant Director and Intimacy Coordinator) at Detroit Opera; *The Nose* (Intimacy and Fight Director) at Chicago Opera Theater; *Carmen* (Intimacy and Act 4 Intimate Violence Choreography) at Des Moines Metro Opera; *Memoirs of Jazz in the Alley* (Intimacy Director) at South Chicago Dance Theatre; *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turning* (Intimacy and Fight Director) at Chicago Opera Theater; and *Athena* (Urbanite Theatre). Kat also serves as adjunct faculty at DePaul University and CCPA at Roosevelt.

## TOR CAMPBELL

Stage Director | On My Mind & No One's Child

Tor Campbell is a director, choreographer, producer, and educator committed to creating theatre that uplifts, challenges, and heals. A proud native of Milwaukee, Tor recently completed his MFA in Stage Directing at Northwestern University, where his thesis *Directing with Heart: The Pursuit of Goodness through Theater* examined empathy, activism, and moral integrity as guiding forces in the creative process.

## MADELEINE SHOWS

Costume Designer

Madeleine (she/her) is a costume designer and technician whose recent credits include *Infernal* and *Prick* at Proboscis (costume design), *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* at The Story (assistant design), and *Circus Quixote* and *Iraq, but Funny* at Lookingglass Theatre Company (crafts and stitching). She is a lay-medievalist and an expert in the esoteric. Hire her to design your cult's ceremonial robes.

## ANNALEIGH STONE

Prop Designer

Annaleigh Stone is a prop designer and performer specializing in the DIY theater and comedy scenes. From recreating the Power Rangers cockpit to building cardboard toilets, no budget is too small for the bounds of her creativity. Credits include prop and production designer for *The Onion*, "The Lizzie McGuire Movie the Play" with Derek Begrudgingly Presents, "Little Orphan Boy" at The Annoyance, and "Fantasy Quest!" with Laketown Productions, "Merry We" with Split Lip Theater, as well as company member with Split Lip Theater.

## MICHELLE TORISHNYAK

Lighting Designer

Masha Torishnyak is incredibly excited to work on her first professional show in the Chicago area at age 20. She is



currently studying psychology, theatre, and sociology at Lake Forest College, and serves as the lighting designer for the theatre department. She has worked primarily as a lighting designer since 2016, beginning her journey in middle school during a production of *The Drowsy Chaperone Jr.* and continued theatrical lighting design through high school and college. Since 2021, she has worked for community theatres and dance companies such as Cricket Theatre Company, Reverie Dance Academy, Denise Sabala Dance Studio, and several Arangetrams.

## JO CHALHOUB

Stage Manager

Jo Chalhoub (They/Them) is a proud Lebanese-American, Queer, Milwaukee native that has lived and worked in the Chicago area since 2021. They hold a minor in Theatre Arts from UW-Milwaukee and have worked on- and off-stage on over 80 productions in Wisconsin and Illinois. Favorite credits include *Assassins* (Four Seasons Theatre), *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (Music Theatre of Madison), and serving as the stage manager for The Shedd Aquarium. Jo also has significant arts administration experience, serving as co-deputy of Forward Theater's Advisory Company and as the former Company Manager of Steppenwolf. This is Jo's third production with CFO, previously serving as the stage manager for *Fizz & Ginger* and *Hindsight*.

## NINA KASMAN

Assistant Stage Manager

Nina Kasman (they/she) is a Chicago-based set designer and emerging stage manager. Recent credits include Set Designer and Scenic Charge for *Prowess* (NIU), Stage Manager for *My Three Angels* (Summer Place Theatre), and Stage Manager/Assistant Director for *Fasting Cougars* (Aurora Riverfront Playhouse). Their work is informed by a background in mechanical and design engineering.

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Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.



## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2025, 7:30 PM

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Harris Theater for Music & Dance  
205 East Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60601

### ANCHOR PERFORMANCE

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#### Ear Taxi Festival presents *Invictus* & *An African American Requiem*

Stacy Garrop † | *Invictus* \*

-Intermission-

Damien Geter † | *An African American Requiem* ^

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

^ Midwest Premiere Performance

### PERFORMERS:

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#### Performers:

Marta Aznavoorian, piano soloist

Chicago Philharmonic, Scott Speck, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Tiana Sorenson, soprano

Leah Dexter, mezzo-soprano

Cameo Humes, tenor

Khary Laurent, bass

Apollo Chorus, Stephen Alltop, Music Director

This program brings together two bold, deeply expressive works that center the composer's voice in all its power, vulnerability, and urgency. This culminating performance of the 2025 Ear Taxi Festival—celebrating the theme The Composer's Voice—invites us to reflect on what it means for music to speak directly to our moment in time.

The evening begins with the world premiere of Stacy Garrop's Piano Concerto No. 1 "*Invictus*", performed by internationally acclaimed Chicago pianist Marta Aznavoorian. Known for her dramatic and emotionally charged music, Garrop crafts a narrative of resilience and personal strength through the soloist's voice. The title, *Invictus*—Latin for "unconquered"—draws inspiration from William Ernest Henley's iconic poem of the same name, which champions the human spirit in the face of adversity. Garrop's concerto traverses moments of lyrical introspection, fierce determination, and triumphant resolve, giving the piano a role that is both narrator and survivor.

In the second half, composer Damien Geter's monumental "*An African American Requiem*" offers a powerful reckoning with racial injustice while honoring the memory of Black lives lost to violence and oppression. Premiered in 2022, the work merges the traditional Latin Requiem Mass with spirituals, contemporary texts, and moments of spoken word. Performed by the Chicago Philharmonic and Apollo Chorus, this performance marks the midwestern premiere and a significant moment for Chicago audiences to encounter a work that confronts grief, celebrates cultural identity, and calls for collective healing.

Together, these works exemplify what 21st-century composers are capable of: giving voice to personal truth and communal experience, expanding tradition, and crafting music that resonates with a modern, diverse audience. As the final note of this year's Ear Taxi Festival rings out, we invite you to carry these voices with you—and to keep listening.

Additional support for this program is provided by Cedille Records, U.S. Bank, the American Composers Forum, Eric Wassenaar and Khrystyna Savchuk, MD, and the Harris Theater to Music and Dance. Additional support is provided by Lori Ashikawa, Gustavo Bamberger, Jemia Cunningham-Elder, Zandraquilla Madkins, Tom Manning, Stetson Marshall, Scott Neslund, David Oskandy and Martha Garcia Barragan, and Scott Speck.

*Invictus* was co-commissioned by pianist Marta Aznavoorian and the American Composers Forum. American Composers Forum support is made possible by The Thelma E. Hunter Fund. This commission is also made possible through Individual donors Alexandra Nichols, Madeleine Plonsker, Jim Stone, and Nicholas Yasillo.

## PROGRAM NOTE

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### INVICTUS

English poet, critic, and editor William Ernest Henley (1849–1903) was diagnosed with a tubercular bone disease at the age of 12, resulting in the eventual amputation of his left leg. While hospital-bound in 1873–1875 after a surgery to save his right leg, he penned the poem “Invictus” as a testament of his determination to persevere.

The word invictus is Latin for unconquerable or undefeated. Henley named his poem well; its 16 lines speak to having strength and resolve in the face of great adversity. Nelson Mandela, the South African anti-apartheid activist who was jailed for 27 years before becoming the leader of his country, regularly recited the poem while imprisoned. Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, established the Invictus Games in 2014, an international sporting event that promotes the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded service personnel worldwide and celebrates their resilience.

In my concerto Invictus, I focus on the first verse of Henley’s poem, with each line representing a movement:

#### **I. Out of the night that covers me,**

The soloist wakes up at the bottom of a pit, represented by the orchestra. The soloist tries to climb out, only to be forced back down by the orchestra. After singing a song to find inner strength, the soloist then climbs again, but is forced down once more.

#### **II. Black as the pit from pole to pole,**

The soloist is violently tossed from side to side at the bottom of the pit by the orchestral forces.

#### **III. I thank whatever gods may be**

Looking up, the soloist prays to the heavens far above.

#### **IV. For my unconquerable soul.**

The soloist sings the song again, then climbs, this time placating the orchestra as needed, before triumphantly reaching the rim of the pit and escaping.

*Invictus* was co-commissioned by pianist Marta Aznavoorian, pianist, and the American Composers Forum. American Composers Forum support is made possible by The Thelma Hunter Fund. Marta and I wish to thank individual donors Alexandra Nichols, Madeleine Plonsker, Jim Stone, and Nicholas Yasillo for making this commission possible.

–Stacy Garrop

### **An African American Requiem**

“It is an artist’s duty to reflect the times.” – Nina Simone

Composing An African American Requiem began after the 2016 election. Taking Nina Simone’s quote to heart, I composed this piece during a time marked by a surge in the killings of Black men and women, a reality that demanded both mourning and a response. It blends traditional Latin Requiem Mass texts with modern poetry, spirituals, protest slogans, and writings from prominent African American voices.

Premiered in 2022, the composition was born from the urgent need to confront the realities of racial injustice and violence against Black Americans. At its heart, An African American Requiem mourns the lives lost to racial violence, and is dedicated to their memory.

The twenty movement work draws its structure from the classical Requiem forms inspired by the works of Verdi, Britten, and Penderecki.

–Damien Geter

# AN AFRICAN AMERICAN REQUIEM: LIBRETTO

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## Introit

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine:

et lux perpetua luceat eis.

— Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,

et tibi reddetur votum in Ierusalem:

exaudi orationem meam,

ad te omnis caro veniet.

— A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Zion; and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem: hear my prayer; all flesh shall come to Thee.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine:

et lux perpetua luceat eis.

— Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

## Kyrie

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy.

## Recitative

We are living in communities that are like war zones. (By Jamilia Land)

## Dies Irae

Dies iræ, dies illa,

Solvat sæclum in favilla:

Teste David cum Sibylla.

— The day of wrath, that day will dissolve the world in ashes, David being witness along with the Sibyl.

Quantus tremor est futurus,

Quando iudex est venturus,

Cuncta stricte discussurus!

— How great will be the quaking, when the Judge will come, investigating everything strictly.

## I Can't Breathe

I can't breathe. (By Eric Garner)

## Tuba Mirum

Tuba, mirum spargens sonum

Per sepulchra regionum,

Coget omnes ante thronum.

— The trumpet, scattering a wondrous sound through the sepulchers of the regions, will summon all before the throne.

## Mors stupebit

Mors stupebit, et natura,

Cum resurget creatura,

Judicanti responsura.

— Death and nature will marvel, when the creature will rise again, to respond to the Judge.

## There's A Man Goin' Round / Liber Scriptus

There's a man goin' round takin' names...

Liber scriptus proferetur,

In quo totum continetur,

Unde mundus iudicetur.

— The written book will be brought forth, in which all is contained, from which the world shall be judged.

Judex ergo cum sedebit,

Quidquid latet, apparebit:

Nil inultum remanebit.

— When therefore the Judge will sit, whatever lies hidden will appear: nothing will remain unpunished.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?

Quem patronum rogaturus,

Cum vix iustus sit securus?

— What then will I, poor wretch, say? Which patron will I entreat, when even the just may hardly be sure?

Rex tremendæ majestatis,

Qui salvandos salvas gratis,

Salva me, fons pietatis.

— King of fearsome majesty, who freely savest those that are to be saved, save me, O font of mercy.

## **Recordare**

Recordare, Jesu pie,

Quod sum causa tuae viae:

Ne me perdas illa die.

— Remember, merciful Jesus, that I am the cause of Thy way: lest Thou lose me in that day.

I am confused and afraid. (By Antwon Rose)

Quaerens me, sedisti lassus:

Redemisti Crucem passus:

Tantus labor non sit cassus.

— Seeking me, though faint and weary, Thou redeemst me, having suffered the Cross: let not so much hardship be in vain.

Juste Judex ultionis,

Donum fac remissionis

Ante diem rationis.

— Just Judge of vengeance, make a gift of remission before the day of reckoning.

## **Ingemisco**

(English psalm/biblical interpolations: “Do not fret because of evildoers... For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord...”)

## **Confutatis**

Confutatis maledictis,

Flammis acribus addictis:

Voca me cum benedictis.

— Once the cursed have been silenced, sentenced to acrid flames: call Thou me with the blessed.

Oro supplex et acclinis,

Cor contritum quasi cinis:

Gere curam mei finis.

— Kneeling and bowed I pray, my heart crushed as ashes: take care of my end.

## **Lacrimosa**

Lacrimosa dies illa,

Qua resurget ex favilla

Judicandus homo reus:

Huic ergo parce, Deus.

— Tearful will be that day, on which from the flowing embers will arise the guilty man who is to be judged. Then spare him, O God.

Pie Jesu Domine,

Dona eis requiem. Amen.

— Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest. Amen.

Offertory

## **Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriæ...**

— O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed... (traditional continuation).

## **Sanctus (Kum Ba Yah)**

Kum ba ya my Lord, kum ba ya...

(Somebody's prayin' Lord... Somebody's singin' Lord... woven with Sanctus hymn)

## **Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona eis requiem.

— Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest.

(repeated 3x, last: sempiternam = eternal rest)

## **Lux Aeterna**

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: Cum Sanctis tuis in aeternum: quia pius es.

— May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord, with Thy Saints for evermore: for Thou art gracious.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.

— Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

## **Libera Me**

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda...

— Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal in that awful day... (traditional continuation).

(Here, interwoven with Ida B. Wells's “Lynching is Color-Line Murder.” See Addendum.)

## **In Paradisum / Walk Together Children**

In paradisum deducant te Angeli:

in tuo adventu suscipiant te Martyres,

et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem.

— May the Angels lead thee into paradise: may the Martyrs receive thee at thy coming, and lead thee into the holy city of Jerusalem.

Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat,

et cum Lazaro quondam paupere aeternam habeas requiem.

— May the choir of Angels receive thee, and mayest thou have eternal rest with Lazarus, who once was poor.

Walk together children, don't you get weary, there's a great camp meeting in the Promise Land.

## Addendum: Ida B. Wells, Lynching is Color-Line Murder (Edited excerpt)

The lynching record for a quarter of a century merits the thoughtful study of the American people. It presents three salient facts:

First, lynching is color-line murder.

Second, crimes against women is the excuse, not the cause.

Third, it is a national crime and requires a national remedy.

Proof that lynching follows the color line is to be found in the statistics which have been kept for the past 25 years. This was wholly political, its purpose being to suppress the colored vote by intimidation and murder... the purpose was accomplished, and the Black vote was suppressed. But mob murder continued.

From 1882, in which year 52 were lynched, down to the present, lynching has been along the color line. Mob murder increased yearly until in 1892; more than 200 victims were lynched and statistics show that 3,284 men, women and children have been put to death in this quarter of a century. Twenty-eight human beings burned at the stake, one of them a woman and two of them children, the awful indictment against American civilization – the gruesome tribute which the nation pays to the color line.

Why is mob murder permitted by a Christian nation? What is the cause of this awful slaughter? This question is answered almost daily – always the same shameless falsehood that “Negroes are lynched to protect womanhood.”

This is the never-varying answer of lynchers and their apologists. All know that it is untrue. The cowardly lyncher revels in murder, then seeks to shield himself from public execration by claiming devotion to woman. But truth is mighty and the lynching record discloses the hypocrisy of the lyncher as well as his crime.

The Springfield, Illinois, mob rioted for two days, the militia of the entire state was called out, two men were lynched, hundreds of people driven from their homes, all because a white woman said a Negro assaulted her. A mad mob went to the jail, tried to lynch the victim of her charge and, not being able to find him, proceeded to pillage and burn the town and to lynch two innocent men. Later, after the police had found that the woman’s charge was false, she published a retraction, the indictment was dismissed and the intended victim discharged. But the lynched victims were dead.

As a final and complete refutation of the charge that lynching is occasioned by crimes against women, a partial record of lynchings is cited: 285 persons were lynched for causes as follows: unknown cause, 92; no cause, 10; race prejudice, 49; miscegenation, 7; informing, 12; making threats, 11; keeping saloon, 3; practicing fraud, 5; practicing voodooism, 1; refusing evidence, 2; political causes, 5; slapping a child, 1; turning state’s evidence, 3; protecting a Negro, 1; to prevent giving evidence, 1; knowledge of larceny, 1; writing letter to white woman, 1; asking white woman to marry, 1; jilting girl, 1; having smallpox, 1; concealing criminal, 2; threatening political exposure, 1; self-defense, 6; cruelty, 1; insulting language to woman, 5; quarreling with white man, 2; colonizing Negroes, 1; throwing stones, 1; quarreling, 1; gambling, 1.

Is there a remedy, or will the nation confess that it cannot protect its protectors at home as well as abroad? Various remedies have been suggested to abolish the lynching infamy, but year after year, the butchery of men, women and children continues in spite of plea and protest.

The only certain remedy is an appeal to law. Lawbreakers must be made to know that human life is sacred and that every citizen of this country is first a citizen of the United States and secondly a citizen of the state in which he belongs.

Time was when lynching appeared to be sectional, but now it is national – a blight upon our nation. Let us undertake the work of making the “law of the land” effective and supreme upon every foot of American soil – a shield to the innocent; and to the guilty, punishment swift and sure.

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Ear Taxi Festival is a presentation of New Music Chicago, a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization with a mission to support and advance Chicago’s robust cultural scene with resources for artists, composers, and audiences.

Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Apollo Chorus of Chicago

Founded in 1872, just after the Chicago Fire, the Apollo Chorus of Chicago is one of the oldest auditioned volunteer choral societies in the United States, and the oldest musical organization in Chicago. Under the direction of Music Director and Conductor Stephen Alltop, the Chorus regularly presents choral masterworks in illustrious Chicago venues such as Symphony Center and the Harris Theater. The 2022-23 season, the 100th anniversary for the Apollo Chorus, included Bach's St. John Passion, the Chicago premiere of Stacy Garrop's oratorio, *Terra Nostra*, and a performance of contemporary choral music for the American Choral Director's Association. Recent collaborations have included Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, Joby Talbot's *Everest* and Karol Szymanowski's *King Roger* with Chicago Opera Theater. One of the most active presenters of contemporary choral music in the Midwest, the Apollo Chorus has collaborated with many prominent composers, including Jeff Beal, Jeremy Beck, Flannery Cunningham, Eleanor Daley, Stacy Garrop, Stephen Paulus, Tanyaradwa Tawengwa, and Eric Whitacre. Highlights from 2025-26 include *The Consolation of Apollo* by Kile Smith and Bach's St. Matthew Passion. Chorus membership includes people from many professions united by a love of choral music and dedication to excellence. In addition to six appearances at the Peninsula Music Festival in Door County, WI, the Apollo Chorus has collaborated with outstanding artists and organizations, including the Oprah Winfrey Show, Josh Groban on Tour, Chicago Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, and Louis the Child at Lollapalooza. Since 2002, the Chorus has appeared on many occasions with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival. Recent performances with the CSO have included Mozart's operas *La Clemenza di Tito* in 2022 and *The Magic Flute* in 2023, and Holst's *The Planet's* in 2024.

The Apollo Chorus released Handel's *Messiah* on the Clarion label. Dedicated to reflecting the richness of diverse cultures, recent programs have included works from Latin America, Estonia, Georgia, Africa, Ireland, and many other countries, and such styles as Gospel, Jazz, Samba, Broadway, and film music.

### Chicago Philharmonic

The Chicago Philharmonic is re-imagining the orchestra concert experience through culturally diverse, genre-bending programs breaking barriers of exclusion in orchestral music. With nearly 200 musician members, diverse and trailblazing leadership, and a deeply collaborative artistic model, we are one of the most versatile, innovative, and ambitious orchestras in the country.

The Chicago Philharmonic presents 30+ concerts annually and year-round, featuring diverse musicians and drawing new-to-the-symphony audiences. 2025-2026 partners include Artist in Residence Njioma Chinyere Grevious, Disney Concerts, Chicago composers Damien Geter and Stacy Garrop, Marta Aznavoorian, *Sleeping At Last*, Cedille Records, The Joffrey Ballet, The Auditorium, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, and Ravinia Festival.

The Chicago Philharmonic Society was created by Lyric Opera principal musicians in 1989. Today, we are a crucial part of Chicago's music ecosystem and an incubator of talent, creating thousands of jobs for 425 musicians annually and making Chicago a viable home for talented freelance musicians. As Executive Director, Crain's Business 40 Under 40 awardee and APAP "Spark of Change" winner Terell Johnson has led the orchestra as a force for inclusion with a series of increasingly high-profile events, including the 2024 Lollapalooza debut as the first professional orchestra to perform at the festival to a global audience of 100,000+ live and on Hulu.

Our audiences are 200,000+ strong, and our community engagement programs reach 6,000 students and participants annually. The Chicago Philharmonic proudly collaborates with the greatest artists of our time, in every genre. Past collaborations have included English National Ballet, Laufey, Nas, Lindsey Stirling, Justin Hurwitz, Kishi Bashi, Lady Gaga, Tony Bennett, Joshua Bell, Tank and the Bangas, William Basinski, the American Ballet Theatre, Lollapalooza Festival, Ryan Speedo Green, and more.

### Scott Speck

Scott Speck was named Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Chicago Philharmonic in June of 2013 and has been Music Director of the Joffrey Ballet since 2010. He has become a frequent guest for the Chicago Symphony's family concerts. His work with Chicago Philharmonic earned him the award "2021 Conductor of the Year" from the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

His gala performances with Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Renée Fleming, Joshua Bell, Midori, Evelyn Glennie, and Olga Kern have highlighted his recent and current seasons as Music Director of the Mobile Symphony. This season he also collaborates intensively with Carnegie Hall for the seventh time as Music Director of the West Michigan Symphony. He



was invited to the White House as former Music Director of the Washington Ballet.

In past seasons Scott Speck has conducted at New York's Lincoln Center, London's Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, Chicago's Symphony Center, Washington's Kennedy Center, San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House, and the Los Angeles Music Center. He has led numerous performances with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Houston, Baltimore, Paris, Moscow, Shanghai, Beijing, Vancouver, Romania, Slovakia, Buffalo, Columbus (OH), Honolulu, Louisville, New Orleans, Oregon, Rochester, Florida, and Virginia, among many others.

Previously he held positions as Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet; Music Advisor and Conductor of the Honolulu Symphony; and Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Opera. During a tour of Asia, he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the China Film Philharmonic in Beijing.

Scott Speck is the co-author of two of the world's bestselling books on classical music for a popular audience, *Classical Music for Dummies* and *Opera for Dummies*. These books have received stellar reviews in both the national and international press and have garnered enthusiastic endorsements from major American orchestras. They have been translated into twenty languages and are available around the world. His third book in the series, *Ballet for Dummies*, was released to great acclaim as well.

Scott Speck has been a regular commentator on National Public Radio, the BBC, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and Voice of Russia, broadcast throughout the world. He has been featured in TED talks and at the Aspen Ideas Festival. His writing has been featured in numerous magazines and journals.

Born in Boston, Scott Speck graduated summa cum laude from Yale University. There he founded and directed the Berkeley Chamber Orchestra, which continues to perform to this day. He was a Fulbright Scholar in Berlin, where he founded Concerto Grosso Berlin, an orchestra dedicated to the performances of Baroque and Classical music in a historically informed style.

He received his Master's Degree with highest honors from the University of Southern California, served as a Conducting Fellow at the Aspen School of Music, and studied at the Tanglewood Music Center. He is fluent in English, German and French, has a diploma in Italian, speaks Spanish, and has a reading knowledge of Russian.

## **Stephen Alltop**

Stephen Alltop serves as Music Director of the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, and the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra. A specialist in oratorio and historical performance practice, he is a full-time member of the conducting and keyboard faculties at the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University. Dr. Alltop has conducted numerous opera productions at Northwestern, including Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puccini's *La Buona Figliuola*, Handel's *Theodora* and *Alcina*, and *Orfeo* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* by Monteverdi. Stephen Alltop has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as both a harpsichord and organ soloist. He has performed with the Joffrey Ballet, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and every season since 2011 as harpsichordist for Music of the Baroque. Alltop served as Coordinator for WFMT's Bach Complete Organ Work Project in 2014, and the WFMT Bach Complete Keyboard Festival in 2015, and has performed as a keyboard artist across Europe. Dr. Alltop has guest conducted orchestras and choruses in the United States, Europe and South Korea. He has led world premieres of works by John Luther Adams, Jan Bach, Frank Ferko, Stacy Garrop, Stephen Paulus, Joseph Schwantner, and many others. In June of 2022, he stepped in on four-hour's notice to lead the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra in a program of Beethoven, Schubert and Tchaikovsky that was broadcast live on WFMT. He returned to the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra in August of 2023. An advocate for diversity in programming, he has sought to bring attention to under-represented composers in both the orchestral and choral realm. Dr. Alltop lectures frequently about music for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Northwestern University Alumnae Continuing Education Series and Osher Lifelong Learning. Since 2014, he has given presentations on leadership for various programs in the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern.

## **Tiana Sorenson**

Wisconsin-born and Chicago-based soprano Tiana Sorenson is an accomplished performer whose work spans the breadth of the classical repertoire—from early music to contemporary commissions. In chamber settings, she has collaborated with renowned ensembles across the country, including *The Crossing* (featured on their 2023 and 2025 Grammy Award-winning albums), *Conspirare*, *Lorelei*, *Alarm Will Sound*, and *Apollo's Fire*. Tiana is a frequent collaborator with *The Thirteen*, a Washington, D.C.-based ensemble, where she serves as a mentor for their Vocal Fellows Program—an initiative designed to support and develop early-career singers from underrepresented backgrounds. In Chicago, she has performed with a wide range of ensembles: *Hearing in Color*, *Newberry Consort*, *William Ferris Chorale*, and *Bella Voce*, as well as the choruses of Grant Park and Chicago Symphony. Her operatic work includes covering roles with both

Chicago Opera Theater and Lyric Opera of Chicago, most recently in Lyric's 2024–25 season as Girlfriend 1/Nurse in Jeanine Tesori's Blue.

## Leah Dexter

Leah Dexter, mezzo soprano, is excited to be debuting with the Ear Taxi Festival. A force in the Chicago area performing arts scene, Leah debuted two world premiere roles, this past season, with Chicago Opera Theater: Herbalist in Remedios Varios, and Susie "Mama Sue" McDonald in the critically acclaimed, *She Who Dared*, for which her performance was praised as "pointed and iridescent" (Chicago Tribune). Further solo performances for the 24/25 season included Girlfriend 3 (cover) for Lyric Opera of Chicago's Blue, Handel's Messiah with Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, Rutter's *Feel the Spirit* with the DuPage Symphony, and Reicha's Requiem with the DePaul Community Chorus. Upcoming engagements include Notes for Peace recordings and concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Negaunee Institute, a debut with the Michigan City Orchestra/Chorus as alto soloist for Handel's Messiah, a return to the Elgin Master Chorale as alto soloist for Garrop's *Terra Nostra*, a return to Chicago Opera Theater for *Die Silbersee* in the role of Frau von Luber and a debut with the Rockford Symphony for Bernstein's "Jeremiah" Symphony No. 1. In addition, Leah continues her work with the Lyric Opera of Chicago Chorus, the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and the Grant Park Festival Chorus throughout the season.

Hailed by critics for possessing a "compelling lyric tenor that pulses with the perennially conflicted feelings of the character" [Opera News] and a "sonorous, dark-hued timbre which vividly projected the complicated nature of the drama" [theWholeNote],

## Cameo Humes

Cameo Humes is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after tenors in operatic and concert repertoire. He has performed with Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Richmond Symphony, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, SANAA Opera Project, and the Orchestra Sinfonica dell'International Chamber Ensemble in Italy. His most recent engagements included a debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago in the role of Mano Alfaroin Terrence Blanchard's *Champion* as well as debuts with Lucerne Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, and Teatro alla Scala in the roles of Peter, Crab man, Mingo and Robbins in *Porgy and Bess*. Other operatic credits include the title role in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, Reverend Milton Allison in the world premiere of Errollyn Wallen's *Quamino's Map* with Chicago Opera Theater, Ottavio (Don Giovanni) with Operafestival di Roma, Almaviva (Il Barbiere di Siviglia), Gastone (La Traviata), Prunier (La Rondine), Peter (Porgy and Bess) with Lyric Opera of Chicago (cover), Dayton Opera and Skylight Music Theatre of Milwaukee, Crab man (Porgy and Bess) with The Princeton Festival, Nelson (Porgy and Bess) with Cincinnati Opera, and Ensemble (Show Boat) with Houston Grand Opera. He has recorded the lead role in Richard Thompson's *The Mask in the Mirror*—a modern opera based on the life of Paul Laurence Dunbar—with Navona Records which was reviewed by Opera News and selected as Critic's Choice. A lover and avid performer of the Negro spiritual, Cameo has toured Spain, France and Ireland with the world renown American Spiritual Ensemble. He is also a full-time member of the chorus at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

## Khary Laurent

Khary Laurent (also known as K. F. Jacques) is a classical singer and hip-hop producer. He has been featured on The Rosie Show (OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network), WGN News, ABC7 News, and multiple television and radio networks, having toured extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Currently, Mr. Laurent serves as head composer and stars as Figaro in *The Rosina Project*—a "hip-hopera" adaptation of *The Barber of Seville*, featuring a dynamic cast of rappers, dancers, singers, a beatboxer, and a DJ. The production has been featured in the Pivot Arts Festival for two consecutive years, and highlighted by the Chicago Sun-Times and The Chicago Tribune. It also received grants for a citywide summer tour through the Chicago Park District's "Night Out in the Parks" initiative.

His latest work, *Telekinetik*, was commissioned by Catapult Opera and incorporates cameos of his octogenarian, Haitian-born father. Blending science fiction elements, the piece explores themes of violence and bravado in contemporary society.

Previously, *L'Assassino*—a hip-hop opera film commissioned by Resonance Works Pittsburgh—delves into the backstory of Verdi's infamous villain Sparafucile.

During the pandemic, Chicago Fringe Opera commissioned *Corsair* for the Decameron Opera Coalition's *Tales From a Safe Distance*. The work premiered to critical acclaim, earning "Best New Local Opera Production" from The Chicago Reader and "Best Music Video" from the Aladerrri International Film Festival, among other awards.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Mr. Laurent holds a Master of Music in Voice Performance from the Chicago College of

Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. His recent roles include Tom in Fizz 'n' Ginger with Chicago Fringe Opera, and the title role in Don Giovanni with Fargo-Moorhead Opera.

## **Damien Geter**

Damien Geter is an acclaimed American composer who infuses classical music with various styles from the Black diaspora to create music that furthers the cause for social justice, as well as a celebrated bass-baritone – “amazing to listen to. Possessed of a rolling, resonant voice even at the lowest register” (Northwest Reverb) – whose varied credits include performances from the operatic stage to the television screen. He is Richmond Symphony’s Composer-in-Residence through 2026 and serves as Interim Music Director & Artistic Advisor at Portland Opera.

Geter’s rapidly growing and “invigoratingly fresh” (Opera Today) body of work includes chamber, vocal, orchestral, and full operatic works, with his compositions praised for their “skillful vocal writing” (Wall Street Journal). In the 2024/2025 season, the world premiere of Geter’s new major opera, *Loving v. Virginia*, concludes Virginia Opera’s 50th anniversary season. Based on the true story of Mildred and Richard Loving, the opera is co-commissioned by Virginia Opera and Richmond Symphony, co-produced by Virginia Opera and Minnesota Opera, and features a libretto by Jessica Murphy Moo, Denyce Graves as director, and Adam Turner conducting. Another new opera of Geter’s, *Delta King’s Blues*, commissioned by IN Series, will be workshopped in January 2025 and premiered later that year. His song, *Amanirenas*, commissioned by soprano Karen Slack for her African Queens art song program, tours at Washington Performing Arts, the Ravinia Festival, Aspen Music Festival, 92nd Street Y New York, the Nashville Symphony, and Friends of Chamber Music Denver. His newly commissioned song, *Gentle lady, do not sing*, is included on the Choral Scholars University College Dublin’s album, *Music* by James Joyce, Volume I (September 2024, Signum Classics).

As conductor this season, he leads Paul Moravec’s opera *The Shining*, based on Stephen King’s iconic novel, at Portland Opera, and Carmel Symphony Orchestra’s Opening Night Gala, *America the Beautiful* concert.

Future commissions include world premieres with the Richmond Symphony and Nathaniel Dett Chorale, plus a new operatic production at Portland Opera in 2026.

In the 2023/2024 season, Des Moines Metro Opera presented the full-length world premiere of Geter’s opera, *American Apollo*, starring Justin Austin, William Burden, and Mary Dunleavy, with a libretto by Lila Palmer and David Neely conducting. Opera Now proclaimed Geter’s orchestrations created “a kaleidoscopic ‘American Impressionism’, with borrowings from other genres of the time, creating a diverse palate to accommodate the vivid characters” and Opera Today stated the composer’s “sound palette and approach is very much his own distinct amalgamated voice”. Last season, Chicago Symphony Orchestra programmed Geter’s *Annunciation* on the concert *Montgomery and the Blacknificent 7*; Richmond Symphony premiered *Sinfonia Americana*; his song cycle *COTTON* saw its New York premiere at the 92nd Street Y, starring Denyce Graves and Justin Austin; Oregon Bach Festival presented his new Bach transcription after *Prelude and Fugue No. 2 in C Minor* from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*; and the Recording Inclusivity Initiative recorded his *String Quartet No. 1 “Neo-Soul”*.

In 2022, Geter had six premieres as a composer, including his large work, *An African American Requiem*, in partnership with Resonance Ensemble and the Oregon Symphony with subsequent performances at the Kennedy Center; *I Said What I Said* for Imani Winds, co-commissioned by Anima Mundi Productions, Chamber Music Northwest, and The Oregon Bach Festival; his one-act opera *Holy Ground* for Glimmerglass Opera; *Elegy for the American Guild of Organists*; *The Bronze Legacy* for Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and the chamber version of *American Apollo* for Des Moines Metro Opera.

Called “superb” by The News Tribune, DC Theater Arts praises his “commanding presence and voice full of bass-baritone gravitas”. Last season, Geter portrayed the role of abolitionist and historian William Still to great critical acclaim in Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Paul Moravec’s oratorio *Sanctuary Road*, presented by Virginia Opera, and based on the writings of Still, who is credited with helping nearly 800 enslaved African Americans escape to freedom. He also joined Auburn Symphony Orchestra in Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony* and Rembrandt Chamber Musicians in *The Wayfarer’s Melodies: A Musical Journey*, singing the John Ireland *Songs of a Wayfarer* cycle.

Recent season highlights include Geter’s Metropolitan Opera debut in the Grammy award-winning production of *Porgy and Bess* as the Undertaker. He performed the title role of Quamino in the world premiere of Errollynn Wallen’s *Quamino’s Map* with Chicago Opera Theatre; as Angelotti in *Tosca* with the Portland and Eugene Operas; as Archibald Craven in *The Secret Garden* with Hawaii Opera Theatre; and as Sam in Reno Symphony’s *Voices of a Nation: Trouble in Tahiti*. In concert, Geter performed as the bass soloist in Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* with the Richmond Symphony and Fresno Philharmonic, Handel’s *Messiah* with North Carolina Symphony, and in the role of William Still in *Sanctuary Road* with the Oakland Symphony.

On television, Geter made his TV debut as John Sacks on NBC’s *Grimm* and was seen in Netflix’s *Trinkets*. Musical theater

credits include Kevin Rosario in Lin Manuel-Miranda's *In the Heights* and Pontius Pilate in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Getter is an alumnus of the Austrian American Mozart Festival and the Aspen Opera Center, and was a semifinalist for the Irma Cooper Vocal Competition. He toured with the prestigious American Spiritual Ensemble, a group that helps promote preserving the American art form the spiritual.

He is the owner of DG Music, Sans Fear Publishing. *Music in Context: An Examination of Western European Music Through a Sociopolitical Lens*, the book he co-authored, is available on Amazon, or directly from the publisher, Kendall Hunt.

## Stacy Garrop

Stacy Garrop's music is centered on dramatic and lyrical storytelling. The sharing of stories is a defining element of our humanity; we strive to share with others the experiences and concepts that we find compelling. She shares stories by taking audiences on sonic journeys – some simple and beautiful, while others are complicated and dark – depending on the needs and dramatic shape of the story.

Dr. Garrop (b. 1969) is an award-winning, internationally recognized freelance composer and lecturer living in the Chicago area. Her catalog covers a wide range, with works for orchestra, opera, oratorio, wind ensemble, choir, art song, various sized chamber ensembles, and works for solo instruments.

Recent commissions include *Forging Steel* for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, *Goddess Triptych* for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, *There's a village in my sneakers* for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, *Spectacle of Light* for the Music of the Baroque Orchestra, *Berko's Journey* for the Omaha Symphony, *Song of Orpheus* for the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, *The Battle for the Ballot* for the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, *In a House Besieged* for The Crossing on texts by Lydia Davis, *Forged by the Sea* for the United States Navy Band, and *Alpenglow*, a double concerto for saxophone, tuba, and wind ensemble commissioned by a consortium of 18 organizations. Notable past commissions include *My Dearest Ruth* for soprano and piano with text by Martin Ginsburg, the husband of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, *Glorious Mahalia* for the Kronos Quartet, *Give Me Hunger* for Chanticleer, *Rites for the Afterlife* for the Akropolis and Calefax Reed Quintets, *Slipstream* for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Musicians Chamber Music Series, and *Terra Nostra* (oratorio), commissioned by the San Francisco Choral Society and Piedmont East Bay Children's Chorus. Her current commissions include a concerto for pianist Marta Aznavoorian and the Chicago Philharmonic, song cycle for soprano, baritone, and orchestra for Cabrillo Festival on texts by Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony, and a string quartet for Grant Park Music Festival.

Dr. Garrop has received numerous awards and grants including an Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Fromm Music Foundation Grant, Barlow Prize, and three Barlow Endowment commissions, along with prizes from competitions sponsored by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Omaha Symphony, New England Philharmonic, Boston Choral Ensemble, Utah Arts Festival, and Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. Earlier in her career, she participated in reading session programs sponsored by the American Composers Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra (the Composers Institute). Recent performances of her orchestral works were given by the Baltimore, Chicago, Fort Collins, Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Reading, Richmond, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, of her wind ensemble works by the U.S. Marine Band and U.S. Navy Band; and of her chamber works by the Avalon String Quartet, Boston Trio, Capitol Saxophone Quartet, Ensemble Échappé, h2 Saxophone Quartet, Kronos Quartet and the Lincoln Trio.

Theodore Presser Company and ECS Publishing carry her works. Dr. Garrop is a Cedille Records artist with pieces currently on thirteen CDs, with the most recent release April 2024 with the first recording of her oratorio *Terra Nostra*. Cedille also released the piano trio version of *Repair the World* as a digital download. Her works are also commercially available on more than a dozen additional labels.

In recent years, she has served as the featured composer of the Bowling Green State University New Music Festival and Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival, with additional guest residencies at the Great Plains Saxophone Workshop, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Michigan State University, Florida State University, University of Colorado at Boulder, and University of Denver. She also served as a mentor composer for the Cabrillo Conductors/Composers Workshop, LunART Festival Composers Hub, and the Toulmin Foundation. Garrop is an ongoing mentor for Chicago a cappella's HerVoice Emerging Women Choral Composers Competition.

She was the first Emerging Opera Composer of Chicago Opera Theater's Vanguard Program (2018-2020), during which she composed *The Transformation of Jane Doe* and *What Magic Reveals* with librettist Jerre Dye. She also held a 3-year composer-in-residence position with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra (2016-2019), funded by New Music USA and the League of American Orchestras. She previously served as composer-in-residence with the Albany Symphony (2009/2010) and Skaneateles Festival (2011), and as well as on faculty of the Fresh Inc Festival (2012-2017).



Dr. Garrop earned degrees in music composition at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (B.M.), University of Chicago (M.A.), and Indiana University-Bloomington (D.M.). She taught composition and orchestration full-time at Roosevelt University from 2000 to 2016 before leaving to launch her freelance career.

## Marta Aznavoorian

A Pianist of exceptionally finished technique and purity of musical impulse” (Boston Globe), Armenian/American Pianist Marta Aznavoorian is known for her inspiringly spirited playing and vast emotional reach. The multi-Grammy-nominated artist has performed to critical acclaim throughout the world as an orchestral soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. She made her professional debut at the age of 13, performing Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 24, K 491 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the invitation of Sir George Solti. She then went on to engage with orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and many others, including an engagement with the New World Symphony as a result of an invitation from Michael Tilson Thomas, who was also the conductor.

Aznavoorian has many awards and accolades, including First prize in the Stravinsky International Competition and the special prize for best interpretation of the commissioned contemporary work. As a recipient of the Level 1 award in the National Foundation of the Arts talent search, Aznavoorian became a Presidential Scholar and was invited to the White House, where she met former President George H.W. Bush and performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. With her expressive energy and originality she brings to new and traditional classical music, Aznavoorian has recorded extensively for Naxos, Warner Classics, and Erato, and has just released her 7th album under the record label, Cedille Records.

Aznavoorian is a founding member of the Grammy-nominated Lincoln Trio, which Fanfare Magazine has labeled as the “hottest Trio in the business”. Aznavoorian also performs extensively with violinist Stefan Milenkovich and her sister, cellist Ani Aznavoorian. The Aznavoorian sister Duo is set to release their debut album in 2022 called “Veiled Mountain: Gems from Armenia” for Cedille Records. A champion and lover of contemporary music, she has recorded music and premieres by the world’s leading composers of our time, including William Bolcom, Osvaldo Golijov, Augusta Read Thomas, Shulamit Ran, Stacy Garrop, Joan Tower, and Jennifer Higdon, among others.

A student of the renowned teacher Menahem Pressler, Aznavoorian received her Bachelor’s Degree and Artist Diploma at Indiana University and her Master’s Degree from New England Conservatory. As a dedicated educator and philanthropist, she gives lessons and masterclasses across the United States and abroad and is on faculty at DePaul University and the Music Institute of Chicago, where she is also an Artist in Residence. Aznavoorian works with many programs to help create training pathways for students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Her new foundation aims to help fund these students and help them achieve their full musical potential. Marta Aznavoorian is a Steinway Artist.

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Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2025, 8:30 PM

Constellation  
3111 North Western Avenue, Chicago, IL 60618

ACCENT CONCERT

Hard Music, Hard Liquor

Helmut Lachenmann | *Dal Niente (Interieur III)*  
Hilda Paredes | *Siphonophorae*  
George Lewis | *Mnemnosis*  
Ana Lara | *Y los oros la luz*  
Anthony Cheung | *Windswept Cypresses*  
Roscoe Mitchell | *Cards*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

PERFORMERS:

Ensemble Dal Niente

Emma Hospelhorn, flute	Ammie Brod, viola	Kyle Flens, percussion
Alejandro Acierto, solo clarinet	Juan Horie, cello	Michael Lewanski, conductor
Katherine Jimoh, clarinet	Mabel Kwan, piano	
Patrick Yim, violin	Ben Melsky, harp	

Dal Niente opens its 20th Chicago Season with the return of Hard Music, Hard Liquor. Have a cocktail (or a mocktail, 'cause it's 2025) and enjoy some virtuosic music by some of the ensemble's favorite composers, including George Lewis, Hilda Paredes, Roscoe Mitchell, and more. Founding clarinetist Alejandro Acierto will perform the solo from which the group derives its name: *Dal niente (Intérieur III)*.

Ensemble Dal Niente performs, develops, and sustains new and experimental music for small to large chamber ensemble. We are dedicated to growing relationships with artists, composers, and listeners; advancing distinct and challenging musical voices; and sharing that work with our Chicago, U.S., and international communities. For more information, go to [www.dalniente.com](http://www.dalniente.com).



**MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025, 6:00 PM**

Blackstone Memorial Library  
4904 South Lake Park Avenue, Chicago, IL 60615

## ACCENT CONCERT

### Stories at the Blackstone

Paul Coletti | *Fantasia*

Alexandra Gardner | *Seduction Involves Patience*

Jonathan Hannau † | *Leaflet*\*

Adrian Gordon | *With the Rising Sun*

Michael Hall † | *Adrenaline Rush*

Narong Prangcharoen | *Antahkarana*

Michelle McQuade Dewhirst | *Zing Boom*

Nico Muhly | *Keep in Touch*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## PERFORMERS:

**Michael Hall**, viola

Fantastic musical journeys and stories of seduction, healing, and awakenings in a program by international viola soloist Michael Hall in Chicago's oldest library: the Blackstone Memorial Library. This program features world and Chicago premieres by composers Jonathan Hannau, Nico Muhly, Michelle McQuade Dewhirst, Narong Prangcharoen, Adrian Gordon, Alexandra Gardner, Paul Coletti, and Michael Hall. Join Michael Hall in an evening of exquisite exhales and adrenaline rushes. Plus, experience the eye-candy of Chicago's oldest and most ornate library. Michael Hall, viola, is an international soloist, recording artist, professor, and passionate commissioner and curator of music by living composers. He has over 170 compositions written for him, performed for three former US Presidents and the King of Thailand, and is the co-founder and artistic director of the Bandung Philharmonic: the 1st professional orchestra in Indonesia.

Michael's given the premieres of concertos by Stacy Garrop, Chen Yi, and Kim Diehnelt, and appeared as soloist in Vienna, Jakarta, Reykjavik, Bangkok, Los Angeles, Bali, New York City, Singapore, Boston, Sorrento, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, and been the featured performer at festivals on three continents.

Michael has performed in recital with legendary musicians Andre Previn, Arthur Balsam, recent Grammy-winner Nadia Shpachenko, Kathleen Supove, as well as international stars like Joby Burgess, Luisa Sello, Leslie Tan, Yehonatan Berick, Trio Arbos. He's worked closely with Chicago composers Stacy Garrop, Osnat Netzer, Marta Ptaszynska, Patricia Morehead, Seth Boustead, and Regina Harris Baiocchi. Michael is curator of the soon-to-be published Anthology of New Music: Viola Vol. 1, by NewMusic Shelf Publishers in NYC. His recordings can be found on the Centaur, Delos, Vienna Modern Masters, Acoma, Parma, Albany Records, and New Focus Recording label.

Michael strongly believes musicians need to be part of communities outside of concert halls, and has founded music series in women's shelters, children's homes, and refugee centers in multiple countries. Michael currently teaches at Carthage College, and is in residence at Interlochen Arts Academy. He lives in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago.

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**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025, 7:00 PM**

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Fourth Presbyterian Buchanan Chapel  
126 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, IL 60611

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Viaggio Profundo: Homage to Gustavo Leone**

Gustavo Leon † | *Viaggio Profondo*

Gustavo Leon | *Oscuro Chiaro*

Gustavo Leon | *Corsón*

Interrupted Dialogue

Cadenza

On Track

Carolina Heredia | *Déjate Caer*

Tomas Gueglio † | *Decals II*

Passacaglia

Bourbons

Gustavo Leon | *String Quartet No.4*

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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Stephen Burns, trumpet & conductor

Rika Seko, violin

Amanda Beaune, violin

James Kang, viola

Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff, viola

Paula Kosower, cello

Kuang Hao Huang, piano

A 75-minute celebration of Argentinian American composer Gustavo Leone featuring works for trumpet, electronics and string quartet with Artistic Director trumpeter Stephen Burns.

Conductor, composer and trumpeter Stephen Burns is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Fulcrum Point New Music Project in Chicago. He has been acclaimed on four continents for his virtuosity and interpretative depth in recitals, orchestral appearances, chamber music, and multi-media performances. He has worked closely with composers John Corigliano, Osvaldo Golijov, Gunther Schuller, Jacob TV, and La Monte Young. Native to Wellesley, Massachusetts, Mr. Burns studied under Carmine Caruso, Armando Ghitalla, Arnold Jacobs, Vincent Penzarella, Gerard Schwarz, Pierre Thibaud, William Vacchiano, and Roger Voisin at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Julliard School, and postgraduate work in Paris. He won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Avery Fisher Career Grant, the NEA Recital Grant, the Naumburg Award, the Charles Colin Award, the Meier Arts Achievement Award, and the Maurice André Concours International de Paris. A certified teacher in The Art of Practicing and Performing Beyond Fear, Mr. Burns is on faculty at DePaul University's School of Music and The Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University, as well as a Visiting Lecturer with Amici della Musica in Florence, Italy. CDs at Naxos, MHS, Dorian, Delos, Essay, Kleos, & Innova. Stephen Burns is a Yamaha Performing Artist.

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025, 7:00 PM**

Horatio May Chapel  
5800 North Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL, 60660

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## ACCENT CONCERT

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### She Rises

Caroline Shaw | *Entr'acte*  
Elizabeth J Start † | *Verdisimilitude*  
Elizabeth J Start | *Rising*  
Augusta Read Thomas † | *Rhea Enchanted*  
Florence Price | *String Quartet #2 in a minor*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

^ Midwest Premiere Performance

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## PERFORMERS:

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### Rising

Mary Kothman, violin  
Lisa A. Williams, violin  
Nora Frisk, viola  
Elizabeth J Start, cello

Opening with Caroline Shaw's *Entr'acte* (2011) and closing with Florence Price's recently published *Quartet No. 2 in a minor* (1935), this 75-minute concert also includes two works by Elizabeth J Start: her optimistically contemplative violin-cello duo "*Rising*" (2012) and her "*Verdisimilitude*" (1998), a tour-de-force of cello techniques that was premiered in Chicago by its dedicatee, Marc Johnson, in 1999. The program also includes Augusta Read Thomas' "*Rhea Enchanted*" (2016) for solo cello.

The members of Rising are realizing a dream of performing in an all-female quartet and presenting a sampling of wide-ranging styles of music by women, from the complex harmonies mixed with music derived from Black idioms in one of Florence Price's most adventurous and emotionally-charged works, to Caroline Shaw's vision of a Haydn minuet and trio through "*Alice's looking glass*".

The quartet's purpose is to raise up works by women composers and continue to rise themselves to more programmatic challenges and opportunities.

This ensemble of midwest-based women (Mary Kothman and Lisa A. Williams-violins, Nora Frisk-violin, Elizabeth J Start-cello) formed to elevate composers who might be underrepresented & whose voices need to be heard. They rose to share this common vision.

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**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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Experimental Sound Studio  
5925 North Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60660

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **The Magnificent Misdeeds of Madame Blanc**

#### **Part 1:**

John Harbison | *Odor* from SIMPLE DAYLIGHT  
Amy Gadd † | *She*  
Justin Pasquil | *Ghosted*

#### **Part 2:**

Paul Scherer † | *The Magnificent Misdeeds of Madame Blanc*\*  
libretto by Germaine Shames

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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Amy Gadd, voice  
Justin Pasquil, piano  
Elena Hensel, soprano  
Marissa Kerbel, piano

### **The Magnificent Misdeeds Of Madame Blanc Synopsis:**

On a secluded island, accessible only by ferry and forgotten by time, stands Hotel Noire. Once a haven of elegance, it now serves as a sanctuary for Madame Blanc and her unwavering code of civility. Guests who follow Madame Blanc's code of decorum enjoy the most wonderful experience, but those who commit acts of impropriety are subject to consequences that ensure they will not be repeated.

Told with tongue-in-cheek severity and a refined sense of theatrical irony, the operetta unfolds through four tableaux exploring themes of decorum, consequence, memory, and legacy. Madame Blanc is the sole voice of the work, singing her reflections, judgments, and final resolve. The piano serves as her companion and witness.

## **TABLEAUX**

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### **Tableau I: The Stain**

Madame Blanc kneels beside her cherished oriental rug, tending to a dark stain left by a guest who was "naughty." She sings of his impropriety and the quiet discipline it provoked. The stain remains—a symbol of what cannot be undone.

### **Tableau II: Madame Blanc Takes a Lover**

In the garden, Madame Blanc recalls a guest with whom she shared genuine affection. Their intimacy was real, but fleeting. When he breaks the hotel's unspoken rules, she responds as she always does. She sings with tenderness and resolve, accepting that love does not excuse impropriety.

### **Tableau III: The Taxman Calls**

A government official arrives by ferry to demand back taxes. Madame Blanc listens, offers tea, and sings of values beyond money—memory, dignity, and the cost of preservation. The taxman insists. She makes a decision.

### **Tableau IV: The Curtain Comes Down**

Madame Blanc opens the drawer slowly, removes the matchbox, and holds it for a moment. She sings her final lines with quiet resolve. She strikes the match—not with drama, but with precision.

The flame is real, small, and held briefly. Lights fade as she watches it burn.

Special thanks to New Music Chicago, Experimental Sound Studio and librettist Germaine Shames.

Elastic Arts  
3429 West Diversey Avenue, Chicago, IL, 60647

ACCENT CONCERT

Urban Voices: Listening to the Unheard

All pieces arranged by Station Four

*Choose or Be Chosen* \*

text by Saul Bellows

*Kojo* \*

text by Gwendolyn Brooks

*Death Unfolds* \*

text by Rafael Torch

*The Vulture*

text by Gil Scott-Heron

*Fear or Flight*

text by Richard Wright

*Not Yet Free*

text by Boots Riley

*It's Morning in American*

text by Kao Ra Zen

\*World Premiere Performance

PERFORMERS:

Mark Nagy's Station Four

Mark Nagy

Kao Ra Zen

Emily Rach Beisel

Steve Doyle

Neil Jendon

Heather Zimny

Karen Fisher-Doyle

Tuli Bera

Mindy Meyers

The prime objective of my work is to create grass roots-level conversations that can lead to building bridges and creating communities to address critical societal issues. I believe our country is suffering from an ever-increasing wealth gap, a politically divided nation, and an overall feeling of uncertainty. I hope my piece stimulates thought and inspires action. Collectively, people have a stronger voice than individuals and can improve our civic life. Now is the time to bring people together, especially reaching out to those who have been underrepresented in the past.

Station Four is a Chicago band using music, dance, and text to create a multi-sensory experience for its audience. Each of Station Four's musician-members have a long and varied performance career and together have collaborated stretching back 30 years. Saxophonist-composer Mark Nagy, guitarist Steve Doyle, modular synthesizer player and bassist Neil Jendon, and bass clarinetist Emily Rach Beisel wrap their uniquely structured electro-acoustic improvisations around the spoken-word performance art of Kao Ra Zen in Nagy's most recent work for the ensemble a multi-movement suite "Urban Voices: Listening to the Unheard". In addition to the music and text, the ensemble is augmented by four dance artists, Tuli Bera, Heather Zimny, Karen Fisher-Doyle, and Mindy Meyers. Nagy conceived and formed Station Four in 2022, initially inspired by the works of Merce Cunningham and John Cage. In 2023, Nagy was awarded a DCASE grant from the city of Chicago to create a multi-movement work for musicians and dancers to celebrate diverse neighborhoods and important events in the city's history entitled "Dynamic Fabric: Chicago Intersections". Station Four uses a combination of strictly notated music as well as verbal cues to inform group improvisations, which creates an environment in which the ensemble's members are challenged to respond simultaneously to the aural textures and visual stimuli. The objective of the ensemble is to lead both ensemble members and audience members to question preconceived notions and consider new ideas.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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Logan Center for the Arts  
5720 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL, 60637

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Alarm Will Sound, Sinfonietta**

Hans Thomalla † | *Air*

Hans Thomalla | *Harmoniemusik*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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### **Alarm Will Sound, Sinfonietta**

“Überhip” (Entertainment Weekly) 20-member band Alarm Will Sound takes on music from the arch-modernist to the pop-influenced. Committed to innovative performances and recordings of today’s music, Alarm Will Sound has been associated since its inception with composers at the forefront of contemporary music, premiering pieces by the likes of Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, and David Lang. The group itself includes many composer-performers, giving them an unusual insight into the creation and performance of new works. This “stylistically omnivorous” (The Log Journal) ensemble returns to Logan Center this October to perform and record two works by UChicago Professor of Composition, Hans Thomalla.

Alarm Will Sound is “one of the most vital and original ensembles on the American music scene” (The New York Times). A 20-member band committed to innovative performances and recordings of today’s music, they have established a reputation for performing demanding music with energetic virtuosity. With classical skill and unlimited curiosity, Alarm Will Sound takes on music from a wide variety of styles. “Stylistically omnivorous and physically versatile” (The Log Journal), their repertoire comes from around the world, and ranges from the arch-modernist to the pop-influenced. Since its inception, Alarm Will Sound has been associated with composers at the forefront of contemporary music. The group itself includes many composer-performers, which allows for an unusual degree of insight into the creation and performance of new work. Alarm Will Sound is the resident ensemble at the Mizzou International Composers Festival. Held each July at the University of Missouri in Columbia, the festival features eight world premieres by early-career composers. In 2013-14, Alarm Will Sound served as artists-in-residence at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Alarm Will Sound may be heard on eighteen recordings, including *Land of Winter*, their most recent release featuring music of Donnacha Dennehy, and the premiere recording of Steve Reich’s *Radio Rewrite*. *Acoustica*, their genre-bending, critically-acclaimed album, features live-performance arrangements of music by electronica guru Aphex Twin. For more information and to join the mailing list, visit Alarm Will Sound’s website at [www.alarmwillsound.com](http://www.alarmwillsound.com).

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**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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Sherwood Hall, Columbia College, Chicago  
1312 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Vox femina - The Woman's Voice**

Regina Harris Baiocchi † | *I've Got A Mother*

Regina Harris Baiocchi | *Nourish*

Regina Harris Baiocchi | *Who will Claim the Baby?*

Africa Brown | *Rhythm of a Woman*

Kyong Mee Choi † | *Quietly* (video)

Ester Hana † | *And the Sun Came Up (I, II)*

Janice Misurell-Mitchell † | *O Sapientia* ^

Patricia Morehead † | *Altered Reality*\*

\*World Premiere Performance

^ Midwest Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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Adore Alexander, counter tenor, recorded voice

Michael Allen, cello

Nyassa Bossette, voice

Africa Brown, voice and percussion

Kimberly Carlos, piano

Ester Hanviriyapunt, piano

Anthony Jones, baritone

Jeanel Le Blanc, contralto

Eric Trévon McCarter, tenor

Alex Klein, bass oboe

Andrea Morris, soprano

Felicia Patton, mezzo

Meerenai Shim, flute/alto flutelkjlj

Vox femina - The Woman's Voice, presents works that reflect ideas and images of particular women but have a universal view. Regina Baiocchi's pieces, *Nourish*, *Things Change*, and *I've Got a Mother*, reflect African American culture and traditions. Kyong Mee Choi's video, *Quietly*, is based on a poem by the composer on the death of her father. Janice Misurell-Mitchell's *O Sapientia*, for flute/alto flute and electronics uses a recording of the antiphon by Hildegard von Bingen to reflect on humanity's loss of wisdom. Patricia Morehead's *Altered Reality*, for oboe, bass oboe, and electronics uses visual images created by her late sister, Sheryl Ann Noonan, a talented painter and sculptor. Her piece will also feature Alex Klein, former principal oboe in the Chicago Symphony. Ester Hana's piece, *Untitled* is brings a jazz inflection to our program. Our guest composer Africa Brown presents an upbeat celebration of womanhood through song and percussive dance.

Founded in 2010, 6Degrees Composers is dedicated to writing and performing music by Women. 6Degrees Composers is the brainchild of Regina Harris Baiocchi. In the tradition of premiering music, Regina joined forces with sorors of American Women Composers, American Composers Forum, International Alliance of Women in Music, AACM-the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, CUBE, BMI, and ASCAP. Members of 6Degrees are Regina Harris Baiocchi, Kyong Mee Choi, Ester Hanviriyapunt, Janice Misurell-Mitchell, and Patricia Morehead. The group frequently includes a guest composer, such as Chen Yi and Samantha Ege. They have presented concerts in honor of Black History Month, International Women's Heritage Month, and in the HotHouse Online Performance series in 2020-21. As described by M.L. Rantala, in the Hyde Park Herald, "A 6Degrees concert is always a smorgasbord, with many compositional traditions represented, and this latest concert was chock-full of a variety of approaches."

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025, 7:30 PM

Mary B. Galvin Recital Hall  
70 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

ACCENT CONCERT

Time Stands Still

- Gibbons | *The Cries of London*
- Gibbons | *Drop, drop slow tears*
- Dowland | *Weep you no more*
- Gibbons | *The Silver Swan*
- Campion | *Never Weather-Beaten Sail*
- Vaughan Williams | *Serenade to Music*
- Gibbons | *O Clap Your Hands*
- Stucky | *Drop, drop slow tears*
- Parry | *Never Weather-Beaten Sail*
- Clarke | *Weep ye no more*
- Dowland | *Flow my tears*
- Bennett | *Weep, o mine eyes*
- Garrop† | *Drink to me only with thine eyes* \*
- Vaughan Williams | *Three Shakespeare Songs*
- Dowland | *Time stands still*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

PERFORMERS:

Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble

Directed by Andrew Megill and Wonju Jo

Chuck Foster, collaborative pianist

Aaron Amhof	Henry Herbert	Andrea Nalywajko
Abigail Arnold	Elizabeth Hsu	Mason Oberlin
Norah Bernstein	Cynthia Hu	Hope Preischel
Nischal Chakravarthi	Matthew Huang	Rohan Purohit
Jared Cohen	Erin Kazmierczak	Molly Snodgrass
Ken Dulay	Aiden Kocian	Nola Tan
Jules Furgal	Lauren Maho	Daniel Uglunts
Tejas Gururaja	Stephen Miller	Maddy Zuckerman
Jordan Haas	Ian Morris	

The first concert of the 2025 Dunbar Festival of Early Music. The Festival celebrates the works of Orlando Gibbons and John Dowland. In addition to works by these two composers, BCE offers contemporary riffs on their music, including a world premiere by Chicago composer Stacy Garrop.

BCE — the initials could easily stand for Beyond the Common Era or Before the Common Era. The 24-voice ensemble, conducted by Andrew Megill, sings a highly specialized, virtuosic repertoire for advanced choral singers, concentrating on music of the 21st century and drawing relationships to its polyphonic roots in early music, primarily that of the Renaissance. This ensemble is only open to music majors.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025, 8:00 PM**

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PianoForte  
1335 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Myths and Accidents - Vocal Music of Doug Lofstrom**

Doug Lofstrom † | *Myths and Accidents*

Doug Lofstrom | *All Must End*

Doug Lofstrom | *Three Sandburg Songs*\*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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Ryan De Ryke, vocals

Daniel Schlosberg, piano

This concert follows the September 12 release of the CD *Myths and Accidents* by Divine Art/Diversions Records. It features three Lofstrom song cycles, *Myths and Accidents*, *All Must End* and *Three Sandburg Songs*, the last of which will be a world premiere. Several of the songs are based on lyrics by Alan Robert Day, a longtime Lofstrom collaborator and Chicago native. Other songs are based on poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay, Thomas Traherne, Herman Melville and of course, Carl Sandburg.

Watch Ryan and Daniel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=538OrHZvr-g>

### **Ryan de Ryke**

Ryan de Ryke is a vocal artist whose versatility and unique musical presence have endeared him to audiences in the worlds of song, musical theater, early music, oratorio, and concert music. He has performed at many of the leading international music festivals including the Aldeburgh and Edinburgh Festivals in the UK and the summer festival at Aix-en-Provence in France, garnering significant acclaim as both a recitalist and singing actor. Having studied with John Shirley Quirk, Ian Partridge, and Georges Backes, he is also an alumnus of the Britten-Pears Institute in the UK and the Schubert Institute in Austria where he worked with great artists of the song world such as Elly Ameling, Wolfgang Holzmair, Julius Drake, Rudolf Jansen, and Helmut Deutsch. His performances with Haymarket Opera have been heralded by the Chicago Tribune among their top 5 list.

### **Daniel Schlosberg**

Pianist Daniel Schlosberg leads a kaleidoscopic musical life. He has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in numerous chamber music and new music concerts. He has a passion for contemporary music, and has premiered Augusta Read Thomas's *"Starlight Ribbons"* and given the US premiere of Kaija Saariaho's *Calices* with violinist Austin Wulliman. He has recorded for the Albany, Bridge, Bright Shiny Things, Centaur, Navona, New World, Nimbus, Jacaranda and Permelia labels. In the art song realm, he was on staff at Ravinia's Steans Music Institute and was the founder of the Baltimore Lieder Weekend. Based in Chicago, he is on faculty at the University of Notre Dame.

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Your generosity is what makes Ear Taxi Festival possible. Your support enables us to program innovative, thought-provoking, boundary-breaking concerts—along with panel discussions, networking sessions, and professional development workshops.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025, 3:00 PM

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Allen Recital Hall, Holtschneider Performance Center  
2330 North Halsted Street, Chicago, IL 60614

### ACCENT CONCERT

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#### DePaul Faculty Artist Series: Christopher Jones and Osnat Netzer, Composers

Osnat Netzer † | *Diaphonous Diaphony*\*

Osnat Netzer | *Monoblogue*

Osnat Netzer | *Songs of 6 June, 1967*

Osnat Netzer | *Contrapose*

Christopher Wendell Jones † | *How are the intervals filled between these apparitions?*

Christopher Wendell Jones | *Artifact*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

### PERFORMERS:

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Sarah Plum, viola

Ben Roidl-Ward, bassoon

Isadora Nojkovic, cello

Chuck Chandler, voice

Christopher Wendell Jones, piano

Join composition faculty members, Osnat Netzer and Christopher Wendell Jones for a concert of new and recent original work. The program includes solos and duos featuring DePaul voice faculty member, Chuck Chandler and guest artists, Ben Roidl-Ward (bassoon), Isadora Nojkovic (cello), and Sarah Plum (viola), with Netzer and Jones each performing at the piano.

#### Osnat Netzer

Osnat Netzer is a composer, performer and educator. Osnat creates her compositions collaboratively, tailoring her work to the performer's sensibilities, physicality and improvisational inclinations. She takes inspiration from cognitive linguistics, and in dialogue with the embodied experience of physical forces, such as potential and kinetic energy, resulting in compositions that are rich in musical languages and connected to the fulsome pursuit for tension and relaxation.

Netzer's works have been commissioned and performed by Ensemble Dal Niente, ICE (International Contemporary Ensemble), saxophonists Kenneth Radnofsky and Geoffrey Landman, Spektral Quartet, and Winsor Music, among many others, published by Edition Peters and earthsongs, and recorded on Bridge Records and New Focus Recordings. She is currently Associate Professor and Director of Composition and Musicianship at DePaul University.

#### Christopher Wendell Jones

Christopher Wendell Jones is a composer of intricately designed music that explores issues of identity, memory and time in distinctive, unconventional ways. Jones' music has been performed internationally and throughout the United States at venues including the Darmstadt Ferienkurse in Germany, the Havana Festival of Contemporary Music, Merkin Hall in New York, and the Katzen Arts Center in Washington, D. C. He has given lectures at many institutions, recently including Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea.

As a recipient of commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation and the American Composers Forum, among others, Jones has collaborated with a broad range of musicians, including sfSound, the Mivos and St. Lawrence String Quartets, the Callithumpian Consort, David Milnes and the U. C. Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, and many outstanding soloists. Jones currently resides in Chicago, where he is Associate Professor of Musicianship and Composition and Chair of Musical Studies at DePaul University.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025, 8:00 PM

Unity Lutheran Church  
1212 West Balmoral Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640

### ACCENT CONCERT

#### the pNeXT Ensemble: New Works

Schubert | *Five Pieces from "Die Schöne Müllerin"*

Michael G. Miller † | *Vigilant*

Michael G. Miller | *Image of the Floating World*

Alexander Scriabin | *Romance*

Alexander Scriabin | *Etude in c# minor, Op.2 #1*

Ari H Scott † | *Descending*

Anil Altinsoy | *Prayer*

Michael G. Miller † | *Arabesque*

Michael G. Miller | *Ballade-Caprice\**

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

### PERFORMERS:

Michael G. Miller, piano

Ari H. Scott, cello

Jonathan Thomas, horn

Mindy Meyers

Enjoy all-new repertoire for our trio, the pNeXT Ensemble. New music rethinking the academic stereotype is performed by a trio of horn, cello, and piano. Our music is sometimes tonal, sometimes not. The musicians studied at DePaul and New England Conservatory.

#### Michael Gustav Miller

Composer, pianist, and organist Michael Gustav Miller (b.1968) began studying piano in 1973 with Sandra Renegar in Ida Grove, Iowa, including theory, composition, and wind instruments. At 13 he started organ lessons with Phyllis Schultz. He continued studying piano with Arne Sorensen in Sioux City, Iowa. Early concerto appearances included Beethoven second in Sioux City, and Saint-Saëns second in Valparaiso, Indiana, as the first winner of the Lutheran Summer Music Program national academy's concerto competitions, in 1983. He served as organist for several churches in his hometown during middle and high school, and for churches in Iowa City while in college. Michael attended the University of Iowa in Iowa City as one of only ten full scholarship academic Presidential Scholars, studying piano with noted pedagogues John Simms and Kenneth Amada, oboe with James Lakin, and composition with Richard Hervig and William Hibbard, graduating Summa Cum Laude in 1988 with degrees in piano and oboe. At the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Michael studied with many extraordinary artists, including members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Further appearances with orchestra included works of Bach and Cage in Boston. Michael has been heard live on WGBH radio in Boston playing works of Rameau, Harbison, and Etler. He can be heard as soloist with orchestra on John Cage's unusual *Ryoanji* on a CD issued by Mode Records. John Cage described Michael's playing as "extraordinarily beautiful". Michael received the Master of Music degree from New England Conservatory in 1991. Michael returned to the University of Iowa for further graduate work in music composition, collaborating with fellow artists while on staff of the University's Dance and Music Departments. After working with various churches, orchestras, theatre, and ballet companies in the Midwest and New England, he settled in Chicago in 2001 to work full-time as an independent artist as a teacher, composer, and performer. He has been twice nominated for a Jeff Award for theatre music direction in Chicago. Michael taught piano lessons for many years at Access Contemporary Music in Ravenswood (Chicago). Currently he serves as the Organist and Music Director of Unity Lutheran Church in Edgewater (Chicago), and since 2016 as founder of Concerts at Unity concert series. Recent compositions include *Elegy Variations* for flute, for Trevor Watkin; *Enambered*, for the Chicago Bass Ensemble; *Insomnia* for double bass, for Doug Johnson; *Byzantine Fantasy*, for English horn and harp, for St Simon's Episcopal Church (Arlington Heights); *Heart of Tungsten*, for cello and piano, for Alexa Muhly; *Spinning on the Beach*, for clarinet and piano, for John De La Paz and Unity Lutheran Church; and *Caduceus Fantasy*, for violin and cello, for the International Museum of Surgical Science.

## **Jonathan Thomas**

Jonathan Thomas recently graduated with a Master's degree in horn performance at DePaul University where he studied with Chicago Symphony Orchestra second horn James Smelser and Lyric Opera second horn Neil Kimel. Jonathan is also an avid music educator and is currently the horn instructor for People's School of Music as well as the temporary band director of Forman High School in CPS. Prior to living in Chicago, Jonathan studied horn performance and music education at University of Michigan where he studied with Adam Unsworth. During his time there, Jonathan performed in a wide variety of musical ensembles including Michigan's Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Band, Jazz Ensemble, Creative Arts Orchestra, Digital Music Ensemble, and Michigan Marching Band. Jonathan has also performed with a variety of professional ensembles in Michigan including the Dearborn Symphony, Rochester Symphony, Detroit Chamber Orchestra, and the Regenerate Orchestra which specializes in newly composed aleatoric music. In 2019, Jonathan also received an EXCEL grant from the University of Michigan to commission a new piece of music for horn, soprano, and piano. As an avid chamber musician, Jonathan has enjoyed playing in a variety of chamber music contexts including the DePaul graduate brass quintet, a string plus horn quintet to play Eleanor Alberga's "Shining Gate of Morpheus", DePaul Brass Ensemble, and new music ensemble Ensemble 20+, where he premiered a new piece for nine brass musicians and timpani by Augusta Read Thomas. Jonathan has also spent six quarters playing in DePaul's Symphony Orchestra and has also greatly enjoyed his time in DePaul's Wind Ensemble. When not performing or teaching, Jonathan enjoys exploring the various musical venues all over Chicago including jazz clubs and street festivals.

## **Ari Hunter Scott**

Ari Hunter Scott is a cellist, composer, and improviser based out of the Chicago area. With performing degrees from Illinois Wesleyan and DePaul University, Ari has been performing around the midwest for several years, both as a soloist, and as an orchestral and chamber musician. Her repertoire is wide, often performing Debussy, Poulenc, Prokofiev, and Francaix, together with her own music and that of many emerging composers. She often has worked across genres, with jazz musicians, pop artists, and many others. As a composer, she has written several chamber and solo works, as well as several soundtracks, both featuring acoustic and digital music. She often performs concerts, weddings, and other events.



## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025, 7:30 PM

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Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University  
430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

### ACCENT CONCERT

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#### Lemuria

Tim Corpus † | *A Light Divided*

Kyong Mee Choi † | *Im Nebel*

Matt Mason † | *Downhill from Breathing*

Ben Zucker † | *Grass Has Grown Into Your Cities*

Jonathan Hannau † | *3 Pieces for Orchestra*

Clarice Assad | *Lemuria*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

### PERFORMERS:

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#### Roosevelt University CCPA Contemporary Ensemble

#### Directed by Benjamin Firer

The CCPA Contemporary Ensemble presents a bold evening of recent works that explore sound, texture, and atmosphere in strikingly original ways. From Tim Corpus' shimmering *A Light Divided* and Kyong Mee Choi's evocative *Im Nebel*, to Matt Mason's visceral *Downhill from Breathing*, the program highlights diverse voices shaping today's musical landscape. Clarice Assad's *Lemuria* brings a driving energy with its unique scoring for cello choir and percussion, while Ben Zucker's *Grass Has Grown Into Your Cities* offers a powerful reflection on environment and community. The program also features a movement from Jonathan Hannau's *Three Pieces for Orchestra*, showcasing the imaginative artistry of a CCPA alumnus.

#### Benjamin Firer

Benjamin Firer is the newly appointed Assistant Professor of Conducting at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts. Based in Chicago, he also serves as Music Director of the Harper Symphony Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the Rockford Symphony Orchestra. In the 2025–2026 season, he is a Music Director finalist with the Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra, where he will lead a performance of Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* with CCPA guitar faculty An Tran. Additionally, he will serve as principal conductor for Harmonie North and will appear as guest conductor of the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra, presenting *Video Games in Concert*, a fully immersive multimedia experience.

He previously served for eight years as Orchestra Director at Northeastern Illinois University, where he led orchestral ensembles, opera productions, and developed the conducting curriculum. He has previously directed collegiate orchestras at Penn State University, Juniata College and Lewis University. Firer serves on the board of directors of the Illinois Council of Orchestras where he serves on the conducting mentorship committee, devoted to supporting budding orchestral conductors and music educators.

A dynamic and sought-after guest conductor, Firer has appeared with orchestras nationally and internationally, including the Budafok Dohnányi Orchestra (Hungary), Milwaukee Symphony, Altoona Symphony, Champaign-Urbana Symphony, DuPage Symphony, Miami Symphony, Fargo-Moorhead Symphony, and Orchestre de la Francophonie (Canada). He has also served on the conducting staff of the Quad Cities Symphony, Dubuque Symphony, and Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra. Firer holds a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from Northwestern University and a Master's Degree from Yale University.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2025, 4:00 PM**

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PianoForte  
1335 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Nervous Liturgies: The Piano Music of Robert Savage**

Robert Savage | *Cowboy Nocturne*

Robert Savage | *Prelude and Chaconne*

Robert Savage | *AIDS Ward Scherzo*

Robert Savage | *Dance of Avoidance*

Robert Savage | *Piano Sonata No.1*

## **PERFORMERS:**

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Daniel Baer, piano

Pianist Daniel Baer brings the music of Robert Savage (1951-1993) to Chicago. Robert Savage, a queer composer who died from complications due to AIDS in 1993, is a largely unknown artist whose music is unpublished and rarely performed. This concert presents Savage's music from his earliest works to those that he wrote after his AIDS diagnosis in 1988. Savage's late compositions grapple with his AIDS diagnosis and mortality, reflect his practice of Zen Buddhism, and demonstrate the unique synthesis of popular and academic musical trends that led John Ashbery to describe him as "a serious and very talented musicologist and composer." Listen to the evolution of a unique American artist composing music of unparalleled and urgent Intensity.

The New York Times has hailed Daniel Baer as a pianist who plays with "fluidity, warmth, and sparkle" who "achieved the often elusive...goal of putting virtuosity at the service of bigger ideas." Daniel Baer was the artist-pianist for the 2020-2021 LYNX Project, premiering new compositions for voice and piano and recording songs for an anthology celebrating four years of its autism advocacy series. He currently serves as Music Director for Queer Poem-a-Day, a poetry podcast for the month of June. Daniel Baer is an active performer of solo and chamber music throughout the United States. Dr. Baer earned his Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School and his Doctorate from the Eastman School of Music. He is currently on faculty at the Music Institute of Chicago where he also directs the Chamber Music Program. @danielbaerpiano

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**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2025, 8:30 PM**

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McClintock Choral and Recital Room  
70 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **moth songs ii: thresholds**

Selina Liu † | *mother, please sing me awake* \*

Alissa Voth † | *Of the Honey Draught* \*

Megan DiGiorgio † | *did I?* \*

Cecelia Olszewski † | *Falling* \*

Rafe Menon † | *do you want to play a game?* \*

Cecelia Olszewski † | *What Is Not Being Said?* \*

Casey Lyons † | *Laundromat* \*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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### **cosmia opera collective**

cosmia opera collective presents "moth songs ii: thresholds", a continuation of our fundraiser concert series premiering art songs written by northwestern composers for northwestern vocalists. these works, written for voice, piano and/or electronics, have the option of using an original text written by the composer/singer/both, or a public domain text that resonates with both artists and fits this year's themes of thresholds and liminality.

cosmia opera collective is a student-run organization facilitating the performance of new works by historically-marginalized (female-identifying, LGBTQ+, and/or POC) composers at northwestern university.

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**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2025, 7:00 PM**

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International Museum of Surgical Science  
1524 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60610

## ACCENT CONCERT

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### Chicago Bagatelles Project

Karin Rehnqvist | *Rädda mig ur dyn* ^

Luciano Berio | *Sequenza VIIb*

Marcos Balter | *Stroh bass*

Amy Williams | *Child's Play*

-

### Chicago Bagatelles Project

Augusta Read Thomas † | *Hummingbird Musings* \*

Ania Vu † | *Gusts of Wind* \*

Phil Pierick † | *Lullabye* \*

Baldwin Giang | *Bagatelle* \*

Osnat Netzer † | *Philibuster* \*

Carlos Bandera † | *Seedling* \*

Jonathan Hannau † | *The Vinyl Scratched Indefinitely* \*

Molly Jones † | *Bagatelle* \*

Sean Shepherd † | *A Few Good Licks* \*

Paul Novak † | *unruly clock etude* \*

David Clay Mettens † | *Nemesis* \*

Shawn Okpebholo † | *Midnight Hue* \*

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

^ Midwest Premiere Performance

## PERFORMERS:

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Phil Pierick, saxophones

Kyle Flens, percussion

Kristina Bachrach, soprano

Sasha Ishov, bass flute

The world premiere of Chicago Bagatelles Project features twelve short works for solo saxophone performed by Phil Pierick and commissioned by Chicago-based composers who have drawn inspiration from the arts, science, nature, and the city itself. Contributing composers are Carlos Bandera, Baldwin Giang, Jonathan Hannau, Molly Jones, David Clay Mettens, Osnat Netzer, Paul Novak, Shawn Okpebholo, Phil Pierick, Sean Shepherd, Augusta Read Thomas, and Ania Vu. Alongside the Bagatelles, the program is completed with chamber works featuring soprano Kristina Bachrach (the Chicago premiere of *Rädda mig ur dyn* by Karin Rehnqvist), flutist Sasha Ishov (in Marcos Balter's *Stroh bass*), and the other half of Isotope Duo, percussionist Kyle Flens (in Amy Williams' *Child's Play*) as well as an audience-participation "sing-along" version of Luciano Berio's *Sequenza VIIb* filling acoustic of the museum's Hall of Immortals.

### Phil Pierick

Classically trained and experimentally minded, Chicago-based saxophonist, improviser, composer, singer, and educator Phil Pierick has been called "the Swiss Army knife of saxophonists." Though equally at home performing music spanning the past five centuries, he is an emphatic advocate for new music and has commissioned more than 35 new works and presented over 60 premieres. I CARE IF YOU LISTEN describes his duo Ogni Suono's album SaxoVoce as "a tour de force of new possibilities for saxophone and voice." He has appeared as a concerto soloist with the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the Slovenian Armed Forces Band, and MIT (Taiwan) among others. Phil has taught at the Eastman School of Music, the University of Illinois, Butler University, the College of Wooster, and as a guest at more than 40 universities and conferences around the world. The only prizewinner at both the Jean-Marie Londeix and ISSAC International Saxophone Competitions, Phil studied at Eastman School of Music (DMA), the University of Illinois (MM, BM), and in Vienna (Fulbright Scholar) and Paris (Beebe Scholar). His primary teachers were Debra Richtmeyer, Jean-Michel Goury, Lars Mlekusch, and Chien-Kwan Lin. Phil is a Vandoren Performing Artist. More info at [PhilPierick.com](http://PhilPierick.com).

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2025, 6:00 PM

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Harold Washington Library  
400 South State Street, Chicago, IL 60605

### ACCENT CONCERT

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#### Vanishing Point

Adolphus Hailstork | *Eslanda Dances*

Kaija Saariaho | *Cloud Trio*

Andrew Norman | *Companion Guide to Rome*

### PERFORMERS:

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Dylan Feldpausch, violin

Rebecca Miller, viola

J Holzen, cello

Join Vanishing Point for a concert of contemporary classical string music presented by Harold Washington Library as part of the 2025 Ear Taxi Festival! The program guides the listener through the travels, real or imagined, of three composers. Andrew Norman's masterwork *The Companion Guide to Rome* illustrates a set of portraits of Roman cathedrals, while Kaija Saariaho's *Cloud Trio* acts a musical interpretation of the ever-shifting nature of clouds in the Alpine sky. Adolphus Hailstork's *Eslanda Dances* rounds out the program with depictions of dances that Eslanda "Essie" Cardozo Goode Robeson (Paul Robeson's wife) would have encountered in her international travels. Featuring Dylan Feldpausch on violin, Rebecca Miller on viola, and J Holzen on cello, this inaugural concert for Vanishing Point Ensemble will guide the listener through the styles and sounds of three of the 21st century's major compositional voices.

#### Dylan Feldpausch

Dylan Feldpausch is a violinist and composer from Austin, Texas with degrees in violin performance from Rice University and Arizona State University. They were a Chicago Civic Orchestra Fellow from 2021 to 2023, and they are currently the Program Manager and Head Teaching Artist for Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra's Side-by-Side strings program in Matteson, Illinois. Whether they're teaching or performing, Dylan seeks to adapt musical convention to best serve whichever audience or community they're bringing their experience to. They are a founding member of Hot Second, a genre-bending violin and percussion duo based in Chicago, and are a core member of Ensemble Mycelium.

#### Rebecca Miller

Rebecca Miller is a violist with extensive experience across a variety of genres, both onstage and in the pit. She performs with a number of orchestras throughout the greater Midwest, including Northwest Indiana Symphony, Des Moines Metro Opera Orchestra, Orchestra Iowa, Camerata Chicago, Elgin Symphony, and Chicago Sinfonietta. Rebecca has been a top prizewinner at Glenn Gould School Chamber Music Competition with the Highwood Quartet. An enthusiastic advocate for contemporary music, she was part of a 2024 performance of Steven Takasugi's *Sideshow*, and has premiered works by many young composers, most recently alongside cellist Anssi Kartunnen, violist Steven Dann, and composer Magnus Lindberg as part of Creative Dialogue France. She has taken part in Chicago's NUNC Festival, Toronto's 21C Festival, and enjoyed multiple seasons with the NEXT Festival of Emerging Artists. Rebecca holds degrees from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, the Glenn Gould School, and the Boston Conservatory, and has studied with Helen Callus, Steven Dann and Rictor Noren.

#### J Holzen

Cellist and educator J Holzen is in constant pursuit of musical collaborations of all kinds, including contemporary chamber music, pop and jazz shows, and working with students to achieve their artistic goals. Their enthusiasm and sincerity as an artist and performer encourages audience members and students alike to join J on their artistic journey or begin their own. J is a current Fellow with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and a member of Orchestra Iowa and the Sioux City Symphony. Engagements as an educator include serving as a Teaching Associate in Music at Lake Forest College, teaching early childhood music classes through outreach teaching programs in the Chicago Public Schools, and maintaining a private cello studio. J grew up in a musical family in St. Louis, Missouri, and holds a Master of Music in Cello Performance from DePaul University and a Bachelor of Music in Cello Performance from Oberlin Conservatory. Their primary teachers include Brant Taylor, Darrett Adkins, and Ken Kulosa.

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2025, 7:00 PM

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Skowronski Music Hall  
1032 West Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626

### ACCENT CONCERT

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#### Benjamin Sung & David Kalhous

Johann Sebastian Bach | *Sonata for Violin and Keyboard in E Major*

1. Adagio
2. Allegro
3. Adagio ma non tanto
4. Allegro

Dongryul Lee † | *The Ci(r)cadian Tree* \*

Commissioned by Ben Sung and David Kalhous for their extension project

1. Every black is an infinity of colors (The ascension hole)
2. The song sparrow and a trillion impossible questions
3. Interplanetary Lightstorm-blossoms
4. Kinderszenen: The whole world is a playground

György Kurtág | *Tre Pezzi per Violino e Pianoforte*

1. Öd und traurig
2. Vivo
3. Aus der Ferne. Sehr leise, äusserst langsam

Franz Schubert | *Fantaisie in C Major for Violin and Piano*

1. Andante molto
2. Allegretto
3. Andantino
4. Allegro vivace - Presto

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

### PERFORMERS:

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David Kalhous, piano

Benjamin Sung, violin

Loyola University Chicago has the pleasure of inviting you to a concert featuring pianist David Kalhous and violinist Benjamin Sung on Friday, October 31, 2025, at 7:00 PM at Skowronski Music Hall, Mundelein Center for Fine and Performing Arts.

The program will include works by JS Bach, Franz Schubert, György Kurtág, alongside the world premiere of *The Ci(r)cadian Tree* by Dongryul Lee, commissioned by Sung and Kalhous. Inspired by the rare 2024 dual emergence of periodical cicadas in Illinois and the dazzling Northern Lights, Lee's piece explores cycles of nature, life, and impermanence through vivid musical storytelling, through a Borgesian narrative.

David Kalhous is recognized for his elegant musicianship, brilliant pianism, and engaging programming. Equally at home with Scarlatti, Beethoven, Ligeti, and Feldman, he has performed at the Prague Spring Festival, Symphony Space, and Czech Philharmonic Chamber Music Society. A champion of contemporary music, he collaborates with composers and ensembles worldwide. He holds a Doctor of Music from Northwestern University and is Associate Professor of Piano at Florida State University, with recordings on Czech Radio and Arco Diva.

Benjamin Sung is Associate Professor of Violin at Florida State University, Faculty Artist at the Brevard Music Center, and principal second violin of the Brevard Music Center Orchestra. A champion of contemporary music, he has worked with John Adams, Pierre Boulez, and Helmut Lachenmann and recorded for Centaur and Albany Records. He has performed as a soloist and chamber musician worldwide. Sung holds degrees from Eastman and Indiana University and studied at Carnegie Hall's Professional Training Program.



From engineering campanology to an ecological mass cycle, composer Dongryul Lee explores the boundary between sound and idea, reinventing classical expression with clarity and pathos. His works have been performed internationally by ensembles including the Kairos Quartet, Jupiter Quartet, and Avanti!, and in Chicago by the Grossman Ensemble, Axiom Brass, and New Earth Ensemble. A prizewinner of the Bartók World, GMCL Lisboa, and Città di Udine competitions, Lee was the fourth CCCC Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Chicago and is currently Assistant Professor of Music at Loyola University Chicago.

### Program notes for The Ci(r)cadian Tree

In the summer of 2024, I encountered two extremely rare phenomena in the same month. That year, two different types of cicadas simultaneously emerged in Illinois. Theoretically, this can happen every 221 years, when the cycles of the two prime numbers coincide: Brood XIII, the Northern Illinois Brood, hatched and burrowed into the ground 17 years ago, in 2007. Brood XIX, the Great Southern Brood, hatched in 2011 and has spent 13 years underground, sipping sap from tree roots.[...] This spring the two broods will surface together, and are expected to cover a similar range. Up to a trillion cicadas will rise from the warming ground to molt, sing, mate, lay eggs and die. – Jonathan Corum, Maps of Two Cicada Broods, Reunited After 221 Years (New York Times, May 2, 2024)

One day, my daughter asked to visit the “cicada” trees at her school and I thought it was an excellent idea for her to do some nature exploration activities. When I arrived at her school, I was absolutely mesmerized by the unreal, colossal scale of the scene. I saw countless dead cicadas covering the tree stumps, some hung on the trees while thousands on the ground like piles of sand. From time to time, I could hear the snapping sounds of birds shredding or tearing cicadas apart. Abandoned wings on the ground gave the impression that birds enjoyed these snacks like potato chips, eating the bodies and discarding the plastic bag.

My daughter played with the cicadas, placing some on her shoulder or palms to watch them crawl, throwing some to see if they soar before hitting the ground, and even petting them with adorable eyes. The sight of the trees with thousands of holes where cicadas emerged from years of underground slumber, piles of living and dead cicadas with their cocoons, desperately flying cicadas chased by birds, my daughter playing among them by the playground, imprinted a philosophical question: A Buddhist zen question about the meaning and the origin of life. This was on May 31st 2024.

Three weeks before our cicada adventure, there was another rare event. A massive series of solar storms in early May, caused by three coronal mass ejections from the sun, made the northern lights visible in many areas of the northern hemisphere (Kp index of 9 out of 10 – likelihood that the aurora will be visible.) After missing this celestial show on May 10th, my family tried to watch it again the following night with many of our fussy Chicago neighbors. At 11 PM, after dropping off my other family members at home following an exhausting and unfruitful night-chase, I finally set up my base camp at the park near my daughter’s school, right by the cicada playground. Miraculously, around 11:30 PM, I glimpsed about two minutes of the Northern Lights—a cosmic image that I had never encountered before. While writing the piece, I realized that the cicadas might have seen the same celestial fireworks, which inspired the third movement.

The title The Ci(r)cadian Tree reflects the circular daily lives of a trillion cicadas. They emerge in the morning from the holes under their mother trees after the longest and darkest waiting, with some being eaten by predators in the afternoon while others survive. (The original title of second movement was Duel: Sing-Song sparrow sharpshreds snapping snacks.) In the early evening, they hear probably the only song during their lifetime from the playground from children, and at night, those that succeed to reproduce might enjoy the beautiful Northern Lights. The Ci(r)cadian Tree is commissioned by Benjamin Sung and David Kalhous for their extension project and dedicated to them with deepest admiration. It is premiered in October 2025 at Loyola University Chicago.

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY



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## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025, 5:00 PM

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Notre École de Musique  
5036 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625

### ACCENT CONCERT

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#### Threads of Time

Reena Esmail  
Lera Auerbach  
Cynthia Papierniak †  
Frédéric Chopin  
Leopold Godowsky  
Alexander Scriabin  
Sergei Rachmaninov

\*World Premiere Performance

† Illinois-based Composer

### PERFORMERS:

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Ayse Celasun, piano  
Cacie Miller, piano  
Maya Galperin, piano

Threads of Time brings together pianists Ayse Celasun, Cacie Miller, and Maya Galperin for an evening that bridges contemporary and Romantic sound worlds. The program features works by Reena Esmail, Lera Auerbach, and Cynthia Papierniak alongside masterpieces by Frédéric Chopin, Leopold Godowsky, Alexander Scriabin, and Sergei Rachmaninov. From lyrical meditations to dazzling virtuosity, the concert highlights connections across centuries, revealing how composers continue to inspire, challenge, and echo one another through the piano.

#### Ayse Celasun

Ayse Celasun is a French-Turkish pianist based in Chicago. A former tenured professor at the Conservatoire de Créteil (France), she is the founder of Notre École de Musique LLC (2014), a French-style music school, and Fine Arts Music – Performance & Scholarship (2013), a nonprofit supporting concerts and scholarships. She earned a Performance Diploma from the École Normale de Musique in Paris and a Licence de Musicologie from Paris VIII University. Ayse performs internationally while teaching piano and organizing cultural events, building bridges between Europe and the U.S. through music and education. Her repertoire spans Classical to Contemporary.

#### Cacie Miller

Chicago-based pianist Cacie Miller is an active chamber musician and founding member of the Ferrer Miller Duo and the Helia Trio. She leads Composing Our Climate, performer-driven commissioned works engaging the climate crisis. Cacie has performed solo and chamber music across Chicago as well as in Germany, Italy, and Puerto Rico. Her work emphasizes storytelling, community partnerships, education, and an environmentally attentive performance practice.

#### Maya Galperin

Originally from Russia, pianist Maya Galperin is a soloist, chamber musician, and international collaborator. She earned an MM in Piano Performance from Northwestern University's Bienen School, studying with Sylvia Wang and Betty Buccheri. She has performed in Russia, the U.S., France, Italy, Belgium, and Czechia. Since 2003 she has been a collaborative pianist and coach at Northwestern. She also teaches at the Merit School of Music in Chicago and appears in masterclasses, recitals, and competitions across the city.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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The CheckOut  
4116 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60613

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Celebration of Chamber Music for Oboe, Viola, and Piano**

Zae Munn † | Accord

Hilary Tann | Duo for Oboe and Viola

Mikhail Glinka | Sonata in D Minor for Viola and Piano

Charles Martin Loeffler | Two Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola, and Piano

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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### **Grand Trio Accord**

Lisa Kozenko, oboe

Zoran Jakovcic, viola

Réne Lecuona, piano

Grand Accord Trio (oboe, viola, piano) explores repertoire for different combinations of their instruments and are featuring Accord by Chicago-area composer Zae Munn. Also included are works by Tann, Glinka, and Loeffler.

Lisa Kozenko, faculty oboe, Ball State University; Zoran Jakovcic, faculty viola, Ball State University; Rene Lecuona, faculty piano, University of Iowa

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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Mary B. Galvin Recital Hall  
70 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **The Arithmetic of Pain**

Judith Weir | *Drop Down Ye Heavens*

Toivo Tulev | *Summer Rain*

Ted Hearne | *Ripple*

Heinrich Schütz | *Selig sind die Toten*

Daan Manneke | *Psaume*

Caroline Shaw | *and the swallow*

Veljo Tormis | *Curse Upon Iron*

Galina Grigorjeva | *In Paradisum*

## **PERFORMERS:**

---

### **Northwestern University Chorale**

#### **Directed by A.J. Keller**

University Chorale presents a program confronting the calculated devastation wrought by war and violence through a collection of powerful choral works by Judith Weir, Toivo Tulev, Ted Hearne, Heinrich Schütz, Caroline Shaw, and Veljo Tormis.

University Chorale is a large mixed-voice ensemble devoted to performing a diverse selection of works. Comprised of graduate and undergraduate students, University Chorale often collaborates with the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra in masterworks and music of the 21st century.

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## **SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY**

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# SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2025, 4:00 PM

Green Mill  
4802 North Broadway, Chicago, IL 60640

## ACCENT CONCERT

### Day of the Dead: Troubled Water

- Margaret Bonds † | *Troubled Water*
- Quinn Mason | *In Memoriam*\*
- Paul Coletti | *Fantasia*\*
- Jacob TV | *Garden of Love*
- Nina Corwin † and Janice Misurell-Mitchell † | *Salome Gives Seven Explanations For A Kiss* \*
- Cesar Pino † | *Dia de los Muertos*
- Javier Álvarez | *Lluvia de Toritos*
- Marilyn Shrude † | *Solidarnos*
- Joanie Pallatto † and Bradley Parker-Sparrow † | *In Memoriam: Jim De Jong, John Lennon*
- George Flynn † | *American Nocturne II* (from *American Nightmares*)

\*World Premiere Performance  
† Illinois-based Composer

## PERFORMERS:

Frank Abbinanti, piano	Sasha Ishov, flute	Bradley Parker-Sparrow, piano
Richard Brasseale, alto saxophone	Natalie Landowski, piano	Cesar Pino, piano
Nina Corwin, poetry	Janice Misurell-Mitchell, flutes	Rochelle Sennet, piano
Michael Hall, viola	Joanie Pallatto, voice	

## DAY OF THE DEAD: TROUBLED WATER

Sunday, November 2, is the second Day of the Dead, Día de los Muertos, celebrated in Mexican culture. The core of the celebration is to honor the dead, a sentiment that transcends cultural boundaries, a two day holiday that reunites the living and dead. Given our current political situation, we have chosen to expand the program in several ways, not only by including memorial pieces, but to acknowledge the conflicts we are experiencing in our social and political lives and finding imaginative expressions of these conflicts both poetically and musically.

Our featured performer, Rochelle Sennet, will play Margaret Bonds' *Troubled Water*, from her *Spiritual Suite* for piano, a piece which reminds us of resistance and hope.

### Green Mill All-Stars

The Green Mill All-Stars were formed for the purpose of performing new music at the Green Mill for the fall concert, part of a series of three new music concerts at the club that are presented each year. The founder of the series, composer George Flynn, began it with a January concert that would always include a celebration for his birthday, done with humor and often with audience involvement. The new music concerts are now scheduled three times a year: fall, winter, and spring, and the curators are usually members of New Music Chicago or Chicago composers and performers of new music. The fall concerts have been curated by Frank Abbinanti and Jeff Kowalkowski, and since 2023 have been curated by Janice Misurell-Mitchell. Recent programming has included a wide range of music from the 20th and 21st centuries: new instrumental and electronic music, jazz, vocal and spoken word pieces, and a few that include audience participation.

The fall concert repertoire is created with particular themes in mind. These may be related to musical traditions, political ideas, or general repertoire that relates loosely to the concert's title. An example is the satiric "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" concert, which brought in 100 people.

The concert venue provides a welcoming space for musical risk-taking, humor, and pieces that may fit more into performance art than traditional new music concerts. The casual nature of the concerts creates an atmosphere of music which challenges its listeners yet makes them feel included in the musical space.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2025, 7:30 PM**

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Space  
1243 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, IL 60202

## **ACCENT CONCERT**

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### **Mucca Pazza: Running Out of Space**

Original works to be announced from the stage †

† Illinois-based Composer

## **PERFORMERS:**

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### **Mucca Pazza with 7th Period**

Mucca Pazza performs selections from its ever-evolving repertoire in a theatrical performance at Evanston's SPACE. Chicago's most colorful composers collective will present works from Mucca Pazza's stylistically eclectic and extensive 21-year catalog (composed by the band) in perhaps the only Ear Taxi concert featuring cheerleaders.

### **Mucca Pazza**

Mucca Pazza is an intrepid interdisciplinary instrumental music ensemble from Chicago, IL. Since 2004, they have made a name for themselves playing alarmingly danceable music composed and arranged especially for their implausible instrumentation by band members - original music which defies classification but has bloomed out of manifold influences, from surf to Stravinsky, from Bartok to Zappa, from Esquivel to Ellington. In addition to blaring trumpets, slithering saxophones, clarinets, trombones, and tubas, the band boasts a drumline that seems to share a single nervous system, an entire section of disparate instruments that don't belong anywhere near a marching band (electric guitars, accordion, violin, and yes, a cello), and contains within its multitudes a cheer squad that performs absurdist cheers and asymmetrical, impressively low-to-the-ground pyramids. No-one has ever been completely certain of the exact number of people in Mucca Pazza. Everyone can be completely certain that this group of weirdos belongs together! Mucca Pazza: embracing the absurd! in solidarity with the improbable.

### **7th Period**

7th Period is a 7-piece teenage ensemble that performs jazz/funk/soul/pop covers, along with a sprinkling of originals. Formed in 2024 inside the hallowed halls of Evanston's Nichols Middle School, the group would meet during their lunch break (7th period) in the empty music room to jam - exploring musical genres, discovering their ability to create as a group, and having a lot of fun. Encouraged by the massive support given by the school's band director, John Carroll, 7th Period emerged from the classroom and onto the scene. The band continues to grow by exploring the versatility of their instruments and sharing their love of rhythmically upbeat music to all audiences, especially their own. 7th Period is: Noah Hunt (tenor sax), Simone Hewitt (tenor sax), Dylan Wooller (trumpet), Dalston Wooller (alto sax), Ben Williams (guitar), Leonidas Patton (bass), and Brooke Van Haelewyn (drums).

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTING PARTNERS**

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## EAR TAXI FESTIVAL HISTORY

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Founded in 2016 by Augusta Read Thomas and Steven Burns, the Ear Taxi Festival brought new music performances to audiences across Chicago. Supported by Festival Director Reba Cafarelli, the first festival presented over 350 musicians and 54 world premieres in over six days of concerts, lectures, and sound installations.

The second festival, themed **HEAR CHICAGO**, took place over two weeks in October 2021 and featured over 100 composers and 600 performers. Blending virtual and live performances, the festival brought together audiences and musicians for thoughtful performances and discussions after the COVID-19 pandemic.

*HEAR CHICAGO is a call to engage with the vast multiplicity of styles and traditions that constitutes Chicago's expansive musical identity in the 21st century. It expresses our firm belief in the vitality of Chicago's musicians of color, and especially the contributions of Black musicians, as a significant part of the city's complex history. As our society takes steps to heal from the multiple tragedies it is currently experiencing, as well as its centuries-long legacy of injustice, inequity, colonialism, and violence, it is most importantly an invitation to challenge, collaborate, and change together as artists and listeners. We remain committed to doing the steadfast work necessary to progress towards a just society.*

Now as a major program of New Music Chicago, the Ear Taxi Festival is led by a team selected by the New Music Chicago Board of Directors. With planning commencing in mid-2023, the Festival is guided by the theme **THE COMPOSER'S VOICE**. The festival explores the capacity of the human voice, its relationship with instruments, and its ability to tell authentic and relevant stories while highlighting the work of unique and important composers.

## 2025 LEADERSHIP

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Tim Corpus, *Executive Director*  
LaRob K. Rafael, *Artistic Director*  
Amy Wurtz, *Curatorial Director*  
Justin Peters, *Production Manager*

## 2021 LEADERSHIP

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Jennie Oh Brown, *Executive and Artistic Director*  
Beth Koehler, *Production Assistant*  
Michael Lewanski, *Curatorial Director*  
Justin Peters, *Production Manager*  
LaRob K. Rafael, *Director of Community Engagement*  
Jessica Wolfe, *Managing Director*  
Phoebe Wu, *Operations Assistant*

## 2016 LEADERSHIP

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Augusta Read Thomas  
Steven Burns  
Reba Cafarelli, *Festival Manager*  
Dayna Calderón, *Production Manager*

## SUPPORT THE EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TODAY

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## EAR TAXI FESTIVAL STAFF

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### **Tim Corpus, Executive Director**

Filipino-American composer and arts manager Tim Corpus is recognized for his compositions across concert music, film, and interactive media. His works have been performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Ravinia Festival, NYC MoMA, and the Auditorium Theatre, with features on BBC Radio 3, CNN Money, NPR, Illinois Public Media, 98.7 WFMT, and Classical King FM. As a film and media composer, he has scored over 30 films and episodic projects, earning industry recognition from national festivals. Recent project highlights include a performance of his double concerto for percussion with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Marin Alsop at Ravinia Festival and an upcoming new orchestral work for the Danville Symphony Orchestra and dance show with Dance Center Evanston: *ede2*.

An accomplished orchestrator and arranger, he often prepares music for esteemed performers worldwide, including Renée Fleming, Andrea Bocelli, Plácido Domingo, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Third Coast Percussion, Opera Festival of Chicago, and others. His album “MMXX”, a 2022 GRAMMY-selected release, was praised by critic Robert Hugill as “a striking disc.”

His diverse career in the arts includes roles as Executive Director, Production Manager, Marketing Director, and as an educator at Loyola University Chicago and Chicago City Colleges. A sought-after arts manager, in addition to serving as Executive Director for the Ear Taxi Festival, he currently holds leadership roles as Executive Director for the Hyde Park Youth Symphony, co-founder and Vice-Chairman of the Society of Composers & Lyricists Chicago Chapter, Governor of the Recording Academy's Chicago Chapter, and Board Member of the Illinois Council of Orchestras. Previous roles include Executive Director for the Lake Forest Symphony, Board President of the Illinois Council of Orchestras (2018–24), and co-founder of the critically acclaimed Opera Festival of Chicago.

An entrepreneur in the arts, he founded the publishing company Attacca Publishing, LLC in 2012 and its recent branch Chicago Scoring, a division providing composition and copyist services for composers and productions. His work with music technology has made him a main source of information with his acclaimed YouTube channel bringing tutorials and resources for TouchOSC, music notation, and recording software.

With degrees from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University and The Hartt School at the University of Hartford, Tim Corpus has received accolades from 3Arts, ASCAP, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, The American Prize, and the Illinois Arts Council. His commitment to his Filipino heritage is evident in his research of Filipino composer Lucio D. San Pedro, presented at institutions like Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History and the University of Hartford.

[timcorpus.net](http://timcorpus.net)

### **LaRob K. Rafael, Artistic Director**

LaRob K. Rafael is the Founder and Artistic Director of Hearing in Color, a Chicago-based nonprofit committed to amplifying historically misrepresented voices through thoughtful programming, commissioning, and community-centered performances. LaRob leads Hearing in Color in reshaping how audiences engage with music, placing authenticity, cultural memory, and equity at the forefront.

He also serves as Director of Composer Advancement with the American Composers Orchestra, where he works to build equitable systems that support and reflect the breadth of voices shaping American classical music today.

A dynamic speaker, curator, and lecturer, LaRob is a sought-after collaborator with institutions such as the Evanston Symphony Orchestra, Society of Disobedient Listeners (UMS), Grant Park Music Festival, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He brings deep knowledge, accessible storytelling, and a decolonial lens to music education and public programming. He frequently lectures on the intersections of race, culture, and history in classical music, helping audiences and institutions reimagine the canon and their place within it. He has led community engagement initiatives at Lyric Opera of Chicago and serves on the boards of the Chicago Philharmonic and Picoso Ensemble.

LaRob is the Artistic Director for Chicago's Ear Taxi Festival (October 2025), a preeminent contemporary music festival in the Midwest. There, he curates and commissions performances in collaboration with artists, ensembles, and venues across the Chicagoland area—an effort set to become the largest commissioning initiative in Illinois history.

Nationally, LaRob was one of 11 arts leaders selected for the prestigious Sphinx LEAD program (2021) and is a 2025 recipient of the Sphinx MPower Artist Grant, supporting his creative and professional development as a thought leader in the arts. His work continues to reflect the Sphinx Organization's mission to transform lives through the power of diversity in the arts.

At WFMT (Chicago, 98.7 FM), LaRob played a key role in diversifying the station's music library and led innovative programming that deepened community engagement. His efforts included the expansion of Soundtrack—a weekend segment dedicated to music from film, television, and video games—as well as specially curated holiday programs and on-air features amplifying Black voices and cultural narratives within the classical field. He also helped shape the station's evolving identity as co-host and producer of Sounds Classical, a podcast-style radio program offering fresh, culturally relevant perspectives on classical music. Through this work, he broadened the scope of what classical radio could sound and feel like, bringing new audiences into the fold.

With each project, LaRob continues to unveil the evolving story of American classical music—past, present, and future—through bold, imaginative, and community-rooted approaches to performance, presentation, and public engagement.

[hearingincolor.org](http://hearingincolor.org)

### **Amy Wurtz, Curatorial Director**

A fervent advocate for new music and the community that surrounds and supports it, Amy Wurtz is a vibrant performer, composer, and curator of new music. Amy developed a program for Women's History Month, performing 31 pieces on each day of March, to celebrate women composers. Her 2024 album, *Touching Rapture*, with the Wurtz-Berger Duo and supported by Chicago's DCASE IAP grant, features Amy's work *Chambers* alongside works by 3 other American women composers. Originally from California, Amy has lived and worked in the Bay Area, Southern California, throughout the Midwest, South America and Europe. In addition to composing and curation, she is in demand as a solo pianist, chamber and choral musician, teacher, and collaborative pianist. She has won support from the Illinois Arts Council, New Music Chicago, and Ravinia's Breaking Barriers Festival.

Amy performs regularly with the Wurtz-Berger Duo, Access Contemporary Music, the Calumet Chamber Musicians, and as former President of New Music Chicago and current Curatorial Director of the Ear Taxi Festival, is an active force in the new music community. She curates New Music at the Green Mill and the Impromptu Fest, and performs regularly at the Thirsty Ears Festival and the Sound of Silent Film Festival in Chicago. She conducts and performs with the Sounds Good and Good Memories choirs where she works with singers age 55 and better who experience memory loss.

[amywurtz.com](http://amywurtz.com)

### **Justin Peters, Production Manager**

Justin Peters is a drummer, percussionist, producer, and facilitator of music making based in Chicago. Equally fluent onstage and off, Justin brings a holistic approach to production management, balancing artistic vision with production capacity.

In 2015 Justin received his Bachelor of Music in Percussion Performance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Since, he has collaborated with artists such as Eighth Blackbird, Third Coast Percussion, and Nico Muhly. He has appeared at numerous mainstay venues and festivals across Chicago, including Lincoln Hall, the Metro, Orchestra Hall, and the Pitchfork Festival. He performs and records regularly with many groups in Chicago and abroad, including Villekulla, Jenni Stark, Carlile, Dark Canyon, and Caught Stealin'. He is a cofounder of Kinesonics, which presents yoga classes with live improvised musical accompaniment.

Offstage, Justin is devoted to helping artists reach audiences while ensuring the highest level of production quality. Though he began performing at an early age, he also quickly developed a passion for showcasing other artists. Justin cut his teeth curating bills at local rock clubs and eventually opened and co-managed a venue in his hometown. This drive to facilitate live performance has led him to work with Eighth Blackbird, Chicago Sinfonietta, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He previously served as the Production Manager for the 2021 Ear Taxi Festival, and is excited to reprise that role for 2025.

Justin currently serves as the Director of Operations for Chicago Sinfonietta.

[justinpetersmusic.net](http://justinpetersmusic.net)

## Malcolm Bamba, Digital Marketing Coordinator

Malcolm Bamba (he/him) is a multidisciplinary artist, media producer, and digital strategist specializing in culturally resonant storytelling. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, he earned an Independent Major in Arts Management and Marketing, with a secondary focus on Classical Bass performance.

He currently serves as the Social Media and Communications Manager for Chicago Opera Theater and Social Media Manager for Black in Appalachia. His past collaborations include multimedia projects with WTTW/Chicago, NPR's Ideastream Public Media, and Harris for President.

Having generated over five million digital engagements through subversive, data-driven, and socially engaged storytelling, Malcolm is a dynamic force for nonprofits navigating the digital media landscape.

[malcolmbamba.com](http://malcolmbamba.com)

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## NEW MUSIC CHICAGO HISTORY

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New Music Chicago was originally founded in 1982, with a series presented by a group of local area composers and musicians to complement the national showcases organized by New Music America. “Music Mostly at Midnight” was organized by the young composer collective Kapture and attracted a large audience at CrossCurrents, a popular cabaret theater and venue in Lakeview. Kapture was then joined by Music Menta and the Marcel Duchamp Memorial Players to found New Music Chicago, bringing the community together and publicizing new music events with subsequent festivals and calls for scores.

In 2005, following a period of inactivity, several new music ensembles, composers and teaching venues re-incorporated New Music Chicago as it currently exists. Since then, NMC has maintained a significant history of presenting and facilitating festivals, series, and one-off programs featuring members’ work: In September of 2006, NMC presented Sonic Impact at the Museum of Contemporary Arts featuring all member ensembles. In 2011, several NMC member groups co-presented “In C” by Terry Riley at Millennium Park. And in 2015, NMC highlighted its 10th anniversary with a collaborative performance of John Luther Adams’ “Inuksuit”.

In 2016, NMC served as the partner and fiscal sponsor for the Ear Taxi Festival, which united 350+ musicians to offer 54 world premieres over six days of concerts, as well as lectures and sound installations. The second edition of the Ear Taxi Festival in October 2021 featured approximately 600 Chicago artists reaching estimated audiences of more than 10,000 through in-person and live-streamed performances, workshops, and receptions.

In 2018 NMC sponsored Impromptu Fest at the Chopin Theater, an eight-concert downtown series featuring NMC members; subsequent Impromptu Fests in 2019, 2021, and 2023 saw the festival increase its geographic and stylistic reach throughout the city, featuring a growing roster of NMC members and collaborative partnerships with new venues including Guaneri Hall, Nevermore Theater, Elastic Arts, High Concept Labs, and the Epiphany Center for the Arts.


2019 saw the launch of the ongoing free, monthly NMC Presents series at the Chicago Cultural Center, which continues into the present at the renowned Experimental Sound Studio as a livestream hybrid concert program.

In 2020 NMC celebrated its 15th anniversary at Epiphany Center for the Arts with a livestreamed concert demonstrating the organization’s resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As these programs continue and grow, New Music Chicago presents the 2025 Ear Taxi Festival. New Music Chicago stands as a unique resource fostering the vital, cooperative spirit of contemporary classical and experimental music in Chicago.

**NEW//MUSIC**  
CHICAGO

New Music Chicago  
EIN: 05-0627751  
1820 W Fletcher St.  
Chicago, IL 60657

 EarTaxiFestival

[eartaxifestival@newmusicchicago.org](mailto:eartaxifestival@newmusicchicago.org)

## EAR TAXI FESTIVAL TEAM

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Tim Corpus, *Executive Director*  
LaRob K. Rafael, *Artistic Director*  
Amy Wurtz, *Curatorial Director*  
Justin Peters, *Production Manager*  
Malcolm Bamba, *Digital Marketing Coordinator*  
Renata Rangel, *Operations Assistant*  
Zoë Denson, *Festival Intern*  
Sophia Varcados, *Designer*

## NEW MUSIC CHICAGO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## EAR TAXI FESTIVAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Laura Rice  
Russell Rolan

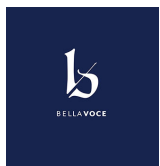
Schoenstadt Family  
Foundation  
Thirsty Ears Festival  
Brian White  
Lidiya Yankovskaya  
Nicholas J. Yasillo  
Ben Zucker



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To present world-class standard productions of Italian opera masterpieces in Chicago that rarely grace the stage in the United States. In doing so we aspire to: generate an inquisitive operatic appetite within Chicago audiences; make our work—and its cultural context—accessible to a wide audience; provide a stimulating and inspirational environment of Italian opera for artists and audiences alike; provide a vital opportunity for young artists entering the profession to uphold the high integrity and demands of Italian opera with artists and musicians who are established professionals; and to highlight and celebrate the immense talent that has originated from the Chicagoland area.

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