



Welcome to the 20th Annual

19-20 March 2021

Virtual Festival

Presenting

Ensemble-in-Residence: The Craft Ensemble

Composer-in-Residence: Melika M. Fitzhugh



Music Marathon

Women Composers Scholarly Symposium

Student Composers Workshop

Ensemble-in-Residence Concert



The Women Composers Festival of Hartford has, since 2001, provided a platform for the promotion of women's music. It introduces and educates audiences about the diversity of musical contributions by women from the Renaissance to the present.

Board of Directors

Rami Levin, President
Melika M. Fitzhugh, Artistic Chair
Ruth Sovronsky, Vice President
Debby Szajnberg, Secretary
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www.womencomposersfestivalhartford.com

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THE MUSIC MARATHON

Friday, 19 March 2021

7:30pm

The Music Marathon is a celebration of high-quality works by women composers. Pieces are selected from a competitive call garnering applicants from across the globe.

THE PROGRAM

- ❖ *Winter Rain* (2013) by Diana Rosenblum (b. 1983) and *Meadow Song* (2013) by Iris Szeghy (b. 1956), performed by Whistling Hens
- ❖ *Bagatelles* by Ann Southam (1937-2010) performed by Olivia Adams, piano
- ❖ *Élégie for solo violin "Melpomene"* (2020) by Manaka Matsumoto (b. 1993) performed by Manaka Matsumoto, violin
- ❖ *Sonata in C Minor, Op. 21* by Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944) performed by Julia Mortyakova, piano
- ❖ *'We Cry' for cello solo* by Jinhee Han (b. 1979) performed by Jihwon Na, violoncello
- ❖ *Shadow Dancer* by Annette LeSiege (1947-2012) performed by Katey J. Halbert, horn
- ❖ 辜月 *November Moon* by Rachel C. Walker (b. 1994), performed by Yongyun Zhang, percussion

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES AND PROGRAM NOTES



Whistling Hens was founded by Jennifer Piazza-Pick (soprano) and Natalie Groom (clarinet) with a vision to celebrate and advance the artistic accomplishments of women through an ensemble performing all female-composed music. Inspired by a quote from a male music critic who said of Lili Boulanger, “women composers are at best whistling hens,” the Whistling Hens duo was hatched. The group performs and commissions music by women composers from around the world. In the past year, Whistling Hens has commissioned four new pieces and premiered three works to expand the soprano/clarinet repertoire. In 2020, the duo was awarded Chamber Music America’s esteemed Residency Partnership Program grant, as well as the M-Cubator Grant for Entrepreneurial Projects and a grant from Awesome Without Borders/The Harnisch Foundation. Learn more about us and shop our repertoire at www.whistlinghens.com.

Winter Rain (2013) is a setting of text by Christina Rossetti. This work paints a musical picture of an earth thirsty for water. As flowers bloom and birds meet, spring always follows the rain. Based in Rochester, NY, **Diana Rosenblum** (b. 1983) is pursuing a Ph.D. in Composition at Eastman School of Music, where she holds a prestigious Sproull Fellowship and is a student of David Liptak, having also studied with Robert Morris and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon. She earned a B.A. in Philosophy from Princeton University — where her senior thesis, “Socratic Sophistry: inherent humors of playing the hypocrite” was advised by Hendrik Lorenz — and an M.M. in Composition from University of Oregon, where she studied with Robert Kyr and David Crumb and was named Outstanding Graduate Scholar. Diana has been recognized for academic achievement at Eastman via the Imagination Fund, Samuel Adler Scholarship, and Pi Kappa Lambda membership. She was recently awarded Eastman’s Belle S. Gitelman Award for Piano Quartet, is a two-time recipient of the Wayne Brewster Barlow Prize — awarded in 2018 for full-orchestral work, *Gordian Knot*, and in 2017 for her octet *Myrioriama* (commissioned by OSSIA New Music for their 20th season) — and received the Anthony and Carolyn Donato Prize in 2016.


Meadow Song (2013) features a variety of extended techniques for both soprano and clarinet, including Sprechstimme, flutter tonguing, crying, and air tone. The two instruments work in duet with no text until the end, where one hears the Slovak hay-harvesting song. Sung in the Eastern Slovakia dialect, the text is: “She raked, raked, raked nothing together / She broke the rake out of great sorrow.” Composer **Iris Szeghy** (b. 1956) was born into a Hungarian family in Presov (Czechoslovakia, now Slovakia). She studied composition at the Academy of Music in Bratislava, and later finished her doctoral studies of composition at the same school. She went through many composition residencies in Germany (Stuttgart, Hamburg, Worpswede), Holland (Amsterdam), Switzerland (Boswil, Stein am Rhein, Willisau), Spain (Mojácar), France (Paris), Poland (Warsaw), Hungary (Budapest), England (London) and in the U.S.A. (San Diego). She writes orchestral, chamber and choral music, and her works are performed in concerts and prestigious festivals in Europe, America and Asia. Szeghy has collaborated with distinguished performers, ensembles, orchestras, including the Hilliard Ensemble, London Sinfonietta, Concorde Ensemble Dublin, Gemini Ensemble and Composers Ensemble London, „ensemble recherche” Freiburg, Musikfabrik Cologne, Camerata Berne, Festival Strings Lucerne, with Harry Sparnaay, Teodoro Anzellotti, and Jane Manning. Szeghy is a freelance composer and lives in Zürich in Switzerland.

after “*Salome*” for violin and piano (2017), *Haiku* for solo violin (2019), and *Dance Suite for Solo Violin “Terpsichore”* (2018), which she also performed at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Her 2016 piece *Perspective – Duet for Violin and Viola* was one of the nine pieces selected for the Boston Microtonal Society’s Third Annual Call for Scores, in which there were 46 submissions from all over the globe. *Perspective* was premiered at the 2017 Boston Microtonal Society’s concert *Modèles – Microtonal Music for Violin and Viola* by violinist Gabriela Diaz and violist Wendy Richman. Her *When the Hazelnuts Ripen* for string orchestra was commissioned by the American Romantic Orchestra, as an original piece set to the 1911 silent film *Enoch Arden*. The piece was premiered in February 2020 at the New Haven Lawn Club by the American Romantics, conducted by Kevin Sherwin.

Manaka is currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts in violin performance at Stony Brook University. Her current violin instructors are Arnaud Sussmann, Jennifer Frautschi, Hagai Shaham and Philip Setzer, and she studies composition with Margaret Schedel. Her past instructors in composition include Julia Werntz, Bert van Herck, Krists Auznieks, David Lang and Christopher Theofanidis.

Élégie for solo violin "Melpomene," the second installment in the "Muse" series, was written in November 2020, and was conceived as an artistic tribute to the Greek goddess of tragedy, Melpomene, who was also one of the Nine Muses in Greek Mythology. As goddesses of the arts and literature, the Nine Muses have been a source of inspiration and wonder to me ever since I was a child, and as an artist, I wanted to compose and perform a piece of unaccompanied violin music reflecting each muse.

I wrote this piece in the key of f-sharp minor, a key that I have always associated with loss, pain, and sadness. The piece is short and simple, composed of an eight-bar melody, repeated three times and interwoven with short episodes, yet each new appearance of the melody signifies a new level of sadness: the first is marked *malinconia* (melancholy), the second, *poco triste* (slightly sad), and the third, *piacimento* (weeping, mourning), which later erupts into a *con somma passione* (with the most passion). The episodes between the melody, marked *sospirando* (sighing, sobbing), consist of flurrying fast slurred notes that are meant to evoke tears streaming. The piece ends on a dying note.

A portrait of Julia Mortyakova, a woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark top, sitting at a piano.

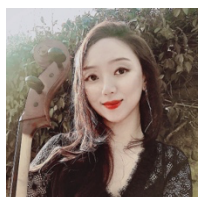
2017 Mississippi Honored Artist pianist **Julia Mortyakova** maintains an international performing career. The 2018 concert season included concerto soloist appearances with the Assisi Performing Arts (Italy), Starkville Symphony (USA) and Yaroslavl Gubernatorial Academic Philharmonic (Russia) orchestras performing four different piano concerti. The 2019 concert season included solo, duo piano, and concerto soloist performances throughout the United States, Russia, Romania and Italy. The Mortyakova/Bogdan Piano Duo are the Second Prize winners of the 2017 Ellis Duo Piano Competition. Julia is a laureate of the

2014 American Prize for her performance of Cécile Chaminade, and the winner of the 2012 Sigma Alpha Iota Career Performance Grant. Dr. Mortyakova serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Music at the Mississippi University for Women and is the Founder/Artistic Director of the Music by Women Festival. She is a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, Vanderbilt University, New York University, and the University of Miami. Julia serves on the Board of the International Alliance for Women in Music (IAWM), National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) Board of Directors, and is President-Elect of the College Music Society (CMS) Southern Region.

Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944) was a French Romantic composer. She dedicated her *Sonata in C Minor, Op. 21* to Moritz Moszkowski. The work contains three movements. The third movement, *Appassionato* was also published as an etude, part of the *Six Etudes de Concert, Op. 35* set in 1886. The entire sonata was published in 1895. The first movement, *Allegro Appassionato*, is true to its tempo marking, featuring dramatic, beautiful, passionate melodies, virtuosic passages and even a fugue.

Chaminade's piano sonata deserves more notice as it is a unique and important part of Romantic piano and piano sonata repertoire. The melodies, phrasing and overall emotional content of this piece appeal to performers and listeners alike. It is an important contribution to the Romantic canon and hopefully it will be performed more often.

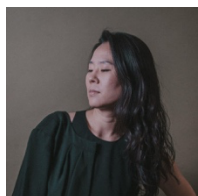
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Cellist **Jihwon H. Na**, has performed in various genres including baroque, classical, jazz, new music, and collaborative art performance. She has performed at renowned halls including Carnegie Hall Stern Auditorium Perelman Stage, Weill Recital Hall, Lincoln Center Alice Tully Hall, Kaufman Music Center Merkin Concert Hall, Consulate-General of Poland NYC, Symphony Space, New York City Center (with the Martha Graham Dance Company), Industry City, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery, Morgan Library, Arnhold Hall Glass Box, Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall, Ernst C. Stiefel Concert Hall, University Center John L. Tishman Auditorium, and John Goldmark Hall. She has played prominent parts in Ensemble 212, Secret Opera, Mannes American Composer Ensemble, Mannes Orchestra and Regina Opera. She was an Artist-in-Residence at The Hollows. She has participated in masterclasses with renowned musicians including Matt Haimovitz, Timothy Eddy, Peter Wiley, Paul Katz, and Bonnie Hampton. She has also participated in Habitat: Home NYC project performance and was invited to perform at the Women Composers Festival of Hartford, the Round Top Festival Institute and Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, with full scholarships.

Ms. Na received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from Mannes, where she recently completed her Professional Study Diploma and received a merit scholarship and a Goldsmith Foundation Award. In addition to her

performances, she is also committed to teaching. She was on the faculty of Park Conservatory and Tone Academy of Music. Her interests include photography, traveling, and nature.



Award-winning musician, **Jinhee Han** is a NYC-based composer from a Seoul, South Korea. She holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in composition from HanYang University and a Professional Studies Diploma from The New School, Mannes School of Music under the direction of Robert Cuckson.

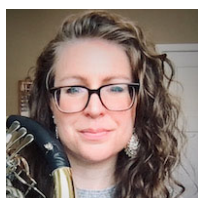
Han creates deep, emotive musical languages that build cultural and artistic bridges. She serves as the Founder and Director for the Asian Women Composers Association in New York City, where she collaborates with a variety of musical projects such as Lilac94, The Half Moon Project, Concrete Timbre, Cobalt, and others. Recent publications of her music include 'We cry' for solo clarinet by Diaphonia Edition in Italy, 2020, and 'To my daughter' for Bb trumpet and bass trombone on Women and Music, Volume 24, 2020. Selected collaborations include Habitat Home NYC 2019, Tokyo to New York 'The moments in this time' 2020, and Geo Mun Go, a Korean traditional 9-string instrument, seminar with Master Sunhee Lee. Currently, she is enjoying her study of music composition under the direction of Joshua Fineberg in the Doctor of Musical Arts degree program at Boston University College of Fine Arts School of Music.

'We cry' for solo cello is one of the series from War cry, which contains human rights and activism by Susan B. Anthony.

To symbolize diverse views, each movement contains a different texture and timbre by various executions, and is built on certain patterns of phrasing. Eventually a C chromatic scale is heard as a group of pentatonic, becomes at the end of the piece as a statement, which infers commonness has a power of our lives to be independent and we keep blooming from our foundations.

The piece consists of three movements titled I. Keen for, II. Failure is impossible, and III. We are blooming.

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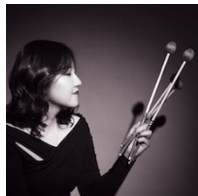


Dr. Katey J. Halbert's vibrant personality and passion for music inspire her work both as teacher and performer. Over the years she has worked tirelessly to create programs that highlight underrepresented female composers, to help diversify the horn canon. She has performed at various conferences including the International Women's Brass Conference, the Women Composers Forum at the Hartt School, and has been a featured soloist across the Midwest. She received her doctorate in May of 2020 from the University of Iowa under the tutelage of

Jeffrey Agrell. Before coming to Iowa, she was on faculty at three universities in Ohio and she frequently performed with the West Virginia Symphony and other local orchestras. She now resides in Central Iowa and is on faculty at Grand View University and Central College, and is the horn player of the Wild Prairie Winds, a nonprofit wind quintet.

Annette LeSiege (1947-2012), an alumna of the Eastman School of Music, studied with Samuel Adler. She was a council member of the College Music Society (1979-81) and a successful teacher and composer. Between 1985 and 2012 she taught at three universities - Wake Forest University, New Jersey City University, and the University of Maine at Augusta.

LeSiegé's *Shadow Dancer* for solo horn was composed in 1993. It is made up of two contrasting motives meant to depict the interplay of light and shadow.



Yongyun Zhang has presented percussion recitals across China and the United States, including recent guest performances in Beijing at the Central Conservatory of Music and at Shandong University in Qingdao, and a concert with the Harry Partch instruments in Seattle. Yongyun has a dedicated interest in performing and premiering works of living composers, especially pieces incorporating the spoken voice. She considers the role of Chinese language in modern percussion repertoire through both her commissions as well as adaptations of existing works.

Yongyun studied at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with Percussion Group Cincinnati, at the University of Washington with Bonnie Whiting, and will begin her doctoral studies in the fall at the University of California San Diego, studying with Steven Schick.

辜月 November moon was composed for percussionist Yongyun Zhang. We selected a text together from 山海经 (Classics of Mountains and Seas), a collection of fragmented myths on geography, folklore, and magic from the ancient world. The lines that captured my imagination most were those about Shan Xi, wife of the emperor, who waded in the water while bathing the moons, who are her children. The title is a slight play on words between 鼓乐 (gu yue — drum music) and 辜月 (gu yue — a type of moon occurring in late November, around the time of the work's premiere).

— Rachel C. Walker

WOMEN COMPOSERS SCHOLARLY SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, 20 March 2021

5:00pm

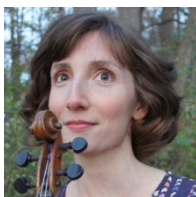
The Scholarly Symposium celebrates historical and living composers, supports ongoing research, and provides professional development opportunities for composers, scholars, and other music professionals.

Women in Canadian Piano Curriculum



The bio for **Olivia Adams** is included in the Music Marathon.

The Violin Concertos of Sofia Gubaidulina



Dr. Janet Jacobson is a versatile violinist who has built a reputation in the New England area performing in orchestras, chamber ensembles, and as a soloist. She has premiered works by David Macbride, Ken Steen, Erberk Eryilmaz, Ryan Jespersen, and many others. Jacobson is concertmaster of the Hartford Independent Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist she performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in Plymouth, NH, and the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the Stara Zagora State Opera Orchestra in Bulgaria. Jacobson earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Hartt School, where she studied with Katie Lansdale, and she holds a Master's degree from The Boston Conservatory. She has taught violin, viola, and chamber music at Hartt Community Division since 2009.

janetjacobsonviolin.com

New Music for New Musicians™



Concert pianist **Patricia R. Abreu** has performed throughout the United States, Europe, New Zealand and South America, as well as in Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington DC, Atlanta, Madrid, Caracas, and Christchurch, among others. She has performed in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York and at the Spoleto Festival in Italy.

While recovering from burn injuries that sidelined her concert career, Ms. Abreu spent five years as Executive Director of Savings Teens In Crisis Collaborative, a

non-profit organization that assists troubled teens and families struggling with substance abuse and other issues.

In addition to her work as Executive Director, Ms. Abreu has been active in the medical community advocating for improved patient care, co-presenting workshops at medical conferences with Dr. Mary Kraft of the Massachusetts General Hospital: “How You See Me Affects Who I Am” —An Interdisciplinary Approach to Applying Complex Responsive Processes of Relating to Patient Encounters, and Patient Narrative as a Tool to Developing Compassion.

Patricia Abreu graduated from Williams College with Highest Honors in Music and was awarded the Shirley Stanton Prize. She holds a Master's Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Michigan, and studied performance and theory in the doctoral program at the Indiana University School of Music. Continually healing and improving, Ms. Abreu has returned to performing and teaching.

NewMusicForNewMusicians.com

Sonic Crossroads



Acclaimed American pianist **Kathryn Woodard** curates and performs programs that explore cross-cultural exchange in music. Her international performances have taken her to China, Korea, Croatia, Thailand, Germany, Turkey, and Kyrgyzstan. She has served as an American Cultural Specialist for the U.S. Department of State, leading educational initiatives to introduce audiences abroad to new American music. In the U.S. she has performed at such notable venues as Carnegie Hall, the Freer Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Detroit Institute of Art, and the Dallas Museum of Art.

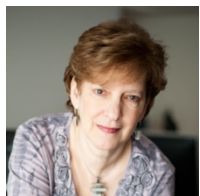
In 1997 she began researching the Turkish composer Adnan Saygun and has since given numerous performances of solo piano music from Turkey and across Asia. Her recordings have been broadcast widely and select performances have been featured on Performance Today (PRI) and The Front Row (Houston).

A native of Dallas, Texas, Kathryn Woodard holds the DMA and MM degrees in piano performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and earned an undergraduate diploma in music pedagogy from the Hochschule für Musik in Munich, Germany. As a sought-after educator, Kathryn teaches piano to students of all ages and enjoys exploring each student's unique interests at the piano.

soniccrossroads.com

FESTIVAL PROFILES PAST AND PRESENT

Composer-in-Residence 2012

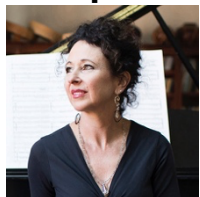


Composer **Judith Shatin** is renowned for her acoustic, electroacoustic and digital music. Called “highly inventive on every level” by the Washington Post, her music combines an adventurous approach to timbre with dynamic narrative design. Described as “powerful and distinctive” by Fanfare and “both engaging and splendidly controlled” by the San Francisco Chronicle, her music includes chamber, choral and orchestral; electronic to electroacoustic and multimedia. An innovator, she often combines acoustic and electronic media, as in *Ice Becomes Water* (string orchestra and electronics fashioned from glacier field recordings). Her imagination is sparked by her multiple fascinations with literature and the visual arts, with the sounding world, both natural and built; and with the social and communicative power of music. Her music is recorded on more than 30 albums, with more in the pipeline! Shatin is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor Emerita at the University of Virginia, where she founded the Virginia Center for Computer Music and led the program to national prominence.

judithshatin.com

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Composer-in-Residence 2014



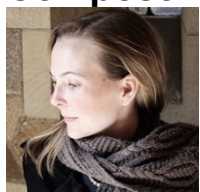
Andrea Clearfield is an award-winning composer who has written more than 160 works for orchestra, opera, chorus, chamber ensemble, dance and multimedia collaborations. Clearfield creates deep, emotive musical languages that build cultural and artistic bridges. She has composed 13 large-scale cantatas including one for The Philadelphia Orchestra. Recent works are inspired by Tibetan music fieldwork that she conducted in the Nepalese Himalaya. She was appointed the Steven R. Gerber Composer-in-Residence with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia for their 2018-19 season and is currently the 2020-2022 Composer-in-Residence with National Concerts at Carnegie Hall. Her first opera, *MILA, Great Sorcerer*, with librettists Jean-Claude van Itallie and Lois Walden, was presented at the NYC Prototype Festival in 2019. Dr. Clearfield was awarded a 2021 Pew International Residency Award, a 2016 Pew Fellowship in the Arts, two Independence Foundation Fellowship awards and fellowships at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center, American Academy in Rome, Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony among others. She received a D.M.A. in Composition from Temple University, where she was awarded the prestigious Presidential Fellowship. She served on the composition faculty at The

University of the Arts from 1986 – 2011. As a performer, she played keyboards with the Relâche Ensemble for 25 years and had the honor of performing with the Court of the Dalai Lama. She served on the Board of Directors of the Recording Academy/Grammy's Philadelphia Chapter and sits on the Executive Board of the Young Women's Composers Camp. A strong advocate for building community around the arts, she is founder, curator and host of the renowned SALON featuring contemporary, classical, jazz, electronic, dance and world music since 1986, now online as the ZALON.

andreaclearfield.com

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Composer-in-Residence 2018



Described as "especially glorious... ethereal" by Whole Note, and "a highlight of the concert" by the Boston Musical Intelligencer, the music of Canadian composer **Tawnie Olson** draws inspiration from politics, spirituality, the natural world, and the musicians for whom she composes. She is the winner of the 2018 Barlow Prize, a consortium commission for the BYU Singers, The Crossing, and Seraphic Fire, and of a 2019 Copland House Residency Award. She was the Composer-in-Residence of the 2018 Women Composers Festival of Hartford. She received a 2017 OPERA America Discovery Grant to workshop early drafts of Sanctuary and Storm, which is now a finalist in the National Opera Association's 2020-2022 Chamber Opera Composition Competition. Her scores are available from the Canadian Music Centre, Galaxy Music, Hal Leonard's BandQuest and Mark Foster series, and E.C. Schirmer.

tawnieolson.com

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Composer-in-Residence 2020/21

The bio for **Melika M. Fitzhugh** is included in the Craft Ensemble Concert.

melikamfitzhugh.com

STUDENT COMPOSERS WORKSHOP

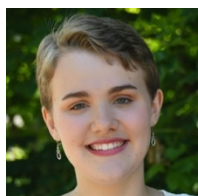
In Fall 2019, three student composers were selected to participate in the Women Composers Festival of Hartford's Student Composers Workshop. Over the winter, the students attended in-person sessions with workshop leader Dr. Jessica Rudman and received online mentoring as they composed new pieces for the 2020/21 WCFH Ensemble-in-Residence, the Craft Ensemble.

THE PIECES

Two Songs for String Quartet
Lưu Thủy (Flowing Water)
Floating

Sarah Marze
Ky Nam Nguyen
Leigh Anne Robichaux

BIOGRAPHIES AND PROGRAM NOTES



Sarah Marze is honored to have the experience of working with the Women Composers Festival of Hartford. Sarah is currently studying Vocal Performance at the University of Connecticut. She studies voice with Dr. Constance Rock, composition with Dr. Kenneth Fuchs, and coaches with Allan Conway. Last summer, Sarah worked with the (virtual) Collaborative Piano Institute at Louisiana State University. She sings with both Concert Choir and Chamber Singers at UConn, and is a choral scholar with Storrs Congregational Church under the direction of Dr. Trisha Snyder. Sarah has composed a one-act musical and multiple instrumental and choral works. Her song cycle for the UConn Holster Scholar fellowship called "Songs of Salem, 1692," was premiered virtually in October with UConn student and faculty performers. This Spring, Sarah's art song settings of the poet Hazel Hall will be featured on soprano Maggie Kinabrew's Masters recital, and a choral arrangement of hers will be workshopped by UConn's Chamber Singers.

Two Songs for String Quartet

For the 2020 Women Composers Festival of Hartford and The Craft Ensemble

1. Dance With Me
2. You'll Never Walk Alone

THE CRAFT ENSEMBLE CONCERT

Saturday, 20 March 2021

7:30 p.m.



Praised for their “lush, warm, robust and full-bodied performance”, **The Craft Ensemble** formed in 2016 and is comprised of a core string quartet of Boston based musicians, Colleen Brannen and Amy Sims on violin, violist Amelia Hollander Ames, and cellist Velleda Miragias. In past seasons the Craft has performed on chamber music series throughout the greater Boston area including Salem Classical, Boston Public Library’s Concerts in the Courtyard and Trinity College’s Summer Music Series in Hartford, Connecticut as well as several performances for the New England Philharmonic’s Mosaic series. The four instrumentalists play with various ensembles throughout New England such as A Far Cry, Back Bay Chorale, Boston Baroque, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Boston Philharmonic, Handel & Haydn Society, Odyssey Opera, Portland Symphony, and the Rhode Island Philharmonic.

Primarily formed to make joyful music among friends playing from the robust string quartet canon, the Craft has also sought to promote the works of female composers of the past and those currently creating music. Past performances have included works by Emily Doolittle, Imogen Holst, Missy Mazzoli, Fanny Mendelssohn, Jessie Montgomery, Osnat Netzer, Ruth Crawford Seeger and Caroline Shaw. The flexibility in numbers has allowed the Craft exciting collaborations in past seasons, among them the Schubert cello quintet, the Shostakovich piano quintet, flute quintets by Walter Piston and Osnat Netzer and the Brahms sextet in G major.

THE PROGRAM

String Quartet No. 7:
dust motes floating in light ‡

Melika M. Fitzhugh

A Strange Magic:
String Quartet No. 2 †

Judith Lang Zaimont

Out of the Flowers †

Ariel Friedman

String Quartet No. 3

Elizabeth Maconchy

Source Code

Jessie Montgomery

String Quartet No. 1 †

SiHyun Uhm

‡ Composer-in-Residence Work: World Premiere

† Score Call Winning Work.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES AND PROGRAM NOTES

A native of Stafford, Virginia, **Melika M. Fitzhugh** (A.B. Harvard-Radcliffe, Music Theory and Composition; M.M. Longy School of Bard College, Composition) has studied conducting and composition with Thomas G. Everett, Beverly Taylor, James Yannatos, Julian Pellicano, Roger Marsh, Jeff Stadelman, and, most recently, Osnat Netzer and John Howell Morrison. Performed internationally, Mel's compositions have been commissioned by John Tyson, Catherine E. Reuben, Laura and Geoffrey Shamu, and the Quilisma Consort, and have been performed by those artists as well as B3: Brouwer Trio (Valencia, Spain), the PHACE Ensemble (Vienna, Austria), Quarteto L'Arianna (São Paulo, Brazil), Sarah Jeffrey (Amsterdam, the Netherlands), the Radcliffe Choral Society, Patricia Reuben Abreu, Berit Strong, Miyuki Tsurutani, and Aldo Abreu.

Mel was the 2020 winner of the PatsyLu Prize for the International Alliance for Women in Music's Search for New Music, and has performed with the Radcliffe Choral Society, Coro Allegro, the Harvard Wind Ensemble, the Village Circle Band, and WACSAC. Mel, who has composed music for film and stage, was a member of Just-In-Time Composers and Players and is currently a member of world/early music ensemble Urban Myth and the early music ensemble Quilisma Consort, in addition to playing bass guitar with acoustic rock singer/songwriter Emmy Cerra, the ambient rock band Rose Cabal and the Balkan folk dance band Balkan Fields. Mel enjoys playing a variety of instruments for folk dance ensembles, including: violin/viola; acoustic guitar/bass; recorders; flute; hand percussion including dumbek/djembe/cajon. Mel teaches these instruments, in addition to piano, violoncello, trumpet, clarinet and saxophone, privately.

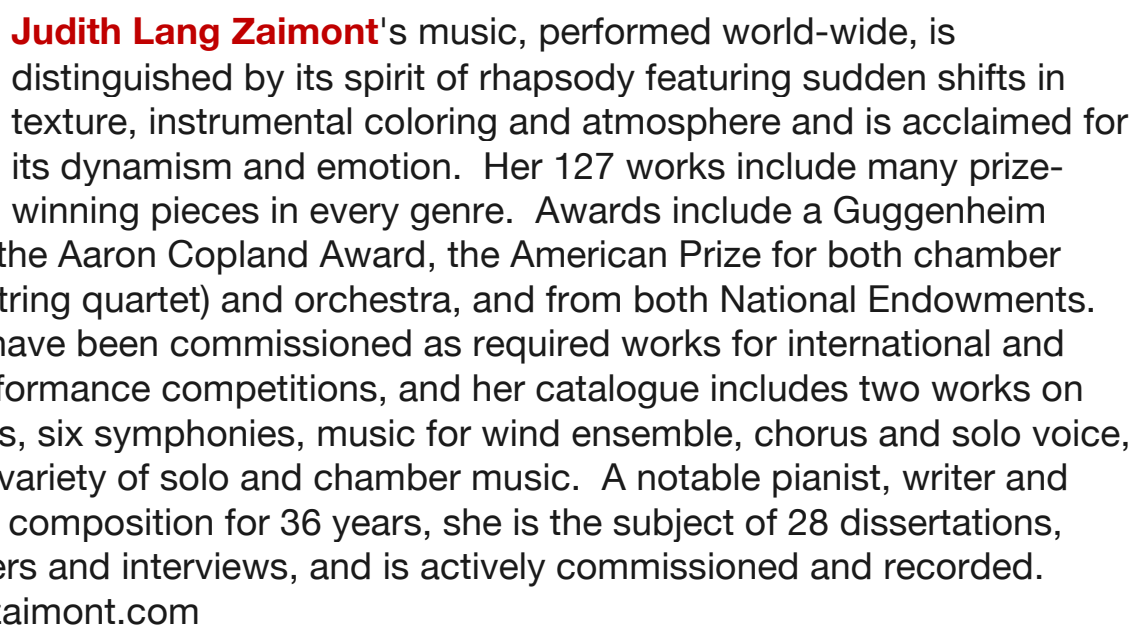
String Quartet No. 7: dust motes floating in light

An exploration of light -- a beam, a glare, a soft waft -- and what one may see within it...memory, or an after-image lingering on the retina.

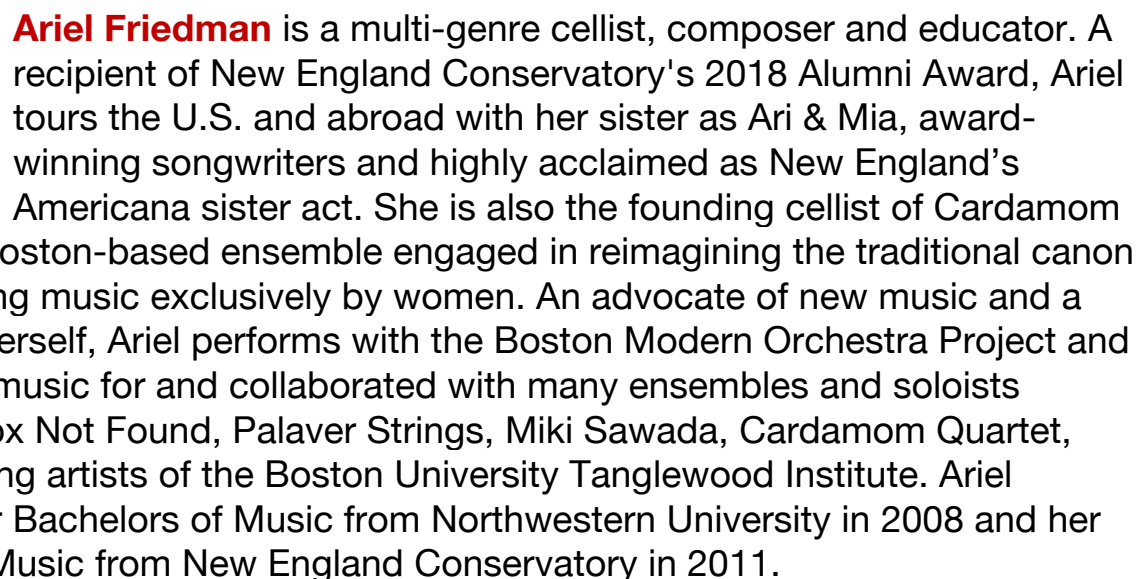
The title comes from *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (1931-2019):

“Sifting daylight dissolves the memory, turns it into dust motes floating in light.”

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Comprised of one extended movement, the quartet begins with a dissonant, chromatic cell in arguing dialogue that is almost mystical in character, then changes to a hypnotic ritual rhythm that veers every once in awhile into abstract ragtime, all encased in the spirit of the dissonant opening cell. At its close, the movement returns to the spirit of the initial questing, unresolved start. This immediate, frontal music asks for players with fully-developed technique and a sense of adventure.



“The Temple bell stops but I still hear the sound coming out of the flowers.” This quote, attributed to the 17th century Japanese poet Basho, erupted vividly in my mind when I first read it. The image of temple bells and their big unearthly sound ringing in the quiet of neighboring flowers—this made me want to dive into the sonic potential of such a landscape. The piece features rising sixths as opening petals, two violins in bell-like dissonance, a flurry of ponticello wind sounds, and a moment of monk-like introspection.

Dame Elizabeth Maconchy DBE (19 March 1907 – 11 November 1994) was a composer of great versatility and unfailing integrity, amply deserving of a British critic's description of her as 'one of the most substantial composers these islands have yet produced'. Born to Irish parents in Hertfordshire on 19 March 1907, she grew up in rural Ireland, playing the piano and writing music from the age of six. She studied at the Royal College of Music with Vaughan Williams, who remained a lifelong friend; but she was attracted less by English pastoralism than by the central European modernism of Bartók and Janáček, and she completed her studies with K.B. Jirák in Prague.

In the post-war era, Maconchy was greatly in demand as a composer amongst the leading professional ensembles, orchestras and soloists of the day, whilst also writing for amateurs and students, and was recognised as a leader of her profession: she chaired the Composers' Guild of Great Britain, was President of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, and in 1987 was appointed Dame of the British Empire. She lived in an Essex village with her husband, the scholar and medical historian William LeFanu, to whom she was married for over sixty years; the younger of their two daughters is the composer Nicola LeFanu. 'Betty' Maconchy, as she was affectionately known by many, died in November 1994.

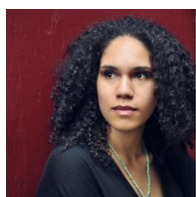
— Excerpted from Wise Music

String Quartet No. 3

Elizabeth Maconchy wrote tons of music for different ensembles, but she kept coming back to the string quartet. She wrote 13 string quartets over a 50-year period. They act almost as benchmarks to the whole of the mid 20th century, from the 1st in 1932 to the last in 1984. String quartet no 3 is Maconchy's shortest quartet but it packs in the drama. Written in 1938 No 3 sees Maconchy really getting into the nitty gritty of complicated family relationships. The piece is a 10-minute psychological thriller, seeing the four instruments engaging in a tense disagreement. The first section is a Lento, slow and full of unspoken tension, expertly paced and drawn out to heighten the drama. This leads into a Presto - frenetic and passionate. There's a brief respite with a seductive Andante, sweet and manipulative before moving into another anguished Presto. This is succeeded by a calmer Poco Largamente which brings the piece to a close.

— Elizabeth de Brito

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Jessie Montgomery was born and raised in Manhattan's Lower East Side in the 1980s during a pivotal moment in the neighborhood's history. Artists gravitated there, and it was a hotbed of cultural activity and community development.

Montgomery's father and mother, a musician and artist respectively, were engaged in the activities of the neighborhood and regularly brought Montgomery to rallies, performances, and parties where neighbors, activists, and artists gathered to celebrate and support the movements of the time. It is from this unique experience that Montgomery has created a life in which performance, creativity, and advocacy merge.

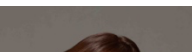
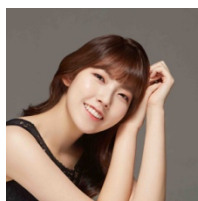
Montgomery encapsulates the 21st century American sound and experience in her works, expertly blending classical music with vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice.

A graduate of The Juilliard School and New York University, Montgomery's music is sought after by some of the most prominent organizations throughout the U.S., including the New York Philharmonic; the Dance Theatre of Harlem; Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; and the Sphinx Organization, an organization "dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts." She currently serves as Composer-in-Residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the organization's flagship professional touring ensemble, and is a Graduate Fellow in Music Composition at Princeton University.

In addition to her success as a composer, Montgomery also enjoys an active career as a violinist. She appears frequently with the Silkroad Ensemble and Sphinx Virtuosi and is a member of the Catalyst Quartet and PUBLIQuartet, which she co-founded.

– Rafaela Dreisin

“The first sketches of **Source Code** began as transcriptions of various sources from African American artists prominent during the peak of the Civil Rights era in the United States. I experimented by re-interpreting gestures, sentences, and musical syntax (the bare bones of rhythm and inflection) by choreographer Alvin Ailey, poets Langston Hughes and Rita Dove, and the great jazz songstress Ella Fitzgerald into musical sentences and tone paintings. Ultimately, this exercise of listening, re-imagining, and transcribing led me back to the black spiritual as a common musical source across all three genres. The spiritual is a significant part of the DNA of black folk music, and subsequently most (arguably all) American pop music forms that have developed to the present day. This one-movement work is a kind of dirge, which centers on a melody based on syntax derived from black spirituals. The melody is continuous and cycles through like a gene strand with which all other textures play.”

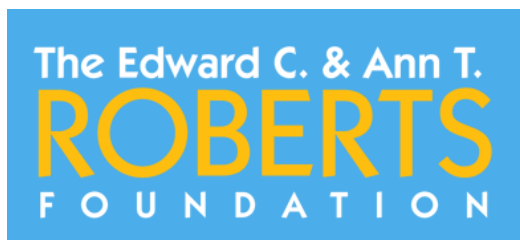


SiHyun Uhm is a composer, pianist, multimedia producer currently based in Rochester, NY. She is a Composer Fellow with Nashville Symphony Composer Lab, Universal Artists Festival, Daegu MBC Orchestra, Intimacy of Creativity, Red Note Workshop, has received prizes from Pyeong Chang Olympic Celebration, Howard Hanson Orchestral Prize, Louis Lane Prize, Leopold Auer, Future Symphony, NY Composers' Circle, Next Notes, National YoungArts, Golden Key Festival, Avalon, MTNA, and CBS National Youth Competition.

String Quartet No. 1

The piece focuses on the alternation between tension and release. The tension is created by conflicting melodies between each instrument and irregular rhythms. Towards the middle of the piece, there is a fugue section. It begins in the first violin and creates a dream-like mood that contrasts from the first extremely rhythmic part. It is an intense and energetic work.

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