

Monday, March 29, 2021 | 12 PM & 8:30 PM

PART I | 12 PM

Livestreamed from Neidorff-Karpati Hall

PART II | 8:30 PM

Livestreamed from Gordon K. and Harriet Greenfield Hall

CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Margaret Kampmeier, Artistic Director and Chair

TACTUS

Part I

PROGRAM

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882–1971)

Histoire du Soldat (The Soldier's Tale) (1918)

Marche du soldat (The Soldier's March)

Musique de la première scène (Music for Scene One)

Petites airs au bord du ruisseau (Little Tunes Beside the Brook)

Musique de la deuxième scène (Music for Scene Two)

Pastorale (Pastorale)

Musique de la troisième scène (Music for Scene Three)

Reprise: Petites airs au bord du ruisseau

Marche royale (Royal March)

Petit concert (Little Concert)

Trois danses: Tango, Valse, Ragtime (Three Dances: Tango, Waltz, Ragtime)

Danse du diable (The Devil's Dance)

Grand choral (Great Chorale)

Marche triomphale du diable (Triumphal March of the Devil)

Teagan Faran, violin

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Emmalie Tello, clarinet

New York, New York

Laura Bibbs, trumpet

Hawley, Pennsylvania

Maxine Troglauer, trombone

Wiesbaden, Germany

Makana Medeiros, percussion

Stafford, Virginia

Lucas Zeiter, bassoon

Henderson, Nevada

Dylan Holly, double bass

Tucson, Arizona

James Baker, Conductor

New York, New York

DANIEL BERNARD
ROUMAIN
(b. 1971)

Fast BLACK Dance Machine (2002)

Stephanie Dressler, flute
Coal Township, Pennsylvania

Emmalie Tello, clarinet
New York, New York

Teagan Faran, violin
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Jordan Bartow, cello
Greer, South Carolina

Han Geul Lee, piano
Goyang City, Republic of Korea

Jon Collazo, drumset
Clermont, Florida

Students in this performance are supported by the *Marga and Arthur King Scholarship*.

We are grateful to the generous donors who made these scholarships possible. For information on establishing a named scholarship at Manhattan School of Music, please contact Susan Madden, Vice President for Advancement, at 917-493-4115 or smadden@msmnyc.edu.

PROGRAM NOTES

Histoire du soldat (The Soldier's Tale)

Igor Stravinsky

Exiled in Switzerland against a backdrop of World War I, the Bolshevik revolution, and personal hardship, Stravinsky had to think creatively. Early in 1918 he and writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz hit on the idea of a little traveling theater production that could tour cheaply. As a novelist rather than a playwright, Ramuz suggested fashioning a “story” rather than a play, held together by narration. They agreed that Stravinsky would compose music that could be performed separately as a concert suite. The composer showed Ramuz some Russian tales by Alexander Nikolayevich Afanasyev, and Ramuz began modeling his narration on *The Runaway Soldier and the Devil*. The story was to be “read, played, and danced” by a troupe consisting of the Narrator, actors in the roles of the Soldier and the Devil, a silent dancing Princess, and a small mixed chamber group.

Working separately, Stravinsky began composing his ingenious musical numbers, drawing on Russian folk idioms and parodying popular modern dances, occasionally imparting touches of international flavor. He achieved novel sonorities by including a high and low instrument of each family—violin and bass, clarinet and bassoon, trumpet and trombone—along with various percussion instruments played by one player.

The first performance of *Histoire du soldat* took place in Lausanne on September 28, 1918, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. Its great success augured well, but the tour had to be canceled owing to a sweeping flu epidemic. Ansermet also conducted the first performance of the Suite, in London on July 20, 1920. Stravinsky’s memorable music has always attracted instrumentalists because each individual part is extremely rewarding to play. As a full theatrical production, *Histoire* is most often performed at festivals and on college campuses where its special demands can be met more easily than by regular dance companies.

Organized as a series of tableaux in two parts, the action takes place during the dance and mime scenes, which the narration connects. Part One begins with a jaunty introductory march as the Soldier heads home on leave (The Soldier’s March). In Scene One, the Soldier stops to rest by a brook and plays a fiddle tune (Little Tunes Beside the Brook), based on a Russian street song fashioned into one of Stravinsky’s signature ostinatos (repeating patterns).

The Devil, disguised as an old man with a butterfly net, sneaks up on the Soldier and convinces him to trade his fiddle for a magic book that foretells the future. When the Devil finds he can’t play the fiddle, he tempts the Soldier with images of luxury to come home and teach him. After three days, the Devil magically whisks the Soldier back to his home village.

In Scene Two the Soldier comes to the eerie realization that he has been gone three years, not three days—even his mother thinks he’s a ghost, and his fiancée is now married with two children. He berates himself and wonders what to do (Pastorale). The Devil, now dressed as a cattle merchant, reappears to remind the Soldier that he can make a fortune by using the magic book.

Scene Three begins as the Soldier, having accumulated great wealth but finding it meaningless, throws the book aside. Disguised as an old woman, the Devil sells him back his fiddle, but the Soldier can't make it sound and hurls it into the wings. To a reprise of *Little Tunes Beside the Brook*, he tears the book into pieces.

Part Two opens with the Soldier trudging along aimlessly. He finds himself in another country, where a king has promised his daughter's hand in marriage to anyone who can cure her illness. Arriving at the palace—accompanied by the Royal March, replete with Spanish flavor—the Soldier meets the Devil, dressed as a virtuoso violinist.

While waiting to see the Princess, the Soldier purposely loses his money to the Devil in a card game, all the while plying him with drink until he falls unconscious. The Soldier recovers his fiddle and plays the triumphant *Little Concert* over the Devil's insensible form.

In the Princess's chamber, the Soldier plays three dances—Tango, Waltz, and Ragtime—to which she dances as she is restored to health. The Devil enters undisguised, and the Soldier makes him dance to exhaustion (*The Devil's Dance*). The Soldier and the Princess drag him off, then embrace to the music of the *Little Chorale*, based on that most famous of Lutheran chorales, "A Mighty Fortress." The Devil interrupts with a dire warning (*The Devil's Song*) that the Soldier must not cross the border to his native village or he will be reclaimed—much like Orpheus. The *Great Chorale*, accompanying the Narrator's moralizing, completes Stravinsky's "Mighty Fortress" parody, which imparts a sense of mock grandness with its delightful sprinkling of dissonance.

Eventually the Soldier and the Princess decide to visit his native village. As they cross the border, the Devil, again in possession of the fiddle, repossesses the Soldier, who follows him unresisting as the *Triumphal March of the Devil* resounds.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

Fast BLACK Dance Machine

Daniel Bernard Roumain

Fast BLACK Dance Machine is a sonic fusion of funk, rock, and minimalism. It is scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, drum kit, and piano and is comprised of three continuous movements: *Fast*, *Black*, and *Dance Machine*. In the score, Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR) offers a short program note; "I think the title suggests provocative questions. I hope the music answers them."

—Stephanie Dressler

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Conductor James Baker is Principal Percussionist of the New York City Ballet Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the Talea Ensemble, and Director of the Percussion Ensemble at the Mannes College of Music. He was Music Director and Conductor of the Composers Conference at Brandeis University for 14 years, as well as Conductor of the New York New Music Ensemble for a number of years. This season he is conducting the Grossman Ensemble at the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition at the University of Chicago. He has conducted the Orchestra of the League of Composers, the Slee Sinfonietta at the Institute for 21st Century Music in Buffalo, Speculum Musicae, the New York Philharmonic Chamber Ensembles, Ensemble ACJW at Carnegie Hall, the Cygnus Ensemble, the Decoda ensemble, Tactus at Manhattan School of Music, Ensemble 21, Musica Nova at the Eastman School, and DaCapo, among many others.

James Baker has conducted at the Darmstadt, Wien Moderne, Warsaw Autumn, Transit Belgium, Contempuls Prague, June in Buffalo, Nouvelles Voix Royaumont, reMusik St. Petersburg Russia, Contempo Chicago, Musikprotokoll Graz, and Beijing Modern music festivals. He has both played and conducted at the Bang on a Can Marathon and has conducted at the Monday Night Concerts in Los Angeles and Fromm concerts at Harvard. He has conducted a number of the Composer Portraits concerts at Columbia's Miller Theater, including those of Pierre Boulez (where he led the U.S. premiere of *Dérive II*), Toru Takemitsu, Jason Eckardt, John Zorn, and Chou Wen-chung.

Mr. Baker was for many years a conductor of Broadway shows, conducting *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Music Man*, *Oklahoma*, and *An Inspector Calls*, among others.

Part II

PROGRAM

NINA SHEKHAR
(b. 1995)

Dear Abby (2019/2020)

Teagan Faran, violin
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Jordan Bartow, cello
Greer, South Carolina

Nicole Brancato, piano
Astoria, New York

Jon Collazo, percussion
Clermont, Florida

INTI FIGGIS-VIZUETA
(b. 1992)

new cosmologies (2020)

Stephanie Dressler, flute
Coal Township, Pennsylvania

Laura Bibbs, trumpet
Hawley, Pennsylvania

Maxine Troglauer, bass trombone
Wiesbaden, Germany

Alyson Kanne, harp
Naperville, Illinois

Nicole Brancato, piano
Astoria, New York

HANNAHLASH
(b. 1981)

Folksongs (2010)

Stephanie Dressler, piccolo
Coal Township, Pennsylvania

Alyson Kanne, harp
Naperville, Illinois

Makana Medeiros, percussion
Stafford, Virginia

MILTON BABBITT
(1916–2011)

Two Sonnets (1976)

Emmalie Tello, clarinet
New York, New York

Teagan Faran, viola
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Jordan Bartow, cello
Greer, South Carolina

Gabriel Garcia, voice
Simsbury, Connecticut

JOHN ADAMS
(b. 1947)

Hallelujah Junction (1998)

I.

Han Geul Lee, piano
Goyang City, Republic of Korea

Nicole Brancato, piano
Astoria, New York

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PROGRAM NOTES

Dear Abby

Nina Shekhar

Founded in 1956, the advice column “Dear Abby” answers readers questions and gives guidance on a variety of topics, including etiquette, relationships, sex, health, and careers. An historical survey of “Dear Abby” and other advice columns paints a distinct portrait of the changes in societal views on identity. Most expressed misogynistic and heteronormative opinions about gender and sexuality. Columns frequently advised women to obey their husbands, give up their careers, tolerate domestic violence, and always smile. Reading these old columns is telling of society’s limited perception of gender roles and how the definition of gender has evolved. This piece, *Dear Abby*, explores how society often attempts to pigeonhole people into narrow gender roles that may or may not conflict with their own identity and the internal reactions [that one might face as a result].

–Nina Shekhar

new cosmologies

inti figgis-vizueta

I see fundamental connections between the improvisatory and interpretative processes in my music and the formation of new, imagined histories of indigenous peoples. I think violence lives in our bones and our blood and that we still feel remnants from the first settlers who murdered and poisoned our ancestors. Imagining a future for us means imagining a past separate from the settler colonialism that killed so many of our mythologies and stories.

When I think about Steve Mackey’s piece *Indigenous Instruments*, I think about the power of a white man’s imagination. The power of being able to conjure into being a New Indigenous peoples, not ravaged by genocide. I imagine the power of being celebrated, featured, and written about for it. Perhaps it’s just a small piece in the scheme of things, but I can’t shake how much that piece radicalized me to tell my own stories, to imagine new pasts and futures, and to fundamentally understand that white people gain their power from stealing our traditions and knowledge, our proximity to the divine, the cosmological, and the truth.

–inti figgis-vizueta

Folksongs

Hannah Lash

Folksongs is a piece about transformation and dichotomy. Its premise is to use very simple, almost homely materials and to transform and manipulate them in complex ways.

The first movement uses a melody that sounds like a traditional Celtic or English pennywhistle tune, with a rhythmic pattern of nonmetrically placed accents in the doumbek, underneath all of which nontonal and lush harmonies are spun out in the harp. These three strata change places instrumentally throughout the movement.

The second movement draws inspiration from a choir singing homophonic music—the collective force of rhythmic unison. Here, the two patterns are rhythmic and melodic: a color and a talea of differing lengths, so that the movement’s completion is not reached until these elements’ ends coincide.

The third movement is a piccolo solo, with three punctuating notes at various points from the harp and gong. It is a simple, songful melody: a shepherd playing for himself on a lonely hill.

The fourth and final movement is similar to the first in the nonmetrically placed accents in the rhythmic patterns of the harp and tongue-drum. The melodic material is drawn from a simple 9-note scale in an E-based mode. The melodic pattern is stated three times at varying speeds in the piccolo, which is joined by a mensuration canon in the harp in the middle of the movement.

This piece was premiered by the MAYA trio, for whom it was commissioned and written.

–*Hannah Lash*

Two Sonnets

Milton Babbitt

Milton Babbitt was one of the greatest all-around musicians of his day or any day. He was also a sought-after mathematician, a pioneer of computer music, and a scintillating conversationalist and lecturer. His book of essays should be in the library of every CPP student.

Milton was a master teacher who encouraged composers of all styles, and young performers who were interested in newer music. He was well known for his enigmatic praise: “My boy, I never heard you sound better” or “Only you play it like that.” *Two Sonnets* was written in 1955, an early piece. Milton was enchanted by poetry and could set a wide range of poets with just the right musical support. I had the honor of being coached by Milton on this piece.

–*Fred Sherry, CPP faculty*

Hallelujah Junction

John Adams

Hallelujah Junction is a small truck stop on Highway 49 in the High Sierras on the California–Nevada border near where I have a small cabin. For years I would pass through in my car, wondering what piece of music might have a title like “Hallelujah Junction.” It was a case of a good title needing a piece, so I obliged by composing this work for two pianos.

Two pianos is a combination that’s long intrigued me, and the pairing plays important roles in both “Common Tones in Simple Time” and “Grand Pianola Music.” What attracts me is the possibility of having similar or even identical material played at a very slight delay, thereby creating a kind of planned resonance, as if the sonorities were being processed by a delay circuit. The brilliant attacks and rich ten-fingered chords of the grand pianos suggest endless possibilities for constructing an ecstatic, clangorous continuum, the effect of which could not be achieved with any other sonorous instrument.

I begin with only the “__lle-lu-jah” of the title (a Hebrew word), a three-syllable exclamation that bounces back and forth between the two instruments until it yields to a more relaxed and regular figuration of rolling 16ths. The harmonies are essentially modal, staying exclusively in the flat regions of the circle of fifths.

Eventually the rambling, busy patter of 16ths gives way to a passage of dry, “secco” chords that punctuate the musical surface like karate chops until they too give way, this time to the serene middle movement. Here the “__lle-lu-jah” motif of the opening is gently transformed *and* extended above a quiet fabric of repeated triplets. These triplets become the main event as the movement tightens up and energy increases, leading into the final section. Here I take advantage of the acoustically identical sounds of the two pianos to make constant shifts of pulse (“Is it in two? Or is it in three?”). This ambiguity produces a kind of giddy uncertainty as the music pings back and forth in bright clusters.

Hallelujah Junction was composed for my friends Grant Gershon and Gloria Cheng, who first performed it at the Gerry Center in Brentwood, California in April of 1998. It was dedicated to Ernest Fleischmann, for many years the guiding light of musical culture in Los Angeles.

–*John Adams*

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

The Contemporary Performance Program at Manhattan School of Music is dedicated to giving advanced student performers the opportunity to study with expert faculty and to work directly with living composers. The CPP concert series presents knowledgeable performances of 20th- and 21st-century masterpieces by the student ensemble Tactus. Past concerts have featured both classic 20th-century repertoire and more recent works played with the composers in attendance. The group presents music by MSM faculty composers and works with the Composition department to read and perform student compositions.

Administration

Margaret Kampmeier

Artistic Director and Chair

Katharine Dryden

Managing Director of Instrumental Ensembles

Jon Clancy

CPP Instrumental Ensembles Associate

Faculty

David Adamcyk, Contemporary Survey

Susan Jolles, Harp

Todd Reynolds, Electronics

Robert Black, Bass

Margaret Kampmeier, Piano

Brandon Ridenour, Trumpet

David Cossin, Percussion

David Krakauer, Clarinet

Lucy Shelton, Voice

Anthony de Mare, Piano

Curtis Macomber, Violin

Fred Sherry, Cello

Monica Ellis, Bassoon

Tara Helen O'Connor, Flute

James Austin Smith, Oboe

John Ferrari, Percussion

Christopher Oldfather, Piano

Dave Taylor, Bass trombone

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 960 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege program continues to offer superior music instruction to 475 young musicians between the ages of 5 and 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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