

••• Master's Composition Recital •••

**Elizabeth Gartman**, *composer*

Saturday, May 1st, 2021 • 5:30pm EST

Manhattan School of Music/YouTube Live (Virtual Event)

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**Unexpected Call** (2020)

Marcus Jefferson, text

Alexander Rodriguez, *tenor*

**The Last Call** (2021)

Marcus Jefferson, text

Elizabeth Gartman, *soprano*

Jonathan Collazo, *percussion*

**[Weight]** (2020)

Susan Bywaters, text

Shannyn Rinker, *soprano*

(video/choreography by Nora Winsler)

**Stoma Haema** (2021)

Composition Thesis

*Chamber Orchestra*

Prime Quintet:

Jennifer Ahn, *violin*

Francesca Abusamra, *violin*

Toby Winarto, *viola*

Jordan Bartow, *violoncello*

Jonathan Collazo, *percussion*

Glenn Alexander, *conductor*

External Ensemble:

Stephanie Dressler, *flute*

Emmalie Tello, *bass clarinet*

Erin Acree, *bassoon*

Sophia Fillippone, *horn*

Laura Bibbs, *trumpet*

Maxine Troglauer, *bass trombone*

Makana Medieros, *percussion*

Gabriel Costache, *percussion*

Alyson Kanne, *harp*

Nicole Brancato, *piano*

Basil Alter, *violin*

Jack Rittendale, *viola*

Clara Cho, *violoncello*

Tyler Vittoria, *double bass*

## Program Notes & Texts

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*Unexpected Call* was created for singer Alexander Rodriguez in collaboration with writer Marcus Jefferson as a part of the Manhattan School of Music Contemporary Opera Ensemble's "Our Multiple Voices" project.

*Unexpected Call* (Text by Marcus Jefferson)

Mom's doing fine. Grandma too.  
With all things considered,  
We're being as safe as we can.  
Are you ok? You only call  
When something's wrong.

She called me *lindo*  
At least 50 times,  
Her hands filling in  
The words I missed.  
I must remind her of you

I saw Maria the other day!  
Yes, your mother Maria.  
We went to the park,  
Adorned in masks,  
Social distance maintained.

If you want, we could  
Find a moment to...  
I understand.  
Maybe next time.  
Bye Dad.

*The Last Call* was written as a companion piece to *Unexpected Call*. Both works were inspired by conversations surrounding the current pandemic.

*The Last Call* (Text by Marcus Jefferson)

They told me  
You're sick.  
Very sick.  
Not the flu,  
No - but like it.

Granting you  
A safe journey  
Into the light.

I don't know  
How to do this.  
To say goodbye.  
To say goodbye  
Like this.

The piety of death  
Interrupted by the  
Blue hue  
Of our coveted  
Intention.

Unaware of your  
Awareness.  
Unable to press  
My hand into yours

Year's worth  
Of catching up  
Urgently passing  
Between each breath.  
Unsure of which  
Will be your last.

*[Weight]* confronts the command at the heart of diet culture: lose weight at all costs. This incessant message is the manifestation of diet culture, a prescription for the body to eat itself. Daily microaggressions repeat this mantra so constantly that to hear it is akin to hearing your own thoughts: lose weight by whatever means necessary. In this piece, the singer hears and responds to this caustic message. They internalize it, their spiraling thoughts represented by the repetitious electronics. They respond, like many do, by falling down the slippery slope of diet culture, and the control that it promises as it tightens its grip. But this illusion of control has dangerous implications. It will destroy any body it claims to save.

*CW: This work discusses body dysmorphia, eating disorders and self-harm. Performer is to encourage audience members who may be triggered by these themes to leave the space.*

*[Weight]* (Text by Susan Bywateres)

If I eat less, I'll weigh less, so I'll eat less.

If I drink less water, I'll weigh less, so I'll drink less water.

If I shave my head, I'll weigh less, so I'll shave my head.

If I cut off my finger, I'll weigh less, so I'll cut off my finger.

If I cut off my leg, I'll weigh less, so I'll cut off my leg.

If I eat nothing, I'll weigh nothing, so I'll eat nothing.

If I am not, I'll weigh not, so I will not.

## ***Stoma Haema***

stoma [stoh-muh] *noun, sing.*

1. *Botany.* any of various small apertures, especially one of the minute orifices or slits in the epidermis of leaves, stems, etc. through which gasses are exchanged.

haema [hah-e-muh] *var. of hemo-. (New Latin haemo-)*

1. of or retaining to blood.
2. *Botany/Binomial Nomenclature (Latin).* blood red in color.

The image below, painted by my father, features the landscape of Peninsula State Park in Door County, Wisconsin. I've come to find that, within my own, short lifetime, the makeup of this Northern Mesic forest has actually changed. Heavier and less predictable rain showers have increased erosion. Invasive

insects and disease survive through milder winters, attacking plant victims of drought. Hotter temperatures in summer months call on small, unprotected plants to activate their stomata and force water to their outer leaves faster. This rapid process means these plants are more susceptible to fatal frost damage in winters when the seedlings can no longer rely on protection from snowpack.

Meanwhile, species like the towering Sugar Maple will adapt and thrive to the shifts in climate and will likely take over these Wisconsin woods in the years to come. Less equipped species will die out, and the Sugar Maple will perhaps outlive even the human species responsible for the infringement upon its land; especially if current trends continue.

*Stoma Haema* for chamber orchestra has been prepared virtually for this event. The piece is comprised of a Prime Quintet and an External Orchestra, consisting of three ensembles. In both live and pre-recorded settings, the outcome of the Prime Quintet is concrete and irreversible. It is the role of the External Orchestra to employ active listening and complete their parts primarily using sonic cues only. These players will first inevitably invade the music of the Prime Quintet, then reconstruct it in a way which is reminiscent of the original, but never precisely what had existed before.

Painting by Gary L. Gartman



This recital and the piece *Stoma Haema* are presented in partial fulfillment of the Master's Degree in Composition at the Manhattan School of Music. Elizabeth is a proud student of Prof. Susan Botti.