

MSM Chamber Choir

Ronnie Oliver, Michael Sheetz, and John Verkuilen,
Conductors

Brian Wong, Collaborative Pianist

Wednesday, April 6, 2022 | 7:30 PM
Gordon K. and Harriet Greenfield Hall

MSM Chamber Choir

Ronnie Oliver, Michael Sheetz, and John Verkuilen, Conductors
Brian Wong, Collaborative Pianist

PROGRAM

STEPHEN CHATMAN *Clocks from Time Pieces*
(b. 1950) A textual and musical glossary of clock sounds

ROSEPHANYE POWELL *To Sit and Dream*
(b. 1962) (Text from poem *To You* by Langston Hughes)

DUNCAN PATTON *There Will Come A Time*
(b. 1959) (Text from speech by President Barack Obama)

John Verkuilen, conductor

FRANK TICHELI *Earth Song*
(b. 1958) (Text by Frank Ticheli)

Michael Sheetz, conductor

ALEXANDROS DARNA *Melodies Unheard* (World Premiere)
(b. 1998) (Text by Emily Dickinson)

**Angelina Bush, Caspian Fernholz, David Freides,
Isaac Hall**, soloists

HUGO WOLF *Der Feuerreiter*
(1860–1903) (Text by Eduard Mörike)

TRADITIONAL *Wade in the Water*
SPIRITUAL
(arr. Moses Hogan) **Alexandra Cirile**, mezzo-soprano

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Der Feuerreiter

Sehet ihr am Fensterlein
Dort die rote Muetze wieder?
Nicht geheuer muss es sein,
Denn er geht schon auf und nieder.
Und auf einmal welch Gewuehle
Bei der Bruecke, nach dem Feld!
Horch! das Feuergloecklein gellt:
Hinterm Berg,
Hinterm Berg
Brennt es in der Muehle!

Schaut! da sprengt er wuetend schier
Durch das Tor, der Feuerreiter,
Auf dem rippenduerren Tier,
Als auf einer Feuerleiter!
Querfeldein! Durch Qualm und
 Schwuele
Rennt er schon, und ist am Ort!
Drueben schallt es fort und fort:
Hinterm Berg,
Hinterm Berg
Brennt es in der Muehle!

Der so oft den roten Hahn
Meilenweit von fern gerochen,
Mit des heiligen Kreuzes Span
Freventlich die Glut besprochen—
Weh! dir grinst vom Dachgestuehle
Dort der Feind im Hoellenschein.
Gnade Gott der Seele dein!
Hinterm Berg,
Hinterm Berg
Ras't er in der Muehle!

The Fire Rider

There at the window
See that red cap again?
Something strange is going on,
See how it bobs up and down.
And suddenly what a tumult
At the bridge, where the field ends!
Listen! The fire bell clanging:
Behind the hill,
Behind the hill
There's a fire at the mill!

Look! He gallops stark mad
Through the gate, the Fire Rider,
On the scrawny-ribbed horse
Like on a fireman's ladder!
Cross-field! Through smoke and
 stuffy air
On his way, now reaches the spot!
Over there the bell keeps clanging:
Behind the hill,
Behind the hill
There's fire in the mill!

He who so often sniffed
The red hen from miles around,
With the holy cross's beam
Blaspheming addressed the fire—
Woe! From the timber frame
The fiend grins at you in hell's red glow.
God have mercy on your soul!
Behind the hill,
Behind the hill
He is raging in the mill!

Keine Stunde hielt es an,
Bis die Muehle borst in Truemmer;
Doch den kecken Reitersmann
Sah man von der Stunde nimmer.
Volk und Wagen im Gewuehle
Kehren heim von all dem Graus;
Auch das Gloecklein klinget aus.
Hinterm Berg,
Hinterm Berg
Brennts! —

Nach der Zeit ein Mueller fand
Ein Gerippe samt der Muetzen
Aufrecht an der Kellerwand
Auf der beinern Maehre sitzen:
Feuerreiter, wie so kuehle
Reitest du in deinem Grab!
Husch! da faellts in Asche ab.
Ruhe wohl, Ruhe wohl
Drunten in der Muehle!

—*Eduard Moerike*

It lasted but an hour
The mill collapsed in rubble;
The brash horseman though
Was never seen again.
Villagers and wagons in a flurry
Head for home, away from horror;
Even the bell's clang is fading.
Behind the hill,
Behind the hill
'Tis on fire! —

Not long after a miller found
A skeleton wearing a cap
Upright at the cellar wall
Sitting on the bony mare:
Fire Rider, with what calmness
You ride in your grave!
Whoosh! Down in ashes it falls.
Rest you well,
Rest you well
Down there in the mill!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ronnie Oliver, Jr., Conductor

Ronnie Oliver, Jr. is a conductor and educator whose commitment to the advancement of the choral art through performance, mentoring, and teaching has spanned over 30 years.

Dr. Oliver is currently Associate Director of Choral Activities at Manhattan School of Music. He is also Artistic Director and Conductor of EnsembleNYC, an emerging choral ensemble whose vision is to be a catalyst for hope in New York City. He has served as choral director and teacher of conducting at Westminster Choir College (Princeton, New Jersey), Western Michigan University, Western Kentucky University, Greensboro College (North Carolina), and Texas Tech University. Dr. Oliver has also served on the faculty of the Juilliard Evening Division and the Music Education Workshops of the Carnegie Hall Weill Music Institute.

Dr. Oliver has served as Executive Director of Manhattan Concert Productions, where he was responsible for the overall administration and management of festival concerts at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. His duties included collaboration with nationally known guest conductors, working directly with the production teams at the various venues, fiscal management, and escorting performing ensembles on tours of Europe and Great Britain. Dr. Oliver served as Managing Director of Musica Sacra, a professional choral ensemble in New York City, for the 2009–2010 season. He was also selected as a Conducting Fellow for the 2012 Chorus America Master Class in Choral-Orchestral Conducting.

Dr. Oliver received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, and his Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting and Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University.

He has studied conducting with Robert Baar, Gerald Welker, and Kenneth Davis. In addition, Dr. Oliver has participated in master classes and clinics with Paul Salamunovich, Robert Page, Dennis Keene, and Robert Shaw. He has participated in the Oregon Bach Festival's Conducting Master Class with Helmuth Rilling. Dr. Oliver has appeared at Carnegie Hall, most recently conducting Fauré's Requiem with the Masterworks Festival Chorus and New York City Chamber Orchestra.

He is a member of the American Choral Directors Association, National Association for Music Education, the National Collegiate Choral Organization, New York Choral Consortium (Board Member), College Music Society, Pi Kappa Lambda, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

John Verkuilen, Conductor

John Verkuilen is a second-year Doctor of Musical Arts student in choral conducting studying with Kent Tritle and Ronnie Oliver. He is also on the faculty of MSM Summer, teaching courses in world music and advanced ear training. Before beginning his studies at MSM, John served for two years as Artistic Director of Sine Nomine, a select 24-voice ensemble in Fall River, Massachusetts; was guest conductor of the 85-voice Falmouth Chorale and 16-voice FC Chamber Choir for two concert cycles; and spent a year as Interim Artistic Director of Calliope, a collaborative chorus and orchestra in Boston. John earned a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from the Boston Conservatory and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in international studies, economics, and music from Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where his interdisciplinary focus was world music.

Before his time in Boston, John Verkuilen was appointed Macalester's Assistant Choral Conductor, completed a yearlong music liturgy internship at St. Olaf Catholic Church in Minneapolis, and performed two seasons as a member of the Minnesota Opera. He has served as Assistant Conductor of the Newburyport Choral Society and Conducting Apprentice at Berkshire Choral International and has been on the Boston Conservatory Vocal/Choral Intensive faculty. In addition to conducting, John frequently performs professionally with choirs in New England and the Midwest.

Michael Sheetz, Conductor

Michael Sheetz, a native of Dix Hills, New York, is a doctoral candidate in choral conducting at MSM, under the tutelage of Kent Tritle and Ronnie Oliver. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree with academic honors from Vassar College and earned a Master of Music and two Professional Studies degrees in vocal accompanying and choral conducting from Manhattan School of Music.

Michael is Assistant Music Director of Musica Sacra, New York City's longest continuously performing professional choral ensemble. Additionally, he is Music Associate at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, where he conducts the Wallace Hall Choir and Orchestra and the early music ensemble Canticum Sacrum and performs as a featured conductor and recitalist on the Concerts at St. Ignatius series. He is the Director of Choirs at Hunter College of the

City University of New York, where he conducts the College Choir and Chamber Singers, and is a faculty member of Classic Lyric Arts, a summer opera training program for singers and pianists in Novafeltria, Italy.

In December 2021, Michael served as the cover conductor for Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic. Numerous Lincoln Center collaborations include Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Walton's *Henry V*, Ives' Symphony No. 4 and the complete choral works of Edgard Varèse at the Lincoln Center Festival. He has been Assistant Choral Director at the New York Philharmonic for performances of Holst's *The Planets*, and Associate Conductor for Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* at the Juilliard School. He has previously held faculty appointments at the Juilliard School, Vassar College, and the United Nations International School.

As a conductor of new music, he has assisted in performance preparation with composers Meredith Monk, Michael Gilbertson, Jocelyn Hagen, Evan Fein, Frank Ferko, Julius Revie, and Gisle Kverndokk. As a collaborator in choral repertoire, Michael has worked with conductors Alan Gilbert, Jane Glover, Pablo Heras-Casado, Bernard Labadie, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, Sir Roger Norrington, Philippe Entremont, Dennis Keene, and Bramwell Tovey, among others. He resides in New York City with his wife, Diana.
www.michaelsheetzmusic.com

Brian Wong, Collaborative Pianist

Brian Wong is an active solo pianist, collaborative pianist, and orchestral keyboardist based in New York City. Currently staff pianist for Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School, he has been the pianist for the residencies of Lawrence Brownlee, Denyce Graves, Simon Estes, Matthew Horner, Isabel Leonard, and Malcolm Martineau.

Highlights of his 2021–22 season include performances at Alice Tully Hall, the Juilliard School, and Carnegie Hall. Brian is the recipient of multiple scholarships, including the L. & G. Goldberg Scholarship, P. & A. Shaffer Scholarship, and Irene Diamond Fellowship at the Juilliard School, and the Jean Barr Scholarship, Ruth and Arno Drucker Scholarship, and Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence to fully support his studies at the Eastman School of Music. He is a fellow at LA SongFest and Aspen Music Festival and holds degrees from the Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Brian was awarded the title Hong Kong Scholar by the HKSAR Government in 2017.

Alexandra Cirile, Mezzo-Soprano

Alexandra Cirile is a mezzo-soprano from Los Angeles, California. She is a senior at MSM studying classical voice with Ruth Golden. Upcoming engagements include Senior Opera Theatre's production of *Die Zauberflöte* as Zweiter Knaben and Bronx Opera's production of *The Mercy of Titus* as a chorister. She would like to thank Sue and Rich for being here.

MSM CHAMBER CHOIR

The Manhattan School of Music Chamber Choir is the school's premier choral ensemble. Led by Director of Choral Activities Kent Tritle since 2008, the ensemble has been featured at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. as part of the Conservatory Project, and has sung with the New York Philharmonic in performances of Walton's *Henry V*, the Act I Finale of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, and Charles Ives' Symphony No. 4. Recently, the Chamber Choir has performed Bach's B Minor Mass, Stravinsky's Mass, Honegger's *Le Roi David*, Mozart's C Minor Mass, David Lang's *Little Match Girl Passion* and Tan Dun's *Water Passion* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Britten's *War Requiem*, and Handel's Coronation Anthems 1, 2, and 3.

Kent Tritle, Conductor

Ronnie Oliver, Associate Conductor

Michael Sheetz, John Verkuilen, Rong Zhang, Graduate Assistants

Brian Wong, Collaborative Pianist

Richener Bissereth

Hyattsville, Maryland

Blake Briol

Chaska, Minnesota

Angelina Bush

Orlando, Florida

Alexandra Cirile

Los Angeles, California

Maggie Curole

Cut Off, Louisiana

Abby Dutler

Vernon Hills, Illinois

Nicole Eliev

Moscow, Russia

Caspian Fernholz

Traverse City, Michigan

Mark Filatov

Brighton Beach, New York

David Freides

Ridgewood, New Jersey

Isaac Hall

Bozeman, Montana

Tess Levine

Birmingham, Alabama

Shuying Li

Shanghai, China

Eva Martinez

Doylestown, Pennsylvania

Michael Sheetz

Dix Hills, New York

Simon Staples

Salem, Oregon

Joseph Stedman

Calgary, Canada

John Verkuilen

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Sara Zerilli

Millstone Township, New Jersey

Rong Zhang

Shanghai, China

Xijia Zhang

Zhangjiakou City, China

Yancheng Zhang

Gansu, China

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its 985 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.

Your gift helps a young artist reach for the stars!

To enable Manhattan School of Music to continue educating and inspiring generations of talented students and audiences alike, please consider making a charitable contribution today.

Contact the Advancement Office at 917-493-4434 or visit msmnyc.edu/support

Land Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.

📍 MSM.NYC 🐦 MSMNYC 📘 MSMNYC

M Manhattan
School of Music