



CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

**Margaret Kampmeier**, Artistic Director and Chair

# TACTUS

Contemporary Chamber Music

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2023 | 7:30 PM  
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



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## Contemporary Chamber Music

PROGRAM

NATHALIE JOACHIM

*Life Lines* (2010)

**Savannah Gentry** and **Adeline DeBella**, flute

JESSIE MONTGOMERY

(b. 1981)

Duo for Violin and Cello (2015)

I. Meandering

II. Dirge

III. Presto

**Yeji Pyun**, violin

**Alan Hlozek**, cello

ALVIN SINGLETON

(b. 1940)

*In Our Own House* (1998)

**Grace Pressley**, soprano sax

**Sam Friedman**, trumpet

**Nacho Ojeda**, piano

**Jon Collazo** (MM '22), snare drum\*

MATTHEW EVAN TAYLOR

(b. 1980)

*Fragments of Glass* (2012)

**Lucy Shelton**, voice

**Savannah Gentry** and **Adeline DeBella**, flute

**Yu-Ting Cheng**, clarinet

**Grace Pressley**, alto sax

**Sam Friedman**, trumpet

**Yeji Pyun**, violin

**Alan Hlozek**, cello

**Nacho Ojeda**, piano

*Intermission*

VALERIE COLEMAN

*Portraits of Langston* (2007)

Prelude: *Helen Keller*

II. *Danse Africaine*

III. *Le Grand Duc Mambo*

IV. *Silver Rain*

**Alexa Smith** (MM '10), Reader

**Savannah Gentry**, flute

**Yu-Ting Cheng**, clarinet

**Sila Senturk**, piano

ALLISON LOGGINS-HULL

(b. 1982)

*The Pattern* (2020)

**Adeline DeBella**, flute

**Yu-Ting Cheng**, clarinet/bass clarinet

**Yeji Pyun**, violin

**Alan Hlozek**, cello

**Jixue Yang** (MM '20), piano\*

**Jon Collazo** (MM '22), percussion\*

**Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez**, Conductor

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Nathalie Joachim** *Life Lines*

*Life Lines* is a piece dedicated to the people in my life who hold me up when I'm not certain I can keep pushing forward. The electronics signify the relentless pace at which I move through the world, made possible by the support of my friends and family. The perpetual motion of the flutes represents each of our relationships, independent of one another, but always closely in step; leaping daringly through each moment, while remaining lightly woven throughout; and flowing together with seamless complexity and care.

—Nathalie Joachim

## **Jessie Montgomery** **Duo for Violin and Cello**

Jessie Montgomery's Duo for Violin and Cello, written for her friend, cellist Adrienne Taylor, comprises three short movements—Meandering, Dirge, and Presto—composed in sonata form. Montgomery writes that the piece “is meant as an ode to friendship with movements characterizing laughter, compassion, adventure, and sometimes silliness.” The first movement begins with a stylistically deceptive start, in what establishes a serious character. Soon after the initial pizzicato gesture of the violin, the movement reveals its true playful, jovial nature, with an emphasis forming around strummed triadic chords. The second movement opens with a four-voice chorale, crafted with deceptively clever voice-leading and unexpected chordal resolutions formed by the two parts. This segues into two contrasting expressive, lyrical solo segments to be presented by each performer, with the movement concluding by recalling its beginnings. The third movement initiates with a repeating motif (played *forte*) alternating between the two instruments, resulting in a composite rhythm of constant eighth-notes, with a special focus placed on the contrast of color achieved by the manipulation of bow contact-point (*norm./sul pont.*). The dominant motif is later contrasted near the middle and end of the movement with a series of legato phrases displaced by one beat between the instruments. The movement concludes with strong emphasis of a tonality centered around D.

—Alan Hložek

# Alvin Singleton

## *In Our Own House*

Alvin Singleton's *In Our Own House* was commissioned by pianist Karen Walwyn for her *Dark Fires* (Vol. 2) Albany Records recording with Rodney Mack, Branford Marsalis, and Jason Marsalis. Premiering in 1998, the chamber work was received well, and it has had numerous performances since. *In Our Own House* requires the ensemble to keep a steady, slow tempo, while also allowing room for musicians to improvise during multiple sections of the piece. The eight-minute work is written for soprano saxophone, trumpet, snare drum, and piano.

–Grace Pressley

# Matthew Evan Taylor

## *Fragments of Glass*

This is a piece about dreams and expectations. What happens when we examine ourselves?

–Matthew Evan Taylor

### Fragments of Glass

By Matthew Taylor

I walked into an old **House**

**Glass** everywhere

Each containing a piece of soul

A remembered kiss....

Here

A faded wink---> there

I've never liked



houses of mirrors

I shouldn't look at myself  
...too intently

**Intensely.**

*Intensity* makes my skin crawl.

## **Valerie Coleman**

### ***Portraits of Langston***

The early 1900s was a new era for African-Americans. For the first time in American history, the disciplines of visual art, music, and literature simultaneously took a turn to celebrate African-American culture. As a result, the “Harlem Renaissance” was born. Langston Hughes was in the center of that cultural explosion and, like many African-American artists who lived in Harlem, Hughes had dreams of living in Europe—living a life unfettered from segregation.

*Portraits of Langston* is a suite in six short movements and is my take on Hughes’s poetic memories of Harlem and Europe (mainly Paris). These movements can be performed separately or in its entirety. I chose Langston not because of who he is in literature, but because he was in fact, an ‘eyewitness’ to legends born. His poems are so descriptive of the era, with references to particular settings and individuals that influenced him: Josephine Baker, Helen Keller, the nightlife/music of Harlem jazz clubs and Parisian cabarets. The imagery that Hughes provides gives me quite a historical palette that inspires me to illustrate a work truly unique to duo repertoire. Stylistically, this work incorporates many different elements that are translated into woodwind technique: the stride piano technique, big band swing, cabaret music, Mambo, African drumming, and even traditional spirituals.

Five of the six movements are musical sketches of selected (and lesser known) poems from Langston Hughes’s vast library: *Helen Keller*, *Danse Africaine*, *In Time of Silver Rain*, *Jazz Band in a Parisian Cabaret*, and *Summer Night*. *Le Grand Duc Mambo* is the only exception. It is a musical sketch of the jazz club in the scandalous red light district of Montmartre, where Langston worked as a busboy for 25 cents a night.

–Valerie Coleman

## **Allison Loggins-Hull**

### ***The Pattern***

*The Pattern* serves as a case for reparations for the African-American community and embodies the historically tumultuous relationship between white and black Americans. Moments throughout American history demonstrate the many ways in which white supremacy has, very intentionally, created roadblocks against progress for African-Americans. Of course, this began with slavery. After the Civil War and during Reconstruction, black Americans began to participate in government and build their own communities. This was met by riots led by

white mobs, and policy was enacted to overthrow the participation of blacks in politics. Later, during Jim Crow, blacks were segregated from whites, receiving poorer quality services and resources, and were disenfranchised as voting citizens. Among many oppressive acts and violence leading up to the Civil Rights Movement, black Americans experienced redlining, making it next to impossible to legitimately purchase a home and build wealth. These are just a few instances indicative of a pattern that's as American as apple pie.

The beginning of *The Pattern* is inspired by the final battles of the Civil War. Once the war ends, black Americans are declared free from slavery but left with no guidance or resources. Though during Reconstruction many blacks were able to acquire land and build their own communities, there was lingering disdain from defeated Confederates, which was followed by terroristic behavior towards blacks. The music moves into a section that represents the hope and optimism felt by black Americans, but also the looming and inevitable attack from white supremacy. There is a moment where true freedom seems possible, established by a groove in the vibraphone and piano accompanied by liberated winds, but there is still a sense that history will repeat itself. In the final section it is made clear that this is a cycle proven to be exhausting, painful, deadly, and psychologically harmful.

Because of this toxic pattern, black Americans have struggled to experience the same privileges as their white counterparts. Acknowledging this pattern and putting an end to this abuse is a much needed and overdue form of reparations.

*–Allison Loggins-Hull*



# ABOUT THE GUEST ARTISTS

## Lucy Shelton, voice

Lucy Shelton, the only artist to receive the International Walter W. Naumburg Award twice, as a chamber musician and as a soloist, has performed repertoire from Bach to Boulez worldwide. She has premiered nearly 100 works written for her by composers such as Carter, Knussen, Ruders, Goehr, Schwantner, Albert, Wuorinen, and Grisey and participated in dramatic works such as Berio's *Passaggio* (with Ensemble InterContemporain), Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* (for Thames Television), and Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* (her BBC Proms debut). Lucy sang Boulez's *Le Visage Nuptial* under the composer's direction in Los Angeles, Chicago, London, and Paris and appeared in Vienna and Berlin singing Kurtag's *The Sayings of Peter Bornemisza* with pianist Sir András Schiff. She has sung Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with at least 20 different ensembles worldwide. Most recently at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in July 2021, Lucy made her grand opera debut as "The Teacher" in the premiere of Saariaho's opera *Innocence*. In the next two years she travels with this production to Helsinki, London, Amsterdam, San Francisco, and Adelaide. Lucy has attended festivals and sung with orchestras across the globe. Herself a student of Jan de Gaetani, she has taught at the Eastman School, Cleveland Institute, the New England Conservatory, and Tanglewood Music Center. In 2007 she joined the faculty of the unique Contemporary Performance Program at Manhattan School of Music.

## Alexa Smith (MM '10), Reader

Alexa Smith (she/her) is the Associate Vice President for Strategic Innovation and Special Initiatives at Manhattan School of Music where she oversees special projects for the Office of the President including MSM's Cultural Inclusion Initiative.

She is a recent alumna of the SphinxLEAD Program, a two-year professional empowerment program designed to evolve the landscape of arts leadership.

She holds degrees in voice from Manhattan School of Music and Roosevelt University and an MBA from Boston University. She has completed Inclusive Leader training with Jennifer Brown Consulting.

Previously, she was Director of Marketing at New York City Opera where she oversaw marketing and planning operations and created events for the Pride Series (Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain* and Iain Bell and Mark Campbell's World Premiere of *Stonewall*) and Opéra en Español series. She created

partnerships with the LGBT Community Center, the Mexican Consulate and Mexican Cultural Institute NY, the Stonewall at 50 Consortium, and the UCross Foundation, and a special feature on Bravo's *Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen*.

She serves as a Board member of New Camerata Opera, a member of the Artist Advisory Committee for Opera on Tap and Harlem Chamber Players, and an Ambassador for Tuwapende Watoto School and Vocational Center in Tanzania. She can be heard frequently on the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts as a panelist on the Opera Quiz Show and other segments.

In March 2023, Alexa Smith will become the inaugural Senior Director of Anti-racism, Equity, and Belonging at the Public Theater.

## **Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez, Conductor**

Esteemed conductor and pianist Dr. Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez is Artistic Director of Musica Viva NY and Director of Music at the historic Unitarian Church of All Souls in Manhattan. He is Artistic Director and co-founder of the New Orchestra of Washington and during its 40th anniversary season in 2016, Hernandez-Valdez was named the third Artistic Director of the Victoria Bach Festival in Texas. He has earned accolades from the *Washington Post* as a conductor “with the incisive clarity of someone born to the idiom,” as well as praise from the *New York Times* for leading “a stirring performance” of Brahms’s *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. He is featured in *El mundo en las manos/Creadores mexicanos en el extranjero (The World in Their Hands/Creative Mexicans Abroad)*, a book by the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs honoring Mexican nationals who are leading figures in diverse artistic fields. He is the recipient of a 2016 Shenandoah Conservatory Alumni of Excellence Award for his exemplary contribution to his profession, national level of prominence, and exceptional integrity. He resides in New York City.

Founded in 1977, Musica Viva NY was recently praised by the *New York Times* as “an excellent chorus.” Since taking the helm in 2015, Hernandez-Valdez has presented an exceptionally broad and innovative repertoire in each of the choir’s seasons, engaging and inspiring audiences with remarkable interpretations of familiar and new works, and exploring the acoustical capabilities of the historic sanctuary of All Souls Church and other venues on Manhattan’s Upper East Side.

As the Artistic Director and co-founder of the New Orchestra of Washington (NOW), a chamber orchestra that “has constituted itself in the forefront of this smaller-is-better movement” (*Washington Post*), Hernandez-Valdez has

been reimagining for the past ten years what have been the limited definitions of “classical music.” NOW’s innovative programming and creative approach to music performance continues to reshape and enrich the cultural landscape of the National Capital Region.

A passionate advocate of new music, Hernandez-Valdez has commissioned and premiered works by Joan Tower, Arturo Márquez, Joseph Turrin, Gilda Lyons, Seymour Bernstein, Viet Cuong, Juan Pablo Contreras, Elena Ruehr, Ramzi Aburedwan, Jorge Vidales, Mokale Koapeng, Trent Johnson, Javier Farias, Andrés Levell, Zachary Wadsworth, Martin Spruijt, Joel Friedman, and other notable composers.

Hernandez-Valdez’s guest conducting engagements include appearances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Lincoln Center in New York City, and the historic Degollado Theatre in Guadalajara, Mexico, where he has directed the Jalisco Philharmonic. As a pianist, Hernandez-Valdez performed for the 2013 Britten100 festival in New York City, organized by the Britten-Pears Foundation to honor the 100th anniversary of the titular composer’s birth. As a composer and conductor, he led the premiere of his own composition, *The Imaginary City*, a cantata inspired by the life of Ramzi Aburedwan, a violist who has opened schools throughout Palestine to teach music to children in refugee camps. He also arranged and premiered the chamber orchestra version of *A Song of Nature* by Seymour Bernstein. Bernstein, the subject of Ethan Hawke’s 2014 documentary film, *Seymour: An Introduction*, is one of Hernandez-Valdez’s most influential teachers and mentors.

# ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

The Contemporary Performance Program (CPP) is a two-year graduate degree program at the Manhattan School of Music. The students of CPP form the core of Tactus, MSM's premier contemporary ensemble. As members of Tactus, CPP students perform works of the 20th and 21st centuries, work closely with living composers, and present works by MSM faculty and students.

## Administration

**Margaret Kampmeier**, Artistic Director and Chair

**Matt Ward**, Manager of Percussion Operations and the Contemporary Performance Program

## Faculty

**David Adamcyk**, Contemporary Survey

**David Cossin**, Percussion

**Anthony de Mare**, Piano

**Monica Ellis**, Bassoon

**John Ferrari**, Percussion

**Susan Jolles**, Harp

**Margaret Kampmeier**, Piano

**David Krakauer**, Clarinet

**Curtis Macomber**, Violin

**Tara Helen O'Connor**, Flute

**Todd Reynolds**, Electronics

**John Pickford Richards**, Viola

**Brandon Ridenour**, Trumpet

**Erin Rogers**, Saxophone

**Lucy Shelton**, Voice

**Fred Sherry**, Cello

**James Austin Smith**, Oboe