



CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

**Margaret Kampmeier**, Artistic Director and Chair

# TACTUS

Contemporary Chamber Music

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2023 | 7:30 PM  
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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## PROGRAM

BOBBY GE

(b. 1996)

*Pell-Mell* (2021)

**Savannah Gentry**, flute

**Yu-Ting Cheng**, bass clarinet

INTI FIGGIS-VIZUETA

(b. 1993)

*linger* (2019, 2021 update)

**Adeline DeBella**, flute

**Grace Pressley**, alto saxophone

**Sam Friedman**, trumpet

GEORGE CRUMB

(1929–2022)

*Vox balaenae (Voice of the Whale)* (1971)

Vocalise (for the beginning of time)

Variations on Sea-Time (Sea Theme)

Var. I: Archeozoic

Var. II: Proterozoic

Var. III: Paleozoic

Var. IV: Mesozoic

Var. V: Cenozoic

Sea-Nocturne (for the end of time)

**Savannah Gentry**, flute

**Alan Hložek**, cello

**Nacho Ojeda**, piano

*Intermission*

GEORGE LEWIS

(b. 1952)

*Artificial Life* (2007)

**Yeji Pyun**, violin  
**Alan Hlozek**, cello  
**Adeline DeBella**, flute  
**Yu-Ting Cheng**, clarinet  
**Grace Pressley**, alto sax  
**Savannah Gentry**, flute  
**Sam Friedman**, trumpet  
**Nacho Ojeda**, piano

CARLOS SIMON

(b. 1986)

*be still and know* (2016)

**Yeji Pyun**, violin  
**Alan Hlozek**, cello  
**Nacho Ojeda**, piano

SAAD HADDAD

(b. 1992)

*Duetto* (2022)

**Adeline DeBella**, flute  
**Grace Pressley**, alto saxophone

GABRIELLA SMITH

(b. 1991)

*Tessellations* (2018)

**Adeline DeBella**, flute  
**Yu-Ting Cheng**, clarinet  
**Sam Friedman**, trumpet  
**Yeji Pyun**, violin  
**John Pickford Richards**, viola\*  
**Alan Hlozek**, cello

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Bobby Ge** *Pell-Mell*

The first half of 2021 proved to be surprisingly fast-paced—if not in locomotion (most of my time had still been spent locked in my room), then certainly in terms of news cycles and workload. For several months, I found myself fretting about what crazy event would trigger the next wave of headline-addled social media rants—riots, mass shootings, record temperatures, collapsing buildings—all while composing furiously, trying desperately to meet deadline after deadline. As each submission date began to feel less reasonable than the last, some of that frenzied, nervous activity began to creep into the music I was writing. I noticed that many of my pieces were becoming increasingly pulse-driven, filled with wild mixed meters and rapid modulations.

*Pell-Mell* continues that trend, collapsing so many months of frenetic energy into a five-minute-long mad dash. I wanted to try and compress my usual processes as compactly as possible, building the piece out of two ideas—an oscillating sixteenth note motif, and an off-kilter 4/4 and 3/4 rhythm. As the flute blazes through double-tongued barrages of notes over vicious bass clarinet multiphonics, the two motifs play against one another through constant stepwise modulations. The piece ultimately captures a mite of my mental state in its large-scale form: a continuous Shepard tone ascending to nowhere, perpetually heightening in tension while never quite breaking.

*Dedicated to Kamroton*

*Commissioned by the Society of Composers, Inc. for the 2021 National Student Conference*

– Bobby Ge

## **inti figgis-vizueta** *linger*

*linger* (2019) is the first in a series of works that combine freely notated music and inset poetic direction; it was commissioned by Kate Amrine for her album *This is My Letter to the World*.

– *inti figgis-vizueta*

## George Crumb

### *Vox balaenae*

*Vox balaenae*, or *Voice of the Whale*, was inspired by the 1969 recording of the humpback whale singing. This piece was originally intended to employ masks and lighting to dehumanize the projection of nature and amplify the instruments so the audience can hear the extended techniques used to mimic the whale sounds.

The opening, *Vocalise* (for the beginning of time), is a flute solo that incorporates a cadenza of singing into the flute to imitate whale songs; it ends with an *Also sprach Zarathustra* quote from *A Space Odyssey*.

The next movement is *Variations on Sea-Time* (Sea Theme). This movement consists of harmonics in the cello and an “aeolian harp” effect in the piano. The first variation is titled *Archeozoic* and refers to “the age of unicellular life” or bacteria—when oxygen was only in the water. The cello glides along the finger board to create the “seagull effect” and the pianist uses a chisel to glide along the piano strings. *Proterozoic* (Var. II) uses a paper clip in the piano and slow lines attempting to reach above to signify this crucial development of life when oxygen was found in the air and cellular life started to appear on land. The third variation, or *Paleozoic*, is a depiction of the oldest animals on earth— those of the sea. The alternating harmonic quintuplets, passed through all the instruments, depict the weaving motion of fish swimming through water. *Mesozoic* (Var. IV) is the age of complex life on land: the dinosaurs! The noble, broad melodic octaves played by the cello and flute are contrasted by the “jangling” glass rod placed in the piano’s counter melody. The final variation is *Cenozoic*, which represents the age after the extinction of the dinosaurs and the dominance of mammals, including humans. Crumb uses each instrument individually, representing the individualistic nature of human existence. This movement ends with a recollection of motifs from the beginning of time and ends with whistling, foreshadowing the end of time.

*Sea-Nocturne* (for the end of time) begins with a whistling duet between the flutist and the cellist while the pedal is down in the piano. This serene melody is based on the first three notes in the cello in the previous movement. This haunting ending gives the listener shimmery textures; a noble, soaring melodic duet between the flute and cello; and a gentle dying away until nothing exists.

– *Savannah Gentry*

## **George Lewis** ***Artificial Life***

*Artificial Life* (2007) is designed to realize a model of group improvisation as an emergent phenomenon based on negotiation and local intelligence. The work is comprised of two parts (either or both of which may be performed), consisting of a set of instructions represented graphically on a grid. The moment of execution and the kind of sounds and silences produced are chosen according to the improvisors' considered judgment unless an instruction indicates otherwise; structural components and sonic gestures are designed to proceed from the use of intuition and snap judgment, obviating any need on the part of the performers to articulate or impose global form or spurious teleologies. As with all improvisations, including our everyday-life human efforts, the performance is achieved through negotiation and consensus, and its success will be less a question of individual freedom than of the assumption of personal responsibility for the sonic environment. The work was created for the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra under a commission from the Scottish Arts Council and received its premiere in December 2007 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Glasgow.

– *George Lewis*

## **Carlos Simon** ***be still and know***

This piece was inspired by an interview with Oprah Winfrey, in which she was quoted: "I have felt the presence of God my whole life. Even when I didn't have a name for it, I could feel the voice bigger than myself speaking to me, and all of us have that same voice. Be still and know it. You can acknowledge it or not. You can worship it or not. You can praise it, you can ignore it, or you can know it. Know it. It's always there speaking to you and waiting for you to hear it in every move, in every decision." (Oprah Winfrey, May 23, 2011)

– *Carlos Simon*

## **Saad Haddad**

### ***Duetto***

In *Duetto*, I sought to create one “super-woodwind instrument” from the combination of flute and alto saxophone. This idea was inspired by a video I saw on YouTube of two violinists seemingly playing as if they were one player in Eugène Ysaÿe's Sonata for Two Violins. If I hadn't actually seen the video, I don't think I would have been able to tell there were two performers. Unlike most of my work thus far, this short work is mostly playful in nature, and meant to be a kind of game between the two woodwind instrumentalists.

– *Saad Haddad*

## **Gabriella Smith**

### ***Tessellations***

*Tessellations* (2018) was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition for Music. Smith develops this piece by layering several short motives. These motives fit together perfectly to form a Tessellation of sound, and often the source of each sound is unrecognizable. She cleverly expands the sound of the ensemble by using percussive elements of each instrument, ethereal vocalizations from the flutist, and "flutey sounds" produced from the trumpet's valves.

– *Adeline DeBella*

# 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