

# **MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

## *Thesis Compositions by MSM Composers*

**George Manahan** (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor  
with **Nicholas Bell, Alison Norris,**  
and **Saverio Alfieri** (MM '23), Conductors

**Reiko Fütting** (DMA '00), Dean of Academic Core  
and Head of Composition

**JT Kane**, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance



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*Funded in part by a grant from the New York City Tourism Foundation.*

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024 | 7:30 PM  
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

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## *Thesis Compositions* *by MSM Composers*

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor  
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### PROGRAM

Zijie Huang

*A Niente* (2023)

Saverio Alfieri, Conductor

Arthur Siyun Li

*enshrinement* (2024)

George Manahan, Conductor

Chongguang Guan

*Echoes of the Wilderness* (2023)

Dedicated to Dr. Stambaugh and Dr. Merryman

Nicholas Bell, Conductor

*Intermission*

**Cengxing Shi**

*Arctic Dreams* (2024)

**George Manahan**, Conductor

**Kenedea Lee**

Tenor Saxophone Concerto: *A Pilgrimage* (2023)

**Alison Norris**, Conductor

**Shahar Regev**

*Yellow Butterflies* (2023)

**George Manahan**, Conductor

# MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

## VIOLIN 1

**Eugenia Cho,**  
concertmaster  
*Ann Arbor, Michigan*

**Jackson Chang**  
*New Taipei City, Taiwan*

**Gyung Min Myung**  
*Anyang, South Korea*

**Kaya Gur**  
*The Hague, Netherlands*

**Cedar-Rose Newman**  
*Thirroul, Australia*

**Nini Giorgadze**  
*Kutaisi, Georgia*

**Minjoo Moon**  
*Gwangju, South Korea*

**Natsuko Kojima**  
*Inagi, Japan*

**Xuan Yao**  
*Changsha, China*

**Mina Kim**  
*Gimposi, South Korea*

**Arianna Behrendt**  
*Redwood City, California*

**Eugene Liu**  
*Clarksville, Maryland*

## VIOLIN 2

**Risa Hokamura,**  
principal  
*Kodaira, Japan*

**Dayeon Jang**  
*Jeonju, South Korea*

**Yeonsoo Jung**  
*Queens, New York*

**Shang-ting Chang**  
*Pingzhen, Taiwan*

**Jou Wen Liu**  
*Hsinchu Country, Taiwan*

**Bangjun Xia**  
*Astoria, New York*

**Selin Algoz**  
*New York, New York*

**Xenia Bergmann**  
*Murnau, Germany*

**Yuna Kashiwa**  
*Shanghai, China*

**Yulin Zhou**  
*Guangzhou, China*

**Alina Hernandez**  
*Temecula, California*

**Adryan Rojas**  
*Delaware, Ohio*

## VIOLA

**Kunbo Xu,** principal  
*Changsha, China*

**Se Lyin Hong**  
*New York, New York*

**Anna Huang**  
*Zhubei City, Taiwan*

**Candy Yang**  
*Taichung, Taiwan*

**Kyuwon Yoo**  
*Paju-Si, South Korea*

**Yuchen Tu**  
*Chongqing, China*

**Ariana Mascari**  
*Chicago, Illinois*

**En-hui Hsieh**  
*Kaohsiung City, Taiwan*

**Katya Eibozhenko**  
*Moscow, Russia*

**Yu Chieh Lin**  
*New Taipei City, Taiwan*

## CELLO

**Jiho Seo,** principal  
*Yongsan, South Korea*

**August Schwob**  
*Oak Park, Illinois*

**Kin Chen**  
*Kwai Tsing, Hong Kong*

**Italia Raimond Jones**  
*New York, New York*

**Ting-Yu Lin**  
*Hsinchu City, Taiwan*

**Chenyi Hu**  
*Baoding, China*

**Olivia Schulte**  
*Scottsdale, Arizona*

**Brandon Jo**  
*Englewood Cliffs,  
New Jersey*

**Kristy Liang**  
*Beijing, China*

**Tianbo Zhang**  
*Shijiazhuang, China*

## DOUBLE BASS

**Lauren Seery,** principal  
*Bethpage, New York*

**Chenhong Shi**  
*Lanzhou, China*

**Isaac Said***Adelaide, Australia***Aiden Johnson***Dacula, Georgia***Wenjie Liao***Chongqing, China***Peter Wiseman***Austin, Texas***FLUTE****Lucy Rubin***Roswell, Georgia***Minseo Lee***Goyang, South Korea***OBOE****Hsiao-ling Ting***Kaohsiung, Taiwan***Janice Wu***Arcadia, California***Ellen Gruber***Cortlandt Manor,  
New York***CLARINET****Jeongmin Hong***Goyang, South Korea***Tingrui Zhang***Taiyuan, China***BASSOON****Chaoyang Jing***Boston, Massachusetts***Austin Wegener***Rancho Santa Margarita,  
California***HORN****Daniel Jansen***Aspen, Colorado***Ben Hommowun***St. Charles, Illinois***TRUMPET****Sam Atlas***Westport, Connecticut***Tiago Gomes Linck***Porto Alegre, Brazil***Andrew Conover***Bridgewater, New Jersey***TROMBONE****Malik Hamza***Frisco, Texas***Jacob Ogbu***Frisco, Texas***BASS TROMBONE****Benjamin****McLaughlin***West Milford, New Jersey***TUBA****Fumiya Miyata***Tsurumi, Japan***TIMPANI****Liam McDonald***Seaford, New York***PERCUSSION****Austin Cantrell***Charlotte, North Carolina***Glenn Choe***Cedar Park, Texas***Mischa Gerbrecht***Vancouver, Canada***HARP****Esther Chung***New York, New York***KEYBOARD****Seth Schultheis***Baltimore, Maryland***Shapu Mou***New York, New York***Olivia Zhao***Hobhot, China***SAXOPHONE****Jaehyuk Lee***Gyeonggi, South Korea***Zachary Kern,***saxophone  
Cypress, California***Steve Ling***Long Island City, New York*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## *A Niente* (2023)

### **Zijie Huang**

The title of this piece holds no particular significance, as I often compose the music before contemplating a name. Please enjoy the music.

## *ensbrinement* (2024)

### **Arthur Siyun Li**

This work is an archive of disappearance. It sounds out the communal disappearances of culture, protest, and autonomy; the redrawing of maps; the stifling of livelihoods. It is based on a popular song from Hong Kong. It is dedicated to my friends in that city.

## *Echoes of the Wilderness* (2023)

### **Chongguang Guan**

Last summer, the composer traveled to Tokyo and Osaka. It was the time when a long-awaited sequel to the game, *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom*, was released. This piece was inspired by this, using various instrumentation to give each section a different musical atmosphere. The hazy timbre used at the beginning of the piece and the relatively dry timbre until the end also imply the transformation and growth of the main character in the game and the challenges.

## *Arctic Dreams* (2024)

### **Cengxing Shi**

I have yet to set foot in the Arctic, but I envision that one day, my life's journey will carry me to that distant realm.

Allow me, for now, to indulge in a musical reverie: the dance of the Northern Lights, the thrill of hunting game, and the first gentle ray of sunlight piercing through the frigid winds. . .

## **Tenor Saxophone Concerto: *A Pilgrimage* (2023)**

### **Kenedea Lee**

This piece is a reflection of my own personal journey.

I embrace the belief that I occupy a space within both the classical and jazz idioms. I have discovered a profound sense of freedom within this intersection.

This piece is about freedom.

## ***Yellow Butterflies* (2023)**

### **Shahar Regev**

This composition stands as a tribute to the life of my grandfather, Uri Weinberg, encompassing significant milestones from his journey interwoven with influences drawn from specific classical music pieces mentioned in his diaries.

Uri's origins trace back to Germany, where an early separation from his parents, tragically never reunited, marked the onset of his arduous biography. Against the backdrop of the ascendant Nazi regime, he aligned himself with the Youth Aliyah, undertaking a solitary passage to Israel over a boat. Later, he bravely returned to Europe and served with the Jewish brigade during World War II. After the war ended, he visited his childhood house, finding an aged wallpaper depicting yellow butterflies amidst a closet where his bedroom used to be, which provided a symbolic vestige to the chronicles of adversity and joy. He brought the wallpaper back to Israel as an elegantly captured reminiscence.

My interaction with my grandfather was short due to his passing when I was nine. Still, they linger as treasured memories, particularly our shared passion for art and music. Subsequent revelations regarding his remarkable life, filled with formidable choices from early adversities to later challenges, underscore the journey toward safety and familial foundation.

The central motif in this piece, the “butterflies,” stands as the thematic cornerstone from its inception. Additionally, the composition embraces an acoustic-spatial framework, orchestrating seamless transitions across different orchestra sections. The piece includes a march-like theme, symbolizing the strength of youth and the idea of unification. In addition, a folklore-style tune, accompanied by metallic and industrial-like sounds, appears in the center of the piece, resembling the atmosphere of agricultural work in the fields. At the end of the piece, the sounds gradually come from the back into the front and then fade away employing nuanced left-right panning to craft an immersive auditory experience.



# ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

## Zijie Huang

Zijie Huang is a second-year composition student. His music does not deliberately include stories, politics, or philosophy; instead, it is an exploration of sound itself.

## Arthur Siyun Li

Arthur Siyun Li is a Hong Kong-Canadian composer and pianist based in New York. A student of pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine and composer and soprano Susan Botti, Li is pursuing concurrent Master of Music degrees at Manhattan School of Music. He has received mentorship from pianists Dang Thai Son and Anthony de Mare and from composers Chen Yi and Chinary Ung.

Li's recent compositional work centres around the sounding of fracture and disappearance in various guises. Of special intertextual interest are Cantopop and haiku. As the winner of the Tactus Commission Prize, his new work, *like plucked strings* /, was commissioned and performed by MSM's resident contemporary ensemble, Tactus, in December 2023.

Li is an active performer and exponent of new music. As the winner of the Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition at MSM, he made his concerto debut in October 2023 with MSM's OPUS130 Orchestra and conductor David Chan performing Alfred Schnittke's Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra. Other recent performance highlights include selections from John Cage's Sonatas and Interludes for prepared piano at National Sawdust; solo and chamber performances of new works at the Tenri Cultural Institute and MSM's Neidorff-Karpati Hall with the BeComEnsemble; solo and two-piano works of Chin, Kondo, and Lutosławski for Mostly Modern Festival at Zankel Hall; the Scotia Festival of Music's Highlight Concerts at Dalhousie Arts Center; and City Lyric Opera's U.S. premiere of Elizabeth Raum's chamber opera *The Garden of Alice*.

## **Chongguang Guan**

Chongguang Guan is a composer, pianist, and electronic music producer who graduated from the Music Middle School Affiliated to Shanghai Conservatory of Music where he studied composition with Weihao Qiang.

He is interested in discovering dream-like sound, and musical atmosphere. His timbral approach is unique—powerful, mysterious, majestic, etc.—and was well received in Elinor Armer’s master class (2015 May) and the Winter Master Class Program (2016) run by UCLA’s music department. His pieces have not only been influenced by various music genres, but also by his rich variety of experiences as a performer—he performed in the 2018 Electric Daisy Carnival Shanghai as a Guest DJ, and he also performed at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music as a jazz pianist in 2016.

Currently he is studying composition at the Manhattan School of Music with Dr. J. Mark Stambaugh for his Bachelor's degree and studied with Dr. Marjorie Merryman before. His chamber music, electronic music, and experimental music, as well as contemporary and orchestral music, have premiered at MSM's Miller Hall, Alan M. and Joan Taub Ades Performance Space, Greenfield Hall, and Neidorff-Karpati Hall in New York.

## **Cengxing Shi**

Chinese composer Cengxing Shi is interested in exploring dream-like musical atmospheres. She is first prize winner of the second YinZhong Prize International Composition Competition in 2016, and winner of the Camerata Nova Commission Prize in 2023. She began studying composition at the age of 10, and was admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Affiliated School in 2014.

Cengxing was joined the Winter Master Class Program (2016) held by UCLA’s music department and obtained Certificate of Outstanding Exchange Student. She was invited by Shanghai Hongkou Official Adult Chorus as composer, musical instructor, and pianist in 2018. She was also admitted to the L.A. Music Industry Summer Academy program in 2022 and collaborated with composer and Grammy-nominee Ariel Chobaz and prominent producer Essay Jones at Paramount Music Studio. Her compositions have premiered in New York, Los Angeles, and China.

Cengxing studied with Marjorie Merryman and is currently pursuing her degree in composition with Dr. J. Mark Stambaugh at Manhattan School of Music. She has received the Deolus Husband Scholarship for Composition for four consecutive years, beginning in 2020.

## **Kenedea Lee**

Kenedea Lee is a New York based pianist and composer. She graduated from UCLA in 2021 with a Bachelor's degree in Ethnomusicology. She currently studies with Susan Botti at Manhattan School of Music and will receive her Master of Music in Spring 2024.

## **Shahar Regev**

Shahar Regev is an interdisciplinary composer based in New York City. Her compositions range from solo, small, and large chamber ensembles to orchestral, vocal, and choral music; arrangements; and music for theater. Regev is passionate about the encounter of ensembles with audiences through live performances. Her writing is often based on horizontal and melodic lines while forming a direct, expressive, and accessible contemporary voice. Many of her works focus on social subjects such as violence against women, indifference, and environmental changes.

Her works include various styles of orchestrations and were performed by ensembles and orchestras worldwide. Recent achievements include the honorable Acum 2022 Award for her piece *Black Bird* for Symphony Orchestra and mezzo-soprano, as well as the Sandra Fivecoat Memorial Composition Contest Award. She is a recipient of the AAUW grant for Doctoral Studies (2023), the Felix Salzer Techniques of Music Award (2021), the Jerusalem Institute of Contemporary Music Grant (2021), and The Hebrew Free Loan Society Scholarship (2019–22).

Besides her work as a composer, Regev regularly performs as a singer and cellist in Israeli folklore ensembles. Regev teaches in several educational projects and works with music foundations. Since 2023, Shahar is the conductor of HaZamir Manhattan Choir.

Regev is currently a Doctoral of Musical Arts candidate at Manhattan School of Music under the guidance of Susan Botti, Dr. J. Mark Stambaugh, and Dr. Reiko Fueting.

# ABOUT THE CONDUCTORS

## **George Manahan** (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

George Manahan is in his 13th season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the American Composers Orchestra. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for 14 seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for 12 seasons. Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival and has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico). His many appearances on television include productions of *La bohème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. The Live from Lincoln Center telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tehillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*.

## **Nicholas Bell, Conductor**

Nicholas Bell, a conductor and trombonist from Kansas City, Missouri, is currently pursuing a Master's degree in orchestral conducting at Manhattan School of Music. Previously Artistic Director of Classical Revolution Kansas City and Associate Conductor of Symphony of Northwest Arkansas, he has also held the positions of Conductor in Residence of the Taneycomo Festival Orchestra, Orchestra Director for Harmony Project KC, and Conductor at Black House New Music Collective.

Mr. Bell received his undergraduate degree in trombone performance from the University of Missouri–Kansas City, with additional studies in orchestral conducting at the Peabody Conservatory. His primary conducting teachers are George Manahan and Marin Alsop.

## **Alison Norris, Conductor**

Alison Norris is a current orchestral conducting student in the Professional Studies program at Manhattan School of Music, where they study under Maestro George Manahan. Alison serves as cover conductor for the MSM Symphony Orchestra, working alongside conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Daniela Candillari, Matthias Pintscher, and David Chan.

Before moving to New York, Alison served as cover conductor and score reader for several concert series with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, including the Madison Ballet's production of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* and WCO's Concerts on the Square. During their Master's program at University of Wisconsin–Madison, Alison was formally awarded a full scholarship and two TA positions: conductor for the All-University Strings Orchestras program and assistant conductor for the UW Symphony Orchestra. Alison also helped to rebuild the UWSMPH Medical Sciences Orchestra as co-conductor after the ensemble was disbanded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alison got their start in conducting in 2018 when they founded a wind ensemble as an undergraduate engineering student. Following their orchestral conducting debut with the Valparaiso University Symphony Orchestra, Alison was awarded an assistantship with the school upon graduation. Since then, Alison has conducted across China—from Beijing to Xi'an and Guangzhou—premiering to Chinese audiences Sky Macklay's *All About Alice* and the rediscovered Joseph Joachim violin concerto, *Hungarian Fantasy*, with violin soloist and esteemed musicologist Dr. Katharina Uhde.

## **Saverio Alfieri** (MM '23), Conductor

Saverio Alfieri was born in Milan, Italy, and began his musical studies at the age of 6. He attended the precollege at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Milan where he studied classical piano with Silvia Limongelli and received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in classical piano with highest honors at the Conservatorio Antonio Vivaldi in Alessandria, where he studied with Silvia Leggio.

Alfieri has distinguished himself in many competitions in Italy and in New York. He won the second prize at the Crescendo International Competition and consequently performed at Carnegie Hall in February 2018. In 2019, he was awarded the Ghislieri prize as the best graduate student at the Conservatorio Antonio Vivaldi. He has participated in several concerts in Milan, Genoa, Bologna, Palermo, Rome, Modane, and Naples; in 2019, he performed in the prestigious Museidisera review at the Vatican Museum.

Alfieri continues his education by participating in master classes with musicians such as Paul Mägi, Giuseppe Andaloro, Riccardo Muti, George Manahan, Olaf John Laneri, Epifanio Comis, Jeffrey Cohen, Beatrice Rana, Peter Winograd, Eugene Sirotkine, Catherine Malfitano, Giovanni Bellucci, Giuseppe Mentuccia at the Juilliard School, and Arnaud Sussmann with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

He graduated in May 2023 with a Master's degree in classical piano at Manhattan School of Music under the guidance of Jeffrey Cohen. He is currently pursuing his Master's degree in classical orchestral conducting at MSM under the guidance of George Manahan.

# 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 1,000 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 Division is a highly competitive and professionally oriented Saturday music program, dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 5 to 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 [giving.msmnyc.edu](https://giving.msmnyc.edu)

## 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.



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School of Music