



CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

TACTUS

Erin Rogers and **Matt Ward** (BM '98), Co-Artistic
and Administrative Advisors

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



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PROGRAM

WESLEY THOMPSON
(b. 1998)

Solar Sonata, Voyager, Op. 33 (2024)
Tactus 2023 Commission Prize Winner

Andrea Ábel, piccolo/flute
Adeline DeBella, flute/alto flute
Gabe Henkin, B-flat clarinet/bass clarinet
Grace Pressley, alto saxophone
Steph Tamas, baritone saxophone
Sam Friedman, trumpet
Yeji Pyun, violin
Cole Habekost, violin
Ruben Høgh, piano

STEFAN WOLPE
(1902–1972)

Quartet (1950–1954)
I. *Lento*
II. *Con moto*

Steph Tamas, tenor saxophone
Sam Friedman, trumpet
Zoe Beyler, percussion
Ruben Høgh, piano

VIVIAN FUNG
(b. 1975)

Corona Morphs (2020)
Adeline DeBella, flute
Gabe Henkin, clarinet
Yeji Pyun, violin
Clara Cho, cello
Ruben Høgh, piano
Hwanee Pak, percussion

Intermission

ANTHONY BRAXTON

(b. 1945)

Composition No. 142 (1988)

Andrea Ábel, piccolo/flute

Grace Pressley, alto saxophone

Steph Tamas, baritone saxophone

Sam Friedman, trumpet

Evan Dexter, trombone

Ben Halle, bass

Kabelo Mokhatla, drums

KATE GENTILE

(b. 1986)

bio me ii (2021)

Adeline DeBella, flute

Gabe Henkin, B-flat clarinet/bass clarinet

Austin Wegener, bassoon

Cole Habekost, violin

Yi-Hsiang Jack Huang, vibes/percussion

Erika Dohi (BM '10, MM '12), piano*

Steven Crammer (MM '20), drums*

**Guest Artist*

PROGRAM NOTES

Solar Sonata, Voyager, Op. 33 Wesley Thompson

During the height of the space race in the 1960s and 70s, NASA was presented with a rare opportunity that only occurs once every 175 years: the outer planets had aligned in such a way that a spacecraft could use their gravity to slingshot between each planet in a single trip. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to finally visit the largest and most distant members of our solar system, the Voyager 1 and 2 space probes were launched in 1977 and flew by Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, taking plenty of iconic pictures of the gas giants and their moons along the way.

With their primary mission complete, the two Voyager probes embarked on a new, far more uncertain path: they were to leave the solar system and cross into interstellar space. And in 2012, they were successful, with Voyager 1 cementing its status as the most distant manmade object from Earth. This monumental moment in human scientific advancement led me to ponder what it truly means to “leave” our solar system, and what it would be like for any human to undergo such a “voyage.” Thus, the *Solar Sonata* was born: a dramatized musical account of the one-way passage into the endless void between the stars. For our fictional astronaut, the journey is quite exciting and filled with many cosmic wonders: the dark, frozen worlds of the Kuiper Belt, the termination shock that marks the end of our sun’s energetic influence, and the interstellar medium itself. But for the Voyager probes, their signal growing weaker and more distant by the day, the reality is unfathomably cold, empty, and lonely. Yet forever they sail on into the infinite.

–Wesley Thompson

Quartet Stefan Wolpe

Written at Black Mountain College, the Quartet for Saxophone, Trumpet, Percussion and Piano is one of Wolpe’s most frequently performed works. Wolpe wrote about how he would juxtapose the most poetic musical ideas with the most prosaic. In notes for a 2000 recording of the Quartet, Art Lange wrote that the fascinating character of the Quartet was shaped by a similarly wide range of factors: “memories of Weill-derived Berlin theater pit bands;” Webern’s Quartet for clarinet, tenor saxophone, piano, and violin; the compositional followup of jazz composer John Carisi to studying with Wolpe (!); and “the limited personnel on hand at musician-deprived Black Mountain.”

–Wolpe Society

Corona Morphs **Vivian Fung**

Corona Morphs is a 15-minute work for chamber ensemble that was commissioned by Vancouver's Standing Wave ensemble. I was in the middle of writing a very different piece when the pandemic shutdown began in March 2020, and I decided to change course with its composition—it became an encapsulation of the various emotions I had at the time of the shutdown, sometimes conflicting, from trepidation to raucous confusion, anger, and frustration. The product is a fast-paced work that constantly evolves or "morphs" from one scene to another without a feeling of resolution or peace until the end. This piece was intended to be accompanied by visuals that reflected the process of constant transition. It is a highly charged and virtuosic piece for all the players.

–Vivian Fung

Composition No. 142 **Anthony Braxton**

Anthony Braxton's output as both a composer and performer is staggering. As of 2020, there were four hundred and twenty three compositions listed in his catalog of works and more than one hundred commercial recordings featuring Braxton himself. This proliferation is by design - all of his music is meant to interconnect and bring the agency of the performers into play - a phenomenon aptly described by Carl Testa as "a system of possibilities." *Composition No. 142* (1988) was written during a period of consistent touring for Braxton. It premiered on October 8, 1988 at the 6th Festival International De Musique Actuelle De Victoriaville (Quebec, Canada). It is written *senza misura* with an open middle and end—an invitation to explore Braxton's ethos of *play*—in both character and, of course, reliance upon the creative instincts of the performers.

–Erica Dicker

b i o m e i . i **Kate Gentile**

b i o m e i . i was commissioned by International Contemporary Ensemble, with lead support from the Jerome Foundation through the Ensemble's 2020–2021 Artist-in-Residence program. *b i o m e i . i* premiered on May 26, 2022 at Roulette Intermedium, as part of a co-production with Roulette Intermedium and International Contemporary Ensemble.

–Kate Gentile

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

Erin Rogers, Co-Artistic & Administrative Advisor

Matt Ward, Co-Artistic & Administrative Advisor

Faculty

Ashkan Behzadi,
contemporary history survey

Gregg August, bass

David Cossin, percussion

Anthony de Mare, piano

Monica Ellis, bassoon

Oren Fader, guitar

John Ferrari, percussion

Susan Jolles, harp

Margaret Kampmeier, piano

David Krakauer, clarinet

Curtis Macomber, violin

Tara Helen O'Connor, flute

John Pickford-Richards, viola

Todd Reynolds, electronics

Brandon Ridenour, trumpet

Erin Rogers, saxophone

Lucy Shelton, voice

Fred Sherry, cello

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 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.

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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.

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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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