

MManhattan
School of Music

MASTER CLASS

The Stravinsky
Project:
ZODIAC TRIO

Kliment Krylovskiy, clarinet

Vanessa Mollard, violin

Riko Higuma, piano

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025 | 2 PM
WILLIAM R. AND IRENE D. MILLER RECITAL HALL

This year's performance season has been inspired by a unifying theme: *Humanity in Harmony: Rituals, Resistance, and Resilience*. We hope during this election year, the biggest in human history with over half the world's population having the opportunity to vote in 72 countries, that this theme reflects the power of the arts to unite us even in moments of discord and differences. The collective experience of collaboration – creating together – reminds us that even in our differences we can find common ground, stand up to tyranny and oppression, and elevate our work as artists to fulfill the hope and promise of a better tomorrow.

James Gandre, President

Joyce Griggs, Executive Vice President and Provost

Faculty and Administration of the Artistic Planning Committee



**Council on
the Arts**

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The Stravinsky Project: **ZODIAC TRIO**

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PROGRAM

SHOUYE HUANG
(MM '25)

Melody of Night (2025)

ALEXA LETOURNEAU
(DMA '29)

The Eleventh Pages (2025)

This residency is made possible by the support of the Fondation Igor Stravinsky.

The culmination of a week-long workshop focused on Igor Stravinsky's *A Soldier's Tale*, the trio will perform works by MSM composition students inspired by Stravinsky's masterpiece.

ABOUT THE ZODIAC TRIO

One of today's premier clarinet-violin-piano ensembles, the **Zodiac Trio** is known for presenting masterpieces for their unconventional instrumentation alongside hidden gems, arrangements, and the occasional duo or solo in a concert experience marked by exceptional gusto, virtuosity, and energy.

The Zodiac Trio's story begins in New York in 2006 when three young musicians from the Manhattan School of Music decided to join forces in an unconventional ensemble and spearhead a career dedicated to the clarinet-violin-piano repertoire. The Zodiac Trio was officially launched with a concert at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City and introduced to classical music listeners by WQXR's *Young Artist Showcase*. Understanding that extraordinary results require extraordinary efforts, one year after its founding, the newly minted Zodiac Trio moved to Paris to attend the Paris Conservatory under the guidance of the Ysaye Quartet and their unique chamber music program—becoming the first American group and first ensemble with a wind instrument to be accepted into the program.

Their formative years in Paris were marked by victories on the international chamber music circuit, winning prizes from the Cziffra Foundation, the FNAPEC Chamber Music Competition, the International Carlo Saliva Competition, the International Chamber Music Competition Duchi D'Acquaviva, the International Chamber Music Competition Val Tidone, as well as the Yellow Springs Chamber Music Competition, among others. In 2008, the London-based *MUSO Magazine* took notice and highlighted the ensemble in a two-page feature.

Today, the Zodiac Trio enjoys an international concert schedule that consistently spans three continents and is recognized by many as one of the foremost clarinet-violin-piano ensembles performing today. Since its formation, the Zodiac Trio has achieved a level of recognition on the international chamber music stage rarely bestowed upon an ensemble of such unconventional instrumentation.

The Zodiac Trio's extensive touring schedule has brought it to many premier international venues such as the Ottawa Chamberfest, Festival Radio France Montpellier, International Colmar Festival, Beijing Performing Arts Center, Izumi Hall in Japan, and Lincoln Center in New York. The trio's live performances have been broadcast by France 3 Television, Radio Classique, Beijing's CCTV News, Canada's CBC Radio and Television, NBC, New York's WQXR and WNYC, Chicago's WFMT, Boston's WGBH, Italy's RAI, and Radio France in Paris.

Over the years, the Zodiac Trio has garnered wide critical acclaim for their unyielding passion for the clarinet-violin-piano instrumentation, their unwavering dedication to perfection, and their joy in sharing their love for chamber music with audiences. The group has been praised for their “impeccable technique” (*Fanfare Magazine*), “remarkable musicality of rare intensity” (*La Tribune*, France), “seemingly effortless ease” (*San Angelo Standard-Times*), “truly exceptional and sublime talent” (*Nice-Matin*, France), and was declared by the French newspaper *La Marseillaise* as “one of the best chamber ensembles of its generation.”

Since their first touring season nearly two decades ago, the Zodiac Trio has given close to 500 concerts, performing in nearly 40 countries. In addition to performing, the ensemble has been invited to present masterclasses and clinics at numerous institutions. Given its novel instrumentation, the Zodiac Trio has championed new music since its debut concert, which featured the world premiere of a work written for the newly formed group.

The Zodiac Trio released its first album in 2007, with works by Khachaturian, Marcus Paus, and Paul Schoenfield. Their 2015 album, *Dreamtime*, featured three works written for the ensemble and received accolades from the new music community. The Zodiac Trio’s latest album, *The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise*, features music by Peter Schickele, George Gershwin, Arturo Márquez, and a special tribute to Benny Goodman, with arrangements of famous jazz standards by French jazz pianist and arranger Jean-Marc Brisson. The album is scheduled for release in February 2025.

In 2013, seeking to incorporate pedagogy into their mission, the Zodiac Trio founded the Zodiac Music Academy & Festival, an international chamber music academy and festival in the South of France. The Zodiac Trio is represented exclusively by Latitude 45 Arts.

PROGRAM NOTES

Melody of Night

Shouye Huang

Melody of Night is a trio written for B-flat clarinet, violin, and piano. It is inspired by the works of Stravinsky. The music in this adaptation reflects only a part of the original, and the current version doesn't represent the entire scope of the original composition. I have worked with the themes I found most compelling and incorporated some of my harmonic ideas, such as polytonality, pentatonic modes, and jazz-inspired melodies. This short piece is more like a movement, and after this, I plan to write several short pieces, continuing to explore the interesting aspects of Stravinsky's works while adding more of my style.

The Eleventh Pages

Alexa Letourneau

The Eleventh Pages is a musical exploration of the hidden labors and unseen efforts that underpin creative life. It is an ode to those "extra" pages: the eleventh page of a ten-page proposal, unread by the busy selection committee, or the composition deemed too challenging for a brief workshop and left unperformed. The piece meditates on the paradox that constantly striving for "more" usually does not yield "better;" Instead, the relentless pursuit of perfection leads to burnout and can even inflict harm on those nearest to us, something that I have struggled to fully internalize in my own life. *The Eleventh Pages* is built around a series of interwoven numerical motifs based on the numbers 5, 3, and 553 that serve as both structural guides and symbolic nods to the multifaceted nature of creative endeavors. 5 and 3 are both prime numbers, embodying a sense of simplicity, and while 553 "feels" like it should also be prime, it is, in fact, 7×79 . This "hidden complexity" is, therefore, a symbol of the unrecognized effort that this piece is about.

In the central movement, the number 553 takes on a role that is unusual in "number-based compositions." Here, I found motivic building blocks in excerpts from various composers' works catalogued under "553"—including Orlando di Lasso, J.S. Bach, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Czerny, Mozart, and Schubert—creating a mosaic of historical voices. Some of these pieces, such as the Bach and Czerny, are pieces that are still commonly performed and studied, while others are works that are almost entirely forgotten. Additionally, quotations from the *Tango-Valse-Rag* movement of Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* are interwoven throughout the piece. This dialogue with Stravinsky's work not only pays homage to his

landmark composition but also highlights elements of the movement that aren't often noticed or considered of central importance, once again refocusing the attention on the "forgotten" elements of the music. At its core, *The Eleventh Pages* is a meditation on both the value of restraint and the hidden beauty of that which often goes unsung. It invites performers and listeners to consider the unseen effort behind every creative act and to appreciate the quiet power of those labors that, though unacknowledged, shape our artistic landscape.

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

Shouye Huang

I am Shouye Huang from China. I started learning piano at the age of five and began exploring Classical Composition in high school. I completed my undergraduate studies at Tianjin Conservatory of Music, and I am currently pursuing my master's degree at Manhattan School of Music. I have been dedicated to studying composition and am also very interested in electronic music and film scoring. My creative style is diverse, and I enjoy drawing inspiration from all aspects of life. While building a foundation in composition theory, I also participated in film scoring and orchestration during my undergraduate years, creating music for multimedia videos. The projects I contributed to were showcased in 2021-2022. Outside of my studies, I also participated in an A Cappella choir, where I performed in 2020 and received a campus award. Beyond music, I am passionate about the Chinese Go, and I achieved 4th Dan in Go during my first year of middle school, with a total of five Dan ranks.

Alexa Letourneau

New York-based creative Alexa Letourneau (b. 1998) is a composer, flutist, singer, researcher, electronic musician, and passionate educator. An Ohio native, Alexa began playing the flute at eight years old. Within weeks, she was taping five pens together to draw a staff on which to begin composing. At present, her works are focused on explorations of shared identity, through compositions that are equal parts intense, contemplative, and whimsical. Alexa is a founding member of Mosaic Composers Collective and Aglet Ensemble; a member of C4: The Choral Composer/Conductor Collective, Transcend Community Chorale, and The New York Chamber Choir; the creator of the podcast Classical Schmassical: the anti-Classical classical music podcast; and an active freelancer, teaching private lessons in flute, music theory, and composition, and frequently gigging as a performer. She is also a current doctoral student at Manhattan School of Music. Alexa is not only a musician, however; she spends her free time developing experimental recipes, writing poetry, constructing increasingly elaborate science fiction cosplays, and cross-stitching.