

FACULTY RECITAL

Jessica Meyer, viola

With guest artists

**Erin Reppenhagen, mezzo-soprano
(MM '19)**

Austin Philemon, piano (MM '19)

Chloé Kiffer, violin (MM '14, PS '15)

Jing Yang, piano (BM '10, DMA '15)

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025 | 7:30 PM
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

JESSICA MEYER
(b. 1974)

Works for Viola & Loop Pedal
Source of Joy
Hello

JESSICA MEYER

On fire...no, after you (for mezzo, viola, and piano)
Poetry by Jennifer Beattie
I. On fire..
II. No
III. After You

JESSICA MEYER

Only a Beginning (for violin and viola)

JESSICA MEYER

with a gift for burning (for mezzo, viola, and piano)

Intermission

PAUL HINDEMITH
(1895 – 1963)

Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4

JESSICA MEYER

Delta Sunrise (for solo viola)

JESSICA MEYER

Swerve (for viola and loop pedal)

PROGRAM NOTES

On fire...no, after you for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano

Poet/mezzo Jennifer Beattie and I met at the Chamber Music America Conference in 2017 and talked about working together. Time passed, and then by happenstance, I bumped into her while performing in another state. We knew we had to make time to chat, and after reading her poetry I definitely knew that a collaboration needed to happen. Her words are emotionally direct, just like the music I write – which is perfect for the narrative I wanted to create by putting these three poems in a sequence. It is about that moment when you realize you have fallen in love and that breathless-passionate-yet-anxiously-fragile feeling that can overwhelm you in the early stages of such a relationship.

I have been carrying these three poems around for a while now, so I am thrilled to have this commission made possible by BMI and Concert Artists Guild to bring these words to life, especially in the hands of fellow violist Jordan Bak. This piece is dedicated to the mutual friend who introduced Jennifer and me – pianist Adam Marks. He died unexpectedly in his sleep, leaving behind his loving husband and a community of colleagues who sorely miss his spirit. Life is short, and love should always win.

Only a beginning for violin and viola

“Only a beginning” was inspired by words and music I interacted with during the Summer of 2015. The title comes from Indira Ghandi’s quote: “Martyrdom does not end something, it is only a beginning.” I happened to stumble upon this quote after a week of performing Poulenc’s “Dialogues of the Carmelites” at Caramoor and a chance encounter of hearing a friend sing the “In Paradisum” of the standard Catholic Funeral mass. With all of these events coinciding, I could not help but reflect on what sacrifice means – what we think it means, and how it actually plays out in everyday life. We may sacrifice things for God, our spouse, our children, our family, our friends, sometimes even for people we don’t even know. This piece explores what can happen to us emotionally in this act of giving, and what we ultimately learn about ourselves in the process.

***“with a gift for burning”* for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano**

When I first read these poems by Adrienne Rich a few years ago, I was immediately struck by the vivid imagery she creates, however there were some things I didn't quite understand yet. This sometimes happens with poetry I set, where the meaning of the text and how it relates to my own life only becomes illuminated at the time I start writing the piece. In this case, all started to make sense after I found out about Rich's history (and legacy) as a woman who was married to a man for a great stretch of her life, emerged from mid-century housewife oppression while coming out as gay, then lived the rest of her life unapologetically as a person and as an artist.

The first song is a section of a much longer poem, which I felt needed a heavy dose of drama. Her thoughts on how randomly love can happen, all while negotiating the forces that may be “ranging” within ourselves and against ourselves via societal expectations, resonated with me very much. The second poem, “Song,” is a beautiful set of vignettes capturing moments that may seem lonely at the outset, until one realizes that the independence shown here might actually be desired— and deeply needed.

These songs are some of my favorite compositions to date, and I deeply thank the Brooklyn Art Song Society, Michael Brofman, and Sarah Nelson Craft for this opportunity.

TEXT AND LYRICS

On fire...no, after you

Jessica Meyer

I. on fire

i am on fire.
and I've decided to be very calm about it
after all, burning is one way to go—
i hold you in the space of other worlds
a radio signal going on and on
and on
love falls around us
the unruly embers of a windblown campfire

II. no

when you say no
i fall down this long dark well
a discarded instrument with strings still gently vibrating
but i too mean what i say
and what i say is that life is rushing by us so fast
so fast that we are already dead.
and since we are already dead
it follows
that we don't have to feel like it's a risk
to burn in the light

III. after you

it wasn't just that one time
it was every time
it was that and no other
it was buzz and snap,
crackle, fly, fall.
afterward turning inward
broken open
resolving
resolved
it felt
like
itself. grasping. broken
open

—Poetry by Jennifer Beattie

***“with a gift for burning” for mezzo-soprano, viola,
and piano***

Jessica Meyer

I. within us and against us

No one's fated or doomed to love anyone.
The accidents happen, we're not heroines,
they happen in our lives like car crashes,
books that change us, neighborhoods we move into and come to love.
Tristan und Isolde is scarcely the story,
women at least should know the difference
between love and death. No poison cup,
no penance. Merely a notion that the tape-recorder
should have caught some ghost of us: that the tape-recorder
not merely played but should have listened to us,
and could instruct those after us: this we were,
this is how we tried to love,
and these are the forces they had ranged against us,
and these are the forces we had ranged within us,
within us and against us, against us and within us.

—Poem 17 from “21 Love Poems” by Adrienne Rich

II. if

You're wondering if I'm lonely:
OK then, yes, I'm lonely
as a plane rides lonely and level
on its radio beam, aiming
across the Rockies
for the blue-strung aisles
of an airfield on the ocean

You want to ask, am I lonely?
Well, of course, lonely
as a woman driving across country
day after day, leaving behind
mile after mile
little towns she might have stopped
and lived and died in, lonely

If I'm lonely
it must be the loneliness
of waking first, of breathing
dawn's first cold breath on the city
of being the one awake
in a house wrapped in sleep
If I'm lonely
it's with the rowboat ice-fast on the shore
in the last red light of the year
that knows what it is, that knows it's neither
ice nor mud nor winter light
but wood, with a gift for burning

—*"Song" by Adrienne Rich*

*Adrienne Rich, "Song" and "21 Love Poems" from Collected Poems: 1950-2012,
published by W. W. Norton. Copyright © 2016 by The Adrienne Rich Literary
Trust. Performed by permission of The Frances Goldin Literary Agency.*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Jessica Meyer, Composer and violist

With playing that is “fierce and lyrical” and works that are “other-worldly” (*The Strad*) and “evocative” (*New York Times*), Jessica Meyer is an award-winning composer and violist whose passionate musicianship radiates accessibility and emotional clarity. Meyer’s first composer/performer portrait album, *Ring Out* (Bright Shiny Things, 2019) debuted at #1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical Chart. Her second album *I long and seek after* is a collection of her vocal works that was recently released in March of 2024 on New Focus Recordings and was hailed by Musical America as “gorgeously scored.”

As a solo performer, Ms. Meyer uses a single simple loop pedal to create a virtuosic orchestral experience with her viola and voice. Her solo shows have been featured at iconic venues such as BAMcafé, Joe’s Pub, and Symphony Space in NYC, the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, in Paris at Sunset Sunside, in addition to venues in Singapore, Switzerland, Vietnam, the Emirates and beyond. At home with many different styles of music and an ardent collaborator, Jessica can regularly be seen premiering her chamber works, performing with GRAMMY®-nominated ensembles, appearing on Baroque viola, improvising with jazz musicians, or collaborating with other composer-performers. In 2022, she premiered her viola concerto GAEA alongside the Orchestra of the League of Composers at Miller Theatre in NYC and recently headlined the 2024 Primrose International Viola Competition at the American Viola Society Festival with a recital of her own works.

Since the start of her composition career in 2014, at age 40, Meyer’s compositions have viscerally explored the widepalette of colors available to each instrument while combining techniques inspired by her experiences as a contemporary and period instrumentalist. Her works have been performed in venues from the Kennedy Center to Carnegie Hall, by musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, and by orchestras around the country. Her first Symphonic Band piece was commissioned and toured by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band and was a finalist for the William D. Revelli Composition Contest while her commission for the Lorelei Ensemble received the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America. She has also received multiple commissioning awards from both Chamber Music America and the New York State Council on the Arts. Upcoming premieres include a work for Met Opera tenor Paul Appleby and the Claremont Trio, a viola and piano work commissioned by Juilliard Pre-college, and a new orchestral piece *Turbulent Flames* to be performed by a consortium of orchestras across the United States.

Ms. Meyer is equally known for her inspirational work as an educator, where she empowers musicians with networking, communication, teaching, and entrepreneurial skills so they can be the best advocates for their own careers. Her workshops have been featured at the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Teaching Artists of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Manhattan School of Music, the Longy School of Music, NYU, the Chamber Music America Conference, and various universities around the country. Jessica has conducted hundreds of workshops for students and adults for Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Caramoor, the Little Orchestra Society, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. She is also passionate about getting musicians of all ages off the page to activate their own creativity, improvise, and awaken their own inner composer – which in turn makes them better performers. In addition to teaching virtual workshops, live engagements have been for the Moab Music Festival, the National Youth Orchestra of Carnegie Hall, the North Carolina Chamber Music Institute, and residencies around the country where her music is programmed. For two years, she created and led a Teen Composer Intensive at New England Music Camp so that teens of all abilities can develop their craft, amass recordings for their portfolio, and connect with both professional and student performers. For the past few summers, she served as the Composer in Residence for the Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival at The Juilliard School and led their Emerging Composer Program. Currently, she serves on the viola and chamber music faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, training students to become the best version of their artistic selves while learning how to build a life in music.

Erin Reppenhagen, mezzo-soprano (MM '19)

Mezzo-soprano Erin Reppenhagen has been praised by Opera News as “flaunting a deep, dark mezzo.” She recently made her Lincoln Center debut performing at the Gala Concert of the IV International Composition Competition. This summer, Erin will perform the role of Flora Bervoix in the Berkshire Opera Festival's production of *La Traviata*. Her previous credits include Madame de Chantal (*The Reef*), Flora Bervoix (*La Traviata*), Thurza (*Les Naufrageurs*), Miss Todd (*The Old Maid & the Thief*), Sesto (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Meg/ Aunt Cecilia (*Little Women*), Mrs. Bass (*Emmeline*), Monitor (*Suor Angelica*), La Madre di Mariuccia (*I due Timidi*), Witch (*Hänsel und Gretel*), and Fortuna/Mercurio (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*). Erin is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music where she earned her master's degree in Vocal Performance.

Austin Philemon, piano (MM '19)

Austin Philemon is an organist, pianist, conductor, and composer based in New York City. He has had the opportunity to perform solo recitals domestically including at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Paul's Chapel at Trinity Wall Street, and the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Times Square, as well as abroad in Paris, France; Graz, Austria; Romainmôtier, Switzerland; Haarlem, Netherlands; Modena, Italy; Höganäs, Sweden; Gdąnsk Poland; and Manchester, UK. He recently placed third in the Sweelinck International Organ Competition in Gdąnsk, Poland, and has been selected as a finalist in several major improvisation competitions including the National Competition in Organ Improvisation and the University of Michigan Organ Improvisation Competition, and also received first prize in the George R. Mathison Memorial Competition.

As an advocate for new organ music, Austin has premiered over 40 works for organ, served as a consultant for countless more, and is passionate about educating composers on how to write for the organ. As a composer of both traditional, electro-acoustic, and performance artworks, Austin collaborates frequently with experimental artists. Upcoming partnerships include the premiere of his piano quartet *The Fermi Paradox* with The Why Collective.

As a conductor, Austin has appeared with the American Modern Orchestra, the Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra, and the Bach Choir and Orchestra of Holy Trinity.

Austin graduated in 2019 with a Master of Music in Organ Performance from Manhattan School of Music where he studied with Dr. Andrew Henderson. In 2017 he graduated summa cum laude as a Levine Scholar from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte where he double-majored in German and Organ Performance, helping to found the university's organ program with his teacher, Dr. Jacqueline Yost. Austin currently serves as Director of Music at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

Chloé Kiffer, violin (MM '14, PS '15)

Franco-American violinist Chloé Kiffer has received enthusiastic praise from *The New York Times* for her “pure and beautiful tone” and *The Greenwich Sentinel* for being “...a star in every sense: performance, exquisite technique, and beauty.” Performing solo and orchestral engagements throughout Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, and Asia, Kiffer has appeared at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Beethoven Hall in Bonn, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Hall, Tel Aviv Opera, and Beijing National Center. In October 2015, Kiffer made her Carnegie Hall debut performing Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in Stern Auditorium. Kiffer has collaborated with artists including Philippe Muller, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Timothy Eddy, the Emerson String Quartet, and pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine.

Kiffer is on the violin faculty of Manhattan School of Music and was previously a violin professor at the University of North Texas. Her students have won prizes at national and international competitions. She is a sought-after guest teacher and faculty member for conservatories and festivals around the world—the Heifetz International Music Institute, Miami Music Festival, Beijing International Music Festival and Academy, Chamber Music International in Texas, MusicFest Perugia in Italy, Paris International Music Academy and MusicAlps in France.

Kiffer is a laureate of the Bleustein-Blanchet Foundation. She graduated from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and earned postgraduate degrees from Manhattan School of Music under Patinka Kopec and Pinchas Zukerman. Kiffer received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stony Brook University.

In 2019 Kiffer released an album of the Ravel violin sonatas on the Steinway & Sons label with pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine. Chloé Kiffer performs on a violin that was made for her by luthier Samuel Zygmuntowicz (Brooklyn, NY, 2023).

Jing Yang, piano (BM '10, DMA '15)

Praised by *New York Magazine* as “...so young but so accomplished...”, Chinese-born pianist Jing Yang has been recognized as a soloist, chamber musician, and ensemble player by audiences worldwide. As a recitalist, she has given solo recitals in many countries, including the United States, China, Germany, Russia, France, Spain, Japan, and Taiwan. After her New York City debut at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall in 2006, Dr. Yang was invited to give a solo recital tour in Europe with stops in Valladolid, Madrid, Paris, and Berlin. In her homeland China, her recital tours have brought her to Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang, Hangzhou, and other major cities in China. She has also been invited as a specialguest performer at the Russian Embassy and Polish Consulate in Beijing. She has appeared as a soloist with the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Symphony in Japan, the DePaul Symphony Orchestra in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Center, the New Juilliard Ensemble in Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center for the “Focus!” festival, and the MSM Brass Ensemble in Borden Auditorium.

As a chamber musician, Dr. Yang has performed extensively with vocalists, strings, woodwinds, and brass instruments in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, Merkin Hall, and Abrons Arts Center. She has toured with her Juilliard Piano Trio in major universities and music conservatories in China. Besides the traditional repertoire, Dr. Yang has also been a frequent advocate of new music, working collaboratively with composers and new music ensembles from the United States, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico, and her homeland China. In 2023, she was featured as the soloist for composer Reiko Fūting’s new album, *Distant Violin Sound*. In 2024, she recorded a complete album,

Perfect Happiness, featuring all piano solo works by Nils Vigeland. Both recordings were released by New Focus Recordings.

As a winner of multiple international piano competitions, Dr. Yang has won first prize at the Munz Scholarship Competition in New York, second prize at the Eastman International Piano Competition, and third prize in both the Beijing Piano Competition for Young Artists and the Chopin International Piano Competition in Taipei. She won the special prize in the St. Petersburg International Piano Competition, and fourth prize in the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition for Young Musicians. In 2005 she recorded demo CDs and DVDs for the National Piano Grading Examination hosted by Zhou Guangren in China.

Dr. Yang holds a bachelor's degree and a doctoral degree of musical arts from Manhattan School of Music and received her master's degree at The Juilliard School. She is the staff pianist and chamber coach for violinist and conductor Pinchas Zukerman's program at Manhattan School of Music in 2017 and was since served as piano faculty and chamber music faculty for Young Artist Program at National Arts Center in Ottawa, Canada. She has been a Steinway Artist since 2010.