



# MSM Composers' Concert

**Reiko Fütting** (DMA '00), Coordinator

With Guest Artist **Ben Roidl-Ward**, bassoonist

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025 | 7:30 PM  
ALAN M. AND JOAN TAUB ADES PERFORMANCE SPACE

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# MSM Composers' Concert

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## PROGRAM

GABRIEL LEGROS

*L'Abyssé de l'Homme* (2025)

Libretto by Lynn Kang, Ashley Mannochi,  
Matthew Jiang, Luis Vega-Torres, Gabriel Legros

**Lynn Kang**, Aloysia De Jean, (soprano)

**Ashley Manocchi**, Protée Biraben (soprano)

**Matthew Jiang**, Alessandro Amato (countertenor)

**Luis Vega-Torres**, Louis De Jean (baritone)

**Jocelyn Braun**, flute

**Laurien Britt**, flute

**Zihao Zhang**, oboe

**Ian Fleck**, clarinet in B-flat

**I-Han Chen**, clarinet in B-flat

**Nadia Ingalls**, bassoon

**Anna Zhang**, bassoon

**Vera Romero**, horn in F

**Hannah Eide**, horn in F

**Hunter Bingham**, trombone

**Mischa Gerbrecht**, timpani

**Chih-Ting (Candice) Yang**, violin

**Valerie Choi**, violin

**Joe DeAngelo**, violin

**Sage Small**, viola

**Ryan Giannitelli**, viola

**Olivia Schulte**, violoncello

**August Schwob**, violoncello

**Peter Wiseman**, double bass

**Arianna Behrendt**, Conductor

PHILIP TAPPAN

Five Miniatures for Woodwind Quintet (2025)

1. Written "C"
2. *Lacrimosa*
3. Spitting Distance
4. Waves Low & Slow
5. Funk

**Bryce Cox**, flutes

**Kate Christensen**, oboes

**Mariana Clavijo Ledesma**, clarinets

**Amber Dai**, horn

**Nadia Ingalls**, bassoon

YINGSHU WANG

*Veil of Remembrance* (2025)

1. Delighted
2. Faded Whisper
3. Weight of Time
4. Flickering Laughter

**Mariana Clavijo Ledesma**, bass clarinet

**Alex Howard**, baritone saxophone

**Joleen Lin**, vibraphone

**Jason Chin**, chimes

**Josh Conklin**, snare drum, bass drum, cymbal, bongos

DIDI GU

*AIWS* (2024)

Winner of the 2025 Manhattan Prize for String Quartet Composition

**Joe DeAngelo**, violin

**Oliver Costella**, violin

**Cole Habekost**, viola

**Clara Cho**, cello

*Intermission*

SHUWEN LIAO

*Asb* (2025)

**Ben Roidl-Ward**, bassoon

SEBASTIAN BLOCK

*Abrasax Part I: Qui tollis peccata mundi* (2025)

**Tiffany Leard**, piano

**August Schwob**, cello

ZEKE MORGAN

*Eileithya Has a Nightmare* (2025)

**Ben Roidl-Ward**, bassoon

VICTOR SCHWARTZ

*Paper Skies* (2025)

1. *Andantino*

2. *Listesso Tempo*

3. *Allegro*

4. *Moderato – Presto – Andante*

**Calder Failla**, piano

JONATHAN GOLD

*variationen* (2025)

**Ben Roidl-Ward**, bassoon

# GUEST ARTIST

## **Ben Roidl-Ward**, bassoonist

Named one of 23 artists “changing the sound of classical music” by *the Washington Post*, Ben Roidl-Ward has been praised for his “dazzling technique” (*The Sydney Morning Herald*), “breathless virtuosity” (*Bandcamp Daily*), and “astounding flexibility and range” (*The Double Reed*). He is the Assistant Professor of Bassoon at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the Principal Bassoonist of the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Illinois Symphony, and the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra. A devoted performer of contemporary music, Ben is the bassoonist of Ensemble Dal Niente and has served as a Contemporary Leader for the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland. His dedication to advocating for composers of his generation has led him to participate in the premieres of over 175 compositions to date.

Ben is an alum of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He received his DMA from Northwestern University, where he studied with David McGill and researched methods of notating the bassoon’s multiphonics. His previous teachers were Ben Kamins (Rice University), George Sakakeeny (Oberlin Conservatory), and Francine Peterson in the Seattle area.

# TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

*L'Abysse de l'Homme* (2025)

**Music by Gabriel Legros**

**Libretto by Lynn Kang, Ashley Mannocho,**

**Matthew Jiang, Luis Vega-Torres, and Gabriel Legros**

(English Translation)

Louis de Jean: *I must leave to attend an urgent matter. Have a good day, everyone.*

*My love, we are finally alone!*

Alessandro Amato: *Stop talking! You're making me blush. Let's hurry. Let's not waste any more time!*

Aloysia de Jean (spoken): *Darling? It's me! I'm coming in.*

Louis de Jean: *That's my wife!*

Aloysia de Jean: *Darling, don't you think the neighbor has been acting strangely lately? I have the impression she's doing everything she can to avoid my gaze. Oh? Hello, Alessandro! How are you?*

Alessandro Amato: *Wonderful, and you, Mrs. de Jean?*

Aloysia de Jean: *Fine, but what are you doing here?*

Louis de Jean: *We're working!*

Aloysia de Jean: *Of course. That's a very pretty bouquet you have there, Alessandro.*

Louis de Jean: *This is for you, my love!*

Alessandro Amato: *I think it's time we got back to work.*

Aloysia de Jean: *Nothing new. "Maybe he'll change"? How much longer am I going to believe that? My whole youth was wasted on this man.*

Alessandro Amato: *Aren't you fed up?*

Louis de Jean: *What are you talking about? We've only just started working.*

Alessandro Amato: *Doesn't this constant trickery make you sick?*

Louis de Jean: *The shareholders don't need to know.*

Alessandro Amato: *The one who needs to know isn't one of the shareholders.*

Louis de Jean: *Alessandro, be very careful what you say.*

Alessandro Amato: *But I love you!*

Louis de Jean: *Are you that stupid? How can you be so childish? The stakes are higher than you can imagine. She's my wife! Don't ever speak to me about this again. Never!*

Aloysia de Jean: *What's all the fuss about? Is everything alright?*

Louis de Jean: *Of course, my love. Alessandro was just about to leave us.*

Alessandro Amato: *Certainly. Have a good rest of the day.*

*You know who your husband really is.*

Aloysia de Jean: *Shut up! I'm the one who should be talking. You've ruined my life.*

Louis de Jean: *What are you talking about?*

Aloysia de Jean: *Give it up!*

Louis de Jean: *Alessandro? I'll never see him as anything but a colleague.*

Aloysia de Jean: *Will you never stop? You're a pathetic man.*

Louis de Jean: *Pathetic?*

Aloysia de Jean: *From the day we met.*

Louis de Jean: *You don't know what you're talking about. Don't speak to me like that, I'm your husband!*

Aloysia de Jean: *You don't act like it. We can't go on like this.*

Louis de Jean: *Yet it doesn't seem to have bothered you these last 20 years.*

Aloysia de Jean: *Get out of here.*

Aloysia de Jean: *Look at yourself.*

Proteus Biraben: *This is who you are.*

Alessandro Amato: *Are you satisfied?*

All: *What can you do now?*

Proteus Biraben: *Was it worth it?*

Aloysia de Jean: *It's for the best.*

Alessandro Amato: *It had to be done.*

All: *People like him are poison to society. We are not like him.*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## *L'Abysses de l'Homme* (2025)

### Gabriel Legros

Throughout my short journey as a composer, writing and composing this work has been my greatest challenge. In this opera scene, each character is being allocated either a time period, a style, or a composer. From there, I have asked the performers to choose arias corresponding to their respective given characteristics. I decided to arrange them in a collage. Although they will be utterly recognizable at the beginning of the piece, I later develop and alter their orchestration into something almost unrecognizable. The musical material, however, remains the same throughout the piece, apart from the short overture and very last few bars. I wanted this project to be a true collaboration between the performers and me. In this manner, we wrote the libretto together, shaping it into something that corresponded to us all.

*L'Abysses de l'Homme* approaches infidelity as experienced in today's society. The scene tells the story of Louis de Jean, a financial analyst for a venture capital firm, and describes his apparent inability to be loyal to his wife, Aloysia de Jean, an affordable-housing developer. As the story begins, Louis is working remotely from his home office when he gets a visit from his Italian counterpart, Alessandro Amato. Although acting like professional acquaintances, the two proclaim their love as soon as Louis hangs up the phone. Nonetheless, their happiness rapidly fades away as Aloysia gets home earlier than expected. From there, a series of awkward interactions occurs until the two men get back to work in Louis' office, while Aloysia laments about her husband's attitude, underlining that she has known about his infidelities for a long time now. In the office, the two "colleagues" argue. While Alessandro wants them to reveal their liaison to Aloysia, Louis is extremely reluctant to the idea. Their quarrel gets so loud that Aloysia worries and goes to the office. There, Louis brushes it off and invites Alessandro to leave, the latter complying. As he goes through the door, he reveals to Aloysia who her husband really is. The married couple then argues, Louis slowly revealing a troubling double side his wife had never imagined. Having had enough, Aloysia asks her husband to leave. On his way out, he encounters the maid whom he had tried to seduce in the past. In a last demonstration of his inevitable pulsions, the man tries to seize her, to which she responds by pushing him away strongly. Aloysia and Alessandro, who had not left, join Protée and humiliate the man. As Louis flees the scene, the remaining characters reflect on the success and necessity of this confrontation, highlighting they had planned it

all along. As they repeat they are not like Louis, an unsettling emotion appears on their faces. The three slowly start getting closer together physically, and leave the scene one by one, inviting each other to the same place. This rather unexpected ending highlights that infidelity nowadays can affect anyone in great numbers, even the people we expect it from the least.

I would like to show my appreciation to all the musicians taking part in this project. Every single one of them made the performance of this piece possible. I also am beyond grateful to Lynn Kang, Ashley Manocchi, Matthew Jiang, Luis Vega-Torres, and Arianna Behrendt for their indispensable collaboration, their dedication, their talent, their generosity, and most importantly, their friendship I value more than anything. This work is dedicated to them.

## **Five Miniatures for Woodwind Quintet (2025)**

### **Philip Tappan**

*Written "C"* is a playful take on when all members of the ensemble play the same 'written' note. *Lacrimosa* draws inspiration from the traditional Latin mass text, as well as from historical musical ideas that represent tears. *Spitting Distance* explores how to represent being in close proximity to others and literal spitting. *Waves Low & Slow* is a representation of vibration and of waves. *Funk* formalizes the sounds and rhythms of the funk genre, particularly drawing inspiration from 16th note clavinet grooves.

## ***Veil of Remembrance* (2025)**

### **Yingshu Wang**

*Veil of Remembrance* is a four-movement work that traces an emotional journey through the many layers of memory. Written for bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, and a diverse percussion instrument, the piece weaves together contrasting textures and moods to portray how personal remembrances shape and veil the human experience. Each movement inhabits a distinct emotional landscape—ranging from lightness and celebration to heaviness, burden, and fleeting joy. The interplay of timbre between the deep resonance of the bass clarinet and baritone saxophone, and the shimmering brightness of the vibraphone and chimes, symbolizes this delicate balance between clarity and obscurity. The percussion, with its pulse and color, serves as both heartbeat and echo—reminding us of time's unrelenting forward motion.

Memory—however fragmented or fleeting—is what ultimately defines our sense of self.

## ***AIWS*** (2024)

### **Didi Gu**

*AIWS* stands for Alice in Wonderland Syndrome, which is a neurological disorder that distorts perception. In this piece, I tried to fill the space with diverse-sounding objects and portray an upside-down landscape.

## ***Ash*** (2025)

### **Shuwen Liao**

*Ash* carries dual meanings: on the one hand, “ashes” symbolize mourning, mortality, and repentance; on the other, “the ash tree” represents healing, strength, and rebirth. Both convey growth and transformation, existing in a space where life and death intertwine, obscuring the difference between the two experiences. Both rely on breath, the endless cycle of life, and the force of growth.

Ashes drift like branches in the wind — light, fragmented, suspended in air. They overlap and scatter, forming delicate patterns of dots and lines expressed through the bassoon’s high register. There are sudden dynamics that shift with tremolos at different speeds, intensifying the instability.

As ashes descend, they take different shapes, like the rough texture of a tree trunk. The combination of various rhythmic patterns reflects a sense of weightlessness. Trills and timbral colors resemble the gravity that pulls the heavier ashes down swiftly, fragility with strength, carrying both the resilience of the tree and the underlying vulnerability of its form.

When the sound reaches its fullest expression, it is thick, powerful, and grounded. Using flutter tonguing in the low register, the bassoon conveys deep meditation, reflection, and stillness. It recalls the persistence of a pulse, steady and unhurried, contrasting the previous sparkle with a more pronounced, heavy texture, suggesting a moment of resolution, a completion, and yet, it is also the beginning of a new cycle. It is both vibrant and terminal, both repetitive and varied, all at once.

Ash touches softly, like new leaves, moist and delicate, with boundless vitality. At the end of the piece, notes are played in soft dynamics, blending with the sound of key clicks. The two textures gradually merge, becoming indistinguishable, and dissolve into the air.

...Deep respect for this ever-repeating yet ever-unique life cycle...

## ***Abraxas Part I: Qui tollis peccata mundi* (2025)**

### **Sebastian Block**

“The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the world. Who would be born must first destroy a world. The bird flies to God. That God’s name is Abraxas.”

-*Demian* by H. Hesse

“Hard to know is the deity of Abraxas. Its power is the greatest, because man perceiveth it not. From the sun he draweth the summum bonum; from the devil the infimum malum; but from Abraxas life, altogether indefinite, the mother of good and evil.”

-*Septem Sermones ad Mortuos (The Seven Sermons to the Dead)* by C. G. Jung,  
translated by H. G. Baynes

*Abraxas* – an erroneous Latin translation of the Greek translation to *Abrasax* – was a gnostic deity of the teachings of Basilides. Jung was fascinated with *Abraxas*, whom he viewed as a source of liberation. To Jung, *Abraxas* offered freedom from striving towards the realm of the divine and its effective fullness, which Jung believed created an equal and opposite subconscious archetype of the devil striving towards effective emptiness. He saw *Abraxas* as an intersection of the two, an acceptance without pursuit of a side.

Herman Hesse was very influenced by Jungian thinking. While undergoing psychoanalytic treatment, he wrote *Demian*. The book follows Emil Sinclair in his youth as he tries to navigate the world of good and evil. His new friend, Demian, tells him of the existence of the god Abraxas. With this, he begins his journey to finding the balance between the world of purity and the world of temptation.

In this piece, we explore these worlds, oscillating between the two, and looking for our answer to the eternal question: What makes something a sin?

## ***Eileithya Has a Nightmare* (2025)**

### **Zeke Morgan**

Eileithya is the Greek goddess of childbirth and one of the only children Zeus conceived with Hera.

## ***variationen* (2025)**

### **Jonathan Gold**

What a delight it is to melt down something that was once an image of pain and suffering and recast it into an innocent frolic.

# 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 8 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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## 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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