



CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

TACTUS

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

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Program

LINDA CATLIN SMITH
(b. 1957)

Morandi (1991)

Tiffany Leard and **Zheng Liu**, piano
Mihail Babus and **Grace Goss**, percussion

EDGARD VARÈSE
(1883–1965)

Octandre (1923)

- I. *Assez lent*
- II. *Très vif et nerveux*
- III. *Grave–Animé et jubilatoire*

Sarah Pedlar, flute
Ethan Burke, clarinets
Ariana Varvaro, oboe
Lillian Gleason*, bassoon
Amber Dai, French horn
Sam Friedman* (MM '24), trumpet
Lauren Galarraga, trombone
Leo Martinez, bass
Quinn Saylin*, Conductor

FINOLA MERIVALE
(b. 1987)

Falling Flames (2020)

Ariana Varvaro, oboe
Mariana Clavijo Ledesma, bass clarinet
Lauren Galarraga, trombone
Joe DeAngelo, violin
Tiffany Leard, piano
Zheng Liu, piano
Mihail Babus, percussion

Intermission

TAN DUN
(b. 1957)

Silk Road (1989)

Poem by Arthur Sze

Piper Weldon, soprano

Grace Goss, percussion

LEE HYLIA
(1952–2014)

Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra (1988)

(New York Premiere)

Mariana Clavijo Ledesma, bass clarinet solo

Sarah Pedlar, flute

Ethan Burke and **Ian Fleck***, B-flat clarinet

Lillian Gleason* and

Hunter Lorelli* (MM '21, PS '22), bassoon

Amber Dai and **Emre Tetik***, French horn

Sam Friedman* (MM '24), trumpet

Lauren Galarraga, trombone

Shirley Guo* (MM '25), harp

Joe DeAngelo, violin solo

Allison Lee*, **Yiru Zhang***, **Jackson Chang***, and

Mingnan Yue*, violin

Ealaph Tabaa*, viola

Pablo Elizalde Nino* and **August Schwob***, cello

Leo Martinez, bass

Matt Ward⁺ (BM '98), Conductor

* Guest Performer

+ CPP Faculty

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

“The Silk Road”

Arthur Sze

the, a, this, the, tangerine, splash hardly:
these threads of sound may be spun in a-spin into fiber:
lighted buoy, whistling buoy, spar buoy, bell buoy, buoy.hear the sound of apricots
dropping from branch to the earth;
feel the red vibration of wings before you see a hummingbird.
a man may travel from Mindanao to Macao to avoid
staring into himself; he may be search at night in a helicopter
for the shimmer of a fire opal dropped into water;
he may inhale starlight as if it were a pungent yellow
flower opening slowly in the still summer night.
to be still: watch a dog listen to sounds you cannot hear,
feel the pull of moonrise on the feathers of an owl.
there are apricots beginning to drop to drop from branches to the earth;
there are apricots not yet not yet beginning to drop.

PROGRAM NOTES

Morandi (1991)

Linda Catlin Smith

Linda Caitlin Smith was born in New York in 1957. Her works have been performed, commissioned, and recorded by many ensembles and soloists including Thin Edge Collective, Anthony de Mare, Arraymusic, the Modern Quartet, the Banff Centre for the Arts and Le Coucouc Bénévoles, and artists abroad. The Globe and Mail, Toronto, have described her music as “sensuous, in an understated way”, and with “beautiful sonorities.”

Morandi (1991) is named after the 20th century Italian painter Giorgio Morandi. While I was writing this work, I was thinking about his numerous still life paintings, which reveal a preoccupation with the same objects, in muted colours, painted over and over again. Morandi was commissioned through the Ontario Arts Council by Kitchener-Waterloo’s New Art Quartet.”

–Linda Catlin Smith

Octandre (1923)

Edgard Varèse

Edgard Varèse's 1924 premiere, *Octandre*, is a captivating modern chamber music piece that simultaneously meets and subverts expectations of the time period.

Varèse executes the neoclassical aesthetic characteristic of the time period through elements such as the formal approach to structure as well as the smaller ensemble, and disrupts it through the novel use of timbre as a structural element. Although it is Varèse's only known multi-movement work, *Octandre* is typical of his style and technique. The instruments' lyrical material develops throughout the movements, using the same notes with different extended and foundational techniques.

Belgian musicologist Arthur Hoérée wrote that "What strikes the listener from the outset [about *Octandre*], is the exceptional instrumentation that forms the basis of the writing. The flute rises to high C sharp, the bassoon to D, and the trombone wanders through the middle notes of the trumpet. Techniques like flutter tongue are used regularly."

The title refers to two different aspects: the octet of performers that make up the ensemble and the word's literal meaning of a flower with eight stamens, which is used symbolically. This double meaning to elements is found regularly when academically analyzing the work. One of the most-prominent examples of this is the oboe solo that opens the piece, which is reminiscent of Stravinsky's bassoon opening from *The Rite of Spring* (1913) but composed in a manner that makes dynamics (and consequently timbre) the prime focus of the repeated line.

–Leo Martinez

Falling Flames (2020)

Finola Merivale

Finola Merivale is a composer of acoustic and electro-acoustic music, based between France and Ireland. Themes that run across her music include socio-political issues, the climate crisis, nature and a sense of place—both real and imagined. Finola is currently a 2025–26 Fellow at Columbia University's Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris.

Falling flames is an open instrumentation work consisting of 50 repetition cells to be gradually proceeded through by an ensemble or soloist. The range of the instrument(s) must include the pitches from C₂ to C₇. Starting at the summit of this range and descending over the duration of the work evokes a long fall, akin to life and death.

–Mihail Babus

***Silk Road* (1989)**

Tan Dun

Tan Dun is a Chinese-born American composer and conductor. A leading figure of contemporary classical music, he draws from a variety of Western and Chinese influences, a pairing which has shaped much of his life and music. Tan is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Grawemeyer Award for his opera *Marco Polo* (1996) and both an Academy Award and Grammy Award for his film score in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000).

Silk Road (1989) is a piece for soprano and percussion. Written in conjunction with poet Arthur Sze, *Silk Road* is inspired by the ancient trade routes connecting East and West. Contrasting moments allow the listener to enter a new realm where cultures collide and traditions are reshaped.

–Grace Goss

***Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra* (1988)**

Lee Hyla

Lee (Leon Joseph) Hyla was an award-winning American composer from Niagara Falls, New York. The music of Lee Hyla sought to find a common ground between the tradition of postwar American Expressionism represented by composers such as Stephan Wolpe and Elliott Carter and the gritty urban style of avant-garde Jazz musicians like Cecil Taylor. Hyla also integrated aspects of the rougher styles of Rock (especially Punk) and free jazz into the unique mix of his music. Despite its high energy and raw surface, the music is fully notated, with nothing improvised, nor is there anything haphazard about Hyla's sense of pitch, or dramatic structure, both of which are meticulous in a way that allows raucousness to achieve elegance.

The Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Orchestra (1988) is intelligent, but not intellectual. Lee has chosen, in this work, to tell a tale, to work within a musical space whose boundaries consist of wildly contrasting elements. Bluntly cut transitions range from slow to fast, soft to loud, classic, and contained to raucous rock-and-roll—with an almost bizarre use of Beethovenian techniques exercised on poached riffs.

“During this fitful and teeming work, the bass clarinet wails like a caterwauling jazz saxophone one moment, only to sing with cantorial plaintiveness the next.”

–Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*

–Sourced from Lee Hyla's official website.

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

William Lang, trombone

Curtis Macomber, violin

Kevin Newton, horn

Tara Helen O'Connor, flute

John Pickford-Richards, viola

Todd Reynolds, electronics

Brandon Ridenour, trumpet

Erin Rogers, saxophone

Lucy Shelton, voice

Fred Sherry, cello

Keve Wilson, oboe

Tactus Ensemble

Piper Weldon
State College, Pennsylvania

Sarah Pedlar

Decorah, Iowa

Ethan Burke

Flagler Beach, Florida

Ariana Varvaro

Lake Worth, Florida

Mariana Clavijo Ledesma

Popayán, Colombia

Lauren Galarraga

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Amber Dai

Beijing, China

Joe DeAngelo
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Zheng Liu

Nanchang, China

Tiffany Leard
Las Vegas, Nevada

Mihail Babus

Munster, Indiana

Grace Goss
New York, New York

Leo Martinez
West Park, Florida

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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