



MSM Composers' Concert

With guests from Conservatorio Cuneo, Italy

Reiko Fütting (DMA '00), Coordinator

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 | 7:30 PM
ALAN M. AND JOAN TAUB ADES PERFORMANCE SPACE

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PROGRAM

ELIAS VALLE

Gran Cassa (2025)

Campbell Stewart, timpani

YUQING ZHANG

Neural Noise (2025)

Owen Bloomfield, percussion

Mischa Gerbrecht, percussion

XUANYUAN JIN

Extremis (2025)

Tanner Stegink, tuba

LETIZIA AMBROSETTI/
STEPHEN TAMAS

Bismouth

MICHELANGELO EINAUDI/
GUIOMAR ORTIZ

Ardua

LETIZIA AMBROSETTI/
STEPHEN TAMAS/
MICHELANGELO EINAUDI/
GUIOMAR ORTIZ

Gli uomini nell'ombra

Guiomar Ortiz, piano

Stephen Tamas, saxophone

Letizia Ambrosetti, electronics

Michelangelo Einaudi, electronics

INTERMISSION

MARTÍN LA ROTTA NATALE *desgarros de la elipse ascendiéndose por el principio oscuro, el meteorito y la serpiente para renacimiento del plégamo lunar (rubedo inmolando los deslices entre el fuego de mi sacra iniciación)* (2026)

Stephen Tamas, soprano saxophone

Zhongyang Ling, alto saxophone

Grace Pressley, tenor saxophone

Ked Adams, baritone saxophone

Sonora, electronics

SEBASTIAN BLOCK *Composition I* (2026)

Sebastian Block, violin

JEN IMPEY *Meditation No. 2 (Tick)* (2025)

Ivan Morisov, clarinet

Akshay Tiwari, viola

Noah Hertzman, cello

PHILIP TAPPAN *CIRCE: a dramatic monologue for accompanied voice* (2025)

Text by Philip Tappan

Suzuna Ikeda, voice

Joe DeAngello, violin

Gabriel Ordàs, violin

Olympia Nelson, viola

Alonso Restrepo, cello

Campbell Stewart, percussion

Mihail Babus, percussion

TEXTS

CIRCE: a dramatic monologue for accompanied voice **Philip Tappan**

These are the words that time forgot.

These are the herbs within my pot.

When children disobey, they are
Punished, toys taken away;
So father, Helios, burning Sun,
Punished me for timeless fun,
Cast me here, into the salt licked wilds,
Because I brought dishonour, in a child's
Tantrum, making more fuss than the rooster
Bantam, embarrassing the spilt life force of warrior Titans
Under the ascendent Olympian.
For me to learn the lesson,
To pass the knowledge of the gods,
I speak a simple mantra,
humble, and against received odds:
When men take, but do not pay,
They must bear their fate my way.

These are the words that time forgot.

These are the herbs within my pot.

My sister fucked a sacred cow,
Yet I have been dubbed the slut somehow;
When visited by gods or men,
I take solace in their hem.
Is seeking balm to my isolation,
The epitome of goddess abomination?

These are the herbs that time forgot.

These are the words within my pot.

Sorcerer bitch or wise old witch,
I find tinctures under rocks and in the ditch;

Where others pass and eyes unnoticed,
These plants build up my magic pocus;
Though my voice sounds sweet to humankind,
It is in their interest to mind
That these pipes are bred by gods,
And will usurp men at all odds.
When pushed into the corner,
When attacked by thieves and rot,
I look as if I'm weak;
But my power throbs just where your's caught,
Waned; and the swain
Becomes the piggy,
snorting, chained;
Losing all that was once taken,
All that was feigned,
In your heart, in your soul,
Full of greed and malice stained.

These are the words.
These are the herbs.

Here I am, here am I, stranded on this small island,
Purgatory, all-inclusive resort, everything I want and
Nothing, nothing more than sterile, bloody sand.
Eventually drinks with umbrellas lose their thrill;
When I argue and shout to Zeus, that I have paid my bill,
He sends ten more rounds, and orders me to chill;
Blue waves chain the shackles of my keeping.
Eventually, pleasure returns, in waking and sleeping,
My voice finds the tune, slowly, subtly, it sings,
Perceives these little pleasures as amendments-
Less pleasure, more contentment-
Like rich compost added to soil,
As if from Technicolor, to grayscale, to layered oil.

PROGRAM NOTES

Neural Noise (2025)

Yuqing Zhang

This piece approaches the neuron not as something to be represented, but as an operational paradigm—a way of thinking about how music functions. At the core of the compositional approach is the concept of neural noise—the inherent instability that arises when neural networks form. In this work, that noise emerges through the performer’s unpredictable choices and the inharmonic character of the sounds.

The project unfolds through graphic notation (see QR code below), which provides a system of constraints and possibilities rather than prescribing exact sonic outcomes. Its visual language, inspired by contemporary abstract art and early neural anatomy drawings, uses non-linear paths, branching forms, and areas of varying density to define relationships between sound events instead of dictating their precise realization.



Meditation No. 2 (Tick) (2025)

Jen Impey

As a compositional study, the primary idea that is explored in Meditation No. 2 is repetition. The first few measures will establish the fundamental musical figure for the piece.

Extra-musically, the piece is designed to transport the listener into a “machine” of sorts, encouraged by the environment of the hall and musical content. The electronics and performers are meant to be perceived as the “gears” and “cogs” in the machine, engaging in their repetitive motions until failure, ending in the listener’s perspective moving outward to view the now broken and worn parts.

***CIRCE: a dramatic monologue for accompanied voice* (2025)**

Philip Tappan

Circe, a goddess of the ancient Greek pantheon, was vividly re-imagined as a quietly powerful immortal in Madeline Miller's novel *Circe*. That portrayal inspired me to write the verse *Saga of Circe*, which in turn became the springboard for this dramatic vocal setting and for shaping a live musical encounter with the re-envisioned goddess.

Circe is associated with several defining traits: the power to shapeshift herself and others, deep knowledge of plants and minerals capable of healing or destruction, and a profound resilience forged through exile and marginalization. These qualities are reflected aurally throughout the work, inviting the listener into Circe's world and into the enduring magic of her transformation.

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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