



CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

TACTUS

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026 | 7:30 PM
ALAN M. AND JOAN TAUB ADES PERFORMANCE SPACE

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Program

ERIN GEE
(b. 1974)

Mouthpiece 28 (2016)

Piper Weldon, voice
Sarah Pedlar, flute
Ethan Burke, clarinet
Madeline Hocking*, violin
Mihail Babus, percussion
Amber Dai, Conductor

AMBER DAI
(b. 2000)

Ultraviolet (2026)

Amber Dai, horn and electronics

ANNIE GOSFIELD
(b. 1960)

Shattered Apparitions of the Western Wind (2013)

Part I

Part II

Zheng Liu, piano

NICO MUHLY
(b. 1981)

Doublespeak (2012)

Sarah Pedlar, flute
Mariana Clavijo Ledesma, clarinet
Joe DeAngelo, violin
Clara Cho, cello
Tiffany Leard, piano
Grace Goss, percussion

Intermission

MICHELLE LOU
(b. 1975)

untitled three-part construction (2014)

Leo Martinez, double bass

Mihail Babus, percussion

Grace Goss, percussion

GREGG AUGUST
(b. 1968)

Quintet in Five Parts (2026)

Ariana Varvaro, oboe

Steph Tamas, soprano saxophone

Ethan Burke, bass clarinet

Mariana Clavijo Ledesma, bass clarinet

Lauren Galarraga, trombone

SUSAN BOTTI
(b. 1962)

Cool to the Touch (2025)

Piper Weldon, **Susan Botti**⁺ and **Katie Lee**, soprano

Sarah Pedlar, flute

Mariana Clavijo Ledesma, bass clarinet

Lauren Galarraga, trombone

Joe DeAngelo, electric violin

Leo Martinez, double bass

Mihail Babus, percussion

Quinn Saylin, Conductor

* MSM Alumnus

+ CPP Faculty

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Cool to the Touch (2025)

Susan Botti

Soprano 2 solo:

...having found a healing balm, an antidote to violence

Cool to the

Cool touch

Cool to the the the... touch

(cool to touch)

Cool to to to (touch)

no knowing

cool to

[hot hot hot... to to to...]

touch

to to to... touch

to to to... touch

cool

(to to to to...)

cool to....

[hot

too too too.... hot... oh too]

cool

PROGRAM NOTES

Erin Gee, *Mouthpiece 28* (2016)

I notate the vocal sounds using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in order to accurately transcribe both the type of sound and the place of articulation in the mouth. The sounds that I use are often remnants or artifacts of phonemes, however, when placed in a non-semantic context, they float in a liminal space with no overt connection to a language.

In the works for voice and ensemble, the articulatory possibilities of the mouth are often mapped onto the instruments, mirroring and expanding the vocal sounds to form a kind of “super-mouth” that can move beyond the physical limitations of a single vocal tract. Merging the voice with both the instruments and with breath, and repeatedly returning to formlessness through “a more (or less) pronounced utterance of the mouth”. Degrees of pronounced utterance. This has been the main idea behind the entire Mouthpiece series, which began in 2000 and consists of about 30 works for solo voice, voice and ensemble, choir, voice and orchestra, string quartet, opera and other combinations. Not pre-meaning, simply never in the direction of meaning.

–Erin Gee

Amber Dai, *Ultraviolet* (2026)

Some colors are loud, and i consider some bright bluish purple to be one of them.

–Amber Dai

Annie Gosfield, *Shattered Apparitions of the Western Wind* (2013)

Annie Gosfield’s *Shattered Apparitions of the Western Wind* for piano and electronics is inspired by Debussy’s piano work, *What the West Wind Saw*. Gosfield combines pre-recorded fragments of the Debussy work with musique concrète recordings of Hurricane Sandy, which struck New York while she was composing the piece. Written for pianist Kathleen Supové and recorded on *The Debussy Effect* (New Focus, 2016), Gosfield toggles between this electronic collage texture and the live piano, creating a landscape that seems to track the dramatic experience of living through a powerful natural event.

–Kathleen Supové

Nico Muhly, *Doublespeak* (2012)

“*Doublespeak* was written for Eighth Blackbird for the Music Now! festival in Cincinnati, in honor of Philip Glass’s 75th birthday. My mission in writing the piece was twofold: first, to write the most fun piece possible for them, at just the right length. The second was to in some way tip my hat to Philip Glass, whom I admire broadly and deeply. Eighth Blackbird has played so much fast, loosely repetitive music over the years; I wanted to refine this kind of material into its purest, most delicious form and point back to the ‘70s, when classical music perfected obsessive repetition. The piece begins by applying an additive process to a small cell on the solo violin. This is the defining gesture of the piece, and is subject to much variation. Occasionally, the busy textures give way to drones under which we begin to hear chords from Philip’s insanely beautiful *Music in Twelve Parts* (1971–1974). The piece unfolds in similar episodes: fast music offset by slow, melancholic memories of the music of the late 1960s and 1970s (Aren’t those the intervals from *Violin Phase*? Was that a cell from *In C*?). Towards the end of *Doublespeak*, the language of *Music in Twelve Parts* becomes more dominant, and gradually overtakes all the busy material and the piece ends in a stylized dreamstate.”

–Nico Muhly

Michelle Lou, *untitled three-part construction* (2014)

Tracing along a line coextensive with “pedestrian space,” one cannot find their location as being one or the other, inside or outside. With quiet lines, volume and mass are suggested; plans are defined, both discrete and transitory; negative and positive space are one. Experience as accretion.

These lines are directional and yet static, moving in any direction. They are flat and voluminous. Yet they also inhabit all conditions at once.

This is the first in a series of works dedicated to the artist Fred Sanback.

Untitled three-part construction was composed for Trio K/D/M for the Bludenze Tage zeitgemäßer Musik, November 23, 2014.

–Michelle Lou

Gregg August, *Quintet in Five Parts* (2026)

Quintet in Five Parts was commissioned in 2024 by a newly formed group called the Dead Reed Society. Their unique instrumentation intrigued me, as it was an unusual blend of jazz and classical instruments (trombone is replacing bassoon in tonight’s version). The sonic and stylistic possibilities are abundant, and I began to see that

the work could cross seamlessly between classical, jazz and even Afro-Cuban realms. At points the piece features each player as if they are improvising, or “taking a solo” while the ensemble accompanies and holds down the groove. At other moments, the mood is somber and reflective, with relaxing resolutions or “refrains.”

Concert music, but with freedom, and funk.

–Gregg August

Susan Botti, *Cool to the Touch* (2025)

River Spirits is an abstract fable

Three characters sit by a river

Are they in/from the future (?), the past (?)..

from another world (?)..

Perhaps they are three parts of one being (?)..

(or all of the above)

They are sentient and content and intertwined - until their sanctuary is altered by the arrival of “messages” from outside their world. Perspectives are expanded and senses go wild. This splinters the trio causing conflict and confusion. In an allegorical fashion, the story portrays the tension of uncontrolled expression within a community, as well as the healing power of compassion and love. The vocal writing incorporates aspects of motet, extended techniques, and bel canto, combining with instruments from different musical contexts (concert/early music/found sound) ... resulting in a sound world that is familiar yet otherworldly and “time-less”.

I am also exploring the idea of language as a remnant of civilization. What of our culture resonates through our language—now and in the future? What aspects of human nature are reflected in—beyond—our words? The texts (which I have created/ compiled) are a mix of languages, sounds, “nonsense”, and music - in layers of fragmented meaning. The sounds and the words are a gateway to underlying contexts/intent. From a musical standpoint, this word setting is reminiscent of Medieval motets (which use multiple texts to convey layered meanings); operatic aria (which expresses heightened emotions with minimal text); and “grammelot” (the language of the *Commedia dell'Arte*). The music has been created in collaboration with my adventurous and magical vocal cohorts —Lucy Shelton, Mary Bonhag, and Katherine Lerner Lee; and instrumentalists from the Folger and 21st c. Consorts, and from Yellow Barn.

–Susan Botti

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