

The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

May 24th, 2022 1:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Kirsten Jermé, cello Nathaniel LaNasa, piano

Sonata No.1 for Solo Cello, Op. 72 (1960)

Adagio

Allegretto

Allegro

Mieczysław Weinberg

(1919–96)

Lamentations: Black/Folk Song Suite (1973)

Fuguing Tune: resolute

Song Form: plaintive

Calvary Ostinato

Perpetual Motion

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

(1932–2004)

INTERMISSION

Evocation for Cello and Piano (2003, revised 2022)

James Ra

(b. 1974)

Sonata for Cello and Piano in B-Flat Major, Op. 8 (1899)

Allegro ma non troppo

Scherzo: Vivace assai

Adagio non troppo

Tema con variazioni: Allegro moderato

Ernő Dohnányi

(1877–1960)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.

Notes on the Program

Mieczysław Weinberg never became a household name as did his friend Dmitri Shostakovich, but the two composers shared a warm relationship of musical affinity spanning decades of their lives. Whether this discrepancy in fame was a result of post-war antisemitism, never having been awarded the Stalin Prize, or even his self-professed focus on the act of composition over seeking performances of his works, Weinberg's music was nonetheless championed by Shostakovich among other prominent composers and performing artists of the day, and received a resurgence of interest in the mid-1990's, shortly before his death. A prolific composer, Weinberg produced 17 string quartets – 2 more than Shostakovich – in addition to 22 full symphonies and four chamber symphonies, an array of chamber works and concerti, operas, and a requiem on the scale of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*.

Weinberg's early adulthood was fraught with tragedy, loss, and narrow escapes. Born in 1919 to Jewish musicians in Warsaw, Weinberg was performing as a pianist with his father's Jewish Theater orchestra by the age of 10, later attending conservatory in Warsaw. Were it not for the onset of war, Weinberg could have attended the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, but the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 cut this dream short. Instead, he embarked on a harrowing journey by foot to Minsk in order to escape the Nazis. A mere two years later, having barely completed his composition studies in Minsk, he was forced to flee again, traveling by train to the distant Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In Tashkent he married the daughter of the renowned actor Solomon Mikhoels, then leader of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, and through Mikhoels became acquainted with Shostakovich, who recognized the composer's genius and helped him ultimately settle in Moscow. There, he learned that his parents and his sister – who had started the journey to Minsk with him but turned back – had been killed in concentration camps.

Despite an initial period of calm in Moscow, Weinberg was again visited by tragedy in 1948, when his father-in-law Mikhoels was assassinated by the Stalinist regime. With the resurgence of post-war antisemitism reaching its height, Weinberg himself was placed under surveillance, and was even incarcerated in 1953 – rescued only by Stalin's death later that year. After so much trauma and loss, Weinberg's music certainly bears the imprint of suffering and remembrance; many of his compositions in the years that followed were commemorative, and works across genres retain influences of Jewish secular music as well as folk materials from a variety of Eastern European sources.

Weinberg's **Sonata No. 1 for Solo Cello, Op. 72** written in 1960, came at the start of a decade of relative success as a composer. Dedicated to the great Soviet cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, the work predates Benjamin Britten's First Suite for Cello (also dedicated to Rostropovich) by several years, though it has received much less recognition than the Britten for its significance in the genre. Weinberg composed three additional solo sonatas for cello between 1965 and 1986 – another dedicated to Rostropovich and two to Borodin Quartet cellist Valentin Berlinsky – but these were not published until 2005, when Josef Feigelson, who released the first recording of Weinberg's complete solo cello sonatas in 1996/7, assisted in bringing them to press. In addition to the four solo cello sonatas, Weinberg wrote four for viola, three for violin and one for bass, notably in a genre in which his friend Shostakovich did not work.

The Cello Sonata No.1 appeared the year after Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No.1 and bears unmistakable influences, including a direct quotation of the concerto's opening motive heard just before the end of the sonata's last movement. (While Shostakovich's influence on Weinberg is often

more distinctly audible to listeners familiar with the former's music, the influence undoubtedly went both ways. Of note here is Weinberg's heart-stopping 8th String Quartet in C minor, written in 1959, one year before Shostakovich's famed 8th String Quartet in C minor, which bears more than a few superficial connections.) The cello sonata is in three movements, each one quite distinct in character yet linked through common motivic material. In particular, a plaintive melodic motif heard in repetition in the third bar of the first movement recurs transformed in both the second and third movements, lending an element of cyclic unity to the piece. This and other motives appearing throughout the work are likely influenced by the Jewish secular music tradition in which Weinberg was steeped as a child.

The first movement is doleful and expansive, tracing a narrative arc mirrored in the full exploitation of the cello's vast register and sonority. Opening as though from a distance, with long measures of 6/4 in *Adagio* giving a sense of vastness, a solitary melody rises from the bass of the cello. Built of primarily open intervals in D minor, the tune circles on itself before introducing the chromatically-inflected plaintive gesture that will recur throughout the piece: a rising half-step followed by a three-note descent, which in its repetition also contains an element of circularity and pleading. A sense of return frames the entire movement: the circular opening motive is heard at five points, with varying intensities, registers and keys. Approaching the climax, this figure is heard at twice the speed of the opening, suggesting an element of desperation. Now in C minor, the music climbs up to a perilous height before diving down to the open C for the most powerful iteration of the theme yet heard. Painfully withdrawing from this emotional outburst, the music returns to its distant opening state, resting at great length on the low D.

From the heartrending sonorousness of the first movement emerges a consoling middle-movement dance in 3/4, played with mute throughout. More a wistful minuet than a macabre waltz à la Shostakovich, the second movement's dampened resonance and soft dynamics suggest we may be viewing the dance through the gauze of memory. Utilizing the G Lydian mode (similar to major but with a raised fourth scale degree), the melody takes its cue from the first movement's opening, but expands on the rising gesture, seeming to twirl and bound upward; the lamenting chromatic figure from the first movement now almost jests, playfully swinging around the high point of the phrase. Later a metric shift gives way to a middle section in an abruptly shifted key; repetitively circling gestures seem to get stuck on a hemiola figure as though taking a ride on a ghoulish merry-go-round. The movement never quite verges on the sinister, however, and ends even more charmingly than it began, with a tongue-in-cheek glissando to a pizzicato final cadence.

Of the three movements, the third bears the most marked resemblance to Shostakovich, particularly in light of the work's proximity to his first cello concerto. In the absence of an orchestral backdrop, Weinberg achieves a remarkably orchestral texture from the cello alone in this movement. The introductory statement is at once martial and declamatory: three sharply-articulated triple-stops spanning C's in three octaves, followed by a short melodic motif, occur three times, with each attendant melodic gesture increasing in intensity. Authoritative G triple-stops bookend the introduction, and the body of the movement is launched with unrelenting vigor: the recurring motive from the first movement becomes frenzied, double stops and registral leaps abound, and repetitious motives spin breathlessly from one passage to the next before diving headlong into the C octaves. A middle section in a ghostly *ppp*, marked *spiccato*, continues the sense of breathlessness, now at a whisper; two iterations of this passage separated by a brief pizzicato section build up to a return of the repeated C triple-stops. After a brief expansion of meter from 2/4 to 3/4, the music continues to build towards a dramatic high point, after which the opening four-note motif from Shostakovich's Cello Concerto

No.1 is declaimed in double-stops. Three repeated chords, each played three times, close the movement: after a piercing dissonance, the C triple-stops get the final word.

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson's musical life ostensibly knew no bounds: spanning genres and continents, his career encompassed composition, classical and jazz piano performance, conducting, arranging, film scoring, television, and music academia. From writing chamber and symphonic works to ballets for Alvin Ailey and Dance Theatre of Harlem, touring internationally as pianist with jazz drummer Max Roach's quartet, serving as musical director and arranger for Marvin Gaye and Harry Belafonte, scoring a Sidney Poitier film and a documentary about Martin Luther King, Jr., and co-founding and conducting the Orchestra of the New World, there were few musical arenas in which Perkinson did not leave an impact. Yet the stunning variety in his career also reveals a more insidious truth about the classical music establishment in America: the opportunity to tour to Japan with Max Roach, for example, came at a time of severe financial strain for Perkinson, when opportunities either weren't being offered at all in the U.S. or were revoked or reconfigured as soon as the institution learned that Perkinson was Black. For all his artistic greatness and success, systemic racism within American musical institutions was undoubtedly a barrier to his career and to his music receiving the recognition it deserved—a travesty only now being more widely addressed in the Black Lives Matter era.

Raised in New York City, Perkinson showed early promise as a composer, winning a competition for his choral work “And Behold” at the High School for Music and Art (now LaGuardia High School), and taking home the LaGuardia Prize in music upon graduation. Named for the renowned Afro-British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor by his seemingly prescient mother—a pianist and organist herself—Perkinson formalized his composition studies at Manhattan School of Music, where he also encountered numerous soon-to-be jazz greats and future collaborators. Perkinson pursued conducting as well, studying at the Berkshire Music Center and later at Princeton University, and spending several summers training in the Netherlands and at the Salzburg Mozarteum. Throughout his career, his affiliations as a composer, conductor, and music director were numerous and varied. He held several university posts, at Brooklyn College and Indiana University, and in his later years at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, serving as artistic advisor to Ensemble Stop-Time. During this time he also founded and directed the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble and served as composer-in-residence for the Ritz Chamber Players, for whom he wrote his final work, a poignant one-movement string trio.

Lamentations: Black/Folk Song Suite for Solo Cello dates from an active time in Perkinson's early-mid career, and follows his composition *Blue/s Forms for Solo Violin* by a year. Written in 1973 for cellist Ronald Lipscomb and premiered the same year at Alice Tully Hall, *Lamentations: Black/Folk Song Suite* showcases the astonishing genre-bending versatility of the composer and stretches the vernacular of the solo cello literature. The suite is in four movements, each with a distinct and self-contained style. Perkinson described the unity of the work by stating: “the common denominator of these tunes is the reflection and statement of *a people's crying out.*” Elements associated with traditional African and African-American musical genres are prevalent throughout—minor pentatonics, syncopation, rhythmic complexities, “blue” notes and jazz harmonies, to name a few. Also prevalent are influences from Modernism to Bach amalgamated within his utterly individual compositional style.

The first movement, “Fuguing Tune,” is a tour-de-force of counterpoint infused with jazz and the blues. Marked “resolute,” the movement opens with a statement of the D minor pentatonic “tune” in double stops, beginning with a rising diminished triad in sixths that turns back to the fourth, giving a jazzy inflection. Metric asymmetry increases the sense of jazziness: the first bar is lengthened by a

sixteenth note while the second bar, a near repetition, is shortened by a sixteenth. After this introduction of the theme in double stops, the tune begins again as a single line. With a second voice added in the second bar, the “fuguing tune” is now heard as a fugue subject in the style of J.S. Bach, one of Perkinson’s most admired influences. Of note here is the distinction between a fugue and a “fuguing tune,” the latter referring to a late 18th-Century style of hymnody that emerged in New England and involved the use of block chords in the outer verses and imitation in between. The movement pays respect to both traditions, all the while in an idiom evolved to incorporate wholly 20th-century musical styles.

“Song Form,” the second movement, takes its shape somewhere in the space between ballad and spiritual. Marked “plaintive,” this movement is the most lyrical, at once doleful and consoling. Also making extensive use of double stops, the harmonic language stretches from bluesy to nearly polytonal, leaving the key center ambiguous. Expansive measures and frequent meter changes increase the sense of searching and longing. A contrasting middle section, marked “sonorous,” separates iterations of the opening melody, and the movement drifts off with three repetitions of the melody’s lilting final bar, fading away without clearly resolving the ambiguity.

The third movement, “Calvary Ostinato,” directly riffs on the African-American spiritual “Calvary,” but with a more up-tempo feel than the original. Played pizzicato throughout, the ostinato is a 9-beat bass line that utilizes only the lower three strings of the cello. Syncopated mid-bar, this plucked ostinato evokes a laid-back jazz bass line, continuing throughout the entire movement with only occasional variation or pause for a brief cadenza-like passage. With the lower three strings occupied by the ostinato, the top string takes on the melody voice: Perkinson’s bluesy variation on the “Calvary” theme. Ever the master of counterpoint, Perkinson achieves a dialogue between registers of the cello suggesting two instruments in duet, while also referencing jazz and blues idioms from walking bass to slide guitar.

The fourth movement “Perpetual Motion” dazzles with its kaleidoscopic array of sound and momentum. Utilizing rapid-fire string crossings around an open-string pedal point, the first part of the movement circles around the open D. The melodic line makes use of minor pentatonics inflected by occasional blue notes, as well as parallel fourths and fifths (and eventually parallel thirds), moving in double stops against the open-string drone. Later the register expands, as the G and C become the pedal notes, and melodies rise in long strings before continuing the rhythmic oscillation. Brilliant throughout, the movement also plays with rhythmic complexity, metric shifts, and “grooves,” often repeating a figure three times before varying it or moving on. Nearing the conclusion of the work, the grooves become increasingly “electric,” almost rock-and-roll, and the movement ends with flair, dashing up the cello in sixths against the open A and D.

A year after Perkinson’s death in 2004, Cedille Records released the first ever recording of numerous of his works on the album *Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson: A Celebration*. In addition to performances by the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble Quartet and the Chicago Sinfonietta conducted by Paul Freeman, the album includes solo and chamber works, including *Lamentations* in a stunning rendition by Tahirah Whittington. As has deplorably been the case with much of the music by composers of color, female composers, and other marginalized groups, the published edition of *Lamentations* has quite a few discrepancies, making it challenging to know the composer’s intentions in some passages. Efforts to address the lack of critical editions of works by great composers including Perkinson are being made by individuals and ensembles such as the Catalyst Quartet in their project UNCOVERED.

Evocation for Cello and Piano
James Ra

Evocation (or Invocation)

A name shattered to pieces!
A name scattered in the void!
A name that never replies!
A name that I'll die calling!

The one word left in the soul
To the last I couldn't pronounce.
My beloved!
My beloved!

The red sun hovers over the hill,
And the deer moan woefully.
I'm calling your name
On a lonely hill.

I call your name in great sorrow,
I call your name in deep sorrow.
My voice reaches towards the sky,
But the sky is too far from the earth.

Turn me into stone,
I'll call your name till I die!
My beloved!
My beloved!

-Kim, So-wol (reprinted in program notes by James Ra)

This impassioned 1925 poem by the Korean poet Kim, So-wol (1902-1934) serves as the inspiration for Korean-American composer **James Ra's *Evocation for Cello and Piano***, written in 2003 for cellist Patrick Jee. In his own notes to the piece, Ra explains the speculative dual meanings behind the poem: one related to a forbidden and ultimately tragic love in the poet's own life, and the other being a subversive cry against the oppression and occupation of Korea by Japan beginning in 1910. Knowing Kim's biographical information, it is not difficult to imagine the poem as an outpouring of love and heartbreak. Though destined for an arranged marriage since childhood, Kim was deeply in love with another woman, who was herself betrothed by arrangement to another man. Devastatingly, his lover committed suicide as a young bride (Kim, So-wol himself died less than ten years later by suspected suicide). In a second interpretation, the "beloved" refers to the homeland of Korea, whose lifeblood was being drained by the Japanese occupation through horrific acts of genocide and cultural suppression. Ra explains how poetry of the era took on layers of hidden meaning as a form of resistance, positioning the poem as part of a larger body of protest works. Describing how the trauma from this era became imprinted in the shared consciousness of Koreans, Ra poignantly expresses how his sense of the yearning and anguish his own parents experienced settling in a new homeland in the U.S. influenced his writing in *Evocation*.

The piece begins with the solo cello crying out, as though from the “lonely hill” referenced in the poem. After a forceful attack, the call begins almost imperceptibly, gradually gaining in volume and intensity while moving from non-vibrato towards a wide vibrato. Ra describes effects heard in the solo cello—such as the widening of vibrato and sliding between pitches—as connecting to a lamenting style of singing or performance on traditional Korean instruments like the bamboo flute (*daegeum*). The writing for cello at times also seems reminiscent of the ancient string instrument known as *haegeum*, with grace notes becoming fast trills and repeated slides into a single note.

After the initial outcry from the cello alone, the remainder of the work follows a three-part structure. The outer sections, for cello and piano together, are hauntingly lyrical, at turns shimmering, anguished, and reflective. A pentatonic melody in the cello, adorned with grace notes and harmonized by lush chords in the piano, opens into a soaring phrase—but a series of densely clustered chords in the low range of the piano suggests irrevocable suffering. The middle section is a quasi-cadenza for the cello, marked “*appassionato, rough and raspy*,” the pianist holds down the sustain pedal while the cello plays, creating dense overtones. This section is the most fiery and tormented, an intensely lamenting personal plea. As though attempting to scale the distance from earth to sky with its cries (as the poem’s fourth stanza suggests) the cello embarks on a series of rising gestures, gaining momentum through their repetition. Ra notes that though his inspiration was the structure of the poem, the work’s slower outer sections with a more agitated inner section aligns with many forms of traditional Korean music and dance.

When the cello’s rising gestures at last seem unable to attain their goal, the piano re-enters with a weighty blow and the lyrical material takes on a new poignance. A tremulous accompaniment is added to the pentatonic melody heard in the earlier section, giving a sense of floating mid-air, and the piece ends suspended and unresolved in a high register of both instruments.

Patrick Jee, now a member of the New York Philharmonic, premiered *Evocation* in November of 2003 with pianist Andrew Armstrong at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco, and in 2009 recorded the work with pianist Hye-Yeon Park for the Urtext label. Numerous other works by Ra have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by acclaimed artists and ensembles internationally, including by the Arditti Quartet, Soovin Kim, and members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony and Seoul Philharmonic. James Ra, DMA, studied composition at Franklin and Marshall College, the Curtis Institute of Music, and Manhattan School of Music. Recipient of numerous fellowships and accolades, he was previously Composer-in-Residence for the Korean Concert Society of Washington, D.C., and his works have been heard in prestigious halls across the U.S. and Korea, and in France, India, Japan, and Turkey.

Though a traditionalist in compositional style, **Ernő (Ernst von) Dohnányi’s** impact on the national musical scene in his native Hungary cannot be overstated. Known internationally as Ernst von Dohnányi, the composer, pianist and conductor was especially influenced by a classically-inclined German Romanticism of the Brahmsian ilk. Indeed, Johannes Brahms himself was so taken by the young Dohnányi’s Piano Quintet in 1895 that he ensured the work would be performed in the Vienna Tonkünstler-Verein, aimed at promoting chamber music works by leading composers of the day. Dohnányi’s artistic influence in his homeland was thus felt more in his promotion of younger composers and his investment in the musical culture within Hungary than in any particularly revolutionary developments of compositional style.

A native of Pozsony (known today as Bratislava), Dohnányi attended conservatory in Budapest—an unconventional decision at the time for a Hungarian musician of his talent to remain in his home

country for conservatory training (Béla Bartók followed suit). After establishing himself as one of the leading pianists of his day, Dohnányi was invited by the great violinist and Brahms collaborator Joseph Joachim to teach at the Hochschule in Berlin, a post he held for 10 years. Upon returning to Hungary to teach at the Budapest Academy, his profound influence began to take hold: here, he brought to the forefront the work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, two composers who were little known at the time but have become defining voices in Hungarian music of the first half of the 20th Century, in part due to their ethnographic work with folk music, which initiated the field of ethnomusicology. Bartók's style in particular revolutionized classical music worldwide, and despite the distance between his compositional voice and Dohnányi's, the latter's support certainly aided in promoting Bartók's works early in his career.

Dohnányi's impact was also felt in raising the standard of musical performances nationally. A prolific concertizer, Dohnányi was known to present up to 120 performances in Hungary in a single year, establishing Budapest as a vibrant musical center. He conducted the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra for nearly 25 years and the Hungarian Radio for over a decade. Dohnányi was ardently anti-Nazi, choosing to leave the Academy rather than abide by antisemitic dictates, and after the outbreak of World War II, he disbanded the Philharmonic Orchestra rather than be forced to dismiss Jewish and other "non-Aryan" members of the orchestra. His son incidentally became a leader in the anti-Nazi resistance in Germany.

Dohnányi composed his **Sonata in B-flat for Violoncello and Piano, Op. 8** when he was only 22, and the work certainly bears the mark of a virtuoso pianist. As with many of his early works, the influence of Brahms is palpable throughout, and reminiscences of Schumann are also heard at various points. Written only two years after Brahms's death, the work goes well beyond a tribute to the master's style—fresh, innovative harmonically, and full of sensuously spun-out melodic lines, the work is a true testament to Dohnányi's originality and compositional brilliance. The sonata is in a traditional four-movement format, with a brief slow movement leading directly into the finale, akin to some of Beethoven's sonatas. As has been the case with many of Dohnányi's works, this sonata has regrettably not held as high a place in the canon amongst other great Romantic cello sonatas, though the exquisite second theme from the first movement has recently been used as the title music for videos produced by CelloBello.org, an online platform hosted by New England Conservatory.

The first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, opens in the relatively obscure key of B-flat minor, with a distant-sounding melody played in unison between the cello and piano. A rumbling triplet figure in the piano foreshadows the drama to come—the cello responds with a fragment of what will become the heroic first theme. Ratcheting up the tension, the dialogue builds and both instruments climb to great heights before breaking out into a soaring, fervent melodic line, spanning nearly the full range of the cello in only a few bars. A long trill ensues, and the statement of the heroic theme arrives like a protagonist ready to embark on an epic journey. But the tone is not weighty throughout—the second theme rises from the tumult with the tenderness of a young flower opening towards sunlight. A sense of rising and reaching towards ever-higher heights, paired with the heroic motif, permeates the movement. In sonata form with a modified recapitulation in B-flat major, the movement nearly bursts with youthful ecstasy and poetic lyricism before returning to its quiet, minor-inflected state from the opening.

The second movement Scherzo is particularly dazzling pianistically, with agile acrobatics and virtuosic runs across the keys while the cello plays a sly spiccato melody. In constant, almost taunting motion between the instruments, with asymmetrical phrase lengths and mercurial changes of character, the movement captures the essential playfulness and witticism of a scherzo. In contrast to the rapid

articulations of the outer sections, the middle section is a lyrical folk-like melody with an underlying march quality, almost humorously square in phrase lengths next to the unpredictability of the outer sections.

In a warm, glowing E major, the third movement *Adagio ma non troppo* nods to Brahms in the piano writing. The cello spins a glistening thread of melody, with yearning lifts and sighs and heart-throbbing suspensions against an E pedal in the bass. A quotation from the first movement suggests some tension under the surface, but the return of the opening melody offers reassurance. Turning a corner, the cello repeats a questioning figure in three octaves, pausing on a suspended harmony before swinging right into the fourth movement *Tema con Variazioni*. This final movement is a masterful set of variations that brings back primary material from each of the three preceding movements. The theme itself, marked *semplice*, resumes a charming folk-like character. Replete with harmonic ingenuity and nuance, the theme is not so simple as it purports to be, and these subtle shadings maintain a sense of discovery throughout the nine variations. Dohnányi's compositional dexterity is perhaps most on display when combining elements of the theme with melodic material from the preceding movements: the second variation is a light-hearted rendition of the second theme from the first movement; the fifth starts in a particularly Brahmsian fashion before quoting the heroic motif from the first movement; the seventh brings back a near replica of the second movement scherzo material. The eighth variation is particularly touching, layering the fourth movement *Tema* in the cello directly over the gorgeous third movement melody in the piano. The final variation acts as a coda, bringing back the theme in a sunny rendition and ending with a brilliant flare.

About the Artists

An avid chamber musician, cellist **Kirsten Jermé** has appeared internationally from Harlaxton College in England to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. to the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. Formerly cellist of the Larchmere String Quartet, she performed across the U.S., Canada and Italy and recorded for Naxos while serving as Eykamp String Quartet Faculty Artist-in-Residence at the University of Evansville and principal cellist of the Evansville Philharmonic. In New York, she has performed at Carnegie, Weill and Zankel Halls, the Joyce Dance Theater, Madison Square Garden, Le Poisson Rouge and the United Nations. She has appeared as a chamber musician with the Carolina Ballet, at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville and the Art Institute of Chicago, and has performed for the Dame Myra Hess Concert Series, Electric Earth Concert Series, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, Chamber Music Raleigh, and the Strad for Lunch Recital Series. This summer, she will perform as guest cellist with the Cassatt Quartet for the Seal Bay Festival in Maine and concerts in New York.

Kirsten recently served as Applied Music Lecturer in cello at North Carolina State University and has given masterclasses at UNC-Chapel Hill, Otterbein and Western Kentucky University. She helped launch a chamber music course at the University of Evansville and served on faculty for the North Carolina Chamber Music Institute and as Director of the Honors Division for the Lamar Stringfield Music Camp. She has also taught at New York institutions including Greenwich House Music School, Frank Sinatra High School of the Arts and 92nd Street Y.

Kirsten received her M.M. at Eastman School of Music as a pupil of Steven Doane, and her B.A. from Stony Brook University, where she studied with Colin Carr. She is currently pursuing her D.M.A. at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City as a pupil of Marcy Rosen, and serves as an adjunct at Brooklyn College.

Pianist **Nathaniel LaNasa** discovers fresh possibilities of sonority, gesture, and storytelling in music — especially in music being written NOW. In early 2022, Nate played sixty performances of Ricky Ian Gordon's new opera for two pianos, *Intimate Apparel*, at Lincoln Center Theater. He has premiered works for quarter-tone pianos by Dimitri Tymoczko at Princeton, made first recordings of chamber works by Tobias Picker for *Tzadik*, and workshopped Hannah Lash's most recent opera at Columbia's Miller Theater. Works written for him include Tyler Harrison's piano concerto, a protest song by Shawn Jaeger, and Molly Joyce's *YouSaidHeSaidSheSaid* for vocalist and singing pianist.

A consummate collaborator, he has been praised for his “stormy lyricism” (*The New York Times*) as well as his “poise and elegance” (*Feast of Music*). His projects range from vocal partnerships to premieres and performances with dancers. “The magic,” Nate says, “lies in expanding the spaces of our shared inspiration. It's all about dancing with the tension and flow of musical dialogue.”

As winners of the 2019 Joy In Singing International Art Song Competition, Nate and partner baritone Gregory Feldmann made their sold-out Carnegie Hall debut in February 2020. Nate also frequently partners with vocalist Lucy Dhegrae; they have performed together in the candlelit crypt of the Church of the Intercession, as part of the Resonant Bodies Festival, and at the American Music Festival (Albany Symphony). He's also appeared in song partnerships at the Musée d'Orsay, Royaumont Abbey, Brooklyn Art Song Society, and New York Festival of Song.

Nate's NYC credits include Alice Tully Hall, MoMA, and (le) Poisson Rouge. A graduate of the Juilliard School and a 2018 fellow at Tanglewood, Nate joined the coaching staff at Berlin Opera Academy in 2019, and the faculty of Saluzzo Opera Academy in 2021. Nathaniel-LaNasa.com