

# PORTRAITS

December 12th @ 7:30pm ET



*Yoshi Weinberg*



*Yaz Lancaster*

Featuring world premieres &  
compositions by non-binary composers  
**Yoshi Weinberg & Yaz Lancaster**

Elebash Hall  
CUNY Graduate Center  
365 5th Ave, New York, NY  
**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

\*Proof of vaccination & ID required to enter

## **Program:**

*Two Rosetti Settings* (2019) for countertenor and piano Yoshi Weinberg

I. After death

II. Catch at hope

Texts by Christina Rossetti

*floaters* (2020) for solo flute Yaz Lancaster

*deixis* (WORLD PREMIERE) for mezzo-soprano and flute Yaz Lancaster

Text by Yaz Lancaster

*Out of the Sickroom* (2017) for mezzo-soprano and piano Yoshi Weinberg

I. Cause and Effect

II. Come away, come away death

III. Bluebird

IV. Out of the sickroom and into the blazing white sun

Texts by Charles Bukowski and William Shakespeare

## ***Intermission***

*braid* (2016) for mezzo-soprano and violin/processing Yaz Lancaster

Narrative text improvised by Sophie Delphis\*

*Unreal City* (WORLD PREMIERE) Yoshi Weinberg

for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble

From *The Waste Land*

Text by T. S. Eliot

*our streets* (2022) for string quintet Yaz Lancaster

## **Performers**

Sophie Delphis, mezzo-soprano

Garrett Eucker, tenor/countertenor

Joseph Vaz, piano

Yoshi Weinberg, flute/piccolo

Tyler Neidermayer, clarinet/bass clarinet,  
electronic processing

Giancarlo Latta, violin

Sarah Thomas, violin

Martine Thomas, viola

Sarah Song, cello

Austin Lewellen, double bass

## **Bios**

**Yoshi Weinberg** (they/them) is a New York City based flutist, harpist, and composer. Lauded for their “sublime tone” and “creative interpretation and technical virtuosity” (I Care If You Listen),

Yoshi is a dedicated performer of contemporary and experimental works. They have performed on the stages of Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, National Sawdust, Roulette Intermedium (NYC), the Fitzgerald Theater (St. Paul, MN), the Ordway Center for the Arts (Minneapolis), Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada), Mahaiwe Theater (Great Barrington, MA), Orchestra Hall (Minneapolis, MN), Gesellschaftshaus (Magdeburg, Germany), Fondation des États-Unis (Paris, France), Conservatoire Darius Milhaud (Aix-en-Provence, France), Duomo di Pavia (Pavia, Italy), Palau de la Musica (Valencia, Spain), among many others. They currently are Artistic Director of NYC-based experimental music collective InfraSound, and is founding member and flutist for Apply Triangle, InfraSound, and KnoxTrio. As a sought after chamber musician, Yoshi has performed as an invited guest with legendary soprano Lucy Shelton, Ensemble Signal, Contemporaneous, the Da Capo Chamber Players, and Zeitgeist. Additionally, Yoshi served as Artistic Director of the Minnesotan new music ensemble RenegadeEnsemble for the 2017-2018 season, and performed regularly in Minneapolis/St. Paul as flutist with Renegade, Zeitgeist and Spitting Image Collective. Yoshi was a participant in the 2018 Ensemble Evolution residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts, where they worked and performed with members of the International Contemporary Ensemble, and premiered works by George Lewis, Cory Smythe, and themselves. Yoshi won 1st Prize in the 2015 Schubert Club Competition, 2nd Prize in the 2019 Upper-Midwest Flute Association Young Artist Competition, and 3rd Prize in the 2020 South Carolina Flute Society Young Artist Competition. An avid piccoloist, Yoshi currently plays 2nd flute/piccolo in the Berkshire Opera Festival orchestra, piccolo/3rd flute with the Greenwich Village Orchestra, and previously held the solo piccolo position with Encore Wind Ensemble.

As a composer, Yoshi's compositions have been described as "a stunning compositional display of polyphony and texture" (ICLYL) and "transcendent, emotional, and intimate" (Sparks and Wiry Cries), and that their work "artfully blends contemporary composition with fantastically haunting and dramatic poetry" (IN Magazine). Their works have been premiered by members of the Flute New Music Consortium, InfraSound, e(L)ement duo, the dream songs project, and RenegadeEnsemble, and have been featured on Minnesota Public Radio and at the American Harp Society Summer Institute.

Yoshi is currently studying their D.M.A. in Flute Performance at the CUNY Graduate Center, studying with Robert Dick. They graduated with a B.M. in Music Performance from Saint Olaf College in 2015 studying flute with Catherine Ramirez and harp with Elinor Niemisto, and a M.M. degree in Contemporary Music Performance at the Manhattan School of Music in 2020 studying flute with Tara Helen O'Connor, composition with Reiko Fütting, David Adamcyk, and Susan Botti, and harp with Susan Jolles. Other teachers and coaches include Margaret Kampmeier, Lucy Shelton, Patricia George, and Michele Frisch. Yoshi currently resides in Brooklyn, NY with their 55+ houseplants.

**Yaz Lancaster** (they/them) is a Black transdisciplinary artist. They are most interested in practices aligned with relational aesthetics & the everyday; fragments & collage; and liberatory politics.

Yaz performs as a violinist, vocalist & steel-pannist in a wide variety of settings; and their work is presented in many mediums & collaborative projects. It often reckons with specific influences ranging from politics of liberation & identity to natural phenomena & poetics. Their ongoing independent studies navigates prison-industrial-complex abolition, Marxist theory, and internet/social media cultures. Their writing appears in I CARE IF YOU LISTEN and various literary publications.

Most recently they have been developing post-genre duo *laydøwn* with Toronto-based guitarist/producer Andrew Noseworthy; and working on new music with Opera Philadelphia, the National Sawdust Ensemble, and Bearthoven. Yaz has recording credits on recent/upcoming projects with Miss Grit, Massa Nera, Nyokabi Kariūki, and BAKUDI SCREAM. Their debut album of commissioned music for violin/voice & electronics with video *AmethYst* is forthcoming on *people | places | records*.

Yaz holds degrees in violin and poetry from New York University where they studied with Cyrus Beroukhim, Robert Honstein, Joan La Barbara & Terrance Hayes (among others). They currently live in Lenapehoking (NYC) with their little dog Nori; and they enjoy chess, horror movies, and jalapeños.

## **Program Notes**

### **Yaz Lancaster**

*floater* (2020)

*deixis* (WORLD PREMIERE)

*braid* (2020)

*our streets* (2022)

While seemingly disparate in concept, narrative, and focus; each of these four works navigate ideas of space. Space to recall and reflect, holding space for those who struggled before us, space between words and thoughts, (meta)physical space. *floater* was written as a way to transmute the experience of eye floaters— black stringy, squiggly objects that drift across the field of vision as your vitreous ages or deteriorates. There are stretches of time where I cannot see them, however since curiously acquiring them in June 2020, I catch them fleeting through my eyeballs daily. This piece utilizes rest/space, and small, (sometimes awkward) active gestures. *deixis* – written specifically for this program – deals with the space between semantic and denoted meaning. The term “non-binary” has shifted to signify something different than it did when I came out nearly seven years ago. I continually examine the label and my relation to it as this context shifts. The text captures this feeling of translucence or vanishing, as the space/time/context(s) between these connotations grow. *braid* is an exploratory work that asks the vocalist to “tell us about a significant, happy childhood memory.” It is both intimate and spacious, as the violinist emerges from and responds to the vocalist’s sound and narration. Finally, *our streets* commemorates the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre in which white supremacists attacked and destroyed the Black community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Not entirely an elegy nor total celebration of Black Capitalism, the piece moves through and occupies the space of several

moods, themes, and collections of gestures during my research of and reflection on the tragic, though complex history.

### **Yoshi Weinberg**

Two Rossetti Settings (2019)

Out of the Sickroom (2017)

Unreal City (WORLD PREMIERE)

CW: mentions of death and suicide

As a composer, I have always been drawn to the voice as an instrument of expression. These three song cycles represent three different pivotal moments in my composition career and collaborations with three incredible performers I owe for their creation of the pieces. All three of these works deal with the theme of death and decay.

The first work *Two Rossetti Settings* was written for one of my dearest friends and collaborators, countertenor Luke Paulino. When we were discussing a new work for him to sing, he was interested in mixing his countertenor and tenor ranges. With this idea, I looked into the poetry of Christina Rossetti, and aimed to create a “queering” of the countertenor voice through these two poem settings. Rossetti’s poetry is a reflection of her struggle with physical ailment and the constant prospect of being at death’s door. Through her words she is able to tackle subjects of love, depression, anxiety, and hope.

The second cycle was written for mezzo-soprano Alyssa Anderson. Alyssa was one of my first collaborators in Minneapolis after I graduated undergrad, and she gave me my first professional commission as a composer. This work deals with the subject suicide, as told through the perspective of one narrator. The inspiration came from my interaction with a young non-binary homeless artist who was recovering from alcohol addiction. They had stopped me asking for directions after having bikes 10 miles in fur-covered platform heels. I was out having coffee, and we just started chatting. They were telling me about how their friend had just “tossed in the towel” and took her own life. I was taken aback at how nonchalant they seemed about the situation, and they explained to me that in their life they have seen countless friends attempt or commit suicide and that they could no longer blame them. They then began to recite part of Charles Bukowski’s poems “Out of the sickroom and into the blazing white sun.” This experience has shaped the piece as a whole, from a beginning wrought with despair and grief, to an ending that is hopeful and optimistic.

My final piece to this eclectic program is just as eclectic. *Unreal City* is a partial setting of modernist poet T. S. Eliot’s *What the Thunder Said*, which is from his much larger poem *The Waste Land* (1922). This piece is written for and dedicated to Sophie Delphis, who has inspired many conversations and collaborations during my time here at CUNY. I wanted to write a piece that encapsulates Sophie’s astonishing range with her intellectual and charismatic stage presence. *Unreal City* will eventually become part of an evening-length song cycle setting of

*The Waste Land*: the first ever fully musical setting of T. S. Eliot's seminal work and a project that has been four years in the making.

I dedicate this evening's performances to the many loved ones we have lost over the last two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the many queer and trans people who have had their lives taken from them much too soon. May their memory be a blessing.

## **Texts**

***After Death*** by Christina Rossetti

The curtains were half drawn, the floor was swept  
And strewn with rushes, rosemary and may  
Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay,  
Where through the lattice ivy-shadows crept.  
He leaned above me, thinking that I slept  
And could not hear him; but I heard him say,  
'Poor child, poor child': and as he turned away  
Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.  
He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold  
That hid my face, or take my hand in his,  
Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head:  
He did not love me living; but once dead  
He pitied me; and very sweet it is  
To know he still is warm though I am cold.

***De Profundis*** by Christina Rossetti

Oh why is heaven built so far,  
Oh why is earth set so remote?  
I cannot reach the nearest star  
That hangs afloat.

I would not care to reach the moon,  
One round monotonous of change;  
Yet even she repeats her tune  
Beyond my range.

I never watch the scatter'd fire  
Of stars, or sun's far-trailing train,  
But all my heart is one desire,  
And all in vain:

For I am bound with fleshly bands,  
Joy, beauty, lie beyond my scope;  
I strain my heart, I stretch my hands,

And catch at hope.

**deixis** by Yaz Lancaster (text becomes fragmented in the piece)

I am not here

I do not exist

no one can hear (me)

no one can see me (anymore)

nobody can see me

no one touches (me)

you can hear (me)

you cannot hear me

you can see me

you cannot see me

nobody touches me

you touch me

**Cause and Effect** by Charles Bukowski

the best often die by their own hand

just to get away,

and those left behind

can never quite understand

why anybody

would ever want to

get away

from

them

**Come away, come away death** by William Shakespeare

Come away, come away, death,

And in sad cypress let me be laid.

*\*Fly away, fly away, breath;*

*I am slain by a fair cruel maid.*

*My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,*

*O, prepare it!*

*My part of death, no one so true*

*Did share it.\**

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,

On my black coffin let there be strown.

Not a friend, not a friend greet

My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.

A thousand thousand sighs to save,

Lay me, O, where

Sad true lover never find my grave,  
To weep there!

*\*text not set in this song*

**Bluebird** by Charles Bukowski

there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I'm too tough for him,  
I say, stay in there, I'm not going  
to let anybody see  
you.

there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I pour whiskey on him and inhale  
cigarette smoke  
and the whores and the bartenders  
and the grocery clerks  
never know that  
he's  
in there.

there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I'm too tough for him,  
I say,  
stay down, do you want to mess  
me up?  
you want to screw up the  
works?  
you want to blow my book sales in  
Europe?  
there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I'm too clever, I only let him out  
at night sometimes  
when everybody's asleep.  
I say, I know that you're there,  
so don't be  
sad.  
then I put him back,  
but he's singing a little  
in there, I haven't quite let him  
die



and we sleep together like  
that  
with our  
secret pact  
and it's nice enough to  
make a man  
weep, but I don't  
weep, do  
you?

**Out of the sickroom and into the blazing white sun** by Charles Bukowski

hey, you're not dead, you're  
doing good, damned good again,  
what's this talk about tossing it  
in?  
what you were doing while you  
were feeling sick enough  
to die,  
what you were really doing was just re-  
charging your  
Batteries.

now let everybody get  
out of the way,  
you're thundering  
down the track again  
like a locomotive  
hauling 90 thousand  
unwritten poems  
and they're all  
yours  
and you're pounding along  
the rails  
sometimes through dark tunnels  
but then roaring out again  
into the  
light!

who the hell said that  
you no longer had it in  
you?

it was you who said that.



And also water  
And water  
A spring  
A pool among the rock  
If there were the sound of water only  
Not the cicada  
And dry grass singing  
But sound of water over a rock  
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees  
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?  
When I count, there are only you and I together  
But when I look ahead up the white road  
There is always another one walking beside you  
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded  
I do not know whether a man or a woman  
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air  
Murmur of maternal lamentation  
Who are those hooded hordes swarming  
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth  
Ringed by the flat horizon only  
What is the city over the mountains  
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air  
Falling towers  
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
Vienna London  
Unreal\*

\*A woman drew her long black hair out tight  
And fiddled whisper music on those strings  
And bats with baby faces in the violet light  
Whistled, and beat their wings  
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall  
And upside down in air were towers  
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours  
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains  
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing  
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel

There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.  
It has no windows, and the door swings,  
Dry bones can harm no one.  
Only a cock stood on the rooftree  
Co co rico co co rico  
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust  
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves  
Waited for rain, while the black clouds  
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.  
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.  
Then spoke the thunder

DA

Datta: what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart  
The awful daring of a moment's surrender  
Which an age of prudence can never retract  
By this, and this only, we have existed  
Which is not to be found in our obituaries  
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider  
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor  
In our empty rooms

DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key  
Turn in the door once and turn once only  
We think of the key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison  
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours  
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

Damyata: The boat responded  
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar  
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded  
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient  
To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore  
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order?  
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down  
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina  
Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow  
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie

These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.  
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.  
Shantih shantih shantih\*

\*text not set in this song