

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

April 8, 2024 6:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Amber Evans, soprano

with Francesca Ferrara, bass flute; Niccolo Seligmann, viola da gamba; Giancarlo Latta and Samuel Andonian, violins; Martine Thomas, viola; Aaron Wolff, cello; Samuel Zagnit, double bass; Jay Julio, viola; and Violetta Maria Norrie, harp

“Fables for the Present Day”

The Very Short Sutra on the Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess (2024) Forrest Pierce
*for voice and shruti box, world premiere (b. 1972)

Invocation VI from the opera *Invocation* (2003) Beat Furrer
(b. 1954)
with Francesca Ferrara, bass flute

Sino alla morte from *Diporti di Euterpe*, Op. 7 (1659) Barbara Strozzi
(1619–77)
with Niccolo Seligmann, viola da gamba

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 2 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 10 (1908) Arnold Schönberg
III. Litanei, langsam (1874–1951)
IV. Entrückung, sehr langsam

*with Giancarlo Latta and Samuel Andonian, violins;
Martine Thomas, viola; and Aaron Wolff, cello*

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

The Ornithologia (Or The Phenomenal Unfettering of One Philomela) Aaron Israel Levin
(2019) (b. 1995)
Waking Up: Part I
Bird Dream 2: Juniper Tree
Waking Up: Part II
with Samuel Zagnit, double bass

September Sonnets (2024) *world premiere preview Oliver Vibrans
Steeplechase (b. 1995)
No. 8
I know a woman in New York
with Jay Julio, viola and Violetta Maria Norrie, harp

Sonic Meditation XIV, “Tumbling Song” Pauline Oliveros
*all present in the hall invited to participate (1932–2016)

Notes on the Program

Fables for the Present Day

This program has been a true labour of love, and I am thrilled to be able to present this eclectic offering with music spanning from 1659 to March of this year! The classical voice song recital has been heavily associated as a genre in tandem with piano accompaniment, reflective of its long-standing presence stemming from the 19th century art song tradition. Tonight, the piano has left the stage, giving way to equally evocative contributions to vocal chamber music. Each work in the program could be conceived of as microcosmic insights into new ways of thinking and experiencing the world. The narratives of the two halves of the program are presented as dual triptychs; the first, a meditation on the sacred and romantic facets of human existence, the second expanding one’s awareness across the spectrum of reality versus fantasy, questioning worlds existing beyond our own limits of perception.

The Very Short Sutra on the Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess (2024)

World premiere performance

Forrest Pierce (b. 1972)

for voice and 440Hz shruti box

The brilliant Australian soprano Amber Evans and I kept each other going through the first year of covid by working on a large solo opera. Zen Master Raven arrived a bit at a time through pdfs and videos, Amber from her New York studio apartment, and I from my ramshackle, spidery Kansas garden shed. Life returned to normal before the work was complete, but the opera brought to our attention the possibilities of a single singer

accompanying themselves with a Shruti Box, a practice drone instrument common in South Asia. Shrutis are designed to give drones on any one or more pitches, and it wasn't long before it became clear they could also provide rhythmic ostinatos and grand chromatic clusters. When we at last agreed on a more practical project, a setting of *The Very Short Sutra on the Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess*, it was natural to use the Shrutis we had purchased as a self-propelled orchestra for the work.

The poet Rick Fields was a significant figure in American Buddhism. A poet, historian, practitioner and accomplished editor of publications ranging from *Tricycle* to *Yoga Journal*, he was the author of *How the Swans Came to the Lake*, *Chop Wood Carry Water*, and *Instructions to the Cook*; *A Zen Master's Lessons in Living a Life That Matters*, among many others. "The Very Short Sutra on the Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess," used with the gracious permission of Marcia Fields and the estate of Rick Fields, takes the form of a Buddhist sutra—a discourse on the life or words of the historical Buddha. In Fields' playful and transcendent parody, however, the equanimous Middle Way of the Buddhist Path must contend with an equally-real, equally-experiential tradition: the devotional path of the Goddess. Through humor, keen observation and real wisdom, Fields takes the reader on a journey of discovery that embraces disciplined practice and expansive sensuality, detached awareness and embodied experience. The conversation of the Buddha and the Goddess, and their interpenetrating Darshan (shared glance), flowers at last into a newly composed mantra. The quintessential teaching formula, announced in grandiloquence traditional to the form, distills down to a final reassurance: Remember this: You can't miss.

- Forrest Pierce

Invocation VI from the opera *Invocation* (2003)
Beat Furrer (b. 1954)

Beat Furrer was born in Schaffhausen, Switzerland in 1954 and received his first musical training on piano at the Music School there. After moving to Vienna in 1975, he studied conducting with Otmar Suitner and composition with Roman Haubenstock Ramati at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst. In 1985 he founded the Klangforum Wien, which he directed until 1992, and with which he is still associated as conductor. Commissioned by the Vienna State Opera, he composed his first opera *Die Blinden*. *Narcissus* was premiered in 1994 as part of the Festival "steirischer herbst" at the Graz Opera. Continuing along his operatic writing trajectory His opera *invocation* was premiered in Zürich in 2003. This work is titled as the sixth excerpt from the opera, scored for solo soprano and bass flute. The poem by Juan de la Cruz outlines a snapshot of Anne Desbaredes' story, the wife of a factory owner. She is accused of being the instigator of a murder by gunshot in the bar below the factory. Anne enters the pub, and returns each day for a few days, and talks to a stranger in short sentences about the murder and how it came about. The boundaries between someone else's fate and her own are blurred. In her newly-forged relationship with the unknown person, congruently, the relationship between the murdered woman and her murderer seem to mysteriously align. Furrer's intention for the musical content is to highlight these changing perspectives (camera shots), corresponding to his idea of temporal compression (simultaneity) of linear progressions (the eight separate movements). In Furrer's mind, all components of the narrative are present from the beginning, whereby things (figures) emerge and recede again. While the narrative addresses desire (the protagonist's skin), the focus of his compositional oeuvre in this work is Anne's voice, whose intimacy presents itself in the "dramatic" space between the cultivated "operatic voice" and the immediacy of a physical expression (breath, scream etc.).

Sino alla morte from *Diporti di Euterpe*, op. 7 (“Until death” from Euterpe’s Pleasures) (1659)
Barbara Strozzi (1619-77)

Barbara Strozzi was a highly acclaimed composer and vocal performer in the seventeenth century, known for her significant contributions to Venetian arias and ariettas. She is widely celebrated as one of the earliest composers, regardless of gender, to produce a large number of cantatas. Between 1644 and 1664, Strozzi released eight volumes of music containing over 100 works, often focusing on the soprano voice. The seventh collection, *Diporti di Euterpe* (Euterpe’s Pleasures), published in 1659, showcases her deep emotional expression and ability to evoke raw emotions in the listener. Despite the challenges posed by being a woman composer during the Baroque period, Strozzi’s achievements as a vocalist and composer overcome any adversities faced. Her exploration of secular cantatas in a predominantly operatic musical landscape was ground breaking and left a lasting influence on her contemporaries. Barbara Strozzi’s legacy endures as a trailblazing secular female composer in Western European history. *Sino alla morte* is considered one of her greatest laments ever written, and the vocal lines are clearly written by a soprano who sang these pieces herself, and understood how to showcase her own instrument. The fireworks display of dramatic impulses are only further heightened by choosing to present the accompaniment with an instrument one normally does not associate with its polyphonic possibilities. The viola da gamba via Niccolò Seligmann’s innate virtuosity and command makes the listener feel that the melding of soprano and gamba presents an intimate version of this heart-wrenching lament.

String Quartet no. 2 in F-sharp minor, op. 10, mvts 3 and 4 (1908)
Arnold Schönberg

Arnold Schoenberg’s *String Quartet no. 2*, op. 10, stands as a cornerstone of the turn of the twentieth century modernism, heralding a pivotal shift in Western art music. Composed from March 1907 to August 1908, its final movement signifies a decisive departure from tonal harmony towards what has been termed an atonal structure. Before this ground breaking work, Schoenberg explored the post-Wagnerian harmonic language of the *fin de siècle* era, pushing tonal boundaries to their limits by prolonging the cadential resolutions of prolonged dissonant passages. Schoenberg and subsequent composers of the Second Viennese School and beyond ventured into exploring atonality with gusto, whereby hierarchical harmonic frameworks were no longer a requisite in a composition’s structure.

The third movement, set in the leaden-weight key of E flat minor, introduces a soprano voice, signifying the first time a voice is scored in tandem with a string quartet. The text setting adapts Stefan George’s *Litanei*. The beginning of the movement directly references the thematic material of the second movement, as an augmentation of the original subject, and this theme leads us into the introduction of the soprano: *Tief ist die trauer die mich umdüstert, Ein tret ich wieder, Herr! in dein haus.* (Deep is the sadness that gloomily comes over me, Again I step, Lord, in your house.)

The fourth and final movement, featuring another George poem titled *Entrückung*, evades tonal harmonic structures, instead relying on textual and motivic coherence.

Despite its atonal harmonic framework, the quartet’s emotional trajectory is profound. The listener opens to the invitation of entering a new dimension of awareness with the first line of poetry: *Ich fühle luft von anderem planeten.* (I feel air from another planet.)

In comparison with the third movement’s harrowing intensity, the closing movement exudes a calm, serene atmosphere. This emotional progression mirrors Schoenberg’s personal turmoil during composition—his wife Mathilde leaving him and their children for the artist Richard Gerstl. Anton

Webern, a pupil of Schoenberg's at the time, convinced Mathilde to return to Schoenberg, leading him Gerstl to hang himself, prompting the slow departure of Mathilde's sanity. She was institutionalised for the rest of her life shortly after the quartet's completion.

I am beyond fortunate to be joined by CUNY and CUNY-adjacent stringing friends for this wild ride, and I am touched that they are willing to dive into it with me for my first draft performance, of what I hope instigates many repeat performances to come.

The Ornithologia (Or The Phenomenal Unfettering of One Philomela) (2019)

Waking Up: Part I; Bird Dream 2: Juniper Tree; Waking Up: Part II

Aaron Israel Levin (b. 1995)

I had always wanted to write a piece about metamorphosis. While I was looking at Ovid's classic texts, I learned about a predecessor to his famous *Metamorphoses* by a Greek poet named Boios, called *The Ornithologia*, which was a collection of transformation stories specifically about humans changing into birds. Since Boios's original writings have now essentially been lost, I thought it would be interesting to compile my own "ornithologia."

Both transformation and the desire to fly have a supernatural quality that also feels subliminal. Because of this, I wanted to set my "ornithologia" in the context of a dream. The piece is structured in an arc form, where the first and last movements are connected, the second and second-to-last movements are connected, and the middle movement is unique. Like David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, or Christopher Nolan's *Inception*, the listener (and performer) is taken through a series of dreams into the central dream, and then has to come back out the way they came. Each dream deals with a different bird-transformation. In this way, my *Ornithologia* investigates the one-way directionality of transformation while also dealing with the cyclical nature of time.

The Ornithologia (Or The Phenomenal Unfettering Of One Philomela) was commissioned by, written for, and is dedicated to conflux: Amber Evans and Sam Zagnit.

-Aaron Israel Levin

The first and last movements (Waking Up) are based on a proverb by the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (c. 369 BCE - c. 286 BCE). In this proverb, Zhuangzi details an experience in which he wakes from a dream where he had been a butterfly, and in waking is unsure if he had dreamt that he was a butterfly, or if he is now a butterfly dreaming that he is human. His lesson from this experience is that the only way for a human to be a butterfly, and vice versa, is through transformation. In my adaption for this piece, I changed the butterfly into a bird. The middle movement (Juniper Tree), comes from a Brothers Grimm fairy tale. In this story, a boy's birth-mother tragically dies and his father remarries a wicked step-mother archetype, who has a daughter of her own from a previous marriage. The step-mother is jealous of the boy because, per law, the father's inheritance will go to his son, rather than to her daughter. One day, while the father is at work, the step-mother, in a fit of rage, murders the boy and cooks him in a stew, with the little step-sister witnessing everything. When the father returns home, the stepmother makes up some excuse about his son being away. At dinner, the stepmother feeds the father his own son. The stepsister, out of guilt, buries her step-brother's bones beneath a juniper tree, and the boy is magically reborn as a bird. The bird flies around the village singing a song - the song that is used as the text for this piece. The villagers are so enchanted by the bird that they give the bird a variety of gifts, one of the gifts being the blacksmith's anvil. When the bird flies home, he drops the anvil on the wicked stepmother, killing her.

September Sonnets

Steeplechase, No. 8 and I know a woman in New York (2024)

World premiere preview

Oliver Vibrans (b. 1995)

The September Sonnets have probably been some eight years in the coming, and then, in the end, some three weeks in the delivering; the first three at least. This is the first three of the nine sonnets Sam wrote during his last trip to America.

When approaching setting text, I always strive to give the words as much clarity through the music as possible, not obscuring with melisma or distorting the rhythms of phrases beyond recognition. My aim is always to allow text to occupy complementary aural space within the setting rather than existing in a state of competition with the music. For me, words should be able to retain an inner sense of expressive structure that should not be compromised by the expressive demands of the music.

With Sam's text, what emerged was a methodology whereby I was able to find tiny cells of internal rhythm within individual phrases, as opposed to longer rhythmic ideas one might find in other text derived from rhyme schemes. This made for a somewhat modular collage of ideas in which I could find opportunities to return to melodic themes and shapes in unexpected places. It then seemed necessary to impose a broader musical frame that was very rigid in structure and thematic material so as to present the melodic material of the text in a satisfying way.

I also strived to create a sense of equality in the ensemble and avoid clichés of accompanist verses soloist. The result was a much more 'orchestral' approach to the ensemble writing: all performers simultaneously contributing as components of a single sound or gesture. I have also foregrounded all the performers equally at various points so as to give them all the opportunity to express their own collective musical voice.

We hope to space out the setting of the rest of sonnets around future performances. The staggering of the writing presents exciting opportunities to learn from how the ensemble works and interacts with the words and. Hopefully at least, chart some development of our relationship with the material.

-Oliver Vibrans

September Sonnets were written through October-January 2023/24.

This is a preview small selection from them. There are ten in total.

They were written in New York and Manchester, UK.

George Oppen's 'Discrete Series' was important to their writing.

And I suppose they are poems about what it means to be very far and very close to someone.

We can be far and close in so many different ways these days. I think it can be complicated to live in that.

-Samuel Fairbrother

This song cycle preview presents Vibrans' settings of three of the nine sonnets written by Fairbrother. I am beyond fortunate to share in this joyous occasion alongside the Eleventh Hour duo: Jay Julio, viola and Violetta Maria Norrie, harp.

About the Artists

Amber Evans is an Australian vocalist, conductor and composer currently based in the US. She regularly performs as an early music soloist, chamber ensemble vocalist, and contemporary opera/vocal specialist, with consistent touring engagements in Australia, the US and the UK. Winner of the inaugural US Dwight and Ursula Mamlok Advancement Award for the interpretation of contemporary music, she is committed to the vital artistic collaboration with composers to thoughtfully contribute to the musical canon of the present day. An exponent of the capabilities of the “extra-normal” voice, Amber has premiered over seventy specialised solo vocal chamber works, engaging audiences with ever-changing insights into the paramount role of the voice in the evolution of art-making. She is also a featured soloist and chorusmaster on the CD of Poul Ruders’ new opera *The Thirteenth Child* under the Bridge Records label, which was released in conjunction with the Santa Fe Opera premiere in the summer of 2019. In 2022 for Opera Queensland (OQ), Amber joined their Young Artist Program. Most recently, she sang as a featured soloist in the QPAC Concert Hall season of OQ’s *The Sopranos* with Queensland Symphony Orchestra, and toured regionally throughout Queensland with the production in May. During her time back in Brisbane, Amber became the inaugural lecturer for aural studies at the Young Conservatorium, stepped in as assistant conductor for *The Australian Voices*, established the vocal sextet *Formant*, and directed the music for All Saints Anglican Church.

Upon her return to the US, Amber has begun her doctoral studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, under the tutelage of Neil Semer. She has returned to many of her musical endeavours prior to the pandemic, including work with medieval ensemble *Concordian Dawn*, new music ensembles *BlackBox* and *Infrasound*, her soprano and double bass duo *confluss*, concerts and services with the Choir of St. Luke in the Fields, and is a permanent extra member of the *Ekmeles* new music vocal sextet. www.amberevansmusic.com

Forrest (Farhad) Pierce, lover of both emptiness and bliss, is a composer and poet of the Great Plains. Originally from the Columbia Plateau of Washington state, he writes music of meditative stillness and ecstatic virtuosity rooted in a deep connection to the natural world. A longtime member of the vividly convivial faculty of the Cortona Sessions for New Music and an indiscriminate enthusiast, he is Professor of composition at the University of Kansas. Forrest teaches Sufism in the *Inayati* tradition, enjoys camping at high altitude, and leads *zikr* in his local community.

Flutist **Francesca Ferrara** has followed her music from Santa Monica, California, where she grew up, to New York City. With the goal of building community, she dedicates her life to performing, teaching, and advocating for new music. She frequently collaborates with composers and is a core member of the New York City based ensemble, *Amalgama*. Francesca has also been a performer with *Argento New Music Project*, *ShoutHouse* ensemble, *Camerata Washington Heights* orchestra, *Princeton Pro Musica Orchestra*, and in August of 2018 was a resident fellow in the Contemporary Performance Institute at Brandeis University. Francesca holds a Master of Music degree in Contemporary Performance from Manhattan School of Music where she was a student of Tara O’Connor, and a Bachelor of Music degree from The Boston Conservatory where she studied with Sarah Brady.

Niccolo Seligmann (they/them) is currently the most widely-heard medieval fiddler in the world, featured in soundtracks from Netflix’s *The Witcher*, Firaxis Games’ *Civilization VI*, Obsidian Entertainment’s *Pentiment*, and many more big-budget and indie games, film, and streaming series. Niccolo’s opera & live theatre music includes *Julie Monster: A Queer Baroque Opera*, *An Iliad*, *Minerva: Times Change*, and a full-length electronic dance remix of Dave Malloy’s *Ghost Quartet*.

They perform diverse genres nationally with early & traditional music ensembles Alkemie, The Broken Consort, Concordian Dawn, Eya, Hesperus, Washington Bach Consort, and Wherligig. When not touring with their ensembles or recording soundtracks, Niccolo can be found gleefully recording harsh noise, lo-fi dance music, glitchcore, and drone metal in their home studio in the forests of central Maryland. They hold a B.M. in Viola da gamba Performance from Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University.

Giancarlo Latta, a passionate violinist and composer deeply engaged in contemporary music, explores the dynamic intersection of old and new musical realms. With a diverse repertoire and a fervent commitment to collaborative ventures, he curates projects that traverse various compositional styles and epochs. Collaborating with numerous esteemed composers such as Marcos Balter, Christopher Cerrone, and Anna Thorvaldsdottir, he has performed in prestigious venues worldwide, from New York's Lincoln Center to London's Royal Albert Hall. Joining the renowned Argus Quartet in 2019, Giancarlo's performances have been praised for seamlessly blending classical standards with modern works, exemplifying his belief in the coexistence and mutual enrichment of diverse musical genres. Recent highlights include performances with flutist Claire Chase, premiering new compositions, and residencies at esteemed institutions such as Avaloch Farm and Yellow Barn. A versatile musician, Giancarlo also co-leads the duo escapeVelocity and is a founding member of KINETIC, a conductorless ensemble based in Houston. Rooted in Ann Arbor, Michigan, he honed his craft under the guidance of esteemed mentors at Rice University and the Music Institute of Chicago. Through his compositions, performances, and writings, Giancarlo seeks to blur boundaries and forge connections between tradition and innovation in the realm of music.

Praised by The Boston Musical Intelligencer for his “sonorous, sweet tone and masterful phrasing,” Armenian-American violinist **Samuel Andonian** hails originally from Massachusetts, and is a graduate of The Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Catherine Cho and Donald Weilerstein. Currently, Andonian is a doctoral fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center as a student of Catherine Cho and Mark Steinberg. Andonian has performed solo with the Boston Pops Orchestra, the New York Classical Players, the New England Philharmonic, and at festivals including The Perlman Music Program’s Chamber Music Workshop, Kneisel Hall and Norfolk Chamber Music Festivals. He has performed with artists such as Kim Kashkashian, Donald Weilerstein, Roger Tapping, and members of the Brentano String Quartet. This summer, he will attend the Marlboro Music Festival.

Important to his musical purpose has been Andonian’s work interning and performing with Music for Food, a musician-led initiative founded by violist Kim Kashkashian, which collects donations from its performances for organizations fighting food insecurity in their local community.

Martine Thomas, violist, performs internationally as a soloist, chamber musician, and improviser. She has appeared at the Berliner Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, BBC Proms, and Lucerne Festival and has performed with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and Ghost Ensemble. Martine has recently premiered works by Tyshawn Sorey, Catherine Lamb, and Miya Masaoka. She looks forward to solo recitals this season in New York City, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and upstate New York. Martine studied in the Harvard-NEC dual degree program, is currently working on her doctorate in viola performance at CUNY Graduate Center, and is on the string faculty at Brooklyn College Conservatory and Point CounterPoint. For more of her music and writing, please visit martinethomas.com.

Described by the Chicago Tribune as “a musician of quicksilver brilliance,” **Aaron Wolff** is a New York City-based cellist and performer active in solo, collaborative, and cross-disciplinary

capacities. Aaron gave his Carnegie Hall debut in Weill Recital Hall as the winner of the 2023 Leo B. Ruiz Memorial recital. A prizewinner of the Schadt, Barbash, and Cleveland Cello Society Competitions, he has performed at the Metropolitan Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, Bargemusic, The City Reliquary, MASS MoCA, Nasher Sculpture Center and The Cleveland Art Museum as well as traditional venues like the Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Center Chicago, Prague's Rudolfinum, Vienna's Musikverein, Köln's Philharmonie, and KKL Luzern. Aaron received a B.A. in comparative literature and B.M. in cello performance from Oberlin College & Conservatory. He then completed Master's degree at Juilliard, where he was a Kovner Fellow under Joel Krosnick, and an Artist Diploma under Tim Eddy and Fred Sherry. He is now pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at CUNY: The Graduate Center, studying with violinist Mark Steinberg of the Brentano Quartet. Aaron plays an 1813 Thomas Kennedy cello made in London.

A versatile bassist, composer, and educator, **Samuel Zagnit** is a New York born and raised musician who enjoys a multifaceted career, from performing in smaller, experimental venues like Bushwick Public House, to touring with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra across the country. Performing and composing contemporary music make up a large part of Sam's career, and he is dedicated to performing works by living composers and creating a more inclusive environment in every musical context. As a composer, his work focuses on self-reflection as a way to deepen connections and build intimacy with his audience and fellow musicians on stage. Sam has worked and studied with many exemplary musicians from many generations, including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Orin O'Brien, Mattias Pintcher, Lucy Shelton, Jessie Montgomery, and Seth Parker Woods. Sam is part of the duo *conflus*, with soprano Amber Evans, an up-and-coming chamber ensemble committed to the exploration of their unique timbre and sound through performing original compositions for their ensemble, some by Sam himself. Since 2019, Sam has served as Acting Associate Principal Bass with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, where he plays alongside his former teacher, David Grossman. This April, Sam performs with Orpheus at the Carteret Performing Arts Center, The Houston Symphony, and with Amber Evans at the CUNY Grad Center. As an educator, Sam is a teaching artist for the Harmony Program in NYC, and leads workshops and residencies with the arts education program, LEAP. Sam is a graduate of the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Don Palma, and a recent graduate of the Performer/Composer MM at the New School.

Aaron Israel Levin, an American composer, crafts emotionally dynamic music infused with storytelling and drama, drawing from a diverse array of influences such as American minimalism, European modernism, Jewish folklore, and Italian cinema. His compositions, characterized by a blend of somberness and playfulness, have been performed and commissioned by esteemed ensembles and artists worldwide. Passionate about collaboration, Aaron frequently collaborates with artists in theater, dance, and film, co-founding the chamber music project *Rattlebox Music* in Minneapolis. His works have been featured at prominent venues and festivals, and he has garnered numerous accolades, including the Cortona Prize and the Druckman Prize from the Aspen Music Festival & School. Currently pursuing his DMA at the Yale School of Music, Aaron's residency at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague in the Netherlands is supported by the Frank Huntington Beebe Fund.

Originally from Uniondale, New York, 26-year old first-generation Filipino-American **Jay Julio** (they/siya) is the Assistant Principal Violist of the Opera Philadelphia Orchestra, substitute violist with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, the Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra, the Dallas, Memphis, Charleston, and Virginia Symphonies, and has been invited to play with the New York Pops, the American Composers Orchestra, the Metropolis Ensemble, and PROTESTRA. Recent appearances include solo turns with the Ocala Symphony, the Marquette Symphony, and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, and chamber music performances on the TIME SPANS Festival with the Talea

Ensemble, the Broadway Advocacy Coalition's Arts in Action Festival, and on tour with Norman Menzales' Sampaguita Filipino Flute Project through Buffalo and Montana. They work closely with harpist Violetta Maria Norrie in harp-violin duo Eleventh Hour, and currently lead musical-abolitionist collective Sound Off: Music for Bail, recipient of grants from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Copland Fund, and New Music USA for their work platforming musicians and composers from traditionally marginalized backgrounds and mobilizing audiences against oppression. This August, they join Hamilton on tour as violist/violinist. BM, Manhattan School of Music, MM, The Juilliard School (Susan W. Rose Graduate Fellow and Music Advancement Program Teaching Fellow).

Praised for her “powerful command and nuanced facility (onemanz blog)”, **Violetta Maria Norrie** is a harpist and improviser of diverse range and ability. She began playing the harp at the age of 6, after falling in love with the instrument at a Renaissance Faire. Since then she has performed orchestral, solo, and chamber music at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Merkin Recital Hall, Symphony Space, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She performs has performed as a member and guest artist of many ensembles including the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, Greenwich Village Orchestra, Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, and Opera Theatre of Montclair. Violetta has been featured on The Today Show on NBC, MTV's Silent Library, and the Harmony ad campaign for Emirates Airlines. She is a former faculty member of the Turtle Bay Music School until its closure in 2019 and maintains a thriving harp studio in Inwood in Manhattan.

Oliver Vibrans, an Ivor Novello award-winning Composer, Producer, Musical Director, and Sound Designer based in the UK, is celebrated for his versatile contributions across various mediums including the concert hall, theatre, film, and digital platforms. Notable commissions range from concert works like "Hatchet Job" for the Royal Northern College of Music to theatre productions such as "Duet for One" and "Oliver Twist" for Leeds Playhouse. His diverse portfolio also encompasses film, radio, and digital projects, exemplified by collaborations with BBC Radio 4 and Graeae Theatre Company. Renowned for his collaborative approach, Oliver's musical direction extends to acclaimed productions like "The Threepenny Opera" and "The Who's Tommy," where he incorporates innovative soundscapes and multi-media elements. Additionally, Oliver's prowess as a drummer has been showcased in various performances, including collaborations with the Paraorchestra and his jazz trio, The Four Legged Trio, which earned the Reinstein Prize for Jazz in 2015. www.olivervibranscomposer.com/

Samuel Fairbrother is a writer and performer, based in Manchester UK. He is a founding member of The Commission for New and Old Art, a music/theatre reconsidering mid/late 20th century artistic disciplines for the contemporary moment. <https://the-commission.vercel.app/> 'A Promenade', his debut poetry pamphlet, was published by Pariah Press in 2023.

His work has been seen at Tate Britain, the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, the White Hotel, the Union Chapel, L'Asilo Filangeri in Naples Italy, and the DiMenna Performing Arts Center, NYC. He has been funded by Arts Council England, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Becky Gerrault Fund, the Francis Bacon Estate, and CHERRIO publishing, amongst others.

He was trained in dramaturgy by the German Musicologist and language scholar, Dr. Marion Kant, at the University of Cambridge, and received a Masters conservatoire degree in 2018 from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in European ensemble practice.

Texts and Translations

The Very Short Sutra on the Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess

Text by Rick Fields

Thus I have made up:

Once the Buddha was walking along the
forest path in the Oak Grove at Ojai,
walking without arriving anywhere
or having any thought of arriving or not arriving

and lotuses shining with the morning dew
miraculously appeared under every step
soft as silk
beneath the toes of the Buddha

When suddenly, out of the turquoise sky,
dancing in front of his half-shut inward-looking eyes,
shimmering like a rainbow
or a spider's web
transparent as the dew on a lotus flower,

—the Goddess appeared quivering
like a hummingbird in the air before him

She, for she was surely a she
as the Buddha could clearly see
with his eye of discriminating awareness wisdom,

was mostly red in color
though when the light
shifted she flashed like a rainbow.

She was naked except
for the usual flower ornaments Goddesses wear

Her long hair
was deep blue,
her two eyes fathomless pits of space
and her third eye
a bloodshot ring of fire.

The Buddha folded his hands together
and greeted the Goddess thus.

“O Goddess, why are you blocking my path.
Before I saw you I was happily going nowhere.
Now I'm not sure where to go.”

“You can go around me,”
said the Goddess,
twirling on her heels like a bird darting away,
but just a little way away,

“or you can come after me.
This is my forest too,
you can’t pretend I’m not here.”

With that the Buddha sat
supple as a snake
solid as a rock
beneath a Bo tree
that sprang full-leaved to shade him.

“Perhaps we should have a chat,” he said.
“After years of arduous practice
at the time of the morning star

I penetrated reality, and now...”
“Not so fast, Buddha. I *am* reality.”

The Earth stood still,
the oceans paused.

the wind itself listened
—a thousand arhats, bodhisattvas, and dakinis
magically appeared to hear
what would happen in the conversation.

“I know I take my life in my hands,” said the Buddha.
“But I am known as the Fearless One — so here goes.”

And he and the Goddess
without further words
exchanged glances.

Light rays like sunbeams
shot forth
so bright that even
Sariputra, the All-Seeing One,
had to turn away.

And then they exchanged thoughts
and the illumination
was as bright as a diamond candle.

And then they exchanged mind
And there was a great silence
as vast as the universe that contains everything

And then they exchanged bodies
And clothes
And the Buddha arose as the Goddess
and the Goddess arose as the Buddha

and so on back and forth
for a hundred thousand
hundred thousand kalpas.

If you meet the Buddha
you meet the Goddess.
If you meet the Goddess
you meet the Buddha

Not only that. This:
The Buddha is the Goddess,
the Goddess is the Buddha.

And not only that. This:
the Buddha is emptiness
the Goddess is bliss,
the Goddess is emptiness
the Buddha is bliss.

And that is what
and what-not you are. It's true.

So here comes the mantra of the Goddess and the Buddha, the unsurpassed non-dual mantra. Just to say this
mantra, just to hear this mantra once, just to hear one word of this mantra once makes everything the way it
truly is: OK.

So here it is: Earth-walker/sky-walker
Hey, silent one, Hey, great talker Not two/Not one
Not separate/Not apart This is the heart
Bliss is emptiness
Emptiness is bliss
Be your breath. Ah
Smile, Hey
And relax, Ho
And remember this: You can't miss.

Invocation VI

Text by Juan de la Cruz (1442-1491) from „*Cántico
espiritual*“ (“Spiritual Canticle”)

Por qué, pues has
llegado a questo corazón, no le sanaste?
Por qué así le dejaste?
Salí tras ti clamando y eras ído
Adónde te escondiste,
Amado, y me dejaste?
Apaga mis enojos.
Descubre tu presencia.
Mátame tu vista.

Invocation VI

Translated by Amber Evans

Why have you
wounded this heart and not healed it?
Why do you leave it so hurt?
I ran after you shouting, you were nowhere
Where did you hide, beloved,
and leave me behind?
Take away my fear.
Reveal your presence to me.
Even if the sight of you kills me.

Sino alla morte

Text by Sebastiano Baldini

Mi protesto d'adorarvi,
Voglio amarvi
A dispetto del tempo
E della sorte,
Sino alla morte
L'inanellato crine,
Che biondeggia superbo in masse d'oro,
Per le man dell'età divenga argento;
L'amorose rovine
Della vostra beltà ch'io tanto adoro,
Calpesti il tempo a consumarle intento.
Resti ogni lume spento
Delle pupille, e d'ostri e di cinabri
Veggansi impoverir le guance e i labri.
Pur del pensiero
Che nudre l'alma,
Havrà la palma
Il cieco Arciero.
Al desio ch'a voi s'aggira,
Che per voi sempre sospira,
Goderò del mio core aprir le porte
Sino alla morte.
Turbi la fede mia
Il tosco de gl'amanti,
La ministra de' pianti,
L'origin d'ogni mal: la gelosia.
Servirò la tiranna
Ch'a morir mi condanna,
Tra cure ne' martir, fra le ritorte
Sino alla morte.
Scuota la mia costanza
La nemica d'amore,
La madre del dolore,
La furia d'ogni cor: la lontananza.
In adorar costei
Con tutti i voti miei,
Mi vedrà quale
Anteo sorger più forte
Sino alla morte.
Può la fortuna
Trarmi lontano,
Ma sempre invano
Gl'affanni aduna.
Aque non serba il fiume dell'oblio,
Che bastino a temprar l'incendio mio,
Poiché ad estinguer l'amoroso foco
Ci vuol un mare, anzi ch'un mare è poco.
Io so ch'alle faville degl'amanti,
Tutti i mari alla fin non son bastanti.

Until death

Translated by Richard Kolb, ed. Amber Evans

I vow that I will adore you.
I want to love you
in defiance of time
and fate,
until death.
Let your adorned locks,
magnificently resplendent in masses of gold,
be turned to silver by the hand of age;
Let the beloved ruins
of your beauty that I so adore
be trampled by time intent on consuming them.
Let every light be spent
from your eyes and let the scarlet and vermilion
of your cheeks and lips become impoverished.
Even against thought that nourishes the soul,
the blind archer will take the prize.
The desire that surrounds you,
that sighs for you continuously,
will delight in opening the door of my heart
until death parts us.
Let my trust be troubled
by the poison of lovers,
that overseer of tears,
the origin of every ill: jealousy.
I will serve the tyrant
that condemns me to death,
amidst the cares of misfortune,
amidst trials, until death.
Let my faithfulness be troubled
by the enemy of love,
the mother of suffering,
the frenzy of every heart: separation.
In adoring her,
by all my vows,
I will be seen, like Antaeus,
to rise stronger than before, until death.
Let fortune
carry me afar,
yet always in vain will it bring vexations.
The river of oblivion doesn't hold
enough water to quell my passion,
for to extinguish the fire of my love
would take an ocean,
and even an ocean is too little.
I know that all the oceans of the world
are not equal to the sparks that fly between lovers.

Schoenberg String Quartet No. 2

Litanei

Text by Stefan George, from *Der siebente Ring* ("The Seventh Ring")

Tief ist die trauer
die mich umdüstert,
Ein tret ich wieder
Herr! in dein haus . . .

Lang war die reise,
matt sind die glieder,
Leer sind die schreine,
voll nur die qual.

Durstende zunge
darbt nach dem weine.
Hart war gestritten,
starr ist mein arm.

Gönne die ruhe
schwankenden schritten,
Hungrigem gaume
bröckle dein brot!

Schwach ist mein atem
rufend dem trauma,
Hohl sind die hände,
fiebernd der mund . .

Leih deine kühle,
lösche die brände,
Tilge das hoffen,
sende das licht!

Gluten im herzen
lodern noch offen,
Innerst im grunde
wacht noch ein schrei . .

Töte das sehnen,
schliesse die wunde!
Nimm mir die liebe,
gieb mir dein glück!

Entrückung

Ich fühle luft von anderem planeten.
Mir blassen durch das dunkel die gesichter
Die freundlich eben noch sich zu mir drehten.

Und bäum und wege die ich liebte fahlen
Dass ich sie kaum mehr kenne und du lichter
Geliebter schatten—rufer meiner qualen--

Litany

Translated by Robert Forbes

Deep is the sadness
that gloomily comes over me,
Again I step,
Lord, in your house.

Long was the journey,
my limbs are weary,
The shrines are empty,
only anguish is full.

My thirsty tongue
desires wine.
The battle was hard,
my arm is stiff.

Grudge peace
to my staggering steps,
for my hungry gums
break your bread!

Weak is my breath,
calling the dream,
my hands are hollow,
my mouth fevers.

Lend your coolness,
douse the fires,
rub out hope,
send the light!

Fires in my heart still glow,
open,
inside my heart
a cry wakes.

Kill the longing,
close the wound!
Take my love away,
give me your joy!

Rapture

I feel air from another planet.
I faintly through the darkness see faces
Friendly even now, turning toward me.

And trees and paths that I loved fade
So I can scarcely know them and you bright
Beloved shadow—summoner of my anguish—

Bist nun erloschen ganz in tiefem glute
Um nach dem taumel streitenden getobes
Mit einem frommen schauer anzumuten.

Ich löse mich in tönen, kreisend, webend,
Ungründigen danks und unbenamten lobes
Dem grossen atem wunschlos mich ergebend.

Mich überfährt ein ungestümes wehen
Im rausch der weihe wo inbrünstige schreie
In staub geworfner beterrinnen flehen:

Dann seh ich wie sich duftige nebel lüpfen
In einer sonnerfüllten klaren freie
Die nur umfängt auf fernsten bergesschlüpfen.

Der boden schüffert weiss und weich wie molke.
Ich steige über schluchten ungeheuer.
Ich fühle wie ich über letzter wolke

In einem meer kristallnen glanzes schwimme--
Ich bin ein funke nur vom heiligen feuer
Ich bin ein dröhnen nur der heiligen stimme.

Are only extinguished completely in a deep glowing
In the frenzy of the fight
With a pious show of reason.

I lose myself in tones, circling, weaving,
With unfathomable thanks and unnamed praise,
Bereft of desire, I surrender myself to the great
breath.

A violent wind passes over me
In the thrill of consecration where ardent cries
In dust flung by women on the ground:

Then I see a filmy mist rising
In a sun-filled, open expanse
That includes only the farthest mountain hatches.

The land looks white and smooth like whey,
I climb over enormous canyons.
I feel as if above the last cloud

Swimming in a sea of crystal radiance--
I am only a spark of the holy fire
I am only a whisper of the holy voice.

The Ornithologia

Aaron Israel Levin

Waking Up: Part I

Based on the proverb by Zhuangzi

In my dream
I was flying
I dreamt that I was a bird
I dreamt twice that I was a bird

Bird Dream 2: Juniper Tree

Based on the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm

Mama killed me,
Papa ate me,
Little sister buried my bones under the Juniper,
Tweet tweet tweet,
Aren't I the prettiest bird that you've ever seen?
What a beautiful little bird! Won't you sing your song again?

Waking Up: Part II

Based on the proverb by Zhuangzi

When I awoke from that dream
I was human again,
But for a moment I was unsure:

Was I a human who had dreamt that I was a bird?
Or am I now a bird
Dreaming that I am human?
Because humans are not birds,
And birds are not human,
Which is why we transform.

September Sonnets

Oliver Vibrans

Text by Samuel Fairbrother

Steeplechase

Attempts to contain
what the world is abject wallowing,
are said to
find no sounds to close a cadence.
And that so singing
what looks to be so bleak,
came not in sprints or lazy marches,
that trumpet faith can bleed in mires.
Well what is never clear
to artless rhyming is tones
to invite love at turns
trivial and without caveat.
Many have said the sonnet is the true
length of a thought. The sentiment is you.

No. 8

To etch it so simply:
peace.

I know a woman in New York

She swears and sees squeeze all of it all and ask her questions.
She'll answer you yet!
With swiftly delivered, shine a trifle sometimes sourced, silvery, situations
because it she, I must be unless said.
Darning done by others, unless said.
Really sweet occasions.
Unless.
Sugary or, as she said once, saccharine.
Selves wrangle, and often set the solutions on lips.
There are no doctors in older department stores she says but she,
she has blisters on her feet to the old days selling soft circulars,
will enquire selves sunk, and shift the sands, soon.
I saw it going downtown and thought were better to this.
Now same sift, soup savoured.
Well, if you ask agreeing age is ossifying, and noise, tedious, stealthily.
Carouse.
Save the pulse cumulates if supple.
Slap smack kisses certain and frightened men can smile themselves.
Though not content to change with her from what they've got.