



*Dedicated to the creation
and performance of new music*

NEW MUSIC
FOR VOICE AND
INSTRUMENTS

MARC A. SCORCA HALL
NATIONAL OPERA CENTER
NEW YORK CITY

APRIL 21, 2022, 7:00PM

NEW YORK COMPOSERS CIRCLE

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Three Pieces on Paintings by Kandinsky Catherine Neville

Kyle Miller, *electric guitar* — Matthew Kowalski, *vibraphone*

By Night. By Day. † Paul Aljian

David Steinberg, *violin* — Daniel Barrett, *cello*

Jauna Meilē † Simona Smirnova

Simona Smirnova, *soprano* — Vivienne Aerts, *alto*

Takuma Matsui, *tenor* — Erik Scharck, *bass*

Five Mirror Canons † David Mecionis

David Steinberg, *violin* — Daniel Barrett, *cello*

Hallie Quinn Brown Madelyn Byrne

Jacqueline Melina Thompson, *soprano*

Rich Wardlow, *trumpet* — Simon Mulligan, *piano*

— INTERMISSION —

Short Story for Violin and Piano No. 1 † Eric Heilner
Marina Kifferstein, *violin* — Simon Mulligan, *piano*

Remember Me, from “Written in the Stars” . . . Patricia Leonard
Jacqueline Melina Thompson, *soprano*
Simon Mulligan, *piano*

Shortcuts for Solo Piano † Christopher Sahar
Simon Mulligan, *piano*

Mysterious Star † Anton Rovner
Jacqueline Melina Thompson, *soprano*
Simon Mulligan, *piano*

† World Premiere

*This season's concerts are dedicated to the founder of New York Composers Circle,
Jacob E. Goodman, to whom we owe a never-ending debt of gratitude*

PLEASE JOIN US AFTER THE CONCERT
FOR A WINE & CHEESE RECEPTION

Although primarily self-taught in composition and improvisation, **PAUL ALJIAN** studied music theory as an undergraduate and continued with additional study of music theory and percussion performance. He spent years freelancing part time as a percussionist/drummer for musical theater and other music venues, and later performed on hand drums in concerts with classical and traditional middle eastern ensembles. Having recently ended a career as a graphic designer, Paul has finally had enough time to pursue composition productively, concentrating on chamber music using standard orchestral instruments.

MADELYN BYRNE is an active composer of both acoustic and electronic music. Some recent compositions include *In A Winter Landscape* (commissioned and recorded by Peter Sheridan), *Nocturne for Orchestra* (commissioned by the Palomar Symphony Orchestra), *For ANWR* (commissioned by Yoon Jeong Heo), and *Rain, Sea, and Sky* (commissioned by the NOISE Ensemble).

Past honors include ASCAP Plus Awards, honorable mention in the "Suoni di Legno" competition, winner of the Friends and Enemies of New Music Composition Competition, and recordings on MOVE, Innova, Everglade, and New World/CRI Records. Madelyn's music has also been selected for a wide range of new music festivals including several International Computer Music Conferences, Electronic Music Midwest, WIU's New Music Festival, *Imagine II*, and *Merging Voices* among others. Her music has received additional national and international performances and broadcasts on television, radio, and the internet. Madelyn completed her DMA in Composition at The Graduate Center in 1999 and joined the Palomar College Faculty in the Fall 2000 semester. Madelyn has also been a guest composer at Columbia University's Computer Music Center.

ERIC HEILNER a lifelong rock & roll and R&B keyboardist, finds himself venturing into the classical composition field for reasons that he does not fully comprehend (although he has ruled out financial gain as a motive). While his primary focus is composing chamber music, he can still be found playing in various clubs and seedy bars in New Jersey.

A native of Boston, **PATRICIA LEONARD**'s early musical training began with piano studies, followed by composition studies at The New England Conservatory. She received a B.Mus. in Composition from The Boston Conservatory. During that time, performances of her compositions included Boston University's Tsai Performance Center, in which she was commissioned to write an original composition for a theatre company, The Longy School, The New England Conservatory and The Boston Conservatory. In 1998, she came to New York to study composition with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Del Tredici. Since then, she has been involved with chamber music and theatre groups and has had performances at The Stella Adler Theatre, Merkin Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Leonard's premiere of her piano trio *Strangely Close, Yet Distant*, inspired by Oskar Kokoschka's famous painting *The Bride of the Wind*, was reviewed as "arresting and evocative with innovative harmonies" (New York Concert Review). Often influenced by art and literature, Ms. Leonard enjoys composing programmatic works, exploring the psychological nature of her subjects. Ms. Leonard is a founding member of New York Composers Circle and shared the group's inaugural concert in May 2003 with guest composer, David Del Tredici. She is also a Board member of The League of Composers/I.S.C.M.

DAVID MECIONIS is a self-taught composer, arranger, instrumentalist, and music copyist whose work has spanned a wide range of genres. He played guitar in Elliott Sharp's electric guitar quartet—known as 'Dyners Club—and played drums and bass with *God Is My Co-Pilot*, *Baby Tooth*, *Mors Syphilitica*, *The Greys*, and others. He has written, produced, and arranged for artists including Perio, Dominique A, and Godwin Peak. He has played the *Knitting Factory*, *CBGB*, *Tonic*, *ABC No Rio*, *92nd Street Y* and other New York City venues, and performed on tours of the United States, France, and Scandinavia.

David's commitment to composition began later in life. His first fully realized classical-style composition, *Grand Saxophone Quartet in E-flat minor*, was premiered in October 2009 at SUNY Fredonia by the

Coleman Prize-winning Mana Quartet, who went on to perform it at a half-dozen other campuses. *Obstinate Duet* followed, a staunch twelve-tone piece for flute and clarinet, premiered in New Paltz, N.Y. by Marcia Gates and Larry Tietze of the Poné Ensemble for New Music. The past few years have seen the world premieres of *Die Sprechmasken von Hofmannsthal* for tenor, violin, English horn, bass clarinet and electric guitar; *Filidi/Setera* for trumpet solo; *Ahab* for woodwind quintet; and *Table Canon for Two Clarinetists*, which dedicates Guido Arbonelli and Natalia Benedetti have continued to perform on tour in Italy. *Trio in Two Parts with an Interval Between*, for oboe, bassoon, and viola, will receive its New York premiere in May 2020 at Little Church Around the Corner.

David also writes electronic music. *Little Fails, Version Red and Version Yellow* was composed in 2011 for Lynn Neuman's PUBLIC, an ensemble dance piece performed that summer by Artichoke Dance Co. under the vaulted archway of the Manhattan Bridge in DUMBO, Brooklyn. He has also composed and performed pieces for synthesizer and analog treatments, with a series of “post-ambient impressions” pending release.

In late 2016, David began composing under the guidance of Raoul Pleskow, a highly regarded composer of the Wolpe and Wuorinen circles. David serves as Concert Director of the New York Composers Circle, richly enjoying his role as art-music advocate and producer of a yearly series of concerts of new works by a host of member composers.

Composing since 2017, **CATHERINE NEVILLE**'s music has premiered in New York City, Seattle, Moscow, Birmingham, Alabama, as well as several venues on Long Island, New York. In 2019, Mrs. Neville was a featured composer at “The Muse’s Voice” concert series at Barnard College. During the Covid-19 quarantine of 2020, Mrs. Neville’s music was selected by the Quintessential Quintet for their virtual residency, and her “Dances” for solo violin premiered in July in the “Spread Spectrum” online music festival, which was broadcast live from Moscow.

A freelance clarinetist, Mrs. Neville has performed with several chamber and orchestral ensembles in the New York City area. As an educator with nearly 20 years in the classroom, Mrs. Neville has taught instrumental and classroom music for children of all ages.

Mrs. Neville currently studies with Jeff Nichols at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens, New York. She holds a Master of Science in Education from Hofstra University, and a Bachelor of Music degree from SUNY Stony Brook, where she was the winner of the Concerto Competition. Mrs. Neville studied clarinet with Fan Lei, Deborah Chodacki, Gregg Miller, and Lawrence Sobol, and has participated in masterclasses for Michael Webster, Stephen Williamson, and Charles Niedich.

ANTON ROVNER (Russian АНТОН Аркадьевич РОВНЕР; transcription Anton Arkadyevitch Rowner; born in 1970 in Moscow) is a Russian-born American composer, music critic and music theorist. Rovner is the son of the writer Arkady Rovner, and in 1974 he emigrated with his family to the United States.

He studied piano at the Manhattan School of Music and composition with Andrew Thomas and Milton Babbitt at the Juilliard School (Master 1993) and from 1994 to 1997 with Charles Wuorinen at Rutgers University, where he earned his Ph.D. made. In addition, he studied composition with Eric Ewazen within the Esther Wood Music Festival for two years music theory with Joseph Dubiel at Columbia University and at Vladimir Tarnopolski and Tristan Murail. From 1989 to 1990 he received a scholarship to the Moscow Conservatory with Nikolai Sidelnikov and Yuri Kholopov. His thesis was about the composer Sergei Protopopov. In 1998 he attended the Darmstadt Summer Courses.

From 1992 to 1997 he was artistic director of the Bridge Contemporary Music Series at Lincoln Center, in which he invited Russian, European, and American composers. He advises the Composers Concordance in New York and is a member of the American Music Center and the Composers Guild of New Jersey. He also organized several concerts in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

His works have been played in Russia, Ukraine, Italy, South Korea, Moldova, France, Romania, Switzerland, and the USA. In 2005 he was guest composer at the Visby International Centre for Composers in Sweden. He is also active as a music critic, among other things Muzykal'naja akademija, Musica Ukrainica online magazine and the 21st Century Music Magazine. For the latter, music magazine, he conducted interviews with composers such as Jean-Luc Darbellay, Tristan Murail and Alvin Lucier. In addition, he was there as a journalist at the ISCM World Music Days 2000 and several times at the Dresden Festival of Contemporary Music.

Since 1997 he lives in Moscow, where he joined the faculty of music theory and music history at the Conservatory as a teacher at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Musicology (Professor Valentina Cholopova).

CHRISTOPHER SAHAR is a composer of classical music who, like a good deal of others, freely adopts elements outside this genre when appropriate to achieve one's musical aims. His birthplace is Jersey City, but his home is Astoria, Queens, New York with its many worlds encompassed in a small corner of New York City.

He holds a Bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and a Master's degree from Queens College/City University of New York. Of all of his formal composition teachers, the most critical to his development was Conrad Cumming, a wonderful composer of opera at Juilliard's Evening Division. Sahar has continued his education as a member of the New York Composers Circle, which offers the camaraderieship and performance opportunities to both continue to learn and the motivation to write music.

Sahar earns a living mainly as a church organist, as well as a teacher of piano and composition, and he occasionally works as an administrative assistant for small businesses. However, the job he is most proud of having in recent years is overseeing the care of his mother who is a survivor of metastatic breast cancer since 2018.

Regarding his music, Mr. Sahar writes, "For those of you interested in some of the projects I have done, I can always send you my composer curriculum vitae, a rather dull method, or join me for a drink after a concert and hear some of the tales of my musical adventures. As for my aesthetics and why I compose, it can be summed up as the following:

"Music produced by humans (and a good deal of animals) is, in my opinion, a set of sonic conventions communicated in a variety of means to align ourselves with or gain membership to a group of people we wish to belong to. Music is simply an elaborate ritual of social bonding and insidiously powerful tool to enforce a social hierarchy. And it often ends up oppressing people -- except those who give up trying to adopt a sonic convention or enforcing a convention of their own upon others and, instead, freely accept or create those that suit them for their own personal reward. The added benefit is the act of creation and recreation benefits our present physical well-being in the present. Composers may desire their music to be remembered after they pass, but it is a misplaced desire. We will never know exactly what aspects of ourselves those around us will treasure and hold in memory after we pass, so why work so hard to make it only our compositions and performances?"

My philosophy and definition of music supports my main impetus to compose and improve at it - to better be my own physician and hopefully when a piece of mine is heard, it offers a model to others of using the arts as a tool to maintain and improve one's well-being."

SIMONA SMIRNOVA is a Lithuanian born jazz vocalist, composer and kanklės player based in New York City. She's a fixture in the New York live scene with her quartet when she's not touring the world, including Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

Smirnova's genre-bending style has a unique theatrical flavor and uncanny vocal improvisation techniques. She deftly implements chamber music, Lithuanian zither -- kanklės and folkloric chants into

foundations of jazz and rock.

Smirnova's latest album, *Joan of Arc, for String Quartet*, is an original composition written as a soundtrack for the classic Carl Dreyer silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928). The album is a cinematic landscape of chamber pop, jazz, and folklore.

Classically trained on Lithuanian zither - kanklės, Smirnova earned her BA in jazz vocals at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater. Shortly after receiving the European Touring Scholarship, she moved to the United States to study at Berklee College of Music where she earned a degree in Contemporary Composition and Production.

NEW YORK COMPOSERS CIRCLE

Now in its nineteenth year, the **NEW YORK COMPOSERS CIRCLE** is a multifaceted artistic and educational organization of composers and performers dedicated to new music, whose mission is to promote public awareness and appreciation of contemporary music through concerts, salons, and other events in the New York-metropolitan area. NYCC assists composers in the creation of new concert works of all genres, arranges for their performance, and offers its resources toward the development and education of new audiences for new music.

Inspired by a workshop at the American Music Center, Jacob E. Goodman founded the New York Composers Circle in the spring of 2002 as an association of composers meeting regularly to play their music for one another. It soon became apparent to him that the Circle had the artistry and commitment to present its music before an audience. In May 2003, NYCC produced its first public concert at Saint Peter's Church, featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Del Tredici along with eleven of NYCC's original members. This well-attended concert was favorably reviewed in the *New Music Connoisseur*.

In the summer of 2007, NYCC held the first of its annual composers' competitions, open only to non-members. In January of 2015, following the death of our beloved friend and honorary member John Eaton, the competition was renamed the **John Eaton Memorial Competition**.

For its members, New York Composers Circle offers a variety of opportunities for presenting for feedback works in progress at monthly salons which are also open to the public, performing completed works in concerts, and fostering collaboration and development, both artistic and professional, with other composer and performer members. For the sophisticated concert-going public, NYCC offers as many as eight concerts a year of its members' works, including jazz concerts and at least two non-series concerts of special performances, all which are curated by a jury of members headed by Program Committee Chair, Linda Marcel. And for members of the public who have not yet been exposed to much contemporary concert music, NYCC sponsors an outreach program. Composers and performers are sent to various institutions, including high schools and senior centers, to perform music of the 20th and 21st centuries accompanied by talks about the music.

Friends of the New York Composers Circle

The NYCC gratefully acknowledges the patrons listed below who have made contributions to the general fund of the New York Composers Circle. We welcome donations large and small, which help to make our concerts possible. Contributions to the New York Composers Circle are tax-deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your donations may be sent to the address on the last page of this program, or you may go to our website and click the **DONATE TO NYCC** button on the main page of our website at <https://newyorkcomposerscircle.org>.

If you enjoyed tonight's concert and would like to help us in our efforts to build new audiences for new music, please consider becoming a Friend of the New York Composers Circle by contributing today.

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Our next concert will take place at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, May 18, 2022
at Church of the Transfiguration “Little Church Around the Corner”
1 East 29th Street, New York, NY.
Please visit our website for more information.

newyorkcomposerscircle.org