

I/O FEST 2020

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2020, 7:30 PM

'62 CENTER FOR THEATRE AND DANCE

IOTA ENSEMBLE

Brandon Hilfer '20

Excerpt from *Actaeon, or the hunter* (2020)
for solo baritone and ensemble

Recitative: "My Friends"

Aria: "Stars pierce the purple sky"

Jack Romans '20, *Baritone*; Alexandra Medeiros '20, *Clarinet*; Chen Chen Huang '23, *Flute*;
Eugene Cho '20, *Piano*; Polly Ellman '22, *Violin*; Nat Davidson '22, *Cello*; Hal Olson '22,
Percussion; Brandon Hilfer '20, *Conductor*

Thomas McGee '22

Liminal Moments for Solo Flute (2020)

Hanbin Koo '22, *Flute*

Hannah Gruendemann '20

Spirit Trio (2020)

for soprano, celesta, and double bass

Erin Kennedy '19, *Soprano*; Jake Eisner '21, *Celeste*; Matthew Williamson '21, *Double Bass*

Stephen Dankner

The Persistence of Memory: Blues (2019)

for solo piano

Dalton Yu '22, *Piano*

Daniel O'Connor

Toss me into the sea (2019-2020)

Justin Connell '22, *Flute*, Sammi Jo Stone '17, *Soprano Saxophone*; Alexandra Medeiros '20,
Bass Clarinet; Charlie Kerzner '23, *Trombone*; Thomas McGee '22, *Violin*, Benjamin Mygatt '20,
Viola; Eli Miller '21, *Cello*; Rebecca Christensen '21, *Guitar*; Daniel O'Connor, *Vibraphone*;
Tiffany Tien '20, *Percussion*; Leonard Bopp '19, *Conductor*

~ intermission ~

Francesca Hellerman '22

Soundwalk no. 1 (2020)

for vibraphone and live electronics

Daniel O'Connor, *Vibraphone*; Francesca Hellerman '22, *Live Electronics*

Alexandra Medeiros '20

"Invitation": Negro for Sale (2020)
for piano and performer

Alexandra Medeiros '20, *Piano*; Jack Romans '20, *Performer*

George Walker

Lyric for Strings (1946)

Chamber Orchestra of Williams; Alexandra Medeiros '20, *Conductor*

Anna Clyne

Prince of Clouds (2012)
for two violins and string orchestra

Benjamin Mygatt '20 and Jeffrey Pearson '20, *Violin*; Leonard Bopp '19, *Conductor*

Chamber Orchestra of Williams

Benjamin Mygatt '20, Jeffrey Pearson '20, Daniel Yu '20, Thomas McGee '22, Caitlin Han '23,
Kaela Zarrillo '23, Audrey Shadle '23, Curtis Liu '23, *Violin*; Rebecca Christainsen '22, Polly
Ellman '22, Williams McCormick '23, *Viola*; Eli Miller '21, Sonya Lee '22, Samuel Boyce '23,
Cello; Matthew Williamson '21, *Bass*

In memory of Steven Dennis Bodner.

*This event is generously supported in part by the Towards Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity (TIDE) grant
program.*

About the Artists

LEONARD BOPP is a conductor, composer, and trumpet player who works on solo and collaborative projects that span from the classical repertoire to contemporary music and media. Leonard's work treats music as a practice of critical inquiry, public engagement, and community building. Leonard is the founder and Music Director of the Blackbox Contemporary Music Ensemble, a new music collective devoted to critical engagement in contemporary cultural discourse through the performance of innovative and experimental creative work. Leonard is also a founding member of the Michigan-based creator-performer chamber group Ensemble In Hand. Leonard's recent composition projects include *Christopher Street Liberation Day, 1970*, written for the opening of the LGBT history photo exhibition at the Church of St. John's in the Village's Revelation Gallery and premiered in June 2019, and a new piece of the 2020 Williams College I/O Festival; his current projects include a multimedia piece on the social history and formal design of the Central Park Ramble. Leonard studied Music and English at Williams College, where he was Assistant Conductor of the Berkshire Symphony, Music Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Williams, and Student Director of the I/O Contemporary Music Festival. While at Williams, Leonard's work was supported by the Roche Student Research Fellowship, the Wilmers Research Grant, and the Sentinels Fellowship in U.S. Public Policy. Upon graduation, Leonard was named the 2019 recipient of the Hubbart Hutchinson Fellowship in Music. Leonard is a graduate of the Juilliard School Pre-College Division, where he studied trumpet with Raymond Mase. Leonard is currently pursuing his Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, where he is also a graduate fellow at the Center for World Performance Studies.

About the Program

Brandon Hilfer '20: Excerpt from *Actaeon, or the hunter*

This excerpt is from the first scene of my opera *Actaeon, or the hunter*, based on a myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Here, Actaeon, the protagonist, finds himself alone after a long day of hunting. Searching for a place to rest, Actaeon ponders his uncertain future.

—Brandon Hilfer '20

Brandon Hilfer is a composer and sound designer from Chappaqua, NY studying music and political science. He is very grateful for the opportunity to premiere this excerpt of his senior composition thesis during the I/O Festival.

Thomas McGee '22: *Liminal Moments for Solo Flute*

This piece was conceived in the early spring of 2019. I wanted to evoke the brightness and optimism of spring, while using a complex type of pitch organization that is often associated with vibrant visual color. The piece is named for its barely audible moments, which serve as transitions between sonorities and draw the listener in.

—Thomas McGee '22

Thomas McGee is a composer from Long Island, NY, double majoring in Music and Psychology. Thomas attempts to create a wide range of expressive gestures and sonorities in his music, balancing terse, slowly progressing figures with more chaotic and complex music.

Hannah Gruendemann '20: *Spirit Trio*

The text of this trio is by the American Imagist poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), from her three poems "Moonrise," "Storm," and "The City is Peopled." They have been paired to illustrate the construction of a relationship through musical terms.

—Hannah Gruendemann '20

Hannah Gruendemann is a composer, writer, and vocalist from Los Angeles, CA, double majoring in Music and English. Her compositions explore how the human voice can be used to embody queerness and mental illness.

Stephen Dankner: *The Persistence of Memory*

In 1989 I composed an experimental work for electronic tape, string quartet, contrabass and piano entitled *The Persistence of Memory* - the title borrowed from the very famous small masterpiece by Salvador Dalí, painted in 1931. It hangs in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.

In this work, I attempted a kind of musical *surrealism*, using, like Dalí, familiar themes that gradually become somewhat distorted (like the "melted" clocks in the painting): a popular 'ballad', Charleston and 'stride' piano rhythms and a tragic, 'blues' lamentation. These 'found objects', in my piece, are situated in the 1920s-era (a.k.a. The 'Roaring '20s' and the 'Jazz Age'), where dynamism and strong emotionalism were dominant traits within the popular music culture.

This piece, in its original form, unfortunately, would need to be reconstructed, since its *premiere* and recording at Loyola University in New Orleans in 1989. I have since made some revisions to the electronic tape, which included the sounds of Fred Astaire's tap dancing, Al Jolson's singing and Paul Whiteman's orchestra, among other time-specific quotes, including electronic manipulations of these and other 'artifacts'.

In the meantime, I excerpted three fragments ('sketches') from the score and re-conceived them for piano solo. Tonight's performance is of the middle movement, *Blues*—A despondent lament; the lighting is dim, the days are short and the nights are long. The spirit sinks into a mood of hopeless, *noir* despair.

—Stephen Dankner

Stephen Dankner received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Composition from the Juilliard School in 1971. A list of works since 1990 includes eight symphonies, 24 string quartets, a saxophone quartet (commissioned by the Mana Saxophone Quartet), six concerti (one each for piano and violin, two for cello, an E flat clarinet *Concerto* commissioned by Louisiana Philharmonic E flat clarinetist Stephanie Thompson, and a *Concerto* for alto saxophonist Lawrence Gwozdz; a *Symphony for Saxophone Chamber Orchestra*; five major song cycles; sonatas for violin (4), piano, alto saxophone, cello; four piano trios; a piano quartet, piano quintet, saxophone quintet (saxophone quartet with piano) and five orchestral tone poems. Dankner was the composer-in-residence with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra from 2004-2007. Dankner has composed over 130 major works in all *genres* except opera.

The composer is also a writer/journalist and has, for 14 years, written preview columns on classical music events in print for The Advocate newspaper, and online for the last five years for the website iberkshires.com.

Dr. Dankner is also a visual artist, with juried exhibitions of his experimental digital art, much of it taking inspiration from mathematical manipulations of both Julia and Mandelbrot fractal patterns found in nature.

Daniel O'Connor: *Toss me into the sea*

Toss me into the sea was created largely in 2019. It's tuned justly, using rational intervals derived from the harmonic series. By way of slow transformation, I hope to induce a dreamlike, uncanny state—a sense of something unfolding at a glacial pace.

—Daniel O'Connor

Daniel O'Connor is a composer, percussionist, and improviser from Virginia. They are pursuing a BA in music at Bennington College. Current interests include harmonic perception, ritual, systems theory, and folk vernacular.

Francesca Hellerman, '22: *Soundwalk no. 1*

Soundwalk no. 1 was inspired by a walk around the Williams College campus in the spring. The ambient sounds, that evening, included striking frog calls, which carried for a remarkable distance. The piece evokes this atmosphere with its harmonies and with "frog calls" created by the live electronics from the sound of the vibraphone.

—Francesca Hellerman '22

Francesca Hellerman is a composer from Montreal, Canada, studying music. Her music creates gradually shifting sonic atmospheres from simple material. She makes use of aleatory and improvisation to create subtle yet accessible music.

Alexandra Medeiros, '20: "*Invitation*": *Negro for Sale*

This piece is for my brother who has experience covert and overt racism in his life. His favorite jazz standard is "Invitation" by Bronislau Kaper. The song comes from the movie, *Invitation* (1952), about a happily married couple with a secret. Being biracial is like having a secret that everyone knows. This piece explores that territory.

—Alexandra Medeiros '20

Alexandra Medeiros is a double major in Music and Psychology from Barrington, RI. She is an aspiring composer and advocate of accessible and quality music education. She believes in the power of music to explore politics and personal feelings.

George Walker: *Lyric for Strings*

Written in 1946, this work was premiered that year under the title *Lament* by the student orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music conducted by Seymour Lipkin in a radio concert. In the following year it received its public premiere by the National Gallery Orchestra conducted by Richard Bales as part of an annual American music festival in Washington. The work carries the dedication "To my grandmother," completed after the Walker's grandmother's passing.

After a brief introduction, the principal theme is stated by the first violins with imitations appearing in the other instruments. The linear nature of the material alternates with static moments of harmony. After the second of two climaxes, the work concludes with reposeful cadences that were presented earlier.

—Composer's website

George Theophilus Walker (1922-2018) was an American composer, pianist, and organist, who was the first African American to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Music. He graduated from Oberlin College at the age of 18 and attended the Curtis Institute with Artist Diplomas in piano and composition, becoming the first black graduate of the renowned music school in 1945.

In 1946, Walker composed his *String Quartet no. 1*. The second movement of this work, entitled, *Lyric for Strings*, has become the most frequently performed orchestral work by a living American composer. In 1950, George Walker became the first black instrumentalist to be signed by a major management, the National Concert Artists. In 1954, he made an unprecedented tour of seven European countries, then returned to the United States to receive a Doctorate from the Eastman School of Music as the first black recipient of a doctoral degree there.

George Walker has composed over 90 works for orchestra, chamber orchestra, piano, strings, voice, organ, clarinet, guitar, brass, woodwinds, and chorus. His works have been performed by virtually every major orchestra in the United States and by many in England and other countries. He received important commissions from ensembles that include the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In 1999, Walker was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In April of 2000, he was inducted into the American Classical Hall of Fame.

—Composer's website

Anna Clyne: *Prince of Clouds*

When writing *Prince of Clouds* I was contemplating the presence of a musical lineage—a family-tree of sorts that passes from generation to generation. This transfer of knowledge and inspiration between generations is a beautiful gift. Composed specifically for Jennifer Koh and her mentor at the Curtis Institute of Music, Jaime Laredo, this thread was in the foreground of my imagination as a dialogue between the soloists and ensemble. As a composer, working with such virtuosic, passionate and unique musicians is also another branch of this musical chain.

—Anna Clyne

London-borne Anna Clyne is a Grammy-nominated composer of acoustic and electro-acoustic music. Described as “dazzlingly inventive” by Time Out New York, Clyne’s work often includes collaborations with cutting-edge choreographers, visual artists, filmmakers, and musicians worldwide.

Appointed by Music Director Riccardo Muti, Clyne served as a Mead Composer-in-Residence for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 2010-2015. She also recently served as Composer-in-Residence for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra during the 2015-2016 season and for L’Orchestre national d’Île-de-France from 2014-2016, and the Berkeley Symphony from 2017-2019. The Scottish Chamber Orchestra recently announced Clyne as its Associate Composer for the next three years, through the 2020-2021 season. She has been commissioned by such renowned organizations as BBC Radio 3, BBC Scottish Symphony, Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Houston Ballet, London Sinfonietta, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and the Southbank Centre, and her work has been championed by such world-renowned conductors as Marin Alsop, Pablo Heras-Casado, Riccardo Muti, Leonard Slatkin, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Clyne was nominated for the 2015 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for her double violin concerto, *Prince of Clouds*, and for the 2014 Times Breakthrough Award (UK). She is also the recipient of several prestigious awards including the 2016 Hindemith Prize; a Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; awards from Meet the Composer, the American Music Center, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and the Jerome Foundation; and prizes from ASCAP and SEAMUS.

Clyne’s music is published exclusively by Boosey & Hawkes.