

**uclaFLUX**  
**Friday, June 4, 2021, 5pm**

**Spring 2021 Recital Program Notes**

**Heinz Holliger (b. 1939), *Airs* — *Seven Poems* (2015-16)**

- i. Une semaison de larmes
- ii. L'oeil
- iii. Ce qui brûle en déchirant l'air

Thacher Schreiber, oboe  
Adam Frary, oboe and English horn

If one were to ask any oboist to identify the person responsible for most of their instrument's contemporary repertoire, the name Heinz Holliger would inevitably stand out among the responses, and for good reason; there is a long list of works written expressly for him by many of the greatest composers from the latter half of the twentieth century to the present day. This list includes (but is not limited to) works by Olivier Messiaen, Luciano Berio, Elliott Carter, Witold Lutosławski, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Krzysztof Penderecki. Many of these works have long since entered the oboist's core repertoire, as well as greatly expanded the oboe's technical capabilities.

In addition to Holliger's long and continuing career as a soloist and performer, he is also a prolific composer, having studied composition with Elliott Carter. Several of Holliger's works for oboe and English horn have also entered the oboist's core repertoire. The work presented here, *Airs*, is a recent composition, using many different combinations of oboe, oboe d'amore, and English horn and written around seven poems by the Swiss poet Philippe Jaccottet, three of which we will perform here. Each poem is infused with otherworldly visions and experiences of the sublime.

Holliger treats these settings as instrumental recitations of the poems, using compositional techniques such as assigning pitches to certain letters, using the rhythm of the poems to dictate the rhythm of the music, using extended techniques such as quarter tones to imbue the pieces with the otherworldly tone that emanates from the poems. Holliger himself states "It's different from simply writing a composition – a song – for voice and piano. Here, I really 'read' the poems with the two instruments." Indeed, the two oboists are called upon to play very freely, without any strict rhythmic structure or meter, merely flowing through the words, two voices reading their poems to each other.

Une semaison de larmes sur le visage change, la scintillante saison	A sowing of tears On the face changes, The scintillating season
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des rivières dérangées chagrin qui creuse la terre	Disturbed rivers Sorrow that digs the earth
L'âge regarde la neige s'éloigner sur les montagnes	Age looks at the snow Go away on the mountains
L'oeil: Une source qui abonde	The eye: A source that abounds
Mais d'où venue? De plus loin que le plus loin De plus bas que le plus bas	But where did it come from? From further than further Lower than the lower
Je crois que j'ai bu l'autre monde	I think I drank the other world
Ce qui brûle en déchirant l'air rose ou par brusque arrachement ou par constant éloignement	What burns tearing the air Rose or by sudden tearing Or by constant distance
En grandissant la nuit la montagne sur ses deux pentes Nourrit deux sources de pleurs	Growing up at night The mountain on its two slopes Feeds two sources of crying

Program note by Thacher Schreiber

**Edison Denisov (1929-1996), *Two Pieces for Three Instruments in C or Bb* (1978)**

Eric Pearce, clarinet  
Rachel Boehl, horn  
Evelyn Coffey, bassoon

Siberian composer Edison Denisov was born in 1929 and had a lengthy career in composition, spanning from the 1950s until his death in 1996. He studied at the Moscow Conservatory, where he later went on to teach orchestration and composition. Before his studies in Moscow, he studied mathematics and learned composition with Shostakovich. Denisov's style blends distinctly Russian and Western European sounds with particular influence from composers like Boulez, Ligeti and Messiaen. This blend of avant-garde styles was met with disapproval from the Soviet regime, and he was placed in the "nonconformist" category of Soviet composers. Although deemed too "Western" in the USSR, Denisov's music is filled with traditional Russian folk songs and motifs.

*Two Pieces for Three Instruments in C or Bb* was premiered on July 3rd, 1984, at the Almeida Theater in London. Originally written for any combination of string or wind instruments, in his program note Denisov states a preference for "homogenous instrumentation." The first movement utilizes phrase offsets and overlapping voices to

create a sense of perpetual motion. The second movement, with the homorhythmic alignment of its three voices, acts inversely from the first. This movement is dominated by stepwise motion and steady sixteenth-note rhythms. This alignment and similarity of parts is complemented idiosyncratically by the texture of our unique instrumentation. The movements are unified through phrasing that is almost entirely slurred and by their soft dynamic ranges.

Program Note by Rachel Boehl, Evelyn Coffey, and Eric Pearce

**Alex Nikiporenko (b. 1990), *American Music* (2019)**

Taylor Lee, bassoon  
Joel Bickel, contrabass

*American Music* is a composition for bassoon, double bass, and tape, premiered on April 9th, 2019, by 840, a London-based experimental and minimalist concert series currently curated by composers Alex Nikiporenko and James Luff. Receiving praise from *The Guardian* as well as *BBC Radio 3*, the 840 Concert Series challenges composers to write for a unique instrumentation in each program, forcing young artists to diversify and expand their compositional strategies. The name “840” is inspired by Erik Satie’s performance instructions in his piano piece *Vexations*: “In order to play the theme 840 times in succession, it would be advisable to prepare oneself beforehand, and in the deepest silence, by serious immobilities.”

Alongside works by Tom Johnson and Mary Jane Leach, the aptly named *American Music* was one of 9 works premiered during 840’s *New Music for Bassoon and Double Bass* program recorded live at the Iklektik Art Lab in Waterloo. This particular instrumentation was chosen because of the relative scarcity of duets written for double bass and bassoon. Composers were encouraged to write pieces showcasing the vast resonance and newfound dexterity of these largely accompanimental bass instruments.

*“The last six American presidents [...] ruled over a period of dramatic change: from the decline and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, to 9/11 and the War on Terror, and to the growing political polarization of the recent years. “American Music” looks at one aspect of their presidencies that is similar - their oaths of office.”*

Alex Nikiporenko, 2019

While the double bass walks descending, chromatic fragments of *The Star Spangled Banner*, the bassoon takes a starring role in mimicking the inflections and natural rhythm of each presidential oath. As America has become more and more politically and socioeconomically divided over the past two decades, so does the piece increase in dynamic contour and rhythmic complexity. Listeners should note how the bassoon melody

becomes more syncopated and distressed while the bass infuses each successive reiteration of America's national anthem with increasingly fervent patriotism.

Russian born, London-based composer Alex Nikiporenko earned his Bachelor of Music from King's College London and later earned his Masters in Music from the Royal College of Music. In addition to being named the 2008 BBC/Guardian Young Composer of the Year, Nikiporenko has had his music performed by Juliet Fraser and the Fidelio Trio, with several recordings having been aired on BBC Radio 3 and Resonance FM. Nikiporenko has studied privately with Laurence Crane since 2014.

Program note by Taylor Lee and Joel Bickel

**Brian Kehlenbach (b. 1958), *Due Pezzi Perpetua* (2013)**

i. Prelude

ii. Canzona

Spencer Hart, tuba I

Hannah Stefureak, tuba II

Andrew Ordonez, tuba III

Brian Kehlenbach is an accomplished American pianist and composer with a background as a jazz performer and classical recitalist. Having initially earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree from the University of Connecticut, Kehlenbach would pursue graduate studies in music earning an Master of Music (MM) from the same institution and complete a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA) from the University of Southern California, where he was named as an outstanding graduate in music theory and composition. Kehlenbach currently serves as a professor in the Music department at Santa Ana College.

*Due Pezzi Perpetua* ("Two Perpetual Pieces") comprises two movements entitled *Prelude* and *Canzona*. Each movement is unified by a perpetual motive: a held E-flat pedal point in the first movement, and constant rhythmic motion in the second. The instrumentation of the ensemble provided the composer with the opportunity to create the illusion of a perpetually held note in the first movement by trading the note amongst the three tuba parts; the second movement trades continuous contrapuntal lines, becoming increasingly more chaotic as the movement develops until abrupt breaks provide moments of release.

*Due Pezzi Perpetua* was commissioned from Kehlenbach in 2013 by a consortium of tuba players from around the world organized by Dr. David Holben of California State University, Fullerton. Containing renowned tuba players such as Deanna Swoboda (Arizona State University, former president of the International Tuba and Euphonium Association), Micky Wroblewski (Beijing Symphony Orchestra), and David J. Saltzman (Bowling Green State University), *Due Pezzi Perpetua* represents the culmination of the

consortium's efforts to expand the repertoire of chamber music available to ensembles made exclusively of tubas rather than the typical combinations of tuba and euphonium.

Program note by Andrew Ordonez, Hannah Stefureak, Spencer Hart

### **Tōru Takemitsu (1930-1996), *Orion* (1984)**

Euan Shields, cello  
Brandon Zhou, piano

Tōru Takemitsu was a largely self-taught 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japanese composer who blended Western classical and Japanese influences in his compositions. His music bears complex sonorities reminiscent of Olivier Messiaen, atmospheric textures reminiscent of György Ligeti, and pointillistic gestures reminiscent of Anton Webern, to name a few Western influences. Though elements of Japanese folk music like pentatonic scales, microtones, and pitch bends also pervade Takemitsu's music, he attempted to avoid conscious use of Japanese influences in his early works due to his negative experience in the Japanese military, which he found alarmingly nationalistic. In his later years, he came to embrace Japanese music and composed works like *November Steps* (1967), a double concerto for two Japanese instruments, the *biwa* and *shakuhachi*.

*Orion* is a cello and piano version of the first movement of *Orion and Pleiades*, a three-movement work for cello and orchestra written in 1984. *Orion and Pleiades* is one of several pieces that Takemitsu wrote with titles pertaining to stars or constellations, the others being *Asterism* for piano and orchestra (1967), *Cassiopeia* for percussion and orchestra (1971), *Gémeaux (Gemini)* for oboe and trombone soloists and 2 orchestras (1971-86), and *Star Isle* for orchestra (1982). The cello and piano version is a piano reduction of the orchestral version, with the solo cello part unchanged. In order to create a wide variety of tone colors to mirror the orchestra version, Takemitsu calls for some extended piano techniques, such as muting and plucking strings.

The music begins with a mysterious low C drone in the piano. The sprinkle of impressionist chords in the piano contrast with the slow, sustained cello melody. The lazily meandering semitones and quarter-tones in the cello makes one wonder if it's suitable to even call the cello line a melody. In traditional Japanese music, the emphasis is often on the color of the sound rather than the melodic contour. Extended techniques such as artificial harmonics, *sul ponticello*, controlled glissandos, and even the quarter-tone dissonances are primarily treated as timbral tools to create a wide palette of colors that one usually doesn't expect a cello to make. Further, the drastic changes in color serve to imitate various traditional instruments such as the *shakuhachi* (in quarter-tones in the upper register), *biwa* (the plucked triple-stops in the cadenza) and the female voice (in the ghostly swells and long-tones).

Takemitsu counteracts the Japanese-sounding cello part with Western elements in the piano part and Western classical form. The equal-tempered piano, incapable of producing microtones like the cello, contributes to the air of mystery with dense, chromatic harmonies that resemble those of Schoenberg and Messiaen. Block-chords and arpeggios in the piano part are not only a faithful transcription of the orchestra version, but are idiomatic textures in Western piano music. Formally, the piece is a ternary ABA structure, with music from the beginning returning at the end almost verbatim. By seamlessly blending elements of the East and West, Takemitsu creates a new language that transcends borders.

Program note by Brandon Zhou and Euan Shields

**Nicholas Prost, *4 Crazy Etudes* for saxophone duet**

iii. Amoroso

iv. Valse gourmande

Joshua Park, alto and soprano saxophone

Alexander Lee, alto and soprano saxophone

Nicholas Prost is an award-winning French composer and accomplished saxophonist who is best known for composing for the saxophone. Having performed as a member of the Lamoureux Orchestra and as a chamber musician with the Variance Ensemble and the Saxiana Trio, he also has appeared as a soloist with the Orchestre de la Suisse-Romande and Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse. He is a professor at the Conservatoire de Saint-Maur-des-Fossés and continues to compose and arrange older existing pieces, with a focus on educational and technical significance.

*4 Crazy Etudes for Saxophone Duet* depicts standalone images of various scenes and ideas, each capturing an individual musical motif that is expanded upon in each of the respective etudes. Each etude is dedicated to two pairs of saxophonists who played a significant role in Prost's musical career, ranging from former teachers to students. Each of the four duets, two of which we perform tonight, harbor an intrinsic meaning that contrasts greatly from the others. The third movement, "Amoroso," translates as "loving" and tells the story of a love unanswered. It seems to portray an oblivious, unaware individual represented by the "obstiné et neuter" playing of a Bach-inspired pattern. This person is immersed in his or her own life, failing until the very end to notice the beguiling melodies from the other saxophone until the very end.

The fourth duet, "Valse Gourmande," translates to "gourmet waltz," and seems to depict a night of pure decadence amidst the energetic dancing. The dancers move at a blistering pace, unable to stop either their dancing or their gluttony. Their motions feel heavy and hindered, but they manage to still display a strange grace in their dancing. They are

momentarily rewarded with a break before they return to their revelries, finishing with a final round of waltzing and eating.

Program note by Alexander Lee and Joshua Park

**Gernot Wolfgang (b. 1957), *Low Agenda* (2007)**

Taylor Lee, bassoon  
Nico Hernandez, bass

Austrian-born composer Gernot Wolfgang has established his role as one of the most versatile composers of our time. He bears numerous accolades including the 2018 Spheres of a Genius - 100 Years of Thelonius Monk Award, a 2016 Grammy nomination, and a 2017 Global Music Award. Currently based in Southern California, Wolfgang's work is broadly commissioned, as he often composes for untraditional instrumentations.

*Low Agenda* (2007) features Wolfgang's ability to write for an unlikely duo – the bassoon and the double bass. The two instruments share a bass line that is ripe with funk, and as the interactions between them evolve, both are presented with opportunities to take extensive solos. You will also hear a few extended techniques performed by the double bassist as he utilizes the bass's percussive qualities toward the end of the composition. The piece further showcases the bassoon's woodier and lower timbres, and both the bass and bassoon revel in illustrating the "low" characteristics of *Low Agenda*. As you listen, pay attention to how the bassoon and bass comment on the same motifs. As these two voices argue and weave, try to distinguish where each stands in this conversation.

To learn more about Gernot Wolfgang, please visit [www.gernotwolfgang.com](http://www.gernotwolfgang.com).

Program note by Nico Hernandez and Taylor Lee

**Anne McGinty (b. 1945), *Illusions* (2010)**

- i. Wild Card
- ii. Wizardz
- iii. Juggling

Katie Lang, flute  
Ryan Glass, clarinet  
O'Connor Langi, alto saxophone  
Lindsey Ha, bass clarinet  
Andrew Ordonez, tuba

Anne McGinty is an American composer and flutist who is well known in the wind and educational communities for her over 250 works for wind ensemble. McGinty has been

commissioned by ensembles across the United States, both small and large, and notably was the first woman composer to be commissioned by the United States Army Band (*Hall of Heroes*, 2000). After writing for wind ensembles for over 30 years, McGinty has shifted her focus to writing chamber music for brass and woodwinds while also publishing through her own endeavor, McGinty Music. Her advanced musical education first began at The Ohio State University before she left to pursue a career in flute performance, serving as principal flute with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, the Tucson Pops, and the TSO Woodwind Quintet. She would then later return to school to earn BM (summa cum laude) and MM degrees in flute performance, music theory, and composition from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

*Illusions* was born from McGinty's love for writing chamber music for winds and for the tuba as a soloistic instrument. Having previously been commissioned by Los Angeles-based tubist, Doug Tornquist, to write, in addition to two other original works, the titular piece for his album, *Feels Like Far*, McGinty wished to write another piece that featured the tuba but with a instrumentation different than the Tornquist commission (flute, clarinet, trumpet, horn, tuba). The result was a mixed quintet that introduced two new colors to the ensemble: alto saxophone and bass clarinet. Correspondence with the composer revealed that she drew upon her experience writing for wind band and "[could] hear the colors of these instruments and knew they would blend in this piece."

Revolving around the imagery of illusions in their varying forms, each of the three movements of the work utilizes the unique colors the ensemble provides to create images of mystery and sleight of hand. The first movement, "Wild Card," evokes the imagery of searching for one's own path in life with individual lines dancing in different directions, sometimes being certain in their decisions while at others questioning the unknown. The second movement, "Wizardz," seeks to show how experts in all fields can be "wizardz," with McGinty's writing providing each member of the ensemble with their own unique voice to create magic. The final movement, "Juggling," creates images of motion by constantly trading the motives amongst the musicians as if being juggled.

Program note by Andrew Ordonez  
Contributors: Ryan Glass, O'Connor Langi, Lindsey Ha

**Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938), *Attica* (1973)**, a structured improvisation  
uclaFLUX Ensemble

Frederic Rzewski composed *Coming Together* and *Attica* in response to the 1971 uprising at the Attica Correctional Facility. The texts for the works draw upon testimonies of two men who participated in the riot: Samuel Melville and Richard X. Clark, respectively. Rzewski condemns the government crackdown on the uprising through representations of both prisoners and prison. In these and other works, the prisoner is a figure of suffering. Both Melville and Clark suffer through efforts to raise a voice about the hardships of



incarceration only to have that voice break apart into fragments and silence. Prison emerges as a space of increasing confinement, conveyed by rigorous compositional schemes that tightly link individual sections and close them off in a larger sealed structure. The musical evocation of confinement along with the expression of psychological distress in the texts creates scenes of suffering. Through these scenes, Rzewski brings out the infliction of pain that scholars have viewed as a fundamental aspect of incarceration. The interaction between the critiques of incarceration and the compositional schemes in *Coming Together* and *Attica* is an example of how artists at the time (Steve Reich and sculptor Melvin Edwards) drew upon abstract idioms and materials in works that comment on contemporary political developments.

Program note from David Meltzer's  
*Prisoners' Voices: Frederic Rzewski's Coming Together and Attica*