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NEC Composers' Series

Michael Gandolfi, series director

Don-Paul Kahl, saxophones

Artist-in-Residence

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

John Mallia

Interzonal Hap (2009)

Brief intermission

Robin Meeker-Cummings

Concurrence (2022)

Katarina Miljkovic

If in a Winter... (2009-2023)

Efstratios Minakakis

For Felipe M. (2021)

Don-Paul Kahl, saxophones

Described by distinguished American composer John Corigliano as an "artist beyond his time," concert saxophonist **Don-Paul Kahl** has performed throughout Europe, the United States, Australia, and South-East Asia. He has been an invited artist with many prominent music festivals in Europe and the US including, the KURAIA festival (ES), Tallinn New Music Days (ET), Musica Nova Festival (US), and many more. He has appeared as soloist with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Musa Horti, the Maryland Wind Festival, the Leuven New Music Ensemble, the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, the University of Florida Wind Symphony, and the Susquehanna University Orchestra.

An ardent supporter and advocate of contemporary and modern music, Don-Paul has been involved in the creation and performance of over 100 new works for saxophone by some of the most talented and award winning young composers of the time. Recent commissioned composers include Erik Desimpelaere, Max Grafe, Maria Eugenia Luc, David Biedenbender, Molly Joyce, Stratis Minakakis, Yotam Haber, Eleni Ralli, and Kenichi Ikuno Sekiguchi, among many others.

Don-Paul released his debut solo album entitled *Go Within* on the Equilibrium Label in September 2021. The album features six works for which he is extremely passionate, all by living composers. Five of the works were directly commissioned by Don-Paul, two of which were conceived solely for this project. Featured composers include Molly Joyce, Stratis Minakakis, Eleni Ralli, Gregory Wanamaker, Mischa Zupko, and Kenichi Ikuno Sekiguchi. He collaborated on this project with pianist Alessandro Cervino.

Don-Paul was a prizewinner at the prestigious 4th Jean-Marie Londeix International Saxophone Competition in Bangkok, Thailand. He is a member of the internationally acclaimed saxophone quartet, Ensemble du Bout du Monde (EBM), which recently won the third and special prizes at the International Chamber Music Competition in Illzach, France. In 2017, they garnered first and special prizes at the Concours d'Interprétation de la Ville de Boulogne-Billancourt. Don-Paul was also awarded the Harriet Hale Woolley Scholarship for academic study in Paris, France for the 2013-2014 year. Other awards include prizewinner in the 2013 Marco Fiorindo Chamber Music Competition, University of Florida Concerto Competition, and the Susquehanna University Concerto Competition, along with several others.

Don-Paul is an avid clinician and gives masterclasses throughout Europe and the United States. Currently, he serves on the faculty at the Susquehanna University High School Wind Ensemble Institute in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. He served on the faculty at the College of Central Florida in Ocala, Florida where he taught applied study in both saxophone and clarinet. Concurrently, he served as the saxophone teaching assistant at the University of Florida.

As an avid and in-demand chamber musician, Don-Paul performs in a duo with clarinetist, Jackie Glazier (Duo Entre-Nous (D2)), with WOODWORK, a dynamic reed quintet based in Belgium, and the Central Pennsylvania saxophone and piano duo, Kahl & Nyce Duo.

An advocate for digital forms of education, in late 2020 he became a co-director of the Thrive for Saxophonists from Music360. Born of a need for specialized

education during the pandemic, Thrive was a brand-new program for musicians to elevate their practice to a new level while adhering to strict social distance measures. He was responsible for determining which guest saxophone artists were invited to present each month and managed the relations between members and guests. In addition, he gave private lessons, advice, and tips for understanding our current artistic situation given our relatively new digital life in the wake of the corona pandemic.

Currently, Don-Paul is living and working between the United States and Belgium as a freelance saxophonist. He is also a doctoral candidate for the Ph.D in Artistic Research in collaboration with Leiden University (NL) and the Orpheus Institute (BE). In 2017, he completed a post-graduate performatory research program at the Lemmensinstituut in Leuven, Belgium. Previously, he earned a Master of Music degree from the University of Florida and a Bachelor of Music degree from Susquehanna University (summa cum laude). His primary teachers and mentors are Jean-Michel Goury, Marcus Weiss, Jonathan Helton, Geoffrey Deibel, and Gail B. Levinsky, with additional study with Frederick L. Hemke.

Don-Paul Kahl is a Henri Selmer Paris and Conn-Selmer performing artist and proudly performs on Selmer Paris saxophones exclusively.

Mallia *Interzonal Hap* (2009)

Interzonal Hap is modeled on the activity of the mind flitting between real, remembered, and imagined spaces. The coalescence of emotions conjured through the overlap and interaction between these zones has always fascinated me. Particularly, when physically moving through a given environment, and attention is carried out at least on the level of necessity, the pulling and divergence of multiple auxiliary strains of thought can simultaneously overtake one's awareness and result in a visceral immediacy and sense of place induced by that which exists outside of their physical limits.

The premiere of this composition was given by Eliot Gattegno in 2009. I am most grateful to Don-Paul Kahl for preparing this work for performance on tonight's program. Thanks for listening!

– John Mallia

John Mallia lives and works in the Boston area and is a member of the Composition Faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music where he also directs the Electronic Music Studio. Additionally, he is a member of the faculty at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, as part of their low-residency M.F.A. program in Composition. His compositional process is informed by spatial constructs and concepts, and a fascination with presence, ritual, and the thresholds standing between states of existence or awareness.

His music and multimedia work has been performed and installed throughout the U.S. and internationally by organizations such as Musicacoustica (Beijing, China), the National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), ConArte MediaMix (Mexico), L.A. Freewaves (CA), ZeroOne New Media festival (CA), Gaudeamus (The Netherlands),

International Computer Music Association, SEAMUS, Hua xia Ensemble (Lincoln Center), Zeppelin Festival of Sound Art (Barcelona, Spain), Festival Synthèse (Bourges, France), Interensemble's Computer Arts Festival (Padova, Italy), Yo-Yo Ma (Barbican Centre, London), and Medi@terra's Travelling Mikromuseum (Greece, Bulgaria, Germany, Slovenia).

He was a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia (CEMI) at the University of North Texas (2004-5) and was composer-in-residence at the Institut de Musique Electroacoustique (Bourges, France; 1993, 2002).

Meeker-Cummings *Concurrence* (2022)

"We have at our disposal the concept of simultaneity; and we owe this concept to our ability to perceive external flows of events either together with the flow of our own duration, or separately from it, or, still better, both separately and together, at one and the same time. If we then refer to two external flows which take up the same duration as being "simultaneous," it is because they abide within the duration of yet a third, our own. But, to be useable, these simultaneities of durations must be converted into simultaneities of instants; and this we do as soon as we have learned to spatialize time."

– Henri Bergson

Robin Meeker-Cummings is a composer, sound artist, and improviser who studied Composition at New England Conservatory. They spent years active in the Philadelphia experimental and new music scenes organizing concerts and performing improvised electronics. At school, they have been writing electronic, electroacoustic, and acoustic classical music; many of these works have been performed at NEC. In the summer of 2018, they attended at 9-day program in the countryside near Barcelona which focused on sound art with found sounds. Robin has been performing improvised electroacoustic music using found objects, bells, and parts of wind instruments to create thick textures and pointillistic gestures with the use of live processing. Robin's development in electroacoustic composition has been encouraged by attending the Splice festival, where they took classes about composing for electroacoustic instrumentation and had one of their pieces premiered. Robin has been working with multichannel spatialization and had a piece for 4.1 speaker orientation premiered at the ICMC in NYC in the summer of 2019. In the summer of 2021, the ensemble Sunono Giallo performed Robin's electroacoustic trio as part of the ilSUONO composition Academy in Sansepolcro, Italy.

Miljkovic *If in a Winter...* (2009-23)

The title of the piece refers to Calvino's novel, *If in a Winter's night a traveler...*

As with memories lost in the mistiness of time, the sound begins, then stops, again begins - stops, until it entirely dissolves in an undefined band of noise. Saxophone's role is to play through a blur of noise, a simple, barely perceptible collection of pitches evoking vague memories of utterances and tunes in a winter.

– Katarina Miljkovic

Katarina Miljkovic investigates the interaction between science, music, and nature, through collaborative musical performance. This interest led her to the mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot's essay, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, and self-similar complex structures resulting in the cycle, *Forest*, ("...a dreamy piece, along the lines of Feldman or Brown...entirely captivating" *Signal to Noise*). In collaboration with Wolfram Research, Miljkovic has been working on the sound mapping of the elementary rules from Stephen Wolfram's *New Kind of Science*. She presented her exploration in this new field at Brown University, NKS conferences in 2004, Waltham, MA, Wolfram Technology Conference 2005, Champaign, Illinois, NKS 2006, Washington, D.C., NKS 2007, University of Vermont, 2011, The Musical and Scientific Legacies of Iannis Xenakis, 2006, Toronto, International Conference on Mathematics and Computation in Music, MCM 2007, and ECMST ~ MASA 2010, Berlin, EUROMicroFest 2017, Improtech Paris - Philly 2017, 2022 Earth Day Art Model Telematic and Media Festival, Boston Cyberarts festivals, Cambridge Science festivals, and Boston First Night. Her generative music has been described as "a refined, hypnotic dream" (*Danas*) "a work of musical and visual slow-motion with only a few delicately elaborated musical metaphors" (*Radio Belgrade*).

Minakakis For Felipe M.

For Felipe M. is a love song to ephemeral things.

It is composed of material that engages the margins of auditory perception: islands of fragile sound between pockets of silence, quasi-subliminal signals that disappear in the distance, streams of seemingly interminable melodies, and static sounds of delicate polarities. These four sound types are arranged in an idiomatic "Lieder Ohne Worte" form composed of seven epigrammatic verses and two extended stanzas. If there is one common thread that permeates the nature of this material, it is the predilection for minuscule gradations, particularly evident in the nano-microtonal melodies and delicate nuances of breath tones, both of which the result of painstaking collaboration with saxophonist Don-Paul Kahl. By drawing attention to such esoteric nuances, the work aims to create an intimate space between performer and listener, inviting the latter to an inward journey of what the poet C.P. Cavafy calls "indistinct sensations."

Felipe M. was a rescue cat that left too soon due to congenital heart disease. He was one of the most empathic, kind, and generous beings who, in the six short months of his life with us, blessed Dolores, Catalina, and Stratis with unconditional love and happiness.

This work was commissioned by Don-Paul Kahl and was premiered live on October 4th, 2021 at the Stretansky Concert Hall, Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, PA.

Stratis Minakakis is a composer and conductor whose creative work engages issues of memory, cultural identity, and art as social testimony; it also explores the rich possibilities engendered by the interaction between arts and sciences.

As a composer, he has collaborated with leading performers and ensembles across Europe, North America, and Japan, such as The Crossing choir, the PRISM and

Stockholm saxophone quartets, the Harry Partch ensemble, the Arditti String Quartet, Ensemble Counter)induction, Noh actress Ryoko Ayoki, recorder virtuoso Tosiya Suzuki, flutist Orlando Cela, and conductors Donald Nally and Rüdiger Bonn.

As a conductor, he has directed and coached numerous chamber music and orchestral ensembles in contemporary repertory, including works by Milton Babbitt, Katherine Balch, Henri Dutilleux, György Ligeti, Fabien Levy, Eric Maestri, John Mallia, Katarina Miljkovic, Dimitris Minakakis, Joan Arnau Pamiès, Y. A. Papaioannou, and Iannis Xenakis.

Also active in the field of music theory, his recent work focuses on interpretive analysis of the late string quartet manuscripts by Beethoven. This line of work builds upon the pioneering research of violinist Nicholas Kitchen on the expressive markings and articulations of Beethoven manuscripts. Other areas of interest include early Modernism, and the music of Xenakis and Ligeti.

He is the recipient of numerous artistic prizes, grants, and academic awards from institutions such as the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, the New England Conservatory, the Takefu International Festival in Japan, the Fondation Royaumont in France, the Center for Mediterranean Music in Greece, the Greek Composers Union, and the International Society for Contemporary Music. Deeply committed to music pedagogy, he was awarded the Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching at the University of Pennsylvania and the prestigious Louis Krasner Award at New England Conservatory.

He studied piano, theory, and composition at Atheneum Conservatory (First Prize in Composition), Princeton University (Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude), New England Conservatory (Toru Takemitsu Award in Composition, summa cum laude, Distinction in Performance), and the University of Pennsylvania (Nitze and Hallstead Prizes for Composition, Dean's Scholar Award, George Crumb Fellowship). He currently lives in Sudbury, Massachusetts and teaches Music Theory and Composition at New England Conservatory.

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