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New England
Conservatory

Concert Program

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NEC Composers' Series

Michael Gandolfi, series director
Stratis Minakakis, concert curator

Wednesday, January 22, 2025
7:30 p.m.
NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

John Mallia

(b. 1968)

Dodo (2009)

TJ Borden, cello

John Mallia, electronics

Nima Janmohammadi

(b. 1984)

solo setar performance (2025)

World Premiere

Nima Janmohammadi, setar

Stratis Minakakis

(b. 1979)

Phoni Avras Leptis (2022)

I.

II.

III.

IV.

TJ Borden, cello

Jihye Chang, piano

Intermission

Davide Ianni

Impromptu nel vuoto (2024)

Il respiro dei vasi

Ludi Tinnitus

I giardini di Larsen

Davide Ianni, electronics

Anthony Coleman

(b. 1955)

The Worms Are In Their Brains (2019)

Philip Rawlinson, viola

Sid Richardson

(b. 1987)

Rock Garden (2020)

Shengyu Cui, flute

Yufei Wu, flute, piccolo

Annie Jung, oboe

Katherine Filiss, oboe, English horn

Chasity Thompson, clarinet

Carla Fortmann, clarinet, bass clarinet

Owen Schigiel, bassoon

Daniel Arakaki, bassoon, contrabassoon

Noah Hawryluck, Grace Clarke, French horn

Timothy Ren, conductor

Upcoming Composers' Series concerts

Arthur Berger Memorial Concert

Sid Richardson, curator

Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

DMA Composer Showcase

Sid Richardson, curator

Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Malcolm Peyton Composer-in-Residence Concert

Sid Richardson, curator

Ingrid Laubrock and Ikue Mori, composers

Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Mallia *Dodo*

Dodo (2009) was written at the kind request of Julia Werntz for the occasion of the Boston Microtonal Society's 20th anniversary. The piece was composed for cellist David Russell, who has performed the piece several times.

The year before, during a visit to New York City's Museum of Natural History, while my 6-year-old son William was spending time looking at the expertly stuffed tigers, the skeleton of a dodo bird that happened to be housed in the same large glass case caught my attention. I was reminded of the sad story of the extinct bird, and decided to treat it as the subject of a musical composition. The microtonal melodic lines used in the piece are characterized, alternately, by slow micro-descents and striving, angular lines that tend toward ascent but fail to reach a clear goal. The electronic component includes sounds coaxed from a rare, and injured, vintage Buchla synthesizer.

– John Mallia

Janmohammadi *solo setar performance*

In *solo setar performance*, I draw upon two recordings: *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* by Miles Davis and a collaboration between two of the most prominent masters of Indian music, Ustad Vilayat Khan (on Sitar) and Ustad Bismillah Khan (on Shehnai), in *Rag Bhairavi*.

I attained a conscious understanding of these recordings by studying the temporal densities, the weight and timbre of individual notes, the use of space and distance between notes, segments and melodies, the harmonic, heterophonic and polyphonic layers, the internal energies of gestures and the varied forms of repetition these masters employ. I then learned to play them, immersing myself in a labyrinth of infinite melodic motion, breathing the same air they have breathed. Lastly, I brought these "Affects," these "Moods," to the possibilities and limitations of my own instrument, the Setar, which naturally brings them into dialogue with the realm of Persian classical music.

– Nima Janmohammadi

Minakakis *Phoni Avras Leptis*

Phoni Avras Leptis was inspired by a passage in the biblical Book of Kings, as it was translated into Greek in the Septuagint. The translated passage, notably a little different from the original Hebrew, describes the revelation of God to Prophet Elijah in the form of "a voice of a delicate breeze":

11. ...and behold a great strong wind destroying the mountains and crushing the rocks before the Lord: but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind a mighty earthquake: but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

12. and after the earthquake a fire: but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a voice of a delicate breeze: and the Lord was there.

(Third Book of Kings, 19:11-12, trans. from the Greek by Stratis Minakakis)

The images of a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire appear in a sonic vortex that centers around the image of the "gentle breeze."

– Stratis Minakakis

Ianni *Impromptu nel vuoto*

Impromptu nel vuoto is a fixed-media composition that explores the interplay between minimal sonic elements and diverse resonating spaces. Utilizing breath and keyclicks as primary materials, the piece is structured into three continuous movements — 'Il respiro dei vasi,' 'Ludi Tinnitus,' and 'I giardini di Larsen.'

Throughout the work, live electronics are employed to enhance the sonic landscape, guiding listeners through a progression of increasingly intricate and articulated spaces. These spaces serve as active agents, filtering and shaping the sonic materials, while also adding depth through reverberation and facilitating polyphonic interactions.

Impromptu nel vuoto invites audiences to delve into the nuanced relationship between sonic elements and the spaces they inhabit.

– Davide Ianni

Coleman *The Worms Are In Their Brains*

The Worms Are in Their Brains was written in 2019 for violist Joanna Mattrey. The title comes from the film *Slither*. And *Slither* was the original title of this piece, but it felt a little too obviously descriptive. I'm not a particular fan of the film, but I knew it would have something to offer, so I watched a few videos until I found this incredible line. There is slithering, but not only...the piece has something to do with discovery and inexorability.

– Anthony Coleman

Richardson *Rock Garden*

The primary inspiration for *Rock Garden* is the ancient Japanese art of dry landscape gardens, or *karesansui*. I find that the static energy implied by the relationship of stones to one another in these Zen gardens can be related to disparate musical objects. As the stones each possess a beauty of edges and lines, they in turn have evoked various rhythms, harmonies, and timbres in this piece for double woodwind quintet. I was particularly intrigued by the numerical rhythm of the garden of Ryoanji Temple in Kyoto. Based on the series 7-5-3, the garden's composition reflects the propitious nature of uneven numbers in Eastern numerology. Due to its being situated in the middle of the first nine numbers, the number 5 is accorded special significance as a symbol of the center. With the piece's proportions and rhythms derived from the uneven number series, the layout of the fifteen rocks of the Ryoanji garden permeates its formal structure on several levels. *Rock Garden* draws on other influences, including the play *The Rock Garden* by Sam Shepard, John Cage's *Ryonaji*, and the music of The Smashing Pumpkins. It was commissioned by the Tanglewood Music Center and premiered on July 9, 2022, in Studio E in the Linde Center for Music and Learning. It was made possible in part with the support of The Hermitage Artist Retreat. *Rock Garden* is dedicated with gratitude to my mentor, composer Stephen Jaffe.

– Sid Richardson

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert and ticketing information

Jazz/CMA Faculty Spotlight

Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Joshua Brown, violin (AD '26)

Student of Donald Weilerstein

Friday, January 24, 2025, at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Philharmonia, David Loebel, conductor

Singleton 56 Blows; Mozart Symphony No. 38, "Prague";

Hindemith *Mathis der Maler* Symphony

Monday, January 27, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Tuesday Night New Music

New music by NEC student composers, performed by their peers

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

NEC Symphony, Paul Biss, conductor

Verdi *Overture to "La forza del destino"*; Sibelius *Impromptu*

Mozart *Concerto in B-flat Major for Bassoon and Orchestra*, Heejeong Jeong, bassoon

Mendelssohn *Symphony No. 4 in A Major, "Italian"*

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Faculty Recital: Joel Ayau, piano, and Jennifer Zetlan, soprano

Works by Mussorgsky, Rachmaninoff, Turina, Fauré, Ravel,

and Ricky Ian Gordon

Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 3:00 p.m., Jordan Hall

Opera: Mozart "Così fan tutte"

Robert Tweten, director

Monday & Wednesday, February 3 & 5, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Piano Department Concert, Bruce Brubaker, curator of piano programming

"Fauré and His Students", Part One

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Sonata Night 54, Pei-Shan Lee, director

Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano

Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., Burnes Hall

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and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2024-25 concert season—a celebration of the power of music to connect and inspire one another.

Whether you are seated in one of our concert halls or watching online, we hope you are uplifted by the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists.

Above all, we thank you for your support of our students as they cultivate their artistry and contribute to the world through music.


A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Andrea Kalyn". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrea Kalyn
President

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