

N|E|C

New England
Conservatory

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt, is singing with his mouth wide open. He is standing next to a grand piano, with his right hand resting on the piano's edge and his left hand gesturing. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the man and the piano.

Concert Program

necmusic.edu



Welcome to NEC!

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, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrea Kalyn
President

Voices of NEC: One Heart

NEC Symphonic Choir & Chamber Singers

Erica J. Washburn, director

with conductors

Bailee Green '25 MM

Ying Ting Lena Wong '25 MM

Henri Youmans '25 MM

Honghao Zheng '25 MM

Hyojeong Ham, Rafe Lei Schaberg, piano

Yeh-Chun Lin, viola

Thursday, March 6, 2025

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

Launched in March of 2024, the three-year concert series, “Voices of NEC”, was established to mark choral works of past and present faculty members, alumni, and current students. Tonight’s program, the second in this series, celebrates contributions to the choral canon from NEC alumni. More than 90 pieces were anonymously submitted for programming consideration this evening.

In collaboration with my colleagues James Burton, the Boston Symphony Orchestra Choral Director and Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Anthony Trecek-King, conductor, speaker, educator, and Resident Conductor of the Handel and Haydn Society, and Anthony Maglione, recently appointed as the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Houston and Artistic Director and Conductor of the Houston Symphony Chorus, we came to the difficult decision of narrowing the submissions down to the nine pieces featured by the NEC Symphonic Choir and Chamber Singers tonight.

It is an honor for me, the graduate choral conductors, and the 90+ student choristers to present these compositions this evening, providing a performance in this ‘home’ hall for our alumni.

– Erica J. Washburn

We open tonight’s program with David Hahn’s *I Can’t Breathe*, a musical testimony to the 2014 tragedy of Eric Garner’s murder. Through the use of various breath techniques, the choir creates an almost real-time depiction of the emotional atmosphere surrounding the witnessed, and video recorded, death of the Staten Island native and father of six.

In one of my conversations with David regarding the performance of *I Can’t Breathe*, he said, “Perhaps the goal of the piece—if there is one—is to warn against what happens if we ignore our common humanity.”

Tonight the NEC Symphonic Choir has shed its standard concert black attire and organized, tiered row standing configuration, instead wearing casual streetwear and scattered across the Jordan Hall stage. The visual aspect of this portion of the concert is meant to mirror the scene of events of July 17, 2014, with the choir serving as the crowd of witnesses that gathered at 202 Bay Street, Staten Island, NY.

Without pause follows Kevin Siegfried’s *One Heart*, a piece that serves a musical response to the prior emotions and message. The text comes from poet Emily Dickinson and reads:

If I can stop one Heart from breaking,
I shall not live in Vain;
If I can ease one Life the Aching,
Or cool one Pain,
Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his Nest again,
I shall not live in Vain.

Though the Hahn and Siegfried were submitted, and selected, separately from each other, the empathetic and generous spirit of Dickinson’s text, penned circa 1864, acts

as a reassuring counter message to the Hahn, which made the partnering of the two works poignant; its appreciation of life, even just one life, provides a hopeful contrast to lives that have ended tragically due to excessive violence. – Bailee Green

PROGRAM

NEC Symphonic Choir

These two works will be performed without pause. Please hold your applause.

David Hahn '80

I Can't Breathe (2023)

Kevin Siegfried '05 DMA

One Heart (2022)

Hyojeong Ham, piano

Bailee Green '25 MM, conductor

short pause

NEC Chamber Singers

Bosba '19

this is the garden (2021)

Robert Moorman, tenor

Ben Yee-Paulson '18 MM, '19 GD

Song of Hope (2022)

Rafe Lei Schaberg, piano

Erica J. Washburn, conductor

Nell Shaw Cohen '12

Street Haunting (2023) from *Sauntering Songs*

Henri Youmans '25 MM, conductor

Andrew Rindfleisch '90

Salmo de Alabanza (2010)

Ying Ting Lena Wong '25 MM, conductor

Ari Sussman '16, '18 MM

Higaleh Nah **הִגַּלְה נָח** (2018)

Rachel Solyn, soprano

Yeh-Chun Lin, viola

Rafe Lei Schaberg, piano

Honghao Zheng '25 MM, conductor

Krishan Oberoi '96

Telescope (2022)

Charles Berofsky '24 MM

Thou Art My Lute (2022/2024)

Erica J. Washburn, conductor

Special thanks to the judges of the "Voices of NEC" choral composition competition

James Burton

Anthony Trecek-King

Anthony Maglione

and to our fellow musicians, Yeh-Chun Lin, Hyojeong Ham, and Rafe Lei Schaberg.

We are deeply grateful, as always, to

Bob Winters, Catherine Cooper, and the rest of the Concert Halls staff

and to Lisa Nigris and the RPTS engineers.

Hahn *I Can't Breathe*

On July 17, 2014, Eric Garner, who was selling loose cigarettes on the street, died in Staten Island, New York after a police officer put him in a chokehold during the arrest. According to a video of the event, Mr. Garner cried out "I can't breathe" eleven times before dying.

This piece has numbers from 1 to 11 instead of rehearsal marks to indicate the number of times Mr. Garner repeated the phrase,

I can't breathe.

David Hahn, Seattle-based composer and performer, was educated at Brown University, the New England Conservatory of Music, and the London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Mr. Hahn received a doctorate in musicology at Stanford University in 1993. He began his music career as a performer of lute, guitar, and mandolin with such groups as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera Orchestras, Boston Musica Viva, the Seattle Symphony, Musica Nel Chiostro in Florence, and the City of London Festival. While serving on the faculty at the New England Conservatory, he co-founded the award-winning Boston Renaissance Ensemble which toured extensively in the US and Europe.

Many of Mr. Hahn's works have been commissioned and performed by professional ensembles and soloists, including: *Concerto Alla Barocco* performed by the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, *Four Short Pieces* performed in Carnegie Hall and *Concerto Anatolia* premiered by guitarist Cem Duruöz and Turkey's Antalya State Orchestra, the choir piece *De Omnibus Apostolis* performed by the Emerald Ensemble conducted by Gary Cannon, *W Is For Weasel* premiered by the Shank-Hagedorn Duo, and *Kindergarten Word Ring* for octophonic speaker system, performed at the Spectrum Press Electronic Music Odyssey Concert Series in Los Angeles. Mr. Hahn has also collaborated with artists in film, theater, spoken word, and other media, such as in *Zagreb Everywhere*, an experimental video which premiered at the Rencontres Internationales Festival in Paris and Berlin.

Much of David's work has been released on CD under his name or that of his ensemble, Concert Imaginaire. These CDs include *Your Time Is Up*, *Fortune's Wheel*, *Passionate Isolation*, *For The Trees*, *SHE's Finale*, and *What is the Night?* Individual pieces are also available at davidhahn.bandcamp.com.

Some of Mr. Hahn's awards are: a Jack Straw Grant for Artists' Projects, an Artists Project Award from the Seattle Mayor's Office for the Arts, an ArtsLink Collaborative Grant from the NEA and the Soros Foundation, a Meet The Composer Grant, a Puffin Foundation Grant, a Graduate Fellowship from the Stanford Humanities Center, and the Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society.

Siegfried *One Heart*

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." – *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"We are here to awaken from our illusion of separateness." – *Thich Nhat Hanh*

When I received a commission from the Heritage Chorale to write a piece in celebration of their 85th anniversary, I did some reading about Framingham, Massachusetts, where the Chorale is based. I was intrigued to learn that, in the years before the Civil War, Framingham was an annual gathering place for members of the abolitionist movement. On Independence Day from 1854 to 1865, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society held rallies at an area called Harmony Grove near what is now the city's downtown. At the 1854 rally, William Lloyd Garrison burned copies of the Fugitive Slave Law, with fellow abolitionists Sojourner Truth and Henry David Thoreau in attendance. Reading about this history sparked my imagination and led me to think of Emily Dickinson's poem "If I can stop one Heart from breaking," which was written during the same period of history.

Dickinson's deceptively simple poem underscores the importance of cultivating compassion in our daily lives and shifting our focus from separateness to interconnection. As MLK, Jr. famously wrote: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Dickinson's poem operates from a similar understanding of mutuality. If the suffering of one life affects all, then the alleviation of suffering also affects all, and ultimately makes life worth living.

One Heart honors this spirit of compassion and mutuality. At the same time, it celebrates the interconnections of breath, sound, spirit, and community that make choral singing such a powerful unifying experience and force within society. The words "One Heart, One Life" are extracted from Dickinson's poem and treated as a choral mantra, while the piano represents the steady beating of our collective heart.

– *Kevin Siegfried*

If I can stop one Heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain
If I can ease one Life the Aching
Or cool one Pain
Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his Nest again
I shall not live in Vain.

Emily Dickinson, c. 1864

With a style that draws richly on minimalism, early music, and American folk traditions, **Kevin Siegfried** is a prolific composer of choral and chamber music known for its lyricism and accessibility. Described as "hypnotic and beautifully written" by *The Boston Musical Intelligencer*, "ethereal and otherworldly" by *Organists' Review*, Siegfried's music is published by E. C. Schirmer, G. Schirmer, Earthsongs, and MorningStar.

As composer-in-residence with the Capitol Hill Chorale in Washington DC, Siegfried has composed dozens of new works, including the cantatas *Child of Earth* and *Music of the Spheres*. The Chorale's innovative programming and collaboration with Siegfried was recognized with the "Alice Parker Award" by Chorus America/ASCAP. Siegfried's music has been performed, commissioned, and recorded by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, The Dale Warland Singers, Conspirare, Symphony NH, Choral Arts Initiative, The New York Choral Society, and many more. Recent festival appearances include the American Masterpieces Choral Festival, Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, Minnesota Beethoven Festival, and St. Magnus International Festival.

Deeply committed to the performance and preservation of early American music, Siegfried has devoted much of his career to raising awareness of Shaker musical traditions. In recent years, Siegfried has undertaken extensive archival research at Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village in Maine, the only active Shaker community in the United States. This research has led to multiple collaborations with Brother Arnold Hadd, who carries on the 200-plus-year oral tradition of Shaker song. These collaborations have included concert performances at Sabbathday Lake, a film for the American Folklife Center entitled "Shaker Spirituals in Maine," and the recording of two oral histories for the Library of Congress. This past June, Siegfried presented a "Community Sing" at the Library of Congress in acknowledgement of the 250th anniversary of the Shakers in North America.

Siegfried holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition from New England Conservatory where he studied with Lee Hyla, Michael Gandolfi, and Daniel Pinkham. He also studied in Paris through the European American Musical Alliance, and in India where he studied South Indian music with violin maestro Sriram Parasuram. Since 2004, Siegfried has taught at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

Bosba *this is the garden*

The genesis of the piece came to me whilst cycling down Pembroke Street during my studies at the University of Cambridge, long before I decided to set e.e.cummings' sublime prose.

Death, the garden of which he writes being the passage of time, of life. a resting place.

Originally written as the final movement of a larger choral cycle and inspired by the King's fellows' garden at King's College, and the garden of Dr Sarah Upjohn — whose garden offered much respite during my COVID quarantine before Michaelmas term.

— *Bosba* - London. February 2025

this is the garden:colours come and go,
frail azures fluttering from night's outer wing
strong silent greens serenely lingering,
absolute lights like baths of golden snow.

This is the garden pursed lips do blow
upon cool flutes within wide glooms,and sing
(of harps celestial to the quivering string)
invisible faces hauntingly and slow.

This is the garden. Time shall surely reap
and on Death's blade lie many a flower curled,
in other lands where other songs be sung;
yet stand They here enraptured,as among
The slow deep trees perpetual of sleep
some silver-fingered fountain steals the world.

e.e.cummings from Tulips and Chimneys (1922)

Bosba is a Western-educated, Cambodian composer. Influenced by French expressionism, European sacred music, and American minimalism, her music primarily explores the theme of loss and memory. Her experience as a Cambodian folk singer and classical performance singer informs the lyricism of her music.

A recipient of the Fondation Bay Music Studentship and Cambridge Trust European Scholarship, Bosba holds an MPhil in Composition from the University of Cambridge, having sung with the King's Voices at King's College Chapel. She wrote her master's thesis on Khmer Agency in Western Art Music, and was awarded First Prize by Judith Weir DBE at the Minerva Composition Competition. She is also a graduate of the Walnut Hill School for the Arts (2015) and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA (2019), where she conducted a history minor on the commodification of trauma in arts in post-genocide Cambodian society under Dr James Klein. Previously, she attended the Lycée Français René Descartes of Phnom Penh. She is a former athlete of the Cambodian National Judo Team.

Prior to composition, Bosba began her career in Cambodia as a traditional folk singer at the age of 7. Her parents managed her vocal career. Their collaboration with Cambodian artists led to performances at venues such as Angkor Wat, the 13th-century UNESCO heritage site of temples, a performance praised as "one of Cambodia's most spectacular music events" (*Asia Life Magazine*, 2011). Her life projects aim to contribute to the development of music education in Southeast Asia and to fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Khmer musical identity

Bosba is a proud alumna of the New England Conservatory Preparatory and College Divisions, where she studied composition with Ken Schaphorst, Michael Gandolfi, and John Mallia. She is deeply grateful to Jonathan Richter and Erica Washburn for her time singing in the NEC Youth Chorale, NEC Camerata, NEC Young Women's Chorale, and most of all, the NEC Chamber Singers.

Yee-Paulson *Song of Hope*

One of my final courses at Indiana University was a choral conducting class for graduate students, taught by Prof Dominick DiOrio and Prof Betsy Burleigh. It was a highly illuminating class that reopened my eyes to the possibilities of composing for choir, in no doubt helped by my two excellent composition professors. Prof DiOrio informed the composition program of his “Premiere Project Festival,” where the Choral Arts Initiative would premiere new choral pieces in Los Angeles. I was fortunate enough to have been accepted in the spring 2022 semester, and I began working on a new choral song as a Composer Fellow of the Choral Arts Initiative. The composition that would be created, *Song of Hope*, is not my first choral composition, but it is my first choral composition in years to have piano in it. I also saw this collaboration as an opportunity to try different choral composition aesthetics, outside of purely setting the text to music.

Outside of the music, I quickly knew what kind of song I wanted to write: something optimistic and positive, but not in a trite or tacky way. I wanted to write a composition that walked the bittersweet line of happiness and sadness, ultimately emerging happy. This emotionally tied into my completion of coursework at Indiana University, resulting in me no longer needing to live in Indiana. With the weather changing to summer, the daylight becoming longer, and me finally being able to return home, I had ample motivation to write my composition. Thomas Hardy’s heartfelt poem, also called “Song of Hope,” provided the means of achieving my goals of musical expression.

– Ben Yee-Paulson

O sweet To-morrow! -
After to-day
There will away
This sense of sorrow.
Then let us borrow
Hope, for a gleaming
Soon will be streaming,
Dimmed by no gray -
No gray!

While the winds wing us
Sighs from The Gone,
Nearer to dawn
Minute-beats bring us;
When there will sing us
Larks of a glory
Waiting our story
Further anon -
Anon!

(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)

Doff the black token,
 Don the red shoon,
 Right and retune
Viol-strings broken;
Null the words spoken
In speeches of rueing,
The night cloud is hueing,
 To-morrow shines soon -
 Shines soon!

Thomas Hardy

Dr. **Ben Yee-Paulson** is an internationally-recognized composer and a passionate educator. A Boston native, his music is inspired by a global array of musical and non-musical places and aims to create an emotional experience.

His music is performed across North America, Europe, and Asia, and is also premiered in venues like Carnegie Hall, Jordan Hall, La Schola Cantorum in Paris, the DiMenna Center in New York City, La Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico, and the world opening of Microsoft's flagship store in New York City. Nationally, Yee-Paulson's music won the Costello Competition, both a Merit Award and "Emerging Composer" status from the Tribeca New Music Festival, and multiple finalist positions from the ASCAP Morton Gould Competition. Internationally, he won the Ruth Crawford Seeger Prize, was a finalist in the National Music and Global Culture Society's Composition Competition, received honorable mention in the Future Blend Competition, and was a semi-finalist in the Tampa Bay Symphony's Competition. He was a composer-in-residence at the Lake George Music Festival, the Choral Arts Initiative, the Zodiac Music Festival in France, and at DePaul University with Ensemble Del Niente. He has collaborated with the Grammy-Award winning company PARMA Recordings.

Yee-Paulson's music is played by ensembles like the Boston Opera Collaborative, American Modern Ensemble, Ensemble Del Niente, Choral Arts Initiative, American Modern Orchestra, NEC Contemporary Ensemble, NEC Saxophone Ensemble, IU Concert Orchestra, and the New York Youth Symphony as well as by artists like Grammy-nominated cellist Thomas Mesa, and internationally-acclaimed harpist Abigail Kent. Other performances have occurred at the Celebrity Series of Boston, European American Musical Alliance, Atlantic Music Festival, Zodiac Music Festival, Mostly Modern Festival, International Horn Symposium, and Charlotte New Music Festival.

Yee-Paulson is currently Composition Faculty at NEC's Expanded Education department. He has a Doctor of Music degree at Indiana University, and studied with Han Lash, Don Freund, Aaron Travers, and Claude Baker. He also has a Master of Music degree from NEC, where he studied with Michael Gandolfi and Kati Agócs, and a Bachelor of Music degree from New York University, where he studied with Justin Dello Joio. benyee-paulsonmusic.com

Cohen *Street Haunting*

Street Haunting is a choral selection from *Sauntering Songs*, a concert-length cantata on the theme of walking, commissioned by Skylark Vocal Ensemble. The text for this piece comes from a 1927 essay of the same title by Virginia Woolf, who vividly describes the pleasures of exploring and people-watching on the streets of London.

– Nell Shaw Cohen

“The hour should be the evening and the season winter, for in winter the champagne brightness of the air and the sociability of the streets are grateful. [...] The evening hour, too, gives us the irresponsibility which darkness and lamplight bestow. We are no longer quite ourselves. As we step out of the house on a fine evening between four and six, we shed the self our friends know us by and become part of that vast republican army of anonymous trampers, whose society is so agreeable after the solitude of one’s own room. [...] To escape is the greatest of pleasures; street haunting in winter the greatest of adventures.”

From “Street Haunting: A London Adventure” (1927) by Virginia Woolf. Used by permission of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf.

Nell Shaw Cohen evokes landscapes, visual art, and the lives of mavericks in her lyrical works for concert and stage. *Sauntering Songs*, a 75-minute live album of Cohen’s choral and vocal works commissioned and recorded by Skylark Vocal Ensemble and featuring performances by Juventas New Music Ensemble, was released in 2023. She has also received commissions from Houston Grand Opera, Emmanuel Music, Boston Choral Ensemble, Juventas New Music Ensemble, soprano Laura Strickling, Arkansas State University Concert Choir, and Montage Music Society, among others, and her music has appeared on two GRAMMY-nominated albums.

Previously Artist-in-Residence with Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts and the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, Cohen has received an OPERA America Commissioning Grant for Women Composers, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Graduate Arts Award, the Ellen Taaffe Zwilich Prize from the International Alliance for Women in Music, and was named a Finalist for The American Prize in the Major Choral Works division. Her operas have had workshops with Fort Worth Opera, American Opera Projects, New Dramatists, New York University, Untitled Theater Company No. 61, the Harwood Museum of Art, University of Texas at San Antonio, and University of New Mexico; she was first runner-up for the 2020 Zepick Modern Opera Competition.

Cohen earned degrees in composition from NYU and New England Conservatory, where her teachers included Herschel Garfein and Michael Gandolfi. As Founder & Director of Landscape Music (LandscapeMusic.org), an international network of composers and performers, she advocates for music inspired by landscape, nature, and place. She lives in the Shawangunk Mountains of New York’s Hudson Valley. nellshawcohen.com

Rindfleisch *Salmo de Alabanza*

Salmo de Alabanza is a setting of Psalm 117 and was commissioned by the San Antonio Chamber Choir and Director Scott MacPherson for the re-opening of the famous and historic Mission Concepción (just outside San Antonio), marking and celebrating the Mission's extensive and successful restoration. Set in Spanish, the work is based upon a fast-paced, extremely rhythmic setting of the text, culminating in the overlapping, joyous "Aleluya!" that concludes the work. — Andrew Rindfleisch

Alabad al Señor, naciones todas;

Alabadle, pueblos todos.

*Porque grande es su misericordia para con
nosotros,*

y la fidelidad del Señor es eterna.

Aleluya!

Praise the Lord all ye nations;

Praise him all ye people.

Great is his mercy for us;

And the truth of the Lord is everlasting

Alleluia!

American composer **Andrew Rindfleisch** has enjoyed a career in music that has also included professional activity as a conductor, pianist, vocalist, improviser, record producer, and radio show host. As a composer, he has produced a catalog of over 80 works for the concert hall, including solo, chamber, vocal, choral, orchestral, brass, and wind music. His catalog currently contains over thirty choral works, regularly performed throughout the world, including performances at both regional and national ACDA conferences. Recently, his work *Salmo de Alabanza*, performed by Coral Cantus Firmus of Brazil, was the silver medalist at the World Choral Games in South Africa, and his setting of Emily Dickinson's *I Sing To Use The Waiting*, performed by the Cleveland Chamber Choir, was the grand prize winner in the World Choir Festival in Hong Kong.

Mr. Rindfleisch is the recipient of the Rome Prize, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, the Aaron Copland Award, and the Koussevitzky Foundation Fellowship from the Library of Congress. Over forty other prizes and awards have followed honoring his music. He has participated in dozens of renowned music festivals and has received residency fellowships from the Bogliasco Foundation (Italy), the CzechAmerican Institute in Prague, the MacDowell Colony, and the Pierre Boulez Conductor's Workshop at Carnegie Hall. Much of his music has been commercially recorded and is available on CD and streaming services, including two all Rindfleisch full length choral CDs. He holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin at Madison (Bachelor of Music), the New England Conservatory of Music (Master of Music), and Harvard University (PhD).

As a conductor and producer, Mr. Rindfleisch's commitment to contemporary music culture has brought into performance and recording over 500 works by living composers over the past thirty years. He currently heads the Music Composition Program at Cleveland State University.

Sussman Higaleh Nah הַגְּלֵה נָא,

Y'did Nefesh is a Jewish liturgical poem, or *piyyut*, in four stanzas. The poem is commonly attributed to the 16th century Kabbalist, writer, and poet Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azkari, and is typically sung and prayed during *Kabbalat Shabbat*, the Friday night Sabbath service. The *Higaleh Nah* stanza is the fourth and final stanza of this stunning *piyyut*.
– Ari Sussman

הַגְּלֵה נָא וּפְרֹשׁ, חֵבִיב
עָלַי אֶת סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ
תְּאִיר אֶרֶץ מְכַבֹּדָה
נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמָחָה בְּךָ
מְהֵרָ אֲהוּב כִּי בָּא מוֹעֵד
וְחַנּוּן כִּימֵי עוֹלָם
... לְעוֹלָם

Please, reveal yourself, my beloved, and
spread upon me the shelter of your peace.
Illuminate the earth with Your glory, so that
we may celebrate and rejoice within You.
Quickly, my love, for the time has come.
Have mercy on me for all days, forever,
for eternity...

Praised for his “sophisticated writing” (GTM) and work that “weave(s) a trance-like mystical aura” (Zamir Chorale), **Ari Sussman** is a Philadelphia based hard-of-hearing pianist, clawhammer banjoist, and composer of vocal, chamber, orchestral, choral, and electronic music. His music has been performed in Seiji Ozawa Hall, Carnegie Hall, MASS MoCA, Hill Auditorium, Yerkes Observatory, Jordan Hall, and others. His music has been featured, commissioned, or performed throughout the United States and Europe by the KC VITAs Chamber Choir, soprano Tony Arnold, NPR, Zamir Chorale of Boston, Ensemble Ipse, Bang on a Can, American Modern Ensemble, New York Youth Symphony, BlackBox Ensemble, banjoist Hilary Hawke, the Terezin Music Foundation, Juventas New Music Ensemble, 208 ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, the Tanglewood Music Center, and others. Kabbalah, the natural world, cosmology, meditation, metaphysics, ancient and contemporary poetry, the human condition, and Interactionism are among Sussman's non-musical influences and interests. As a result, Sussman's music illustrates equivocal worlds of sounds that are ambient, euphonious, and ethereal in nature.

Sussman has won the American Composers Forum: Philadelphia Chapter: Young Composers Scholarship, two Honorable Mentions for the Guild of Temple Musicians Young Composers Award, the University of Michigan Brehm Prize in Choral Composition, and a “First Music” commission from the New York Youth Symphony. Sussman has received an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award, a BMI Student Composer Award, and fellowships from the Blackbird Creative Lab, the Bang on a Can Summer Festival, and the Tanglewood Music Center.

An accomplished concert pianist, Sussman has performed many concerts and recitals throughout the Philadelphia, Boston, and Ann Arbor metro areas. With a fondness for musical theatre, Sussman has held music directorships for productions of *Hairspray*, *Les Misérables*, *The Last Five Years*, and many others. With a love for American traditional/roots music, Sussman plays piano and clawhammer banjo for English country dance bands, Contra-dance bands, and Old-time bands. As a

banjoist, Sussman has performed, gigged, or composed music for Westbound Situation, Hilary Hawke, and Nefesh Mountain.

Sussman holds Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees with honors in Composition from the New England Conservatory of Music where he received the Donald Martino Award for Excellence in Composition, and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition from the University of Michigan. In addition to serving as Director of Music at Temple Adath Israel of the Main Line, Sussman is currently an Adjunct Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania Wells School of Music. His primary musical mentors include Michael Gandolfi, Kati Agócs, Evan Chambers, and Kristin Kuster.

Sussman enjoys long walks, playing basketball, drinking tea, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, mancala, cheesecake, being a “numtot,” and avidly rooting for Philadelphian and University of Michigan sports teams. Sussman is a member of BMI and the Landscape Music Composers Network.

Oberoi *Telescope*

I first encountered Kate Wakeling’s wonderful poem *Telescope* in 2019, in her collection *Moon Juice: Poems for Children*. The poem immediately captured my imagination, with its clever repeated use of the letter O, and its haunting and dreamy quality, which is somehow eerily whimsical.

In my musical setting, I’ve tried to mirror in music what the author created so skillfully in her composition of the poem. Just as the poem “revolves” around the fixed point of the letter O, in my choral setting, I’ve used the fixed point of a single pitch (in this case, D4), so that the entire harmony revolves around that locus.

The piece should be sung with metronomic rhythm and with a transparent vocal quality. I think that *Telescope*, with its repeated pleas of “show me”, is really a metaphor for the secret and solitary discoveries of childhood. Singers should strive to capture a sense of wonder and urgency in performance.

– Krishan Oberoi

O
telescOpe
telescOpe
shOw me
hOw
the mOon
glOws
shOw me
whO
the wOrld
knOws
shOw me
the prOgress
Of
thOse
skybOund
bOdies
frOm the
PlOugh to
cOld
Old
PlutO
shOw me
telescOpe
shOw me
the wOnders
that revOlve
beyOnd
yOur
cOol
pOlished
O

Kate Wakeling

Krishan Oberoi (a.k.a. Renoir Kobashi) is an award-winning composer whose genre-defying works have captivated audiences worldwide. His music has been performed around the globe, from intimate chamber settings to large-scale theatrical productions. Premieres this spring include the multi-movement *Infinite Twin in San Diego*, and *Saturday*, commissioned for the Tokyo International School's children's choir festival in May 2025.

Krishan's creative ventures extend beyond the concert stage. His full-length musical *Best Time To Be Alive*, developed with New York City's critically acclaimed BEDLAM Theatre and co-written with playwright Rhiannon Ling, has been hailed by Hamilton star Lexi Lawson as "euphoric... magical... a musical masterpiece in the making." Meanwhile, his semi-animated short-film musical *Jen Xponential*, written under the anagrammatic pseudonym Renoir Kobashi, is currently in post-production, with the original cast album now available on Spotify. Krishan's collaborators span disciplines and borders, including MTV Video Music Award-

winning DJ Cumberbund, trap artist Johan Lenox and choreographer Shura Baryshnikov.

A recipient of multiple prestigious awards, Krishan's work has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mass Cultural Grants for Creative Individuals, the Marion & Jasper Whiting Fellowship, and the Krenek Forum in Austria. As a conductor, Krishan has been celebrated by such press outlets as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Boston Globe* and *Variety* magazine for bringing difficult and complex works to life with energy, precision, and an infectious enthusiasm that inspires both performers and audiences alike. He has served as Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master for Boston's Odyssey Opera, and has also prepared choruses for Oscar-winning film composer Michael Giacchino and the collaborative team of Alan Menken & Stephen Schwartz for the premiere of their Disney musical *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Krishan continues to push artistic boundaries, weaving intricate narratives and infectious harmonies into his compositions. Whether crafting evocative choral works, reimagining silent films through music, or exploring hybrid theatrical forms, his work remains an ever-evolving exploration of sound, storytelling, and artistic collaboration.

Berofsky *Thou Art My Lute*

I became aware of some of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poetry during my senior year of my undergraduate degree, and I was inspired to set his *Invitation to Love* for a cappella choir and submit it for the Eastman School of Music's yearly choral composition readings. Later on, I became motivated to set two more of his texts: *Thou Art My Lute* and *Ships That Pass in the Night*.

I'm especially fond of the poem that serves the basis for this piece; it is such a beautiful, simple expression of idealized love. While the structure is such that it would work perfectly well as a sort of hymn, I thought I would take the opportunity to make the music quite different for each of the first three verses, before heralding the return of the "main theme" in the final verse. At the end, as the speaker declares their oneness with their lover, the music breaks down and the last part of the text starts to repeat itself. The last line of music is sung without words; I wanted to communicate the idea that if "I'm already one with thee," there is no longer any need for words.

– Charles Berofsky

Thou art my lute, by thee I sing, —
My being is attuned to thee.
Thou settest all my words a-wing,
And meltest me to melody.

Thou art my love, by thee I lead
My soul the paths of light along,
From vale to vale, from mead to mead,
And home it in the hills of song.

Thou art my life, by thee I live,
From thee proceed the joys I know;
Sweetheart, thy hand has power to give
The meed of love—the cup of woe.

My song, my soul, my life, my all,
Why need I pray or make my plea,
Since my petition cannot fall;
For I'm already one with thee!

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Equally at home as a solo pianist, collaborator, and composer, **Charles Berofsky** seeks to engage audiences through a myriad of styles and genres of music. Charles grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and began piano lessons when he was six years old. He also developed an interest in composition from a young age and started organ lessons at age 14.

Charles has been a prizewinner at various piano competitions, including the Campillos International Piano Competition (First Prize); the New York International Piano Competition (Third Prize to a solo performer and First Prize for the piano four-hands ensemble); the Thousand Islands International Piano Competition (First Prize, senior division); and the Chautauqua piano competition (Second Prize). For his compositions, he has received a commission from the American Guild of Organists and four prizes from the Eastman School of Music composition department, as well as First Prize at the Chicago College of Performing Arts Young Composer Competition.

An avid chamber musician, Charles is the pianist of Trio Sponte, which won the Grand Prize in the Senior Division of the Coltman Chamber Music Competition. As the pianist of both Trio Sponte and the Newbury Trio, Charles was a participant in NEC's prestigious Honors Ensemble program for two consecutive years. During his time at NEC Charles also performed in Jordan Hall with the Borromeo String Quartet as a winner of their yearly Guest Artist Award, and with the NEC Chamber Orchestra as the winner of the 2022 Mozart piano concerto competition.

Charles is currently studying piano with Antti Siirala, as well as harpsichord and fortepiano with Christine Schornsheim, at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München. He graduated from NEC with his master's degree in 2024, and obtained his bachelor's degrees in piano and composition at Eastman. He has studied piano with HaeSun Paik, Alan Chow, Logan Skelton, and John Ellis; composition with Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Robert Morris, David Liptak, and Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez; harpsichord with Peter Sykes, Michael Sponseller, and Lisa Goode Crawford.

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Erica J. Washburn, Director of Choral Activities
Bailee Green, Ying Ting Lena Wong, Henri Youmans,
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Sally Millar, administrator

Hyojeong Ham, Lingbo Ma, Rafe Lei Schaberg,
and Ashly Zhang, rehearsal accompanists

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Coco Chapman	Jianing Liu	Giuliani Torti
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Taitem Johnson	Rafe Lei Schaberg	Honghao Howard Zheng

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Erica J. Washburn

Director of Choral Activities

Conductor and mezzo-soprano Erica J. Washburn has been Director of Choral Activities at New England Conservatory since 2009. Known for her student-centric approach to classroom and rehearsal instruction, and commitment to the performance of new music, she is the recipient of several outstanding alumni awards, including the distinguished honor of induction to the Westminster Choir College Music Education Hall of Fame.

As a conductor, Washburn has worked with Kansas City, MO based Cardinalis, the Yale Schola Cantorum, the East Carolina University Women's Chorale, and the Eastman Women's Chorus. She is a sought-after guest clinician who frequently leads state and regional festival choruses, and spent five summers as a conductor and voice faculty member for the New York State Summer School of the Arts School of Choral Studies.

Under her direction the NEC choirs have been featured on several live and pre-recorded broadcasts, including the North Carolina based station WCPE Great Sacred Music, WICN Public Radio, and WGBH Boston. The choirs can also be heard in collaboration with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project on the BMOP/Sound recording *Paul Moravec: The Blizzard Voices* and, most recently, with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and the Boston Symphony Orchestra on their Deutsche Grammophon recording of Shostakovich *Symphony No. 13*.

Washburn's stage credits include appearances as Madame Lidoine in Francis Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Rebecca Nurse in Robert Ward's *The Crucible*, Mother/Allison in the premiere of Lee Hoiby's *This is the Rill Speaking* and others. Her recital and orchestral solo credits are numerous, and her live premiere from Jordan Hall of the late Richard Toensing's *Night Songs and Evening Prayers* with the New England Conservatory Symphonic Winds can be heard on Albany Records.

Upcoming Choral Concerts at NEC

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

NEC Philharmonia and Symphonic Choir, Hugh Wolff, conductor

Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, op. 45; with soloists Josie Larsen '25 AD, soprano and Zhanqui Wang '26 MM, baritone

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Chamber Singers, NEC Symphonic Winds: *Movie Night!*

Erica J. Washburn and William Drury, conductors

Thursday, April 24, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

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