

# Concert Program



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The NEC Composers' Series presents

# Arthur Berger Memorial Concert

Sid Richardson, series director

Wednesday, October 15, 2025  
7:30 p.m.  
NEC's Jordan Hall

**Arthur Berger** was an influential composer, critic and teacher for more than half a century. Born in 1912 in New York City, he received his musical education at New York and Harvard Universities, pursuing further studies in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and at the Sorbonne. By his early twenties he was accepted into the circle of avant-garde New York composers and became a member of the Young Composers Group that revolved around Aaron Copland as its mentor. In his capacity as critic, Berger became one of the chief spokesmen of American music for that period.

Although Berger has made notable contributions to the orchestral repertory, he devoted the major share of his compositional activities to chamber and solo piano music. Virgil Thomson called his *Quartet in C Major for Strings* “one of the most satisfactory pieces for winds in the whole modern repertory”; and his String Quartet received a New York Music Critics Circle Citation in 1962. Among his orchestral works are *Serenade Concertante*, written for the CBS Orchestra; *Polyphony*, a Louisville Orchestra commission; and *Ideas of Order*, commissioned by Dimitri Mitropoulos for the New York Philharmonic—a work that received a full page story in *Time* magazine following its premiere.

Among Berger’s numerous published critical and analytical articles, his seminal study *Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky* applied the expression “octatonic” to the 8-note scale that has since become conventionally known by that term. At a time when Stravinsky’s so-called neoclassicism was under attack, Berger wrote extensively and cogently in its defense. He was one of the first to write about Charles Ives and the first to write a book on the music of Aaron Copland. This study, which had occupied him since the early 1930s, was published by the Oxford University Press at a time (1953) when there was no precedent for books on American composers dealing as he did with their musical technique. In August 1990, *Aaron Copland* was reprinted by Da Capo Press.

When Berger received an award from the Council of Learned Societies in 1933, it turned out to be but the first in a long series of honors bestowed on him by prestigious organizations over the years: Guggenheim, Fromm, Coolidge, Naumburg and Fulbright Foundations; the NEA, League of Composers, Massachusetts Council on the Arts & Humanities to name a few. He is a Fellow of both the American Academy’s Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Berger started his college teaching career in 1939 at Mills College where the following year Darius Milhaud joined the faculty. (It was he who persuaded Pierre Monteux, conductor of the San Francisco Symphony, to ask Berger to write a woodwind quartet for first-desk players of that orchestra.) In 1943 Berger became a music critic for the *New York Sun* and in 1946 accepted Virgil Thomson’s invitation to join the *New York Herald Tribune*. After a decade as a full-time daily music reviewer in New York City, he resumed teaching in 1953 at Brandeis University during the formation of its graduate music program. Following his retirement from Brandeis in 1980 as the Irving Fine Professor of Music Emeritus, Berger taught at New England Conservatory of Music until 1999. Coinciding with his 90th birthday in 2002 the

University of California Press published Berger's memoir, *Reflections of an American Composer*, which won a 2003 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award.

Mr. Berger died in Boston on October 7, 2003. Mr. Berger's Archives are located at the N.Y. Public Library for Performing Arts in Lincoln Center.

## PROGRAM

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**Sid Richardson**  
(b. 1987)

*How Do I Love Thee?* (2024)  
*World premiere*

*Inscribed on a Lintel* (2022)

Aurora Martin, soprano  
Noriko Yasuda, piano

**Arthur Berger**  
(1912–2003)

*Five Settings of European Poets* (1982)  
Last Lines of Horace Ode No. 13 (Horace)  
No. 19, *Sonnets to Orpheus* (Rilke)  
Le bois amical (Valéry)  
Piazza Navona (Bellì)  
Song (Rossetti)

Charles Blandy, tenor  
Rodney Lister, piano

**Kati Agócs**  
(b. 1975)

*Hyacinth Curl* (2015)

Sydney Pexton, Rose Hegele,  
soprano, handbells

**John Mallia**  
(b. 1968)

*Alone*  
*World premiere*

Rose Hegele, soprano

**Rodney Lister**  
(b. 1951)

*Ordinary Heartbreaks and Other Poems of*  
*Michael Blumenthal* (1992)

Ordinary Heartbreaks  
Prayer to be Recited after a Jacques Derrida  
Lecture  
Cherries  
A Man Lost by a River  
Trip to Bountiful  
Leap Child  
The Disappointments of Childhood

Charles Blandy, tenor  
Rodney Lister, piano

*Upcoming Composers' Series Concerts*  
Sid Richardson, series director

*"Home"*

Sophia Szokolay '19, '25 DMA, violin, co-curator  
works by Sam Wu, Marc Migó, Sid Richardson, Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol,  
John Mallia, Stratis Minakakis, and Michael Gandolfi  
*Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall*

## Richardson

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *How Do I Love Thee?* (Sonnet 43) is a standout poem in her collection *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850). My wife Elizabeth had given me a copy of this collection early on in our courtship, and I often returned to it during my marriage preparations as it represents for me an intriguing meditation on love, nature, and religion. The love Barrett depicts here is eternal; it transcends space and time. The poetry inspired a lush musical setting in which harmonic resonances accumulate in the piano as the singer lists the various ways her love manifests itself. Intimate moments of hushed reflection are juxtaposed with exuberant bursts of passion. The music expands outward in register and intensity as it develops in an evocation of the love Barrett describes, which, rooted in our experiences here on earth, opens outward to the cosmos. *How Do I Love Thee?* was commissioned by New England Conservatory in celebration of the marriage of Life Trustee David Scudder and Betsy Ridge.

– Sid Richardson

## How Do I Love Thee?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of being and ideal grace.  
I love thee to the level of every day's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.  
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

*Inscribed on a Lintel* was written for a musical memorial service in honor of long-time Music Department Coordinator at Wellesley College, Magdalen Christian. For inspiration I turned to a Wellesley poet, Dan Chiasson, whose evocative poem *Inscribed on a Lintel* from his collection *Natural History* (2000) beautifully summed up how Mag gave her absolute all for the Wellesley music community. She was working from her hospital bed until mere days before she passed away. Musically, my song is structured in two main parts. In the first half, the singer extolls where she was born and where she comes from. The accompaniment becomes more steadily rhythmic as the singer recounts her life's work in the second half. Ultimately, the poem's protagonist "disappears" after her work is done, just as Mag suddenly did from our lives.

– Sid Richardson

## Inscribed on a Lintel

I was born beside a quarry. I played in granite  
spray and gravel, dust up to my elbows.  
I was born beside the ocean. I played in the tide,  
at night I sucked my arm to get the salt out.  
I was born beside a mountain. I played under  
evergreens. At night my life seemed haunted.  
I lived beside a quarry, I worked deep in the earth,  
I made my body a drill to burrow into stone.  
I lived beside the ocean, I worked inside the water,  
I made my body a net and I cast myself wide.  
I lived beside a mountain, I worked inside the wood,  
I made my body a saw and I cleared a field.  
All my life when I worked, I disappeared inside  
my work; so when my work ended, I disappeared.

Dan Chiasson

## Berger *Five Settings of European Poets*

In the *Five Settings of European Poets*, written in 1978 and 1979 and dedicated to his wife Ellen, Berger set poems in five different languages. In addition to being (excellent) settings of the texts, however, each of the first four songs is an evaluation/criticism/imitation of a style of vocal writing indigenous to the language in question, but filtered through Berger's own compositional voice: the setting of Horace evokes the grand heroic Latin settings of Stravinsky in *Oedipus Rex*, *Symphony of Psalms*, and *Canticum Sacrum*; the Rilke sonnet setting mimics song settings of Schoenberg and Berg; Debussy and Fauré songs are recollected in the Valéry setting; and the rambunctious setting of C. G. Belli's poem about the Piazza Navona in Rome, a favorite place of both the Bergers, conjures up Italian opera buffo. The texts for these songs are about music, love, life, and companionship. The last, the setting of a Christina Rossetti poem in English, is no longer imitation, in any sense, nor is it at any kind of critical distance. It is one of Berger's most personal, serious, and moving works. The whole set is, as was Arthur himself, smart, witty, and erudite, and then, surprisingly, at last, direct, unaffected, warm, loving, and very lovable.

— Rodney Lister

## *Felices ter et amplius*

*Felices ter et amplius  
quos inrupta tenet copula,  
nec malis divolsus querimoniis  
suprema citius soluent amor die.*

Thrice happy and more are those who are  
bound by an unbroken union and whose love  
will never be torn by wretched complaints  
and separate them sooner than life's final day.

Horace, from *Ode No. 13*

## ***Wandelt sich rasch auch die Welt***

*Wandelt sich rasch auch die Welt  
wie Wolken Gestalten  
alles vollendete fällt  
heim zum Uralten.*

*Über dem Wandel und Gang,  
weiter und freier,  
währt noch dein Vor-Gesang,  
Gott mit der Leier.*

*Nicht sind die Leiden erkannt,  
nicht ist die Liebe gelernt,  
und was im Tod uns entfernt,*

*ist nicht entschleiert.  
Einzig das Lied überm Land  
heiligt und feiert.*

Rainer Maria Rilke

## ***Le bois amical***

*Nous avons pensé des choses pures  
Côte à côte, le long des chemins,  
Nous nous sommes tenus par les mains  
Sans dire... parmi les fleurs obscures;*

*Nous marchions comme des fiancés  
Seuls, dans la nuit verte des prairies;  
Nous partageons ce fruit de fêtes  
La lune amicale aux insensés.*

*Et puis, nous sommes morts sur la mousse,  
Très loin, tout seuls parmi l'ombre douce  
De ce bois intime et murmurant;*

*Et là-haut, dans la lumière immense,  
Nous nous sommes trouvés en pleurant  
Ô mon cher compagnon de silence!*

Paul Valéry

Though the world keeps changing,  
fleetingly as the shapes of clouds,  
all perfected things  
return home to the age-old,

Through all the changing and passing,  
wider and freer,  
your leading-song survives,  
God with the lyre.

Our sufferings are not understood,  
nor has love been learned,  
and what separates us from death

has not been revealed.  
Only song over the land  
hallows and celebrates

We thought of pure things  
side by side, all along the paths,  
we held hands without speaking...  
among the shaded flowers;

We walked like fiancés,  
alone in the grassy night of the prairies;  
we partook of that enchanted fruit,  
the moon friendly to the crazed.

And then we were dead on the moss,  
far away, all alone, in the sweet shadow  
of the wood, intimate and murmuring;

And on high, in the great bright light,  
we found ourselves weeping,  
Oh, my dear companion of silence!



## **Piazza Navona**

*Se pò fregà Piazza Navona  
e de San Pietro e de Piazza da Spagna.  
Questa nun è una piazza, è una campagna,  
Un teàtro, una fiera, un'allegria.*

*Va' da la Pulinara a la Corsia,  
curri da la Corsia a la Cuccagna:  
pe tutto trovi robba che se magna,  
pe tutto gente che la porta via.*

*Qua ce so' tre fontane inarberte;  
qua una guja che pare una sentenza;  
qua se fa er lago quanno torna istate.*

*Qua s'arza er cavalletto, che dispenza  
sur culo a chi le vò trente nerbate,  
e cinque poi pe la Bonificenza.*

C. G. Belli

## **Song**

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,  
I shall not feel the rain;  
I shall not hear the nightingale  
Sing on, as if in pain:  
And dreaming through the twilight  
That doth not rise nor set,  
Haply I may remember,  
And haply may forget.

Christina Rossetti

Our Piazza Navona can thumb its nose  
At both Saint Peter's and Piazza di Spagna.  
This is not a piazza, it's a countryside,  
a theater, a fair, a joyousness.

Go from the Pulinara to the Corsia,  
run from the Corsia to the Cuccagna:  
everywhere you'll find food for sale,  
everywhere people carrying it away.

Here there are three rearing fountains;  
here there's a spire like a judgment;  
Here they make the lake when summer  
comes back.

Here they put up the sawhorse, that  
dispenses on the backside of whoever wants  
them thirty lashes, and five extra for  
Bonificenza

## Agócs    *Hyacinth Curl*

In *Hyacinth Curl* I transformed the essence of a ghazal (roughly speaking, the Persian equivalent of highly structured sonnet) into a song in English for two female singers and hand-bells that they play themselves. The hand-bells contribute to the purity of the sound world, playing a ceremonial role and helping the singers to stay in tune. The text, which I wrote myself, paraphrases a ghazal by Bibi Hayati, an early nineteenth-century noblewoman from Bam, in the Kerman province of Iran. Hayati embraced the principles of Sufi Gnosticism, although she adhered to the external principles of Islam, and her poetry reflects her ecstatic communion with God. I set the entire Ghazal in the original Farsi language in 2014, on commission by the Canada Council for the Arts for soprano Anne Harley, as *Divani Hayati*. I loved the exotic and pure sound world of this piece and wanted to make a version that more singers could perform. *Hyacinth Curl* was premiered on Hub New Music's portrait concert of my chamber works in Boston in January 2015. It is about six minutes in duration.

– Kati Agócs

Is this then the night of Power  
Or merely your hair,  
Is it the dawn-break, or your radiance?  
In Beauty's divan  
Is it an eternal first line?  
Or just a couplet transcribed from your inky eyebrow?  
Is this rose-breath (oh is it rose-breath)

Or your ambrosial perfume?  
Is it the tuba tree in paradise (in paradise)  
Or your elegant, empathic stature

Is it a cypress grove?  
Mongolian musk?  
A chalice of the red wind of dawn-tide?  
Ambergris?

Is this scorching lightning,  
Or fire from Mt. Sanai?  
An earthly paradise,  
Or Heaven's garden?  
Is it your hyacinth curl (hyacinth curl)?  
Your Narcissus-eye?  
My own burning sigh?

Everyone turns to pray at a man-made shrine  
My soul is a shrine  
And it turns towards your face.

English Paraphrase of Bibi Hayati: Ghazal #96, originally in Farsi

## Mallia *Alone*

I wrote most of this piece in my young adult years. I had been studying with Earl George, a composer known mainly for his choral works, and he had set me on a path to writing songs. I had been, previously, writing pretty dim-witted heavy metal songs and playing shows, as a guitarist, with national acts such as Anthrax, Megadeth, Flotsam and Jetsam, King Diamond, etc.

Earl introduced me to a whole other way of thinking about text and music and I am deeply indebted to him. He was a true master of the idiom.

*Alone* has never been performed. The first half of the melody was written in 1989. I only recently completed the second half and added some ambient electronics, though I believe it stands on its own as a solo vocal piece.

I've been attracted to Poe's work since I was a kid. I remember writing a paper on his short stories in high school and visiting his grave in Baltimore around that time. Some art students were taking "rubblings" of his gravestone when we arrived (me, my Dad and my Mom).

My father, who had been a reporter as a young man in Savannah, Georgia, also worked in Baltimore for the local newspaper and frequented Martick's, a bohemian bar/restaurant that featured a raven as an establishment attraction.

The trip to Baltimore, on the way to a tent-based camping trip in Virginia, was in some ways a pilgrimage for him, but also a way to pay our respects at Poe's grave.

Rose Hegele is Boston's most avid and accomplished performer of new vocal music and it is a thrill for me to be able to work with such a talented musician who also happens to be an incredible human being. Thank you, Rose, from the bottom of my heart!

— John Mallia

## *Alone*

From childhood's hour I have not been  
As others were—I have not seen  
As others saw—I could not bring  
My passions from a common spring—  
From the same source I have not taken  
My sorrow—I could not awaken  
My heart to joy at the same tone—  
And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone—  
*Then*—in my childhood—in the dawn  
Of a most stormy life—was drawn  
From ev'ry depth of good and ill  
The mystery which binds me still—  
From the torrent, or the fountain—  
From the red cliff of the mountain—  
From the sun that 'round me roll'd  
In its autumn tint of gold—  
From the lightning in the sky  
As it pass'd me flying by—  
From the thunder, and the storm—

And the cloud that took the form  
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)  
Of a demon in my view —

*Edgar Allen Poe*

## **Lister    *Ordinary Heartbreaks and Other Poems of Michael Blumenthal***

### **Ordinary Heartbreaks**

*To think that we could have had an ordinary family life with its bickering, broken hearts and divorce suits! There are people in the world so crazy as not to realize that this is normal human existence of the kind everybody should aim at. What we wouldn't have given for such ordinary heartbreaks!*  
--Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope*

The day dawns, and what to do with your one body?  
At the door, there are no police.  
You are of no great danger  
to the tribe you live among.  
Every crime language can commit  
has already been licensed  
toward some greater profit.  
You look for a place for your rage,  
the guile and pucker of it,  
and only the faces of those you sleep with  
are able to move you. Sweet world,  
you think, with no place for the tragic  
but your own house. So you make a mess  
wherever mess allows. Suddenly,  
a loud rapping on the door rouses you  
from your reveries. Someone you love  
is coming to get you. Unshackled,  
you move slowly toward the door.  
You feel a revolution coming,  
your own four walls trembling.

### **Prayer to Be Recited after a Jacques Derrida Lecture**

*By the word by this text begins...*  
--François Ponge

By the Word *by* this text begins, dear God,  
Whose first line tells the truth  
Of all feeling, which is the truth  
We pray you preserve against the lies  
Of pure intellect, the neglect of the body.  
You can surely judge for yourself, O

Lord, our difficulties, living here  
In the dark of the mind's vengeance,  
Where all that we once knew for certain  
Has been de-constructed, and misfortune  
Resonates backward from its initial text  
To afflict its maker like a mirror  
Broken seven years *after* the bad luck  
It originally caused. Compassionate One,  
Restore us, once more, to our original  
Innocence, let the heart reassert itself  
Through the dark of this intelligenced text.  
Permit us to see, again, by the clear light  
Of its original making. By the word *by*,  
Dear God, return us to the hallowed ground  
Of our text's first making. May we never forget,  
Lord, what we were first moved by...

## Cherries

After Auschwitz, it's been said, it's no longer possible  
to write about cherries. But the cherries were there,  
across from the abandoned lavender oil extraction stove,

surrounded by fields of poppy and thistle and lemon balm  
and thyme, in the old nearly abandoned village of Montmorin  
once controlled by the Moors, and, when we went to pick them,

the air smelled of lavender, rosemary and linden blossom  
and my son was sleeping against the breast of my wife,  
who looked especially beautiful in the late light

of Alpes de Haute Provence, and the cherries were delicious  
against our pallets, turning our tongues a purplish red,  
their juice dripping down our chins, the magpies hovering

over us like priests, the crows pirating the hayfields,  
and I found myself with no choice but to bless  
the ambiguous God of cherries and magpies and children

and marriage, to bless the strange God of my eccentric  
mother-in-law Yvette, gathering cherries high in the trees,  
and to curse the dark God of Auschwitz and Treblinka

and Birkenau and Dachau, relishing the taste of cherries  
in my mouth, refusing to believe they are the same God.

## **A Man Lost by a River**

There is a voice inside the body.

There is a voice and a music,  
a throbbing, four chambered pear  
that wants to be heard, that sits  
alone by the river with its mandolin  
and its torn coat, and sings  
for whomever will listen  
a song that no one wants to hear.

But sometimes, lost  
on his way to somewhere significant,  
a man in a long coat, carrying  
a briefcase, wanders into the forest.

He hears the voice and the mandolin,  
he sees the thrush and the dandelion,  
and he feels the mist rise over the river.

And his life is never the same,  
for this having been lost--  
for having strayed  
from the path of his routine, for no good reason.

## **Trip to Bountiful**

It is good to have someone to sit beside  
late at night, at the movies  
when the lights have dimmed  
and the previews are over  
and you have pigged out over a large order of popcorn,  
and the old woman who has lived unhappily  
for twenty-one years with her failed son  
and her miserable daughter-in-law takes off  
to return to that beautiful small town  
where she has always remembered herself  
as perfectly happy, only to find  
that her one friend, the town's last citizen,  
has died that very morning, and that when she returns  
to the beautiful house that has remained unaltered  
in the scrapbook of her wishfulness,  
it is a mere ghost of what it once was,  
the curtains rotted against the sashes,  
the wood frame sagging like an old scarecrow,  
the neighbors' houses all abandoned  
by death, ice storms, the vicissitudes

of profit; yes, it is good not to be alone  
at times like these, when the woman  
sitting beside you (who this very morning  
seemed merely a burden) send small sobs  
wafting like pollen into the theater  
and squeezes you hand and say "*It's*  
*so sad, this movie,*" and you agree, yes  
it is very sad, this movie, and this life  
in which so much we imagine as inalterable  
will be taken from us, in which  
there are so many towns where someone  
will die, this very day, alone and unclaimed  
by any of their loved ones (who have all left  
to marry in another country or find their fortunes  
in some greed-stricken Houston)

which is why it is good to be here,  
even just tonight, in this dimly lit theater,  
with a good woman and the scent of popcorn  
and a wide bed you can climb into again together,  
as if it were the town you originally came from  
and you could always go back to it,  
as if no one could ever die in the dark alone,  
not even you.

## **Leap Child**

*For Howard Nemerov, 2/29/20*

Born on a day which comes again  
but does not come again each year,  
he grows old and younger both at once:  
Chronology's the music, yet his is  
the off-beat of calendar's asymmetry,  
jazz step in an otherwise classical tune,  
so he measures himself against both  
our time and his own, counting four  
for every one of ours, one for every four.

And if the year skips like a scratched record  
at the thought of his birth, it bothers him not:  
He goes on graying at the temples either way.  
And when February's ice gives way to March,  
he waits the border, counting himself blessed  
to have been born at all, though the stuttering  
years sometimes skip over his good name  
without even calling.

## The Disappointments of Childhood

*Perhaps a bird was singing, and for it I felt a tiny affection, the same size as a bird.* – Jorge Luis Borges

Imagine, now, an affection, the same size  
as the thing it's felt for: for the seed,  
seed-like emoluments of liking, and,  
for the rain, droplets of tenderness  
clustered in small puddles at your feet.

And now remember how, as a child,  
someone is telling you they love you.  
*How much does Daddy love you?* they  
ask, and you, childlike, spread  
your arms as wide as a child can.

Little do you know it then, but the rest  
of your life will be spent measuring  
the distance between "*that much*"  
and what love, in fact, is capable of—

the narrow width of a man or a woman,  
their terrible thinness,  
their small bones  
growing constantly inward  
from your spreading arms.

## Artist biographies

**Aurora Martin** is known throughout New England for her colorful, warm soprano. Aurora Martin recently was named a Semi-Finalist in The 2024 Lyndon-Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition with The Oratorio Society of New York. In 2023 she won 2nd place in The American Prize Frederick & Virginia Schorr Memorial Awards for Women in Opera. Aurora was named a semi-finalist in the prestigious Partners for the Arts 9th National Opera Competition in 2022.

Aurora performs with many organizations in the Boston area, joining the ensemble of Boston Baroque, The Handel & Haydn Society, and the Boston Lyric Opera. You can see her with Odyssey Opera, The Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Emmanuel Music, MassOpera, Cambridge Chamber Ensemble, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Lowell Chamber Orchestra, The Arlington-Belmont Chorale, Opera del West, and as performer and board member of Opera on Tap. Aurora is the soprano in residence at Christ Church Episcopal in Quincy, MA.

Following a love and aptitude for early music, Aurora can be found performing with some of Boston's, and the nation's, leading organizations. She performed the role of Dalila in Cambridge Chamber Ensemble's September 2023 production of Handel's *Samson*. The previous year, she joined them covering Venus and singing as



a Grace, in John Blow's *Venus & Adonis*. She had her debut with Boston Baroque in Bach's *B minor Mass* in October 2022 and sang in their exciting '23-'24 season. She sings with both Emmanuel Music and Marsh Chapel. December of 2020 Aurora performed and recorded two Bach Cantatas (BWV 211 & 212) with the Lowell Chamber Orchestra. She is sought after as concert soloist singing with Sounds of Stow, Lowell Chamber Orchestra, Arpeggione Ensemble, The Boston Cecelia, Arlington-Belmont Chorale, Falmouth Chorale, and other organizations in New England.

Aurora joined Opera Company of Middlebury in September 2021 as a Young Artist and cover of Agnès Sorel for their production of *The Maid of Orleans*. In March of 2022, Aurora performed the lead role of Camilla in the New England premier of *Pepito* with Opera del West, a one-act opera by Nicolas Lell Benavides. June of 2020, she debuted Opera del West's *The Zoompressario*, a spin off of Mozart's *The Impresario* adapted by composer and librettist Dan Shore. Notable operatic roles include Pamina and Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Camilla in *Pepito* by Nicolas Lell Benavides, Noémie in *Cendrillon*, Madame Silvertone in *The Impresario*, La cicsa in *Gianni Schicchi* and Inez in *Il Trovatore*.

Aurora has been an artist with a number of apprentice and training programs. Prior to her recent work with Opera Company of Middlebury, she has sung at The Shenandoah Bach Festival, Opera in the Ozarks, CoOperative, International Vocal Arts Institute, the Bel Canto Institute, University of Miami Summer in Salzburg, Astoria Music Festival, and the Wintergreen Summer Music Festival.

Aurora completed her master's degree in vocal performance at New England Conservatory (NEC). Born and raised in Arlington, VA, Aurora received her bachelor's degrees in Music and Chemistry from Virginia Tech. In 2011, she was selected as a Young Apprentice Artist with Opera Roanoke and made her professional debut in *Il Trovatore* that Fall, under the baton of former Artistic Director Scott Williamson. In addition to performances in opera and art song during her undergraduate degree, Aurora was the soloist of L2ork, a Linux Laptop Orchestra. With L2ork she sang at conferences across the US as well as Europe during a 3-week European tour.

**Noriko Yasuda** began her career in Osaka Japan as an accompanist with the Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra and Osaka College of Music Opera House. An active vocal coach and accompanist in the Boston area, she has worked with Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Baroque, Handel and Haydn Society, Emmanuel Music, Chorus Pro Musica, Masterworks Chorale, New England String Ensemble, and La Donna Musicale. Her credits as opera continuo are *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Oronteia*, *Alcina*, *Xerxes* and *Dido and Aeneas*. Currently, she is a member of the faculty at the Longy School of Music of Bard College. She is the principal coach at Opera North, NH, and staff accompanist/coach at Brandeis University. In 2009 she received the George Seaman Excellence in Teaching Award from Longy School of Music of Bard College.

**Charles Blandy** has been praised as “unfailing, tirelessly lyrical” (*Boston Globe*); “fearless” (*New York Times*); “a versatile tenor with agility, endless breath, and vigorous high notes” (*Goldberg Early Music Magazine*); and for his “clear, focused, gorgeous tenor voice” (*Worcester Telegram and Gazette*).

He made his Boston Symphony Orchestra/Carnegie Hall debut in 2024 in Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He is a core member of Emmanuel Music, and regularly appears in their ongoing Bach Cantata series. With Emmanuel he performed at BachFest Leipzig; has sung the Evangelist in Bach’s *St. John Passion* and *St. Matthew Passion*, and lead roles in Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*, Mozart’s *Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Magic Flute*, and Handel’s *Ariodante*.

He has performed Bach’s *B minor Mass* with Orchestra Iowa, the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, and the American Classical Orchestra (NYC) at Lincoln Center. He sang Handel’s *Messiah* with Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; Monteverdi’s *Il Ritorno d’Ulisse, Vespers of 1610, L’Orfeo*, and assorted madrigals with Boston Early Music Festival; *Messiah* and *St. Matthew Passion* with the American Bach Soloists (SF, CA). He has appeared with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Music of the Baroque (Chicago), Rhode Island Philharmonic, and Charlotte Symphony.

He gave the US premiere of Gerald Barry’s *Canada* at the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music. With Boston Modern Orchestra Project he recorded Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*; and Virgil Thomson’s *Four Saints in Three Acts*. With Collage New Music he recorded Rodney Lister’s chamber song cycle *Friendly Fire*, and gave the US premiere of Rautavaara’s song cycle *Die Liebenden*.

A recitalist of wide repertoire, he has performed Schubert’s *Schwanengesang* at the Token Creek Festival (WI) and at Tufts University; *Winterreise* at Tufts; *Auf dem Strom* and Brahms songs with Boston Chamber Music Society; and songs of Finzi and Janáček’s *Diary of One Who Disappeared* at Monadnock Music (NH). He gave recitals of contemporary American songs in New York, Boston, London and Manchester UK, with Rodney Lister at the piano.

Charles Blandy is a member of Beyond Artists, a coalition that supports good causes through their work. He studied at Oberlin College, Indiana University, and Tanglewood Music Center. He is the product of a strong public school arts program in Troy NY.

A passionate educator, new music advocate and prolific composer, **Rodney Lister** is currently on the faculties of Boston University School of Music—where he teaches composition and theory and is the director of Time’s Arrow, a new music ensemble—and the Preparatory School of the New England Conservatory—where he teaches composition, theory, and chamber music and is co-director of the annual contemporary music festival. He is also a music tutor at Pforzheimer House, Harvard University, and is on the faculty of Greenwood Music Camp. His articles and reviews have appeared in *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, *Tempo*, *Sequenza21*, and *The Paris New Music Review*.

Rodney Lister’s works have been performed by Joel Smirnoff, Tammy Grimes,

Phyllis Curtin, Jane Manning, Mary Thomas, Michael Finnissy, Kathleen Supove, Jonah Sirota, Rebecca Fischer, Boston Cecelia, the Blair and Chiara Quartets, Collage New Music and the Fires of London among others, at Tanglewood, the Library of Congress, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and in New York and London, among other places.

As a pianist, he has been involved in premieres, first US performances, first UK performances or first Boston performances of works by Virgil Thomson, Peter Maxwell Davies, Milton Babbitt, Michael Finnissy, Philip Grange, Lee Hyla, and Paul Bowles, among others.

Rodney Lister received his early musical training at the Blair School of Music in Nashville, Tennessee. He was a student at the New England Conservatory of Music (Bachelor of Music degree, with honors) from 1969 to 1973 and at Brandeis University (Master of Fine Arts degree) from 1975 to 1977, and from which he received a doctorate in 2000. He studied privately with Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, and was a member of Davies's composition seminar at the Dartington Hall Summer School of Music (1975, 1978, 1980-82). He was a Bernstein fellow at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood in 1973. His composition teachers, aside from Davies, have been Malcolm Peyton, Donald Martino, Harold Shapero, Arthur Berger, and Virgil Thomson. He also studied piano with Enid Katahn, David Hagan, Robert Helps, and Patricia Zander.

Canadian soprano **Rose Hegele** explores the extremes of human vocal and artistic expression in 20th and 21st century music. Active across genres including avant garde music, contemporary opera and chamber music, Rose creates healing spaces for audiences to embrace their complexity and humanity. Recent highlights include a performance of Pierre Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître* at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art in January 2025, a solo recital at Brown University in January 2025, and premiering *Five Ways to Die with Experiments in Opera* in June 2024 at HERE Arts Center. Dedicated to education through artistry, Rose has presented masterclasses at Brown University, the University of Texas at Austin, Roger Williams University, Frost School of Music, Berklee College of Music, and Clark University. She teaches Voice at the Upper Valley Music Center and Voice & Musicianship at the Suzuki School of Newton. A collaborative tour de force, Rose is a founding member of Der Gestanke Pierrot Ensemble and Peridot Duo, and regularly sings with Sound Icon, Nightingale Vocal Ensemble, and Carduus. Rose holds a Post-Master's Degree Fellowship from the Berklee College of Music, a master's degree in Contemporary Classical Music Performance from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance and Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music.

**Sydney Pexton** is a soprano from Salt Lake City, Utah, who has prepared and performed in various operas and concerts with New England Conservatory and Utah Valley University, including *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She most recently performed the role of Elaine in New England

Conservatory's production of John Musto's *Later the Same Evening* and attended the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival's New Music Workshop as a New Music Fellow, where she was able to premiere eight pieces as part of the Emerging Artist Series. While at New England Conservatory, she has been able to cover the role of Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, perform the role of Little Red in Barab's *Little Red Riding Hood*, and has been featured on various concerts as part of NEC's Liederabend concert series, where she has been able to work with renowned coaches such as Cameron Stowe, JJ Penna, and Tanya Blaich. She has also performed the roles of The Governess in Britten's *Turn of the Screw* and Adele in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* with the Trentino Music Festival and the Lyric Opera Studio Weimar.

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**NEC Jazz Orchestra**, Ken Schaphorst, director

*"Dreamkeeper: Music of Carla Bley"*

**Thursday, October 16, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**Faculty Composers + Ensemble du Bout du Monde: "Liminality"**

Works by faculty composers Stratis Minakakis, Davide Ianni, and Nima Janmohammadi, as well as by Xenakis, Czernowin, Luc, and Tzortzis;  
guest artists Ensemble du Bout du Monde

**Sunday, October 19, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre**

### **Tuesday Night New Music**

New music by NEC student composers, performed by their peers

**Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall**

**Liederabend LXXVII**, JJ Penna, curator

*"Paris Visions: Guillaume Apollinaire and Ned Rorem"*

Works by Francis Poulenc and Ned Rorem

**Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall**

**NEC Symphony**, David Loebel, conductor

*Tower Sixth Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman; Haydn Symphony No. 85, "La Reine";  
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**Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

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I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2025-26 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 the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists uplift you.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Andrea Kaylin  
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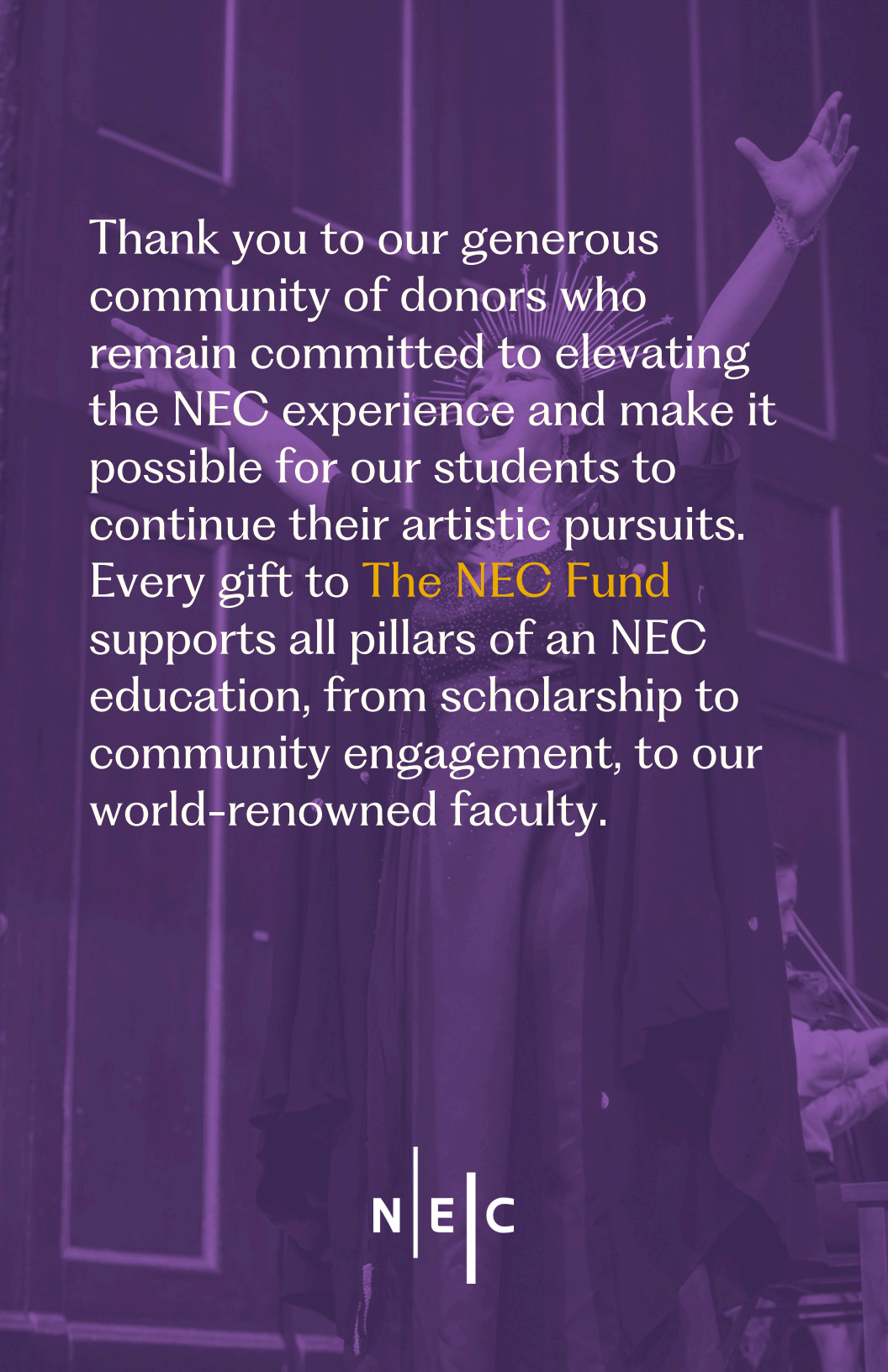


A wide-angle photograph of a large orchestra performing in a grand, ornate hall. The stage is lit with warm, golden light, and the audience is visible in the foreground, seated in rows. A large white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing text. The text is in a serif font, with the word 'you' in a bold, dark blue color. The overall atmosphere is one of a formal, high-quality musical performance.

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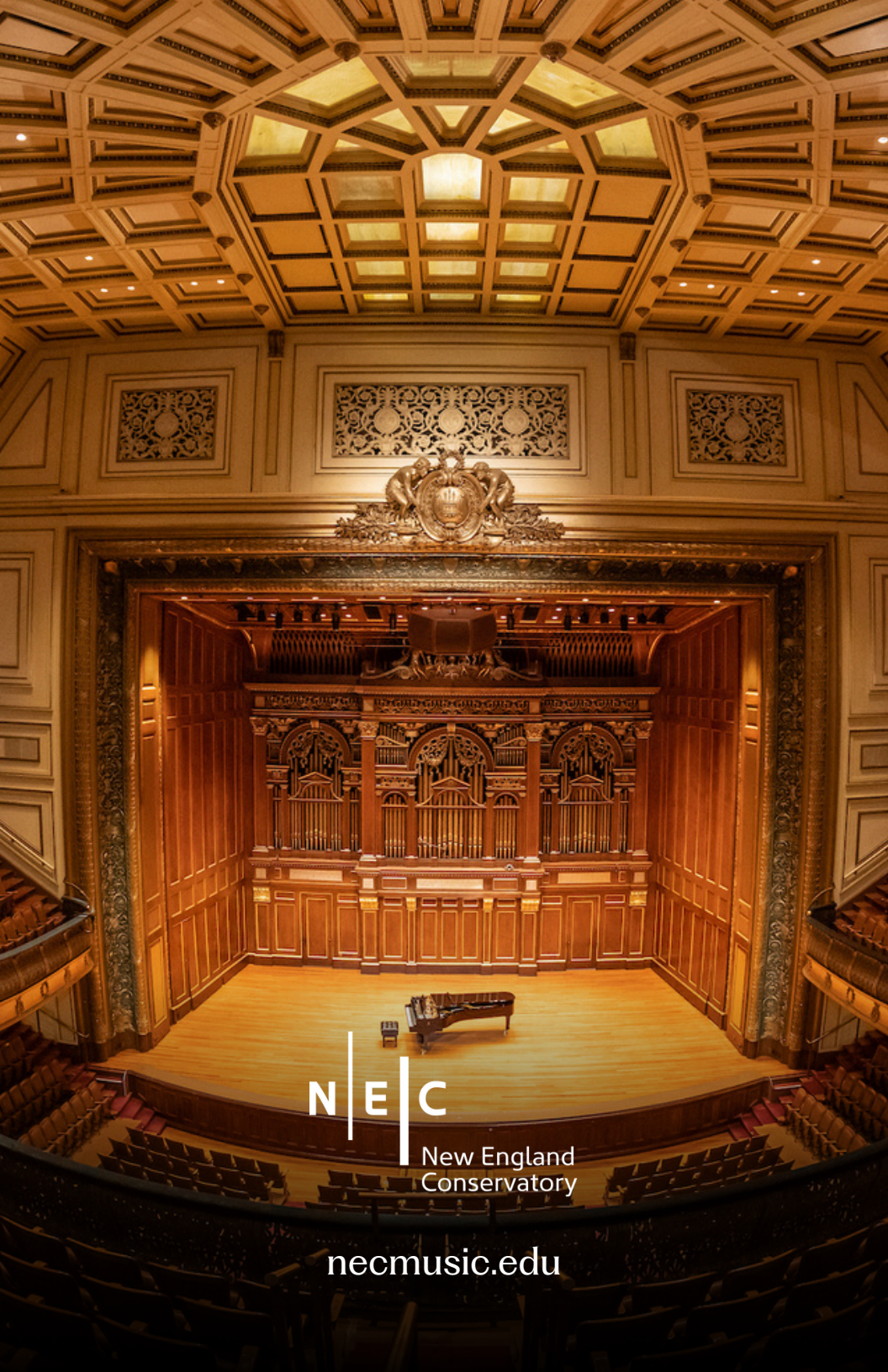
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