

*NEC Festival*

Contemporary Musical Arts Today:  
*A Global Vision Realized*

Produced by Hankus Netsky and Eden MacAdam-Somer

Tuesday, November 18, 2025  
7:30 p.m.  
NEC's Jordan Hall

## NEC Festival 2025

This performance is part of the NEC Festival, which will celebrate the legacy of Gunther Schuller, president of NEC between 1967 and 1977 with a week-long series of concerts and discussions. In addition to reflecting on his work as a composer, conductor and scholar, the legacy of Gunther Schuller's influence on NEC will be demonstrated through a range of collaborative presentations.

Learn more about the NEC Festival [here](#).

## PROGRAM

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### *Introductory Music:*

Ran Blake's *The Spiral Staircase* (1980, Arista Novus)

featuring Ran Blake, piano with members of the Third Stream department

Hankus Netsky, oboe; Paul Meyers, electric guitar, electric bass; Jon Hazilla,

George Schuller, drums; Daryl Lowery, saxophones; Chris Pasin, Spencer MacLeish,

Ingrid Monson, Frank London, trumpets; Ed Jackson, alto saxophone;

Christopher Brooks, electric guitar; Pat Hollenbeck, percussion;

Norman McWilliams, trombone, and special guests John Heiss, flute and Ted Curson, trumpet

### **Hildegard von Bingen**

(1098–1179)

#### **Caroline Kuhn**

### *Gaudete*

Anju Madhok, Carla Kihlstadt, Cristi Catt,

Eden MacAdam-Somer, Farayi Malek,

Kayden Carter, Lucy Geller,

Keilani Bolhuis, Stella Sokolowski, voice

*Rejoice, friends, the age-old snake is bound!*

### **Lavtacı Andon/**

(d.1925)

#### **Anonymous**

Recomposed by

#### **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol**

(b. 1974)

### *Hüseyni Saz Semaisi/Dere Geliyor Dere*

Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, Renaissance 17, oud

Mal Barsamian, clarinet

Mark Tipton, trumpet

James Heazlewood-Dale, electric bass

George Lernis, drums

**Yontev Ehrlich, Traditional**

*Yosef Mokir Shabes*

*NEC Jewish Music Ensemble*

Hankus Netsky, director

Gitty Jakubowicz, voice

Lucy Geller, voice

Kayden Carter, flute

Jake Wise, clarinet

Miles Kennedy, violin

Hangyeol Cho, cello

Peter Vazquez, piano

Andy Messier, guitar

Bug Jaffe, bass

Yilin Chen, marimba

**Samandar Dehghani '26 MM**

*Three Drummers Walked into a Bar*

Samandar Dehghani, daf

Yilin Chen, Chinese percussion

Moises St. Fort, drums

**Ornette Coleman**

(1930–2015)

*Ornette Plays the Blues*

Peter Vazquez, piano

Bug Jaffe, bass

**Cecil Taylor**

(1929–2018)

*African Violets* from *Looking Ahead!* (1958)

Elfie Shi, vibraphone

Kazuki Tsubakida, piano

Cosmo Lieberman, electronics

**Lee Miller '27 GD**

**Rebecca Tillinghast**

*That Old Remember When*

Tinley Gorman, Andy Messier, voice

Keilani Bolhuis, fiddle, voice

Lee Miller, guitar

**Avi Randall '27 MM**

***Curiosity Killed the Cat***

*(based on Gunther Schuller's "Magic Row")*

Avi Randall, piano

**Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton**  
(1890–1941)

***Frog-I-More***

Itay Dayan, clarinet

Anthony Coleman, piano

Paul July Joseph, drums

*Brief Remarks:* President Andrea Kalyn

**Carl Sigman**

(1909–2000)

Lyrics by Bob Russell

arr. Sam Srithongkum

***Crazy, He Calls Me***

Stella Sokolowski, voice, guitar

Sam Srithongkum, piano

Othniel Privat, electric bass

Paul July Joseph, drums

**Sweet Honey in the Rock**

***Breaths***

*CMA Department and Friends*

**Samandar Dehghani**

***Naqme-Isfahan***

*Crossroads Ensemble*

Samandar Dehghani, voice, tar

Bella Navarro, violin

Sam Srithongkum, piano

Solomon Caldwell, bass

Nick Charlton, drums

**David Warren Harewood '26 GD**

***Ruby Row***

*(based on Gunther Schuller's "Magic Row")*

David Harewood, piano

Nick Charlton, drums

**Frantz Casseus**

arr. William Wei

***Merci Bon Dieu***

Woody Pierre, Nick Abraham, trumpet  
 Flynn Ewer, French horn  
 Peter Vazquez, tenor saxophone  
 Hankus Netsky, alto saxophone  
 Julian Quinones, Zixuan Weng, trombone  
 Isaías Fabian, tuba  
 Hao Tian, Tom Chu, guitar

*This Haitian song, made popular by Harry Belafonte, is a favorite of our department's emeritus Chair, Ran Blake.*

**von Bingen, Kuhn    *Gaudete***

Polymath Hildegard von Bingen was a prolific composer, theologian, mystic visionary, herbal healer, scientist, poet, and more. She was a respected figure who advised popes, kings, and bishops, conducted preaching tours throughout Germany (at a time when women were banned from interpreting scripture), and in 2012 was officially named a Doctor of the Catholic Church. Tithed to the church as a child, she eventually became the Abbess of a community of wealthy women and, through her celebrity status, established an abbey for them in which, on feast days, they adorned themselves in white robes and jewels as “brides of Christ.” She was a fascinating woman, unafraid of speaking her mind to authority figures and eager to share her revolutionary thoughts with the world on everything from spirituality to medicine. During her lifetime, she made careful plans to ensure the preservation of her works, which is why we have both music and text for her sacred musical drama the *Ordo Vitutum* (Order of the Virtues), the only medieval musical drama with both text and music attributed to a named composer. In the *Ordo*, a soul struggles between the Devil and salvation, aided by 17 Virtues, who redeem the soul and bind the Devil.

The composition that we are singing tonight was written by NEC alumna singer/songwriter/music director Caroline Kuhn, based on a line of chant from the end of the *Ordo* - "Rejoice friends, the age-old snake is bound!" I can't imagine a better way to begin this program than by calling in the good spirits with music written by these two incredible women.

– Edén MacAdam-Somer

**Andon/ Sanlıkol    *Hüseyni Saz Semaisi/Dere Geliyor Dere***

Among the many things Gunther Schuller gave to NEC, one of the most meaningful was the presence of distinguished musicians and scholars who represented microtonal music traditions from around the world. In 1974, Schuller brought to NEC the highly respected Hindustani music performer and scholar Peter Row —who would later serve as both Dean and Provost. A decade later, in 1984, Peter brought in Robert Labaree, an ethnomusicologist who reconstructed the long-forgotten Ottoman

harp, the *çeng*. Together, Row and Labaree invited numerous artists from around the world to NEC, and often performed alongside them, showing our community that excellence in musicianship—as performer-scholars—was equally possible in non-Western musical traditions as well.

Meanwhile, when Gunther Schuller hired Joe Maneri in 1970, a different side of microtonality entered NEC. Hearing Joe play traditional Greek music on the clarinet was truly unforgettable, but Joe also offered something entirely different: for decades he taught a course on microtonal music that was not grounded in modal non-Western traditions, but instead explored dividing the octave into more than twelve equidistant pitches—approaching microtonality from a contemporary Western perspective.

I studied with all of these masters. They were amazing scholar-performers—and, just as importantly—genuinely kind people. I learned so much from each of them, and I will never forget the email Peter wrote to me on February 27, 2018, just a month before he passed away. In that email, he essentially asked me to continue their legacy at NEC... Seven years have passed since then, and I am deeply grateful to the CMA Department for giving me the opportunity to represent the legacy of these masters tonight. To honor them, we will begin with an Ottoman/Turkish traditional piece, reflecting the non-Western musical traditions they so passionately represented. We will then transition to a folk song I recomposed, in which I will perform on my digital microtonal keyboard, the SANLIKOL Renaissance 17 (Patent 12,334,044).

– Mehmet Sanlıkol

### **Erlich, traditional**    *Yosef Mokir Shabes*

Gitty learned this song with lyrics from the legendary Hassidic folk poet and singer, Yontev Ehrlich, when she was very young, growing up in Hassidic Williamsburg, Brooklyn. My arrangement is based on Lev Cogan's arrangement of *Dos Freylekhe Shnayderl* (The Happy Tailor), by Soviet Jewish poet Yosef Kerler, a song that uses the same Bessarabian-Jewish folk melody.

– Hankus Netsky

Hear my story, dear friends,  
There was once a very poor man.  
His name was Yosef, who honored the Sabbath.  
He wore old, worn clothes,  
And ate bread with water,  
And saved all his money  
Ay, ay...

The children and his wife  
Were happy just the same.  
The house was truly empty,  
But everyone already knew,

That Thursday morning early,  
He'd tell his wife, full of joy:  
"Hurry, my good wife  
Take the basket and go,  
Take all the money we own,  
And buy whatever you wish—  
The finest fish,  
Big, fat, and fresh!"  
Ay, ay...

And Friday night,  
He sang songs full of grace:  
"A woman of valor, who can find?"  
There is truly nothing like the sabbath.  
And a little farther away,  
Right across from Yosef's little house,  
Stood a palace, locked and grand.  
There lived a man of great wealth  
who was not fond of Jews,  
Who had lived many years—  
Perhaps eighty or more.  
He was stingy  
He wouldn't look at a poor man.  
It didn't take long—

The wealthy man fell very ill.  
And in the middle of the night,  
They brought a stargazer.  
And the man said to him:  
"All that you own  
Will be inherited  
By that pious Jew across the street  
Who keeps the Sabbath."  
The wealthy man heard this  
And was greatly troubled.  
He brought a buyer,  
And sold everything he had that night,  
And with all the money  
He bought a diamond,  
The largest in the world.  
Ay, ay...

Then he left,  
And sailed to a foreign shore.  
On the bridge, a wind arose—  
It caught his hat,  
And flung it into the sea.  
A fish came,  
Gave the water a swish,  
Fishermen caught it,  
And hauled it into their net.  
And Friday afternoon,  
They brought the fish to shore.  
They searched here and there,  
But no buyer could be found.  
Said Reb Yosef, "What a pity!  
My wife has no strength left."  
Said his wife, "Don't worry at all—  
I still have one empty pot."  
He cut open the fish's belly—  
And she began to cry out: "A diamond! A diamond!"  
"But THAT has nothing to do with the Sabbath!" said Yosef.

**Dehghani** *Three Drummers Walked Into a Bar*

*Three Drummers Walked Into a Bar* is a rhythmic encounter that celebrates cultural authenticity while exploring new common ground. Each artist draws from the rhythmic language of their own tradition—whether rooted in Chinese classical and folk percussion patterns, or the Afro-Caribbean pulse of Haiti, or in Persian mystic cycles—engaging in a compositional and improvisational approach that honors their origins while addressing differences between traditions, the similarities, and places of natural overlap.

— *Samandar Dehghani*

**Coleman** *Ornette Plays the Blues*

Gunther Schuller was an early champion of Ornette's music. In 1959, Ornette was invited to study with Schuller and others at the Lenox School of Jazz on scholarship, where Ran Blake was also in attendance. Schuller took a chance on Ornette, no matter how divisive a figure he was, and they remained working together closely for years to come. In studying the writings of Ornette Coleman, interviews, and rehearsal tapes, one thing we determined is that Ornette's musical philosophy is inextricable from his philosophy on life. When he says that every member of his band is free to express himself totally, he means total freedom and equality for every human being. At the same time, with some hindsight, we can hear that there is a very clear hierarchy in Ornette's music, with himself audibly in charge. This struggle is one we are hoping to explore in our performance.

— *Peter Vazquez, Bug Jaffe*

**Taylor** *African Violets* from *Looking Ahead!* (1958)

“What’s music all about?”. Cecil shared his opinions with us in his interviews. He said that music is about joy; music is everything that you do, and this album comes from his early period when he was still on the way to figuring that out. So, there are not only chord changes to preserve his jazz soul but also solos to show his free spirits.

Gunther Schuller was one of his biggest supporters at that time, and there’s no doubt that the Third Stream would play his piece again and slightly add some new things. So, here is my understanding and electronic version of this song, *African Violets*.

– Elfie Shi

**Miller** *That Old Remember When*

*That Old Remember When* is a modern Americana song that pays tribute to an Appalachian feeling, and the memory of a love lost a long time ago.

When something fades to nothing  
Leaves you wondering  
Where you’ve been  
Tomorrow won’t hurt like  
That old remember when

When forgetting leads to giving  
Keeps you feeling  
Who you’ve been  
Tomorrow won’t seem like  
That old remember when

Remember when you loved him  
Remember when you flew  
Remember when all you had was you  
Remember the laughter  
Remember the years  
Remember you’re living  
as you wipe away tears

Sunshine fades to moonlight  
Peace is thundering in the din  
and Tomorrow won’t hurt like  
That old remember when

**Morton** *Frog- I-More*

*Frog- I-More* (or *Froggie Moore*) is one of Jelly Roll Morton’s earliest and most important compositions. The transitional nature of Morton’s early work can be heard in the way that the three-strain structure is derived from Classic Ragtime, while the

use of riffs and rhythmic patterns clearly point out Early Jazz's expansion from (and simplification of) Ragtime, in its move towards an Improvisation and Blues-based vocabulary.

As is often the case in early Morton works, the third section is reserved for the large portion of the improvising. I like to call these sections "Morton Chorales", because they start out relatively rhythmically square, and then build, chorus by chorus, towards a (hopefully) inexorable climax.

Gunther Schuller devoted a chapter of his book *Early Jazz* to Morton, calling him Jazz's First Great Composer. Although Schuller was not the first to write about Morton analytically, *Early Jazz* is a key work in the history of the establishment of a Jazz Canon.

### **Sigman** *Crazy He Calls Me*

*Crazy He Calls Me* was composed in 1949 by Carl Sigman with lyrics by Bob Russell. Shortly after, the song was first recorded by Billie Holiday, whose rendition made it a famous hit. The song portrays a woman's unwavering love for a man who calls her "crazy," yet she doesn't mind because, to her, love transcends everything.

In this arrangement, the inspiration comes from the soulful sound of Billie Holiday, who expressed the song's meaning so beautifully through both lyrics and melody, as well as from the neo-soul groove of Erykah Badu—an artist who herself drew significant influence from Holiday. This arrangement aims to blend the richness and emotional depth of Holiday's version with the smooth, contemporary groove inspired by Erykah Badu's neo-soul style.

### **Sweet Honey in the Rock** *Breaths*

We were introduced to this Sweet Honey in the Rock song by Assistant CMA Chair Farayi Malek, singer/songwriter/fiddler/composer/educator extraordinaire (I could go on, but I'd run out of room), and it is such a powerful reminder to stop and reconnect with nature and with those who came before us. Please join us on the chorus.

*Chorus:*

Listen more often to things than to beings  
Listen more often to things than to beings  
'Tis the ancestor's word  
When the fire's voice is heard  
'Tis the ancestor's word  
In the voice of the waters  
Ah-ahh, wshh, ahh-wshh

Those who have died have never, never left  
The dead are not under the earth  
They are in the rustling trees

They are in the groaning woods  
They are in the crying grass  
They are in the moaning rocks  
The dead are not under the earth, so...

Those who have died have never, never left  
The dead have a pact with the living  
They are in the woman's breast  
They are in the wailing child  
They are with us in the home  
They are with us in the crowd  
The dead have a pact with the living, so...

### **Dehghani** *Naqme Isfahan*

Inspired by a melody from the Persian *radif*, this composition explores a shared musical language where modal aesthetics interact with elements of jazz. Through a dialogue between improvisation and structured form, the work highlights new expressive possibilities. This piece reflects a collective artistic effort by the ensemble, offering a contemporary bridge between cultures while honoring their original essences.

– Samandar Dehghani

ما سرخوشان مست دل از دست داده‌ایم / همراز عشق و هم نفس جام باده‌ایم  
بر ما بسی کمان ملامت کشیده‌اند/ تا کار خود زابروی جانان گشاده ایم

We, the elated drunk with hearts long lost to love,  
Are confidants of passion, breathing with the wine above.  
Many have aimed the bow of blame toward us in vain,  
For by our Beloved's grace, all knots of fate we did unchain.

### **Harewood** *Ruby Row*

*Ruby Row* is inspired by Gunther Schuller's "Magic Row" and the unique compositional / improvisational style of Thelonious Monk, constructed using four 3-note cells of the row and imbedding them within the harmonic structure of the bop/post bebop paradigm. It is reminiscent of the Monk composition *Ruby, My Dear* as well as the music of Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus.

– David Harewood

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