

NEC Festival

Gunther Schuller 100th Birthday Concert

A Faculty Recital on Gunther Schuller's birthday (November 22)

by

Kenneth Radnofsky
*soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones,
clarinet and bass clarinet*
celebrating 50 years of teaching

with special guests
John McDonald, composer, piano
Yonah Zur, violin
Ziang Yin, piano
Christopher Bush, clarinet
Juan Ruiz, composer, clarinet
Michael Meraw, baritone
Donal Fox, composer, piano
Myron Romanul, composer, piano

Saturday, November 22, 2025

7:30 p.m.

Burnes 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

John D. McDonald
(b. 1959)

* *Simple Gunther Elegy, op. 588a* (2015)

Kenneth Radnofsky, saxophone

Gunther Schuller
(1925–2015)

* **Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano** (1999)
Leisurely, placidly – Allegro vivace

Kenneth Radnofsky, alto saxophone
John D. McDonald, piano

Donald Martino
(1931–2005)

* *Piccolo Studio*
(completed and premiered on November 22, 1999)

Kenneth Radnofsky, saxophone

* *dedicated to and premiered by Kenneth Radnofsky*

George Walker
(1922–2018)

Bleu (2012)

Yonah Zur, violin

Alban Berg
(1885–1935)

Adagio from *Chamber Concerto for violin, clarinet
and piano* (1925)

Yonah Zur, violin
Kenneth Radnofsky, clarinet
Ziang Yin, piano

Intermission

Menachem Zur
(b. 1942)

**Sonata for Soprano Saxophone (and Alto)
and Piano** (1988)

I.
II. Serenade with Variations
III.

Kenneth Radnofsky, saxophones
Ziang Yin, piano

A Set for Gunther

Duke Ellington
arr. Donal Fox

Reflections in D

Donal Fox
(b. 1952)

*Blues Variations on a Twelve-Tone Row by
Arnold Schoenberg*

Improvisations on Gunther's Magic Row

Donal Fox, piano

Anton Webern
(1888–1945)

Quartet, op. 22 (1928–1930)

Sehr mäßig
Sehr schwungvoll

Yonah Zur, violin
Christopher Bush, clarinet
Kenneth Radnofsky, tenor saxophone
Ziang Yin, piano

Igor Stravinsky
(1882–1971)
Text by W. H. Auden

Elegy for JFK (1964)

(memorializing JFK – died on November 22, 1963)

Michael Meraw, baritone
Christopher Bush, Juan Ruiz, clarinet
Kenneth Radnofsky, bass clarinet

Donal Fox

Honoring Gunther Schuller's 100th Birthday

(2025) World Premiere

Yonah Zur, violin
Juan Ruiz, clarinet
Kenneth Radnofsky, bass clarinet
Ziang Yin, piano

Juan Ruiz
(b. 1985)

De Colores (2011, rev. 2025)

Commissioned by Kenneth Radnofsky

Yonah Zur, violin
Kenneth Radnofsky, alto saxophone
Juan Ruiz, clarinet
Ziang Yin, piano

Myron Romanul
(b. 1954)

Till Eulenspiegels lustige Rag

Myron Romanul, piano

Celebrating a dear friend's hundredth birthday had to answer the question: "What music would he have enjoyed (which was everything)?" But some obvious answers were '12-toners.'

The originals—Berg, Webern and Schoenberg—are represented here along with the next generation—Schuller, Martino, Zur, Stravinsky (in his late years, his *Elegy*)—as well as jazz or 'third-stream' (a phrase coined by Schuller as the stream where classical and jazz meet), so well represented by fabulous composer and pianist **Donal Fox**, himself a Schuller student. Precious few can compare with Donal's ability to improvise on Schoenberg's or Gunther's magic row. Gunther loved Ellington, and Donal honors all of them in designing his "Set for Gunther".

John McDonald's heartfelt *Simple Gunther Elegy* may not be 12-tone, but he utilizes a set of developed pitches to spell Gunther's name in musical letters at the end. John and I also recorded Gunther's Sonata under his supervision in 2007. That work, which Gunther told me was his most jazz influenced classical sonata, contains a 'Parkerish' riff (notated by Gunther in the score) as well as a jazz-waltz. You *will* hear it.

Juan Ruiz is a much sought-after jazz artist, composer and arranger who was classically trained (including a year or so with me), and writes latin/jazz, third stream and plays jazz and classical on the same high level, as he does here tonight. I commissioned his work 14 years ago as a companion piece to the Webern Quartet (same instrumentation). Dear old friend **Myron Romanul** is visiting, with a long career as pianist, conductor in Europe, and as Schuller's favorite pianist (and mine) when we were in school and during the ragtime revival, 'orchestrated' by Schuller. Myron wrote: "I would like very much to play a rag that I wrote and dedicated to Gunther and the Ragtime Ensemble. It is called *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Rag*. I played it for Gunther several years ago and he liked it very much."

And for the numerologists, one cannot ignore the synchronicity of November 22 in several of tonight's pieces—not by design, but certainly more than by coincidence. While all of the works here could be analyzed, they were chosen because of the strength and character of the works and the people who wrote them; chosen specifically by the performers, including Yonah Zur's suggestions of George Walker and Berg. I had chosen Menachem Zur's work myself after meeting him in Jerusalem, and the Webern Quartet with Yonah, a great violinist (whom I just met at Rhode Island Phil). And then if the world weren't small enough, I asked Chris Bush (whom I had coached in Webern 20 years ago), who mentioned his PhD at NYU was on Gunther Schuller's music. Michael Meraw is a great singer, and we had promised each other we would work together at the right time and this was it. These performers are amongst the finest people and performers I have ever known. I would like to think that Gunther would be proud to have us carry on ...

In just my first 2 years at NEC as a student (1974–76) I worked with Gunther Schuller in a series of ways: taking a life-changing class, 'Score and Sound,' led by Schuller, Victor Rosenbaum and John Heiss; performing in an NEC Swing Band led by Schuller and Bo Winiker; playing Barney Bigard solos in a Schuller-led Ellington

Orchestra; performing in Ernst Krenek's jazz opera *Jonny spielt auf* (the protagonist an African jazz violinist) which was the rage of Europe, landing Krenek on Hitler's Forbidden Artists list—it seemed the entire school (jazz band, orchestra, choir, soloists) performed, with Krenek attending; performing Ives at the Kennedy Center, celebrating Ives' 100th birthday (it was on the flight back that I asked him about writing a Saxophone Concerto and he said yes!); appearances at Wolftrap, 'Twentieth Century Innovations' including works by Luigi Nono and Milton Babbitt; and recording original Whiteman Band music instead of sleeping—our rehearsals began at 10 pm and ended around 3 am. We were having the times of our lives. Gunther was THE model for unrelenting lifelong hard work, curiosity and joy in performing at the highest level, which continued for a lifetime, for him and all whom he influenced.

Special thanks to the inspiring teachers, friends and colleagues who are represented here tonight...

— Ken Radnofsky

Program notes

Zur *Sonata for Soprano and Alto Saxophone and Piano*

The sonata, in three movements, was written in 1988 for oboe and piano with a middle movement for English horn which has the form of theme (Serenade) and variations. In 1989 it was adapted for saxophones (soprano-alto-soprano).

The style is influenced by the music of Alban Berg and by the theoretical writings of George Perle. It is also searches for ways to embed Schenkerian harmonic and melodic ideas in my own language. My aim was to search for a style that will embed "tonality" within "a-tonal" surface. Hence the work contains many ornaments and figurations used in tonal music.

— Menachem Zur

Menachem Zur was born in Israel in 1942. He has composed over 300 works: chamber music (including 8 string quartets), vocal (including cantatas), symphonic (12 symphonies, 18 concerti), electronic music, and 3 operas. In 2001 he was awarded the ACUM (Israeli ASCAP) prize for life-achievements and the Prime Minister's prize for composition. Other prizes in the past include a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1981, and many other commissions and awards. Most of his works have been published in Israel. His orchestral works have received performances by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. Menachem Zur is a professor emeritus of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. He has taught at Queens College, CUNY, and New York University. He served as the chairperson of the Israel League of Composers and as a member of MALAG (a commission of the Israeli government to appoint and promote professors). He is a graduate of The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and studied in the United States at the Mannes College of Music, Sarah Lawrence College, and Columbia University, where he was awarded a D.M.A. in Composition in 1976.

Webern

The Saxophone and Webern: Quartet Op.22

Completed in September of 1930, Webern's Quartet for Violin, Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone and Piano, Op.22, stands as one of the most important early chamber works for the saxophone. However, Webern's original conception of the piece—a concerto for violin, clarinet, horn, piano, and string orchestra, “in the spirit of some of Bach's Brandenburg concertos”[1]—was quite different. As the Quartet is Webern's only significant work for the saxophone, and one of the earliest Austro-German compositions for saxophone, the change in instrumentation from horn to tenor saxophone is curious. Among possible explanations, the change could be seen as Webern acting politically subversive when confronted with the Nazi propaganda campaign of ‘Degenerate Music’, a term widely applied to the music of Webern, Schoenberg, and Berg among other ‘modernists’, but also applied to the saxophone.[2]

Incensed by Austria's political and economic conditions following WWI, a wave of anti-Semitism swept over the country. As early as 1921 Arnold Schoenberg, an Austrian Jew, was subject to extreme anti-Semitism. Although not Jewish, Anton Webern found this behavior despicable. On March 14, 1933, in the preface to the fourth of his weekly lectures, “The Path to the New Music”, Webern made his feelings quite clear:

What's going on in Germany at the moment amounts to the destruction of spiritual life! What will happen next? To Schoenberg, for instance? And though at present it's linked with anti-Semitism, later on it will be impossible to appoint anyone capable even if he isn't a Jew! Nowadays, ‘cultural Bolshevism’ is the name given to everything that's going on around Schoenberg, Berg, and myself....Imagine what will be destroyed, wiped out, by this hate of culture.[3]

As Webern points out, in addition to the anti-Semitism that was pervasive, Schoenberg and his school of composition were being labeled ‘cultural Bolsheviks’ by the extreme right-wing governments then in power, and their music ‘degenerate’.

“Entartete Musik” (Degenerate Music) was an exhibition that opened in Düsseldorf in 1938, and included works of “degenerate” musicians who had been discredited during the previous five years by Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda. The advertisement for the exhibition, a caricature of a black man playing the saxophone wearing a Jewish Star of David, illustrates the intention of the ‘Entartete’ exhibits; to demonize the “musical other”.

The saxophone as a degenerate or Negro instrument was also a common theme in Germany that had long been established. Eight years prior to the ‘Entartete’ exhibit, leading Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, for example, spoke against “tooting the saxophone and other nigger drums”. [4] Following the Nazis' rise to power, as Daniel Bell points out, “Many players quickly sold their saxophones or refused to use them. Other dance band musicians felt compelled to conceal their saxophones whenever potential Nazi “spies” were present.” [5] But why would Webern choose to align himself with such a contentious instrument?

Perhaps the choice of tenor saxophone is just Webern putting artistic matters first, however, it is hard to ignore Weber choosing an instrument that was so closely associated with “degenerate music”, “Negro music” and jazz.

Geoff Landman

Assistant Professor of Saxophone, University of Kansas School of Music

[1] Hans and Rosaleen Moldenhauer, Anton von Webern, a Chronicle of his Life and Work (New York: Knopf, 1979), 22.

[2] Malcolm Hayes, Anton von Webern (London: Phaidon, 1995), 188-192.

[3] Hayes, 176.

[4] Bell, 27.

[5] Bell, 26.

Stravinsky *Elegy for JFK*

When a just man dies,
Lamentation and praise,
Sorrow and joy, are one.

Why then, Why there,
Why thus, we cry, did he die?
The heavens are silent.

What he was, he was:
What he is fated to become
Depends on us.

Remembering his death
How we choose to live
Will decide its meaning.

When a just man dies,
Lamentation and praise,
Sorrow and joy, are one.

W. H. Auden

Fox *Honoring Gunther Schuller's 100th Birthday*

Emotional references to Schuller, Schoenberg, Mingus, Monk; based on a little birthday music card, I sent Gunther to celebrate his 60th birthday!

– Donal Fox

Gunther Schuller was born in New York on November 22, 1925. His professional music career began as a French horn player, performing with the American Ballet Theater as a teenager, as principal horn in the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (1943-1945), and with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (1945-1959). He performed under legendary maestros of the 20th century including Toscanini, Stokowski, Walter, Reiner, Szell, Mitropoulos, and Doráti.

Schuller also played French horn on Miles Davis' *Birth of the Cool* and *Porgy and Bess* recordings, and composed and/or conducted for jazz greats John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, J. J. Johnson, George Russell and Joe Lovano, among others. He also had significant interactions with Duke Ellington, Ornette Coleman, and Eric Dolphy.

Schuller composed more than 200 works (and created dozens of arrangements), spanning many musical genres including solo works, orchestral and wind ensemble pieces, chamber music, opera, and jazz. Among Schuller's orchestral works are *Symphony* (1965), *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee* (1959), and *An Arc Ascending* (1996). His large-scale work, *Of Reminiscences and Reflections*, was composed as a tribute to his wife of 44 years, Marjorie Black, and it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1994. He wrote important concertos for frequently-neglected instruments such as saxophone, bassoon, contrabassoon, organ, and double bass. He composed maverick pieces such as *Concertino for Jazz Quartet and Orchestra* (1959) and *Variants on a Theme of Thelonious Monk* (1960), and he re-assembled, re-composed, arranged, and conducted Charles Mingus' magnum opus *Epitaph* (1962/1989).

Schuller conducted professional orchestras and various ensembles in wide-ranging repertoire around the globe for much of his career. His guest conducting included leading such ensembles as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Minnesota Orchestras, San Francisco Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Radio Philharmonic of Hannover, Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, as well as the Mingus Orchestra and other American and European jazz orchestras. He co-founded the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra and held titled positions with the Spokane Symphony and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston. Schuller's discography as a conductor spans many classical and jazz genres and is unusually broad in repertoire and style.

As an educator, Schuller first taught at the Manhattan School of Music before moving to Yale University as Professor of Composition. He was also a central figure at the innovative School of Jazz in Lenox (1959-1960). Schuller began teaching at the Berkshire Music Center (at Tanglewood) in 1963 at the request of Aaron Copland, and subsequently served as its artistic director from 1969-1984. He served as the artistic director of The Festival at Sandpoint from 1985 to 1998. From 1967-1977 Schuller served as president of the New England Conservatory where he formalized NEC's commitment to jazz by establishing the first degree-granting jazz program at a major classical conservatory, instituting the Third Stream department (he invented the concept of Third Stream music)—later named the Contemporary Improvisation department and now known as Contemporary Musical Arts—to explore the musical

genres where classical jazz and other music come together.

Schuller earned three Grammy Awards: Best Album Notes for *Footlifters: A Century of American Marches* (1976) and for *Smithsonian Collection of Big Band Jazz* (1985), and Best Chamber Music Performance (1974) for *Joplin: The Red Back Book*, his landmark recording with the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble that helped launch a nationally popular Ragtime revival. Schuller was the recipient of the William Schuman Award (1988), the MacArthur Foundation Genius Award (1991), the Gold Medal for Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1997), the Downbeat Lifetime Achievement Award, and an inaugural membership in the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. He was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master in 2008 and was awarded the 2015 Edward MacDowell Medal.

Schuller wrote numerous articles and six books on the topics of horn playing, jazz (two essential histories), conducting, arts and aesthetics, and in 2011, volume one of his autobiography, *Gunther Schuller: A Life in Pursuit of Music and Beauty*. Despite illness, he never stopped composing, conducting, writing, and being immersed in music. Schuller died at the age of 89 in Boston on June 21, 2015.

It is hard to imagine another 20th century musician who gave so much of his mind, heart, and soul—with the truest and deepest possible devotion—to the breadth of classical and jazz music. In addition to his vast work as a composer, conductor, educator, and author/historian he founded and led a publishing company (Margun/Gunmar Music) and a recording label (GM Recordings); both enterprises dedicated to championing unsung composers and performers in classical and jazz music.

Gunther Alexander Schuller was an idealist in all of his endeavors. He supported everything and everyone he believed in. To many, he was the beacon of the possibilities of that seemingly humble word, “musician,” meant: unfailing devotion to art and artists, exalted levels of musicianship, a passion to share all that he knew, and humility in the face of the master musicians of the past and of his own lifetime.

It was poignant that he passed away on Father’s Day 2015 because he was not only a “musical father” to an unfathomable number of musicians all over the world, but also a Father of American Music in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The vastness of his contributions to American classical and jazz music in all its various forms is—without exaggeration—staggering. It is a legacy that the United States and indeed the world will continue to celebrate, study, reflect upon, and admire for generations.

– Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr.

Saxophonist **Kenneth Radnofsky** has appeared as soloist with leading orchestras and ensembles throughout the world, including the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and New York Philharmonic under the direction of Kurt Masur, Jerusalem Symphony with Gisele Ben-Dor, Dresden Staatskapelle, Taipei and Taiwan Symphonies, New World Symphony, BBC Concert Orchestra, Marlboro Festival, and Vista Philharmonic under the direction of Bruce Hangen. Just last season (2024-25) he appeared as soloist with Hangen’s Vista Philharmonic in Ravel *Kaddish*, and Ullmann

Slavonic Rhapsody, and continues to appear with the orchestra as saxophonist as needed.

During 2025-26 Radnofsky presented the world premiere of the new wind version of Gunther Schuller Saxophone Concerto (arr. Bozich) with the Calgary Wind Orchestra (October 2025), under the direction of Jeremy Brown. Radnofsky made his Carnegie Hall debut with the New York premiere of the same piece with the National Orchestral Association and gave the work's world premiere with the Pittsburgh Symphony, both performances conducted by the composer.

David Amram's concerto, *Ode to Lord Buckley*, is also dedicated to Radnofsky, who first premiered the work with the Portland Symphony under Bruce Hagen's direction in 1981! He appeared with old friend Amram at this year's annual Kerouac Festival in Lowell, Mass in October. Radnofsky has performed on numerous occasions for the Boston Symphony, was thrice soloist with Boston Modern Orchestra Project (Hovhanness, Olivero, Gandolfi concerti) with conductor Gil Rose, and numerous times as soloist with Boston Classical Orchestra and the Bach, Beethoven & Brahms Society with conductor Steven Lipsitt. He returns as soloist in March in the world premiere of Herschel Garfein's new Saxophone Concerto.

He has also been a frequent soloist with conductors John Mauceri and John Williams with the Boston Pops in Franz Waxman's Suite for Saxophone, *A Place in the Sun*, recreating that work as well just last season as soloist with the Owensboro (Ky.) and Venice (Fla.) Symphonies, with Maestro Troy Quinn.

Of his more than 150 commissions, the American composers who have written for Radnofsky include Schuller, Amram, Francine Trester, James Yannatos, Michael Gandolfi, Michael Colgrass, Donald Martino, Ezra Sims, Chris Theofanidis, Michael Horvit, John McDonald, Larry Bell, Roger Bourland, Allen Johnson, Elliott Schwartz, Pasquale Tassone, Armand Qualliotine, Yang Yong, Christian Yufra, Juan Ruiz, Jaime Fatas, Shih-Hui Chen, Andy Vores, Lei Liang, Vincent Plush, Baris Perker and Jakov Jakoulov. Radnofsky is also Founder of World Wide Concurrent Premieres, creating a network of musicians commissioning today's finest composers.

This year Ken Radnofsky celebrates 50 years of teaching. Concurrent with his US performing and teaching, Radnofsky has designed and implemented a saxophone program for Venezuela with saxophone professor Claudio Dioguardi, taught in Brazil, Turkey, and frequently in Israel, Taiwan and China. He is a founding member with Charles Peltz of the Gunther Schuller Society, and co-founder with Michael Couper, of RC Editions (woodwind music publishing house).

He is Professor of Saxophone and Chamber Music at New England Conservatory, and Lecturer at Boston University, where he also directs the Summer Saxophone Tanglewood Workshop and also at Orford Musique (Quebec). He graduated from NEC with a master's degree (with honors), studying with Joseph Allard, and earned his bachelor's degree (cum laude) from the University of Houston, studying with Jeffrey Lerner, David Salge, and inspiring theory teacher, composer Michael Horvit. His first (and most important!) saxophone lesson was with Duncan Hale, followed by Terry Anderson through his early years.

His current solo CD releases include David Amram's *So in America* (Affetto

1801); *Ode to Lord Buckley* (NewportClassic Recordings); Debussy *Rhapsody* with the New York Philharmonic (Teldec13133/Apex); Radnofsky.com (Boston Records 1043); *Fascinatin' Rhythms* (Boston Records 1044); Gandolfi *Fantasia, From the Institutes of Groove*, (BMOP/sound 1028); Donald Martino's *Saxophone Concerto* (New World 80529-2) and Elliott Schwartz *Mehitabel's Serenade* (Albany-Troy 646), both with NEC orchestra and conductor Richard Hoenich; Michael Colgrass' *Dream Dancer* (Mode 125) with NEC Wind Ensemble and conductor Charles Peltz; and as soloist with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, in Franz Waxman's *A Place in the Sun*, under John Mauceri's direction (Philips 4321092).

Guest Artist Biographies

Christopher Bush is currently the Principal Clarinetist of the Glens Falls Symphony Orchestra, with a distinguished career spanning various orchestral positions including the Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra and Westchester Chamber Symphony. He has performed extensively worldwide with ensembles such as the Callithumpian Consort, Harlem Chamber Players, and Seoul Philharmonic, collaborating with renowned composers including Gunther Schuller and Steve Reich. His work has been featured on PBS, KBS, and other major networks, and he has recorded for Naxos, Albany, Innova, and Mode record companies. Christopher has held teaching and leadership roles at institutions including New York University, Summerland Music Society, and the New England Conservatory, where he is currently Director of Adult Education and Digital Programs and an instructor in the Expanded Education division.

Internationally acclaimed composer, pianist, and improviser **Donal Fox** is celebrated for his innovative fusion of jazz, Afro-Latin, and classical idioms, crafting intricate compositions and electrifying performances that transcend genre boundaries. Hailed by NPR's "All Things Considered" as "one of our country's great composers and performers" and described by *The Boston Globe* as "unique and utterly commanding," Fox has established himself as one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music.

Fox's groundbreaking projects include the premiere of "The Monk and Bach Project" at Jazz at Lincoln Center, "The Scarlatti Jazz Suite Project" at Tanglewood, and his piano concerto *Peace Out for Improvised Piano and Orchestra* at Carnegie Hall with the American Composers Orchestra. He was featured in a concert at the Skaneateles Festival with his Inventions Trio and special guest violinist Hilary Hahn. Fox's *Hear De Lambs A-Cryin'* for baritone and orchestra received its New York premiere at Carnegie Hall with the Albany Symphony Orchestra, and his "Piazzolla to Bach Project" premiered at Tanglewood Jazz Festival with special guest cellist Maya Beiser.

Other appearances have included the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Mondavi Center at UC Davis, Cal Performances at UC Berkeley, Newman

Center for Performing Arts at the University of Denver, Coca-Cola Generations in Jazz Festival at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Rockport Jazz Festival, The Library of Congress, and Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. His *Toccata on Bach* for solo piano received its Hungarian premiere at the Valley of Arts Festival (Művészeti Központ), performed by Hungarian pianist Katalin Csillagh in 2021, while his *Ukrainian Anthem: Fight for Freedom* premiered at the 2022 Gilmore International Piano Festival.

In 2023-24 season, Fox performed a special solo concert at The Pianodrome a unique amphitheater built from 40 recycled pianos, the first Pianodrome in America installed at the Historic Grace AME Zion Church, Charlotte, NC, and in 2024, he performed at Lincoln Center in duet with poets Quincy Troupe and Kwame Alexander, in a special concert and event celebrating the release of *New York Times'* best-selling author/poet Kwame Alexander's new book: *This Is The Honey: An Anthology of Contemporary Black Poets*. His chamber work *Never Again Is Now!* — commissioned alongside John Harbison, Yehudi Wyner, and Joan Tower — was premiered by Collage New Music in honor and celebration of its 50th anniversary. Fox's fluency across musical traditions has led to collaborations and recordings with a wide range of artists, including Oliver Lake, David Murray, Regina Carter, George Mraz, John Stubblefield, Elliott Sharp, Al Foster, Stefon Harris, Christian Scott, Warren Wolf, Terri Lyne Carrington, Maya Beiser, Hilary Hahn, Dafnis Prieto, and poets Quincy Troupe, among many others.

Fox has been featured in numerous radio and media programs, including WQXR's "Emancipation 150" series, hosted by Terrance McKnight and Helga Davis, honoring the African American experience in classical music, and WBUR's Radio Open Source with Christopher Lydon in conversations with Paul Elie, author of *Reinventing Bach*, about the music and influence of J.S. Bach. His work and artistic philosophy were also the focus of two hour-long composer portraits hosted by Guy Livingston: *Confounding the Genre Police on American Highways* and *Keys of Change: Donal Fox — Music, Activism, and Spirituality* on ConcertZender Radio (Holland) with podcasts in Europe and the USA. "The Keys of Change" radio series featured composers and musicians (Charles Ives, Conlon Nancarrow, Paul Robeson, Marc Blitzstein, Kurt Weill, Frederick Rzewski, Donal Fox, Pamela Z, and others) who explored the varied and complex ways that politics influenced their creative lives and music.

Among his many accolades, Donal Fox has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Bogliasco Fellowship, and an Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Fox served as the first African American composer-in-residence with the St. Louis Symphony and was a visiting artist at Harvard University, where he received a Certificate of Recognition from the President of Harvard College for his contribution to the arts. In 2009, he was appointed Martin Luther King, Jr. Visiting Scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Fox has also been composer-in-residence at Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus (Germany), Tyrone Guthrie Centre (Ireland), Djerassi Resident Artist Program, Liguria Study Center (Italy), Tanglewood Contemporary Music Festival, and others.

A Steinway Artist, Fox has recorded for New World Records, Evidence Records, Music & Arts, Passin' Thru Records, Steinway Spirio, Flipside Music, and Wergo Records. His works are published by Margun Music, G. Schirmer, and Leonellis Music.

Donald Martino was born in Plainfield, New Jersey and began music lessons at nine—learning to play the clarinet, saxophone, and oboe—and started composing at 15. He holds degrees from Syracuse and Princeton Universities. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, his many awards include two Fulbright scholarships; three Guggenheim awards; grants from the Massachusetts Arts Council, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the National Endowment for the Arts; the Brandeis Creative Arts Citation in Music; the 1974 Pulitzer Prize in music for his chamber work *Notturmo*, First Prize in the 1985 Kennedy Center Friedheim Competition for his String Quartet (1983), and most recently, the Boston Symphony's Mark M. Horblit Award. Mr. Martino taught at The Third Street Music School Settlement in New York, Princeton, Yale, The New England Conservatory of Music (where he was chairman of the composition department from 1969-1979), Brandeis (where he was Irving Fine Professor of Music), and Harvard (where he was the Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music, Emeritus). He was active as guest lecturer and was Composer-in-Residence at Tanglewood, The Composer's Conference, The Yale Summer School of Music and Art, The Pontino Festival (It.), May in Miami, The Atlantic Center for the Arts, The Warebrook Festival, The Ernest Bloch Festival, The Festival Internacional de Musica de Morelia (Mex.), and was Distinguished Visiting Professor at many institutions of higher learning. Commissions for new works had come from, among others, the Paderewski Fund; the Fromm, Naumburg, Koussevitzky, and Coolidge Foundations; the Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco Symphonies; and a number of musical societies and organizations. According to the *New Grove*, "Martino's music has been characterized as expansive, dense, lucid, dramatic, romantic, all of which are applicable. But it is his ability...to conjure up for the listener a world of palpable presences and conceptions...that seems most remarkable."

Described as "the New England master of the short piece," **John McDonald** is a composer who tries to play the piano and a pianist who tries to compose. He is currently Professor of Music at Tufts University, where he teaches composition, theory, and performance. He was the Music Teachers National Association Composer of the Year in 2007 and served as the Valentine Visiting Professor of Music at Amherst College in 2016-2017. Recent and upcoming performances feature McDonald as pianist in longstanding and new partnerships with vocalists and instrumentalists Karol Bennett, soprano; Julia Cavallaro, mezzo soprano/composer; Lilit Hartunian, violinist; Ken Radnofsky, saxophonist; Sky Trio (with Kristen Watson, soprano and Su Lian Tan, composer/flutist); and more. His most recent recordings appear on the Arsis Audio, Bridge, New Focus, and Steinway labels.

McDonald's works are published by American Composers Alliance, and he is currently serving a term on the Board of Governors for ACA.

Baritone **Michael Meraw** has performed with companies across North America (including: Pacific Opera Victoria, the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, the Banff Centre, Edmonton Opera, the Richard Eaton Singers, Symphony Regina, the National Arts Centre, the Thirteen Strings, Opéra Atelier, Opera in Concert, Montreal Opera, Seattle Opera, Virginia Opera, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra), in repertoire ranging from Monteverdi and Handel, to Webern and Szymanowski. Not only has Meraw garnered critical acclaim in the standard repertoire, winning praise for his Figaro in Rossini's *Barber of Seville* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*, but he has also brought lesser-known works to new audiences through his incisive portrayals of such roles as *King Roger* by Szymanowski ("Meraw did well as Roger, with nervy urgency and gripping delivery of his increasingly anguished lines..." — Geoff Chapman, *The Toronto Star*) and Sir John A. MacDonald in Somers's *Louis Riel* ("Dealing with a vocal part that veers from *sprechgesang* to dramatic declamation, baritone Michael Meraw showed great vocal cut and thrust, in addition to contributing a striking stage presence." — Richard Turp, *Opera Canada*). Mr. Meraw has performed many of the standard baritone parts in oratorio including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabeas*, *Joshua* and *Israel in Egypt*, and the Requiems of Brahms and Fauré. A regular recitalist, his repertoire spans the baritone repertoire in English, French, German, Italian, and Russian.

Myron Romanul, born in Baltimore, was raised in Boston and studied piano with Leo Litwin, Theodore Lettvin, Adele Marcus, Sasha Gorodnitsky and Andre Watts. He performed as piano soloist at the age of eleven with the Boston Symphony Orchestra as winner of the Harry Dubbs Memorial Award. Since then he has won numerous prizes and awards and has appeared as soloist with many orchestras including the Boston Pops and many symphony orchestras across the country. As piano soloist on tour with Arthur Fiedler, he effortlessly realized a huge repertoire and was affectionately dubbed "Dial-A-Concerto". He also worked with and assisted the Maestro in many areas of programming.

As the original pianist of the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, he was featured with the ensemble on the Angel/EMI recording *Scott Joplin: The Red Back Book*, which won a Grammy Award for "Best Classical Chamber Music". His many chamber music performances include concerts with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He directed the piano quartet that he formed with his brothers, which won the International Jeunesses Musicales Competition in Belgrade and concertized extensively. As one of the few cimbalom players, he has performed and recorded with various orchestras as well as such groups as Speculum Musicae under Pierre Boulez and recorded the film score of "Gorky Park". He also studied conducting at the New England Conservatory of Music, the Boston University School of Music, and the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood with Seiji Ozawa, Gunther Schuller and Joseph Silverstein.

After conducting orchestras such as the Central Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra and the Boston Ballet Orchestra, he moved to Germany where he has served as Kapellmeister, Associate and Assistant Music Directors in various opera houses in Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Mainz and Essen. He has also guest conducted throughout Germany as well as with orchestras in Europe, Asia and Australia. Romanul was a major force in the successful Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival in Alaska with his creative 16-year run as Artistic/Music Director. His recently released CD, *The Piano of the Opera*, has won critical acclaim. Recently, he has won prizes at several online music competitions—including Platinum, Gold, Silver, “Virtuosic Performance Special Award”—and at the Royal Music Competition, he received 7 Diamond prizes as well as the “Technical Marvel Special Award”. He is currently conductor at the Nationaltheater Munich, Germany, where since 1987 he has been leading performances of the Bayern State Opera and Ballet and is also Principal Conductor of the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra in Worcester.

Born in Medellín, Colombia, **Juan Ruiz** studied Composition and Jazz Performance on clarinet and saxophone at the Longy School of Music and Berklee College of Music. His most recent compositions have been presented in Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, China, Germany, and the United States, and he recently performed as a special guest of the unique jazz harpist Edmar Castañeda at Dizzy’s Club. He also works closely with the 17-time GRAMMY® winner Paquito D’Rivera, composing, arranging, and performing a diverse repertoire during his concerts in New York and abroad. Juan has also worked as a producer for different projects including artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, The New York Voices, Paquito D’Rivera, and Chucho Valdés & Irakere among others.

Ziang Yin is a frequent collaborator with Ken Radnofsky and the saxophone studio at New England Conservatory, where he is currently a doctoral student studying with Bruce Brubaker. His previous degrees include bachelor’s and master’s degrees from NEC and a certificates from Juilliard Pre-College Division. Ziang received highly professional piano education from a young age, including instruction from pianists such as Chu-Fang Huang, Gary Graffman, Ignat Solzhenitsyn, Robert McDonald, Victor Rosenbaum, and Bruce Brubaker. Ziang has won several prestigious competitions, including both the Tennessee International Music Festival (with full scholarship) and the Canadian Music International Festival where he performed the Rachmaninov Second Piano Concerto with the Canadian Orchestra. On his musical journey, Ziang has performed with eminent conductors around the world and has held recitals in many countries, including a recital at Lincoln Center after being named the youngest winner of the Metropolitan International Piano Competition. Ziang not only performs as a soloist but also collaborates with many other musicians. He enjoys exploring the connections and effects between different instruments, as well as the exchange of ideas with different musicians.

Yonah Zur is a regular guest with A Far Cry, the Boston Lyric Opera, the Boston

Ballet, Shelter Music Boston, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and the Rhode Island Philharmonic.

Mr. Zur is proud to be one of the conductors and coaches at the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras and is on the faculty of the Boston Conservatory at Berklee as well as a Teaching Assistant at Harvard University's Music Department. He has been engaging audiences as a teaching artist for the past twenty years.

Mr. Zur has participated in the Marlboro, Yellow Barn, Tanglewood, Newburyport and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and the Newburyport Chamber Music Festival. He has taught at Longy School, the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Opus 188 Harlem School of Music and the JCC Tenaflly. He has performed throughout Israel, the US, and Europe, appearing as soloist with the Jerusalem Symphony, the Israel Contemporary Players, and the Israel Camerata Jerusalem. Yonah Zur was a member of Israel's Carmel Quartet for two seasons and served as assistant principal second violin with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra for six seasons. He graduated from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance having studied with Avi Abramovich, and later studied at The Juilliard School with Robert Mann. He was a recipient of the AICF scholarships from 1995-2003.

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

all programs subject to change

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert information

Song and Verse, Brett Hodgdon, curator

An evening of German Lieder

Monday, November 24, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Joint Faculty Recital: Cameron Stowe, piano and Corey Gaudreau, baritone

"Homage: Works Inspired by Legendary Singers"

Barber *Three Songs*; Britten *Winter Words*; Ravel *Histoires naturelles*

Poulenc *Hommage à Edith Piaf*; *La fraîcheur et le feu*

Monday, November 24, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Saxophone Ensemble, Kenneth Radnofsky, director

Bach *The Art of the Fugue* (1-5); Rivier *Grave et Presto*;

Villa-Lobos *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 1

Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

First Monday at Jordan Hall, 41st season

"Divine Arcana" - von Biber *"Mystery"* sonatas; Lang *Glory* (2014);

Mozart (arr. Schuller) *Grand Sextet Concertante*; and works by Hildegard von Bingen, Pärt, and Messiaen

Monday, December 1, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

—continued

Chamber Music Gala

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Tuesday Night New Music

New music by NEC student composers, performed by their peers

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

NEC Opera: Handel Scenes and Shakespeare Monologues

Wednesday, December 3 & Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

NEC Percussion Group, Will Hudgins, director

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Chamber Singers, Symphonic Winds, Navy Band Northeast

"Into the Holidays"

Monday, December 8, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC New Music Ensemble, Stefan Asbury, conductor

Harvey Mortuos Plangos, Vivo Voco; Byström Rebellion in Greenery; Mallia Plexus 2;

Reich New York Counterpoint for Clarinet and Tape; Murail Winter Fragments;

Abrahamsen Winternacht

Monday, December 8, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

NEC Jazz Composers' Workshop Orchestra, Frank Carlberg, director

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

NEC Chamber Singers, Symphonic Winds, Navy Band Northeast

"Into the Holidays" (repeat) - Audio streamed on [wicn](https://www.wicn.org)

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 12:00 noon, Mechanics Hall, Worcester

Liederabend LXXVIII Cameron Stowe and Tanya Blaich, curators

All-Ravel program

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall

NEC Philharmonia, Hugh Wolff, conductor

Handel Concerto Grosso, op. 6 no. 4; Bartók Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta;

Beethoven Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 61, Joshua Brown AD, violin

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

—continued

Sonata Class Recital, Vivian Hornik Weilerstein, faculty
Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., Williams Hall

NEC Conductors' Choir

Works by Chatman, Gilkyson, Hazzard, Parry, Poulenc, Trumbore, and Victoria
conducted by Estel Haejin Park, Noah Scecina-White, and Louis Shriber,
all '27 MM students of Erica J. Washburn
Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Faculty Recital: **Paula Robison**, flute with **Paavali Jumppanen**, piano
"An Hour of Bach and Mozart"
Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall

NEC Lab Orchestra

Clancy Ellis '26 GD, Joseph Bozich '27 GD and Leonard Bopp '27 GD conductors
Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Borromeo String Quartet Seminar Recital

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Support the future of music at NEC!

Your gift can unleash the power of music by expanding scholarships, fostering innovation, and bringing music's impact and transformative reach to all.

Make a gift today at necmusic.edu/givenow

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.

Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

Stay connected



necmusic.edu/tonight