



NEC Percussion Group

Will Hudgins, director

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 7:30 p.m. NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

David Skidmore

Ritual Music (2004)

(b. 1982)

Christian Bartholomew, Jake Haskins, Chris Koo, Jackson Kowalczyk

Cassie Wieland

Weeds (2018)

(b. 1994)

Dillon Akerman, Chris Koo, Raina Liao

John Psathas

Kyoto (2011)

(b. 1966)

Dillon Akerman, Christian Bartholomew, Jake Haskins, Patrick Sorah,

Brandon Topolski

Robert Marino

Eight on 3 and Nine on 2 (2007)

(b. 1983

Jake Haskins, Patrick Sorah

Michael Burritt

Home Trilogy (2015)

(b. 1962)

Painted Hills White Pines

Home

Patrick Sorah, marimba solo

Camden Briggs, Jackson Kowalczyk,

Raina Liao, Brandon Topolski

NEC Percussion Group

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Christian Bartholomew
Camden Briggs
Jacob Haskins
Chris Koo
Jackson Kowalczyk
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Patrick Sorah
Brandon Topolski

Skidmore Ritual Music

Ritual Music is a dynamic and energetic work for percussion quartet by composer and GRAMMY® Award–winning percussionist David Skidmore, co-founder and executive director of the ensemble Third Coast Percussion. Written with a performer's understanding of rhythm and color, the piece showcases Skidmore's distinctive voice—one rooted in groove, clarity, and the expressive potential of percussion instruments.

Lasting approximately seven minutes, *Ritual Music* draws on a wide palette of timbres, including tambourines, bongos, congas, toms, djembe, marimba, snare drums (with snares off), crotales, a brake drum, and a concert bass drum. This rich instrumentation allows the ensemble to move seamlessly between driving rhythmic unisons, layered cross-rhythms, and subtle textural shifts.

The title reflects the piece's character: a sense of ceremony, pulse, and communal energy. Repeated patterns and evolving rhythmic cells evoke the feel of a ritualistic dance or procession. While highly structured, the music maintains an organic flow, emphasizing physicality and shared momentum among the performers.

Wieland Weeds

Weeds is a deeply introspective work for three vibraphonists, composed in 2018 by Cassie Wieland, an Illinois-born, Brooklyn-based composer whose music is known for its intimate, fragile textures.

At its heart, the piece is a meditation on displacement. Wieland draws on the simple, yet evocative image of a weed—"something growing where it shouldn't." She uses this metaphor to explore the emotional complexities of being removed from one's familiar environment: the disquiet of unfamiliarity, the longing for belonging, and ultimately, the slow growth of something that becomes rooted.

Throughout the 7-and-a-half minutes of the work, the three musicians move gradually through shared material and shifting textures. As the piece progresses, the musical ideas—initially tentative and unsettled—gain clarity and strength, mirroring the way something once foreign can become comfortable and even essential. *Weeds* was commissioned and premiered by the percussion trio, "line upon line".

Psathas Kyoto

Composed in 2011 for percussion quintet, *Kyoto* marks a stylistic turn for John Psathas—eschewing the intense physicality of earlier works like *Drum Dances* and *Etude from One Study One Summary* in favor of a more hypnotic, groove-oriented texture.

In *Kyoto*, Psathas crafts a sonic journey that balances rhythmic drive and reflective stillness—a ritual of pulse, memory, and homage. A constant sixteenth-note pulse underpins the entire piece, propelling the music through changing time signatures. Periods of near silence punctuate the f low, allowing shifts in harmony and color to arrive with impact. Two contrasting musical ideas alternate and interact: driving, rhythmically propelled melodic lines, and delicate arpeggios in the vibraphones. These converge in a powerful climax, creating an arc of tension and release.

The title *Kyoto* is deeply personal for the composer. It refers to a solo improvisation by pianist Keith Jarrett, recorded in Kyoto in 1976, which Psathas has said was "the piece that woke the composer in me, and set me on this journey of creating my own music for others."

Kyoto was commissioned by the Ju Percussion Group for the 2011 Taipei International Percussion Convention, and is dedicated to the ensemble in celebration of its 25th anniversary.

Marino Eight on 3 and Nine on 2

Eight on 3 and Nine on 2 is a striking, virtuosic duet for two percussionists, composed by Robert Marino in 2007.

Written for multipercussion—specifically 8 pitched tom-toms, 2 rototoms, 2 bongos, and a bass drum—the piece challenges the performers with "split" rhythms, shared instrumentation, and tightly interlocking parts.

In performance, the two players face each other and share instruments, creating a sense of unity and synchronization: though there are always two performers, they often sound like one.

The title itself has personal roots: Marino played 3rd bass drum for the Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps' eighth DCI World Championship (2000), and George Clements played 2nd bass drum for the Cadets' ninth World Championship (2005). These experiences inform both the name and the technical/drum-corps character of the piece.

Beyond its technical demands, *Eight on 3 and Nine on 2* is written to combine elements of drum corps performance with the structure and discipline of a concert recital. The result is a piece that is visually engaging, rhythmically intense, and musically compelling—demanding both precision and expressive ensemble communication from its performers.

Burritt Home Trilogy

Home Trilogy is a three-movement work (approx. 20 minutes) for solo marimba and percussion quartet, composed by Michael Burritt and commissioned by the

renowned percussion ensemble NEXUS.

Burritt's idea behind *Home Trilogy* is deeply personal: he reflects both on his home in Rochester, New York, and on "our collective home," the Earth itself. The piece was premiered on a concert dedicated to environmental awareness and sustainability, which reinforces its thematic connection to nature and our planet.

Painted Hills—This opening movement evokes the vivid tapestry of autumn—colored leaves and rolling landscapes. It features the solo marimba accompanied by pitched metallic percussion.

White Pines—Inspired by Burritt's memories of snow-covered pine trees in winter near his home, this movement is more expansive, using both keyboard and battery percussion.

Home—Serving as the emotional epilogue, this final movement portrays the marimba as a steady, evolving harmonic "motor," punctuated by sparsely placed pitched gongs and keyboard percussion.

Throughout the trilogy, Burritt weaves atmospheric textures and harmonically rich passages, creating a warm, reflective soundscape. The metallic percussion in the outer movements (Painted Hills and Home) lends a shimmering quality, while the middle movement (White Pines) brings rhythmic vitality and contrast. The work demands a high level of technical skill from the soloist: not only must the marimbist have strong endurance, but they must also navigate lyrical lines, varying stroke types, and dynamic interplay with the ensemble.

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

all programs subject to change

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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 $\underline{\text{wicn}}$

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

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

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

-continued

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

Student Recitals at NEC

all programs subject to change

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Youngji Choi, violin (GD '25)

Student of Donald Weilerstein

Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Seungwon Park, violin (MM)

Student of Soovin Kim

Friday, December 5, 2025 at 8:30 p.m., Burnes Hall

Xinlin Leon Wang, viola (MM '25)

Student of Nicholas Cords

Friday, December 5, 2025 at 8:30 p.m., Williams Hall

Hyeonmin Lee, cello (MM)

Student of Laurence Lesser

Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Sandy Ssu-Hsuan Li, collaborative piano (GC '25)

Student of Pei-Shan Lee and Cameron Stowe

Sunday, December 7, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Michael Yang-Wierenga, CMA (MM '25)

Student of Akram Haddad, Hankus Netsky, and Farayi Malek

Sunday, December 7, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

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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.



necmusic.edu/tonight



Welcome to NEC!

I am thrilled to welcome you to New England Conservatory's 2025–26 concert season — a celebration of the power that music has to inspire and connect us to 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.

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



Andrea Kalyn President



We thank our generous donors, who remain committed to elevating the NEC experience and who make it possible for our students to continue their artistic pursuits. Every gift to The NEC Fund supports the pillars of an NEC education — scholarship, community engagement, and a world-renowned faculty.



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