

Concert Program

A woman with dark hair is holding a lit matchstick in front of her face, creating a dramatic silhouette effect. The flame is bright and has some smoke rising from it. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, sleeveless top and a pearl necklace. A microphone on a stand is visible in the foreground, partially obscuring her chest. The background is dark, and the overall lighting is warm and focused on the matchstick.

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NEC Composers' Series
Stratis Minakakis, curator
present

ECCE Arts Ensemble

Thursday, January 22, 2026
7:30 p.m.
NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Kati Agócs

Ambrosiana (2017)

Joseph Vasconi, piano

Grant Beale

Autophagos III - Thrafsmasýdeton (2025)

T.J. Borden, cello

Sid Richardson

Astrolabe (2014)

Lily Xie, flute

Aleksis Martin, clarinet

Jordan Hadrill, violin

Robert Bui, cello

Mike Williams, percussion

Joseph Vasconi, piano

Stratis Minakakis, conductor

Stratis Minakakis

Skiagrafies IV: Ajax (2021)

Lily Xie, flute

Aleksis Martin, clarinet

Jordan Hadrill, violin

Robert Bui, cello

Jihye Chang, piano

Stratis Minakakis, conductor

Intermission

John Mallia

Dangerous Passing (2013)

Lily Xie, flute
Jordan Hadrill, violin
Robert Bui, cello
Noah Mark, percussion
John Mallia, video and live electronics
Stratis Minakakis, conductor

Michael Gandolfi

Lowell Songs (2025)

A Blockhead
At Night
From One Who Stays
Grotesque

Isabel Merat, soprano
Lily Xie, flute
Aleksis Martin, clarinet
Jordan Hadrill, violin
Robert Bui, cello
Camden Briggs, percussion
Joseph Vasconi, piano
John Turner, conductor

Nima Janmohammadi

*We ran into a shelter filled with tears and
sounds I had hidden* (2018)

soloists: T.J. Borden, Robert Bui, cello

Lily Xie, flute
Aleksis Martin, clarinet
Erik Paul, bassoon
Flynn Ewer, French horn
Allie Klaire Ledbetter, trombone
Jordan Hadrill, violin
Philip Rawlinson, viola
Lawrence Hall, double bass
Noah Mark, Sam Kerr, percussion
Joseph Vasconi, piano
Stratis Minakakis, conductor

Agócs *Ambrosiana*

Ambrosiana creates a mythical world of ambrosial sonorities. This short work for solo piano is a free interpolation (with variations) on an original melody. In ancient Greek times, ambrosia was a “delightful liquid” which rendered ageless and immortal anyone who consumed it. With a distinctly vocal quality, *Ambrosiana* treats the original melody in a free, rhapsodic way, creating sonorities that are rich and luscious and amplifying them into increasingly expansive textures, both intimate and grand. *Ambrosiana* was commissioned by the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra as a competition piece for the finalists to perform in the 2017 Iowa Piano Competition, and is approximately 6 minutes in duration.

– Kati Agócs

Beale *Autophagos III - Thrafsmasýdeton*

Autophagos III - Thrafsmasýdeton is the third piece in a series in which self consumptive processes trigger permanent change in various musical parameters. In *Thrafsmasýdeton*, those parameters are fragments of pitched and temporal domains which are derived from fractals. The subtitle of this piece, *Thrafsmasýdeton*, is a combination of the Greek words for “shard” (*thrafsma*) and “bound” (*syndeton*). The gestures of the piece develop in non-linear ways, moving rapidly between severe neutral palates to highly characteristic sounds which highlight subtle kinesthetic aspects of the cello as shards bound together by the expression of a single line of fractalized data. While the name may frame the content as programmatic, rather it is a result of my practice as an improvising musician.

This piece uses pianist, composer, and improviser Cecil Taylor’s methodology

Unit Structures as a generative process to create a varied and dynamic syntax. The consumptive process of rotating and culling the inner symmetrical subsets of a much larger sieved structure is an extension of the work of Greek composer Iannis Xenakis. These procedures are not meant to be the focal point for the listener, but a hidden gravitation which exposes subtle trajectories which guide and connect musical fragments.

– Grant Beale

Richardson *Astrolabe*

The astrolabe is an astronomical device used to solve problems relating to time and the position of the celestial bodies in the sky. It was the primary astronomical education tool of ancient times, and as such astrolabes were fashioned by various cultures around the world for both scientific and astrological purposes. Aesthetically, the astrolabe was regarded as a symbol of the universe and as an object of great beauty. *Astrolabe* seeks to interpret the mystical and scientific properties of the device and to consider the implications of time and positioning in musical space. Over the course of the work, several disparate musical elements are combined in new ways, each time with shifts in texture and mood, in much the same way as the moving components of the astrolabe are manipulated to solve for solutions to astronomical problems. The mystical and supernatural properties of the astrolabe, which date back to its early history as an instrument of astrology and divination, are reflected in musical passages incorporating the players' voices. The text is compiled out of three sources: star names from constellations of the zodiac, excerpts from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, and Walt Whitman's poem "Kosmos." Untrained voices and text are employed to convey the dramatic intensity of the symbolic forces represented by the astrolabe, and to further the expressive potential of the musical textures in which they interact.

– Sid Richardson

Minakakis *Skiagrafies IV: Ajax*

Skiagrafies (shadow etchings in Greek) is a cycle of works that approach sound through the perspective of shadows. It consists of four autonomous works: *Skiagrafies I* (for Partch instruments and saxophone quartet), *Skiagrafies II* (for flute and piano amplification), *Skiagrafies III* (for wind ensemble), and *Skiagrafies IV: Ajax* (for chamber ensemble.) All four works approach the concept of shadows through two principal angles: the exploration of particularly minute gradations of sounds, and the reflections and retractions of a musical object in continuously evolving environments. *Skiagrafies IV: Ajax* adds a psychological dimension to the concert of shadows. The work traces its origin to a quotation of Odysseus in Sophocles' *Ajax*: "I see that us the living are nothing but ghosts, hollow shadows." In *Skiagrafies IV: Ajax* an otherworldly, repeating sound signal becomes the connective tissue around which an array of subconscious memories gradually unfold.

– Stratis Minakakis

Mallia *Dangerous Passing*

Dangerous Passing was composed in 2013 at the request of Yu-Hui Chang, Director of the Dinosaur Annex Ensemble for a concert at the MIT Museum featuring scores

created by myself and five other composers to videos containing scientific elements. In the case of this piece, excerpts of early experiments in high speed film by Doc Edgerton were incorporated into the video I assembled which also contains images (combination of original and sourced) of human hands, machines, and sci-fi related material. Sometimes the video echoes actions that are being performed onstage by the percussionist. For example, as the percussionist is obsessively moving broken pieces of terracotta in and out of a wooden box, the video shows a child's hands (my son, William) performing the same activity. The instrumental sounds are sometimes processed, electronically, as is the video.

– John Mallia

Gandolfi *Lowell Songs*

Lowell Songs is a set of four poems by Amy Lowell, scored for soprano, flute clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano, and percussion.

Amy Lowell's poetry, typically associated with Imagism, has long appealed to me due to its powerful impact expressed clearly and concisely in both language and form. There is an air of the New England/Boston experience and its spirit that connects me to her poetry. Our shared, Boston-based roots, although a century apart, provide a point of commonality that is uniquely found in this cultural and geographical connection.

Lowell Songs was commissioned by Joyce Linde for Collage New Music 50th Anniversary Commissioning Program and is dedicated to her memory. Joyce was a longstanding trustee of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She was a beautiful spirit, a strong supporter of music, new and old, and the driving force behind the Linde Center, the spectacular new addition to the Tanglewood Music Center campus. I miss her dearly.

– Michael Gandolfi

A Blockhead

Before me lies a mass of shapeless days,
Unseparated atoms, and I must
Sort them apart and live them. Sifted dust
Covers the formless heap. Reprieves, delays,
There are none, ever. As a monk who prays
The sliding beads asunder, so I thrust
Each tasteless particle aside, and just
Begin again the task which never stays.
And I have known a glory of great suns,
When days flashed by, pulsing with joy and re!
Drunk bubbled wine in goblets of desire,
And felt the whipped blood laughing as it runs!
Spilt is that liquor, my too hasty hand
Threw down the cup, and did not understand.

At Night

The wind is singing through the trees to-night,
A deep-voiced song of rushing cadences
And crashing intervals. No summer breeze
Is this, though hot July is at its height,
Gone is her gentler music; with delight
She listens to this booming like the seas,
These elemental, loud necessities
Which call to her to answer their swift might.
Above the tossing trees shines down a star,
Quietly bright; this wild, tumultuous joy
Quickens nor dims its splendour. And my mind,
O Star! is filled with your white light, from far,
So suffer me this one night to enjoy
The freedom of the onward sweeping wind.

From One Who Stays

How empty seems the town now you are gone!
A wilderness of sad streets, where gaunt walls
Hide nothing to desire; sunshine falls
Eery, distorted, as it long had shone
On white, dead faces tombed in halls of stone.
The whirl of motors, stricken through with calls
Of playing boys, oats up at intervals;
But all these noises blur to one long moan.
What quest is worth pursuing? And how strange
That other men still go accustomed ways!
I hate their interest in the things they do.
A spectre-horde repeating without change
An old routine. Alone I know the days
Are still-born, and the world stopped, lacking you.

Grotesque

Why do the lilies goggle their tongues at me
When I pluck them;
And writhe and twist,
And strangle themselves against my fingers,
So that I can hardly weave the garland
For your hair?
Why do they shriek your name
And spit at me
When I would cluster them?
Must I kill them
To make them lie still,
And send you a wreath of lolling corpses
To turn putrid and soft

On your forehead
While you dance?

Amy Lowell

Janmohammadi *We ran into a shelter filled with tears and sounds I had hidden*
We ran into a shelter filled with tears and sounds I had hidden is a piece that reflects on my childhood memories during the Iran and Iraq war. During bombardments, we sheltered in our basement, the only place that felt remotely safe. The basement was pitch black and the only things I could see were the shadows of leaves cast onto the brick walls and the shifting spectrum of darkness. The space was full of abundant objects: large pots, vases, books, tires, and metallic parts from various appliances. As a child, I was excited to discover these objects, touching them and imagining what they were by listening to their sounds. The game was to see how my imagination of the objects were close to the actual objects once the sirens stopped and the lights could be turned on.

These moments formed my first experiences of touching sound; sounds that were always dusty, hollow, naked, stripped of any expression, yet liberating, protecting me from bombardment. The temporal oppositions of the piece draw inspiration from a poem by my dear friend, exiled poet Mohsen Emadi.

– Nima Janmohammadi

Death is when the heart does not beat and the clock beats.
Love is when the heart beats and the clock does not beat.
Perhaps this simple comparison explains
Why you glanced at your watch.
You knew that waiting is the dense endurance of eternity
And love, the miracle of mortals,
Makes eternity ashamed,
But death does not wait for anybody.

The long summer afternoon
was going down on coffins and clock towers
The ruins knew
And you did not know
That war makes waiting invalid
And saving life
The whole truth.

Was she dead?
Had she fled without you?
Or you were not in love anymore?
The dead were not answering.
The living were escaping
And love from then on
Beat within
The pulse of a clock.

Ecce is an ensemble of culturally and socially engaged creative and performing artists. Core to our mission is the performance of new music of all kinds and collaboration with creative performers and thinkers across disciplines. This week, Ecce has been working closely with NEC students and alumni to curate this evening's concert.

Ecce's summer festival, The Etchings Festival, has become one of the premiere festival academies for young composers. The cultivation of contemporary music from emerging composers has been a cornerstone of the festival for over a decade. This summer, festival guest composers will be Melinda Wagner, Kate Soper, Julia Werntz, David Sanford, Michael Djupstrom and Stratis Minakakis. Selected fellows will take lessons and masterclasses with guest composers, have their works read, rehearsed and performed by Ecce, and will attend a variety of other festival activities that connect the festival to the surrounding communities of Northampton and the Berkshires. Festival activities take place at the Bombyx Center for Arts and Equity, one of the area's premiere performance venues.

Etchings is known for its welcoming atmosphere, its dedication to cultivating young and emerging composers, and its vast community networks that bring performers and composers together with some of the greatest artists of our generation. Applications for the 2026 festival are open until March 15th. For more information visit eccearts.com

Upcoming NEC Composers' Series Concerts

all programs subject to change

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert information

DMA Composers' Showcase

A showcase concert of music by NEC DMA composers featuring a wide variety of chamber music ranging from solo piano to string quartet and beyond; works by Devin Cholodenko, Ying Gao, Mathew Lanning, Yunqi Li, Lingbo Ma, Alex Matheson, Tianyi Wang, and Yangfan Xu

Monday, February 9, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

New Music Ensemble + Malcolm Peyton Residency, Stefan Asbury, director
2026 Malcolm Peyton composer-in-residence Colin Matthews *Postludes*, *Little Continuum* from *Two Tributes*; Messiaen *Oiseaux exotiques*; Ligeti *Etudes for Piano*: No. 5 "Arc-en-ciel", No. 8 "Fém", No. 11 "En suspens", No. 12 "Entrelacs"; Karen Tanaka *Techno Etudes*; Peyton *Piece for Solo Cello*

Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Other Upcoming Concerts at NEC

Faculty Recital: Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol

Classical Ottoman/Turkish repertoire, Byzantine music and his own compositions, culminating in his work for jazz orchestra

Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Faculty Recital: Rachel Childers, French horn and **Christopher Elchico**, clarinet

Jane Vignery *Sonata for Horn and Piano*; Brahms *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*

Brahms 4 *Clavierstücke*; Carl Reinecke *Trio for Piano, Clarinet and Horn*

Jiayan Sun, piano

Monday, January 26, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Tuesday Night New Music

New music by NEC student composers, performed by their peers

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

NEC Philharmonia, David Loebel, conductor

Cindy McTee *The Unquestioned Answer* from *Double Play* (2011)

Barber *Symphony No. 1 in One Movement*, op. 9

Schumann *Symphony No. 2 in C Major*, op. 61

Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

BSO Prelude: What I Hear - Carlos Simon

Thursday, January 29, 2026 at 5:30 p.m., Brown Hall

NEC Symphony, Hugh Wolf, conductor

Jennifer Higdon *Fanfare Ritmico* (1999); Bartók *Deux Images*, op. 10 (1910)

Brahms *Symphony No. 4 in E Minor*, op. 98 (1885)

Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall

Opera: Donizetti "L'elisir d'amore"

Steven Goldstein, director; Robert Tweten, conductor

Monday & Wednesday, February 2 & 4, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

CMA & Jazz Faculty Spotlight: Synergy

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Sonata Night 58, Max Levinson, curator

Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., Burnes Hall

Other Upcoming Concerts at NEC

—continued

Coretta Scott King Tribute Concert

Presented by NEC Black Student Union

Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall

Liederabend LXXIX, Joel Ayau, curator

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall

NEC Chamber Orchestra, Donald Palma, artistic director

Mendelssohn *Sinfonia No. 10 in B Minor*; Maxwell Fairman *Rhapsody Noir*;

Johann Baptist Vanhal *Concerto for Double Bass in E-flat Major* - Dennis McIntyre '27,

soloist; Haydn *Symphony No. 52 in C Minor*, Hob I:52

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Jazz Composers' Workshop Orchestra: The Music of Anthony Braxton

Frank Carlberg, director

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Institute for Concert Artists Recital: Joshua Brown, violin ('26 AD)

Beethoven *Violin Sonata No. 8 in G Major*, op. 30 no. 3; Debussy *Violin Sonata*

György Kurtág *Tre Pezzi*, op. 14e; Richard Strauss *Violin Sonata in E-flat Major*, op. 18

Friday, February 13, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Faculty Recital: Stephen Drury, piano

Nikolai Roslavets: *Poème pour piano* (1916); Liszt: *Transcendental Etude No 4: "Mazeppa"*

Frederic Rzewski: *The People United Will Never Be Defeated: 36 variations on "¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!"* (1975)

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Faculty Recital & Music for Food: Kim Kashkashian, viola and Marc-André

Hamelin, piano - Transcriptions for viola of Kurtág and Bach;

Kurtág *Tre Pezzi* and *Tre Alte Pezzi*; Shostakovich *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, op. 147

Fauré *Piano Quartet No. 2 in G Minor*, op. 45

Friday, February 20, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Piano Department: Scarlatti Sonatas: K. 1 - K. 30

The first of six concerts this semester centering on Domenico Scarlatti's Piano Sonatas.

The entire concert series will span three years and cover all 500 Scarlatti Piano

Sonatas. Bruce Brubaker is Curator of Piano Programming

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan 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.

Stay connected



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.

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


Andrea Kalyn
President

A large orchestra is performing in a grand, ornate hall. A conductor in a bright yellow jacket stands in the center of the stage, facing the orchestra. The musicians are seated in rows, playing various instruments including violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. The hall has a high ceiling with decorative moldings and is lit with warm, golden light. The audience is visible in the foreground, seated in rows of chairs.

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N | E | C

A woman in a graduation gown and a headpiece made of many thin sticks with stars at the ends, has her arms raised in a celebratory gesture. She is wearing a dark gown over a sequined dress. The background is a blurred image of a building with large windows.

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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
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