



New England  
Conservatory

# Concert Program



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# *Poetic Traces*

NEC DMA Composer Showcase

Lingbo Ma, curator

Monday, February 9, 2026  
7:30 p.m.  
NEC's Jordan Hall

In this year's DMA Showcase Concert, we present chamber works for voice, strings, and piano that approach music as a poetic act - one that transforms literature, images, and inner states into sound. Across the program, poems, narratives, mythic figures are reimagined as living, resonant experiences.

The concert opens with a work that gives voice to William Blake's *The Tyger* through a creative use of resonance, inviting the audience to listen deeply and preparing the ear for the journey that follows. The program then moves through a range of literary and spiritual landscapes: Yu Hua's novel *To Live* and a portrait of Asura from Hindu mythology explore endurance, duality, and tension between suffering and grace. Poetry itself becomes the subject in C. D. Wright's *Obscurity and Voyaging*, where writing, reading, and listening merge into a single imaginative act. The atmosphere then softens with a piano suite that drifts between memory, imagination, and the natural world, inspired by dreams. From there, we enter the world of familiar fairy tales - The Ugly Duckling and Cinderella - reimagined as waltzes for piano. The program closes with a string quartet inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, reminding us that the world is "full of noises" - sounds that invite us, again and again, to dream.

- *Lingbo Ma*

**Tianyi Wang '26 DMA**

*Song of Experience* (2019)

Chihiro Asano, voice  
Tianyi Wang, live-electronics

**Ying Gao '28 DMA**

*Kaleidoscope* (2025)

I.  
II.  
III.

Bairun Liu, Cheng Qian, piano

**Yunqi Li '28 DMA**

**Piano Trio** (2026)

Joseph Vasconi, piano  
Ava Kenney, violin  
Kyle Pinzon, cello

**Lingbo Ma '26 DMA**

*ASURA* (阿修罗) (2025)

Lingyu Dong, violin  
Shalun Li, piano

**Alexander Matheson '26 DMA**

*Obscurity and Voyaging* (2023)

Xiaofeng Hou, tenor

**Yangfan Xu '26 DMA**

*Dream in a Ceramic Vessel* (2025)  
*Inspired by and dedicated to Yuhui Jin*

Midnight Current  
Moon Waves  
Brain Tree  
Shadow, Bone, Light  
Reflected Traces

Peter Yide Shi, piano

**Mathew Lanning '26 DMA**

*Dance No. 12 in A Major:  
"The Ugly Duckling"* (2024)

*Grand Waltz No. 1 in F Major:  
"Cinderella's Waltz"* (2023)

Mathew Lanning, piano

**Devin Cholodenko '27 DMA**

*Sounds and Sweet Airs* (2023)

Carson Howell, Christopher Nelson, violin  
Sachin Shukla, viola  
Tyler Michael James, cello

**Upcoming NEC Composers' Series Concert**

*all programs subject to change*

Visit **necmusic.edu** for complete and updated concert information

**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*

## Wang *Song of Experience*

A work for solo voice, live electronics, and piano resonance, based on William Blake's poem *The Tyger, Song of Experience* juxtaposes tranquility with ferocity. The singer's voice is channeled into the piano through tactile transducers, causing the strings directly beneath to vibrate and others to resonate sympathetically. In this way, the body of the piano becomes a live resonant chamber, amplifying and coloring the singer's voice.

– Tianyi Wang

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp,  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears  
And water'd heaven with their tears:  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake, The Tyger

## Gao *Kaleidoscope*

The musical composition *Kaleidoscope* comprises three distinct movements, each employing a set of core musical motifs. It uses the same musical elements in each movement but contains various changes.

– Ying Gao

### **Li Piano Trio**

This piano trio is inspired by Hua Yu's novel *To Live*, a powerful portrayal of ordinary people enduring hardship with quiet resilience. Deeply moved by its exploration of suffering, endurance, and the fragile beauty of existence, I sought to translate these themes into sound. Dissonance plays a central role throughout the piece, representing pain, loss, and the relentless struggles of daily life. Moments of consonance appear sparingly, emerging as brief glimpses of hope and warmth. The tension between these opposing forces shapes the musical narrative, gradually building momentum and driving the work toward its emotional climax. Motivic fragments evolve and transform across the trio, reflecting the changing circumstances of life. In the final section, the main theme slowly dissolves, symbolizing the fading of life. Yet even as the sound disappears, its essence lingers. Though life ultimately passes, the spirit endures—echoing beyond silence.

—Yunqi Li

### **Ma ASURA (阿修罗)**

ASURA (阿修罗) originates from Hindu mythology and is one of the six realms of beings in the Buddhist concept of the Six Realms of Rebirth. Asura embodies a striking duality in both appearance and character: male Asuras are often depicted as ugly and easily angered, while female Asuras are portrayed as beautiful and seductive. In temperament, Asuras are known for their irritability, aggressiveness, pride, and strong jealousy. This piece portrays Asura's dual nature — its belligerent fury and alluring beauty. These contrasting characteristics intertwine throughout the work, highlighting the virtuosic potential of both piano and violin. The Asura realm represents a liminal state situated between the heavenly realm, the human realm, and the lower realms—neither fully aligned with good nor with evil. Through this tension and contradiction, the piece invites the audience to experience the constantly shifting danger and charm of Asura and to sense its unique positioning within the Six Realms.

—Lingbo Ma

### **Matheson Obscurity and Voyaging**

C.D. Wright's poem is about writing itself: "the pen, a gift" which is hard to hold, a kind of magic wand. It's also about reading — "the occupant selects a sentence": doing (hah!) hard time with imagination.

"A long clear silent night," as direct as a storybook and as visceral as a dream: something familiar seen anew. And of course music, already brimming over, carried skyward on itself, the "scream of beauty" that—momentarily—breaks the silence: "the air inhales the passerine lines of a single singer."

—Alexander Matheson

The hand was having a hard time holding the pen.

A superficial cut.

A long clear silent night.

A book held open by a dolostone.

The occupant selects a sentence, No one knows  
how small the smallest life is.

If there's a call, it will not be answered.

A bath; the burning of sweetgrass soothe the limbs.

As a memory stings the brain.

The furniture serviceable but weird, on the verge  
of grotesque.

The vein of light under the door is a comfort  
To the occupant.

The air inhales the passerine lines of a single singer.

A motorcycle saws through the song and goes.

An appliance purrs at intervals.

The pen was bought in Gubbio near  
the thin band marking the great dying of dinosaurs.

The pen, a gift.

It has been designed to coax a scream  
of beauty from a fissure

of hairiness.

Iridium in the nib.

C. D. Wright, "Obscurity and Voyaging" from *ShallCross*.

### **Xu   *Dream in a Ceramic Vessel***

*Dream in a Ceramic Vessel* is a suite for solo piano that drifts between memory, imagination, and the natural world. Each movement takes inspiration from a different image or idea, shaping sound into a series of dreamlike reflections.

#### —Midnight Current

(Inspired by *Duo: Moon. River and Call of the Sea*)

Midnight Current begins with flowing lines and occasional sparkling gestures, like ripples catching the light. As the music progresses, harmonies blur and shift, drawing the listener into a mysterious, impressionistic world, drifting into the unknown.

### —Moon Waves

(Inspired by Duo: Moon, River)

Moon Waves turns inward. The harmony grows dark and foggy, shapes smearing at the edges. Pulse arrives in irregular waves that surge, stall, and slip away. Surfaces hover low, then lift in fractured arcs. Sparks from Piece 1 now flicker at a distance. The piece settles on an ambiguous horizon that is unsteady, quiet, and still pulling.

### —Brain Tree

(Inspired by <Brain> Duality)

A quirky, surreal dialogue between two selves. One voice stays poised and lucid; the other frays at the edges. Off-kilter pulses. Sudden leaps. Harmony that tilts and smears. The piece keeps switching faces like tree branches split and rejoin. Jokes land, then curdle.

### —Shadow, Bone, Light

(Inspired by Shadow, bone, light)

A minimalist study of nature with quiet vine-like counterpoint that coils and uncoils as light shifts and leaves space for the listener.

### —Reflected Traces

(Inspired by 映迹)

Looking at nature and life, the conscious and the unknown, where reality slips into the surreal. The final piece of the suite remembers the current and the waves and the divided voice and the quiet lattice, and walks toward a small steady glow.

— Yangfan Xu

### Lanning   *Dance No. 12 in A Major: "The Ugly Duckling"*

### *Grand Waltz No. 1 in F Major: "Cinderella's Waltz"*

The swans are beautiful and widely admired,  
gliding across the pond with perfect feathers and effortless grace.  
Their wings rest neatly at their sides,  
and when they rise into the air, all eyes follow.  
But the duckling swims alone.  
When she drifts toward the swans, they scatter.  
She is called ugly, unnoticed, uninvited,  
left to wander the edges of the pond in shame.  
She moves gently through the pond,  
content to give rather than to shine.  
The swans do whatever it takes to be admired,  
Their hearts are filled with vanity,  
while the duckling's heart is filled with joy.

Cinderella arrives at the ball,  
uncertain but radiant in the glow of the room.  
Music carries her forward,  
and as she dances, the crowd turns to watch.  
The prince finds her there,  
and together they move in perfect time.  
Then the clock begins to strike.  
The spell tightens, and she pulls away.  
She runs from the hall before midnight claims her,  
leaving only echoes behind  
and a single moment suspended in time.

– Mathew Lanning

**Cholodenko    *Sounds and Sweet Airs***

Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,  
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open, and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I waked,  
I cried to dream again.

– Shakespeare *The Tempest*

## Upcoming Concerts at NEC

*All programs subject to change*

Visit [necmusic.edu](http://necmusic.edu) for complete and updated concert information

### **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 Klavierstücke; Carl Reinecke Trio for Piano, Clarinet and Horn*

Jaian Sun, piano

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

### **Liederabend LXXIX, Czech Songs**

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 (2025);*

*Johann Baptist Vanhal Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra - 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 & 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**

## Upcoming Concerts at NEC

*-continued*

### **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 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall*

### **John McNeil Memorial Concert**

NEC faculty, students, and alumni remember long-time NEC faculty member, John McNeil (1948–2024). Performers include faculty members Allan Chase and Bert Seager, as well as alumni Mark Tipton '25 DMA, and Jeremy Udden '00, '03 MM

*Monday, February 23, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall*

### **CMA Department: "Genius on the Charts"**

In the 1960s and '70s Ray Charles, Nina Simone, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Al Green, Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway, NEC Alum Bernie Worrell, and others challenged the parameters of pop music, writing and producing songs that changed the artistic landscape forever. CMA students will put their own creative stamps on adventurous hits and deep cuts from that golden age of American pop and R&B.

*Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall*

### **Piano Department: Scarlatti Sonatas: K. 31 - K. 62**

The second 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

*Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall*

### **Sonata Night 58**, Max Levinson, curator

Sonatas by Prokofiev

*Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall*

### **Tuesday Night New Music**

New music by NEC student composers, performed by their peers

*Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall*

**NEC Jazz Orchestra: "African Cookbook: Music of Randy Weston and Melba Liston"**  
The NEC Jazz Orchestra and Director Ken Schaphorst present a program of the music of Randy Weston and Melba Liston, Randy Weston's arranger and collaborator for decades.

*Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 7:30 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.

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# 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



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*\*Indicates membership in the Tourjée Society. Named after NEC's founder, Eben Tourjée, the Tourjée Society recognizes those who have made a planned gift to NEC. Learn more by contacting Aaron McGarry, Planned Giving Officer, at [aaron.mcgarry@necmusic.edu](mailto:aaron.mcgarry@necmusic.edu) or 617-585-1356.*



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