

78TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | SEPTEMBER 15, 2019



PROGRAM

United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own”

Moonstruck: Celebrating a New Century of American Music for Pierrot Lunaire Ensemble

September 15, 2019 | 3:30

West Building, West Garden Court

Celebrating By the Light of the Silvery Moon: A Century of Lunar Photographs

David Clay Mettens (b. 1990)

Without Air (2017)

Sebastian Currier (b. 1959)

Flow (2013)

Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)

Under the Sun’s Gaze: Concerto da Camera III (2004)

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

Zaka (2003)

THE ENSEMBLE

The U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own”

The U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own” has been the premier musical organization of the U.S. Army since 1922 when Army Chief of Staff General of the Armies John J. “Black Jack” Pershing directed that the band be organized, built on the tradition of the European military bands he had heard during the First World War.* “Pershing’s Own” provides music support for the leadership of the United States, to include all branches of government, and to a wide spectrum of national and international events in support of soldiers and their families, public diplomacy, memorial affairs, community and international relations, and recruiting initiatives. Its mission is to help connect the Army with the American people. Its soldiers represent all of the heroic men and women who stand around the world in defense of our freedom. Through their musical education, continual training, and masterful performance these outstanding soldiers truly embody the excellence that is found across America’s Army.

The U.S. Army Band became widely known during its early years for radio broadcasts featured on several national networks. During World War II, the band was ordered overseas and performed concerts throughout North Africa and Europe, becoming the only Washington-based band to participate in a theater of war, and earning the musicians the right to display a campaign streamer on their flag. Over the years the band has expanded in scope and diversity, today consisting of over 260 enlisted musicians and support staff and ten official ensembles: The U.S. Army Concert Band, The U.S. Army Ceremonial Band, The U.S. Army Strings (24-piece string ensemble + accordion), The U.S. Army Blues (big band/jazz), The U.S. Army Chorus (men’s chorus), The U.S. Army Band Downrange (pop/rock), The U.S. Army Herald Trumpets, The U.S. Army Brass Quintet, The U.S. Army Voices (mixed voice), and The U.S. Army Woodwind Quintet. Personnel from several elements are combined to create The U.S. Army Orchestra and myriad small chamber ensembles and combos.

Today the musicians of this prestigious unit render musical honors on a regular basis for our nation’s leaders, foreign dignitaries and heads of state, diplomats, and of course, our veterans. The band’s most important duties are performed in honoring our nation’s heroes at Arlington National Cemetery. Elements of the band have been visible in support of every presidential inauguration and have been part of the official escort to the president in each inaugural parade since 1925. Also, The U.S. Army Band plays a vital role in music education, often serving as the featured group at prominent music conferences and conventions throughout the nation and abroad.

“Pershing’s Own” performs free public concerts throughout the year, including performances during the summer months on the West Steps of the U.S. Capitol and in area parks throughout the region. During the cooler months, concerts and recitals are performed around the area and at their Fort Myer headquarters, Brucker Hall. The band regularly joins with the 3rd U.S. Infantry, “The Old Guard,” to present patriotic spectacles, such as the weekly summertime Twilight Tattoos and annual performances of the Spirit of America pageant.

Performing Today

SSG Judith Cho, viola

SSG James Collins, piano

SSG Sonia Dell’Omo, flute, piccolo

SSG Evan Geiger, French horn

MSG Eli Gonzalez, soprano saxophone

SSG Jake Harpster, percussion

SSG Carol Joe, flute, piccolo, alto flute

SSG J.J. Milakovich, Bb clarinet, bass clarinet

SSG Doug O’Connor, conductor

SFC Nadia Pessoa, harp

SSG Derek Powell, violin

SSG Sergey Prokofyev, violin

MSG Mario Ramsey, percussion

SSG Chaz Sonoda, Bb and A clarinets, bass clarinet

SSG Pete Soroka, percussion

SSG Nick Starr, piano

SFC Ben Wensel, cello

SSG Staff Sergeant

SFC Sergeant First Class

MSG Master Sergeant

SGM Sergeant Major

*Upon his retirement in 1924, General Pershing was given the title General of the Armies.

THE COMPOSERS

David Clay Mettens

David Clay Mettens has been praised by the *Chicago Tribune* for composing music “of remarkable beauty,” displaying a “sensitive ear for instrumental color.” His recent work seeks to distill the strange and sublime from the familiar. He reflects upon the experience of wonder in music that ranges from rich and sonorous to bright and crystalline, seeking expressive immediacy in lucid forms and dramatic shapes.

His work has been recognized with Ithaca College’s 2018 Heckscher Foundation Composition Prize, first prize in the 2018 Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Competition, a 2016 American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) Morton Gould Young Composer Award, and the 2015 SCI/ASCAP graduate-student commission. He received a commission from the American Opera Initiative for a one-act opera, which was premiered in December 2015 by the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center. His orchestra piece *Sleeping I am carried...* was selected for the 24th Annual Underwood New Music Readings with the American Composers Orchestra and the 2015 Young Composers Forum with the Brussels Philharmonic. Subsequently, the Brussels Philharmonic, led by Stéphane Denève, performed the piece in December 2016 at Flagey. The piece was also the winner of Eastman’s 2014 Wayne Brewster Barlow Composition Prize and received a premiere with the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra in October 2014. Other orchestral performances include the Chicago Civic Orchestra, L’Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France at Manifeste 2018, and the Austrian Tonkünstler Orchestra as part of the Grafenegg Festival’s Ink Still Wet workshop in 2017 and 2018.

Additionally, his works have been performed by Spektral Quartet, Yarn/Wire, the New York Virtuoso Singers, Ensemble Dal Niente, and Chicago’s Civitas Ensemble, among others. Saxophonists Chien-Kwan Lin, Timothy McAllister, and Otis Murphy performed Mettens’s trio *Everything that rises* at the American Saxophone Academy Faculty Recital in July 2016. At Eastman, his works were featured on OSSIA and at concerts of the Composer’s Forum, the Graduate Composers’ Sinfonetta, and the Computer Music Center.

Mettens currently is working on his doctorate in composition at the University of Chicago, studying with Anthony Cheung, Sam Pluta, and Augusta Read Thomas. He earned his master’s degree at the Eastman School of Music, where he studied composition with David Liptak, Robert Morris, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and computer music with Allan Schindler. A native of Covington, Kentucky, he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of South Carolina

(USC) with a degree in music composition and a clarinet performance certificate. He was a recipient of the McNair Scholarship, the top award the university gives to out-of-state students, and the 2013 Arthur M. Fraser Award from the School of Music. There, his composition teachers were John Fitz Rogers and Fang Man.

Mettens has presented his research on the music of Thomas Adès at the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition 30th Anniversary Conference, hosted by the University of Louisville, and the first annual THEMUS graduate-student music theory and musicology conference at Temple University. In 2012, he was awarded a USC Magellan Scholar Grant for a research project involving pipe organs, spectral music, and computer music, under the guidance of faculty mentor Reginald Bain.

Sebastian Currier

Sebastian Currier is the recipient of the prestigious Grawemeyer Award. Heralded as “music with a distinctive voice” by the *New York Times* and as “lyrical, colorful, firmly rooted in tradition, but absolutely new” by the *Washington Post*, his music has been performed at major venues worldwide by acclaimed artists and orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and the Kronos Quartet.

Currier’s music has been enthusiastically embraced by violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, for whom he wrote *Time Machines*, a piece she premiered with the New York Philharmonic in June 2011 and subsequently performed with various orchestras in the United States, Europe, and Asia. He also wrote *Aftersong* for Mutter, which she performed extensively in the United States and Europe, including at Carnegie Hall in New York, the Barbican in London, and the Grosses Festspielhaus in Salzburg. A critic from the *London Times* wrote, “If all his pieces are as emotionally charged and ingenious in their use of rethought tonality as this, give me more.”

Currier has also had an extended association with members of the Berlin Philharmonic, as well as with the orchestra itself. In 2009, his harp concerto *Traces*, commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, was premiered by harpist Marie-Pierre Langlamet under the baton of Donald Runnicles. Currier has written numerous pieces for Langlamet, which she has premiered with members of the Berlin Philharmonic. He recently wrote *Spark* for the Berlin Philharmonic’s twelve cellos, which premiered in Rotterdam.

Currier’s orchestra piece, *Divisions*, was recently premiered by the Seattle Symphony, conducted by Ludovic Morlot, and will be performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra both in Boston and New York, conducted by Andris Nelsons. Currier’s *Microsymph*, referred to by the composer as a large-scale symphony squeezed into only ten minutes, was commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra and premiered at Carnegie Hall. It has also been performed by the San Francisco Symphony, the Gewandhaus Orchestra, the BBC Wales Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra, and has been recorded by the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra with Hugh Wolff conducting.

Currier has also written works that involve electronic media and video. *Nightmaze*,

a multimedia piece based on a text by Thomas Bolt, in which the protagonist dreams he is rushing along a dark, enormous highway, where strange road signs loom up only to disappear into the night, has been performed by Network for New Music and the Mosaic Ensemble. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote, “every turn is breathtaking,” and the *New York Times* echoed the praise, “Currier’s rich and imaginative music sets the right tone, with its fractured and dissonant baroque-like gestures leading off like highway exits into the void and hinting at distant reservoirs of emotion and yearning.”

Currier’s recordings include his *Time Machines*, with Anne-Sophie Mutter and the New York Philharmonic for Deutsche Grammophon, *Next Atlantis* with the Ying Quartet on Naxos, and *On the Verge* from Music from Copland House, featuring his Grawemeyer Award-winning *Static*, and other chamber works. Currier’s *Quartetset/ Quiet Time* album, recorded by the Cassatt Quartet, “distances the present from the past, causing the listener to think about music itself” (*New York Times*).

Currier has received many prestigious awards including the Berlin Prize, the Rome Prize, Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, and an American Academy of Arts and Letters award. He has held residencies at the MacDowell and Yaddo colonies and received his doctoral degree from the Juilliard School. From 1999 to 2007, he taught at Columbia University and currently is artist-in-residence at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, New Jersey.

Shulamit Ran

Shulamit Ran, a native of Israel, began setting Hebrew poetry to music at the age of seven. By age nine, she was studying composition and piano with some of Israel’s most noted musicians, including composers Alexander Boskovich and Paul Ben-Haim, and within a few years her works were being performed by professional musicians and orchestras. As the recipient of scholarships from both the Mannes College of Music in New York and the America Israel Cultural Foundation, Ran continued her composition studies in the United States with Norman Dello Joio. In 1973, she joined the faculty of University of Chicago, where she is now the Andrew MacLeish Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Music. Her late colleague and friend Ralph Shapey, with whom she also studied in 1977, was an important mentor.

In addition to receiving the Pulitzer Prize in 1991, Ran has been awarded most major honors given to composers in the United States, including two fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, grants and commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fromm Music Foundation, Chamber Music America, and the American Academy and Institute for Arts and Letters, as well as first prize in the Kennedy Center-Friedheim Awards competition for orchestral music.

Ran’s music has been played by leading performing organizations, including the Chicago Symphony under both Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez, the Cleveland Orchestra under Christoph Von Dohnanyi in two U.S. tours, the Philadelphia Orchestra

under Gary Bertini, the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta and Gustavo Dudamel, the New York Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke's under Yehudi Menuhin, the Baltimore Symphony, the National Symphony (Washington DC), Contempo at the University of Chicago under both Ralph Shapey and Cliff Colnot, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Jerusalem Orchestra, the vocal ensemble Chanticleer, and various others. Ran's chamber and solo works are regularly performed by leading ensembles in the United States and elsewhere, and recent vocal and choral ensemble works have been receiving performances internationally.

Between 1990 and 1997, Ran was composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Between 1994 and 1997, she was the fifth Brena and Lee Freeman Sr. composer-in-residence with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where her residency culminated in the performance of her first opera, *Between Two Worlds (The Dybbuk)*. She was the Paul Fromm composer-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome, September–December 2011.

Ran served as music director of Tempus Fugit, the International Biennial for Contemporary Music in Israel in 1996, 1998, and 2000. Since 2002, she has been artistic director of Contempo (Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago). In 2010, she was the Howard Hanson Visiting Professor of Composition at Eastman School of Music. She is also an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, where she was vice president for music for a three-year term, and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The recipient of five honorary doctorates, her works are published by both the Theodore Presser Co. and the Israeli Music Institute and are recorded on more than a dozen different labels. Ran's *Glitter, Doom, Shards, Memory*, String Quartet no. 3, was commissioned by Music Accord, a consortium of concert presenters in the United States and abroad, for Pacifica Quartet, and received its first performance in 2014 in Tokyo.

Jennifer Higdon

Jennifer Higdon is a two-time Grammy Award winner. Born in Brooklyn, New York, she taught herself to play flute at age fifteen, undertook formal musical studies at eighteen, and began composing at twenty-one. Despite her relatively late start, she has become a major figure in contemporary classical music. Her works represent a wide range of genres, from orchestral to chamber to wind ensemble, as well as to vocal, choral, and opera. Her music has been hailed by *Fanfare Magazine* as having “the distinction of being at once complex, sophisticated, but readily accessible emotionally;” and the *Times* of London cited it as “traditionally rooted, yet imbued with integrity and freshness.” The League of American Orchestras writes that she is one of America's most frequently performed composers.

Higdon's list of commissioners includes the Philadelphia, Cleveland, Minnesota, and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras; the Chicago, Atlanta, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras; and such groups as the Lark and the Tokyo String Quartets, Eighth

Blackbird, and the “President's Own” U.S. Marine Band. She has also written works for such artists as baritone Thomas Hampson, pianists Yuja Wang and Gary Graffman, and violinists Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Jennifer Koh, and Hilary Hahn. Her first opera, *Cold Mountain*, won the prestigious International Opera Award for Best World Premiere in 2016—the first American opera to win in the award's history.

Higdon's upcoming commissions include a chamber opera for Opera Philadelphia, a string quartet for the Apollo Chamber Players, a double percussion concerto for the Houston Symphony, an orchestral suite for the Made in America project, and a flute concerto for the National Flute Association's 50th anniversary.

Higdon received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, with the committee citing the work as “a deeply engaging piece that combines flowing lyricism with dazzling virtuosity.” She has also received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, the Independence Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. As winner of the Van Cliburn Piano Competition's American Composers Invitational, Higdon's *Secret & Glass Gardens* was performed by the semifinalists during the competition.

Higdon has been a featured composer at many festivals including Aspen, Tanglewood, Vail, Norfolk, Grand Teton, and Cabrillo. She has been composer-in-residence with several orchestras and was honored to serve as the creative director of the Boundless Series for the Cincinnati Symphony's 2012–2013 season. During the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 academic years, Higdon served as the prestigious Barr Laureate Scholar at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Most recently, Higdon received the Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University, which is awarded to contemporary classical composers of exceptional achievement who have significantly influenced the field of composition. In 2018, Higdon undertook two residencies at the Bienen School of Music as the Nemmers Prize recipient. In the 2018–2019 season, she was in residence at University of Texas, Austin, as part of the Eddie Medora King Award. Higdon enjoys more than two hundred performances a year of her works. Her orchestral work, *blue cathedral*, is one of the most performed contemporary orchestral works in the repertoire, with more than six hundred performances since its premiere in 2000.

Higdon received a bachelor's degree in music from Bowling Green State University, an artist diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, and her master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. She also has been awarded honorary doctorates from the Hartt School and Bowling Green State University. Higdon currently holds the Rock Chair in Composition at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press. Her works have been recorded on over sixty CDs, and she has twice won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition—*Percussion Concerto* in 2010 and *Viola Concerto* in 2018.

PROGRAM NOTES

Over one hundred years ago, Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg produced a wildly creative work for a small, mixed instrumental ensemble and vocalist titled *Pierrot Lunaire* (Moonstruck Pierrot). The piece became one of Schoenberg's most frequently performed works, and the instrumentation became a standard setting for future composers to explore texture, tonality, and musical drama. Here, the Pershing's Own Chamber Players present a twenty-first-century take on this unique instrumentation with music by living American composers.

Without Air

Without Air is based on a short story from Italo Calvino's *Cosmicomics*. In this collection, each story takes as its premise a scientific conceit, ranging from astronomy and physics to geologic time. My favorite story is set on Earth before the atmosphere had formed. Calvino describes this theoretical landscape as an undifferentiated gray expanse (much like our Earth's moon), occasionally transfigured by bursts of color resulting from the contrail of a meteorite filtering the sun's light as it passes by. I love Calvino's fanciful contrast of grayness and color and have sought to render that opposition in music with dryness and resonance. The piece begins with short, brittle sounds: pizzicato strings, high harp, and a consort of wooden non-pitched percussion instruments. Over the course of the piece, small bursts of resonance accumulate into increasingly sustained music, culminating in a sonorous climax and coda. These final sections cast each of the musical ideas from the beginning in a new, resonant light.

Program note by the composer, David Clay Mettens

Flow

In evolutionary biology, it was originally assumed that species evolve very gradually, similar to the physical landscape's evolution. Just as mountains gradually formed over eons, or continents drifted apart imperceptibly, so species also formed slowly. But further discoveries pointed to a different pattern: long stretches of stasis were followed by concentrated periods of intense, active change. This pattern is known as punctuated equilibrium. Since music unfolds in time and, in a more general sense, ideas within a piece "evolve," this notion caught my attention as a way to put together music in time. It also engaged with one of the primary dialogues in music of the past half-decade: minimalism versus, if you will, maximalism. The idea of punctuated equilibrium seemed to me like an invitation to combine these two points of view, which are often perceived as somehow antithetical. In my piece, stable, repetitive patterns are abruptly interrupted, leading to other stable patterns, and so on. This

process defines the entire opening section. As the piece unfolds, however, this structure itself becomes looser. In the final section, the materials from the opening return, but this time, instead of abrupt interruptions ushering in each successive pattern, one pattern dovetails with the next, each idea dissembled as the next gradually forms, hence the name of the piece, *Flow*.

Program note by the composer, Sebastian Currier

Under the Sun's Gaze, Concerto da Camera III

As a title for a musical composition, *Under the Sun's Gaze* conjures up many possibilities. It is, in fact, an imagined line from an unwritten poem, invented with the idea of capturing something of the visual aura the sounds and energy of this work invoke in its composer's mind. An omnipotent presence in all of nature, a source of life that's also capable of its destruction, the sun affects the light and dark in our physical existence as it defines daily and seasonal life. The music of this work, in three interlocking parts, takes turns being exuberant, caressing, scorching, receding, hazy, lazy, blazing, dissolving into darkness, and blinding in its intensity. Subtitled *Concerto da Camera III*, this work is written for what has become known as the standard Pierrot instrumentation of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, plus percussion. The difference here is that the winds are doubled—the two flutists alternating with piccolo and alto flute, and both clarinetists also doubling on bass clarinets. The ninth member of the ensemble, a soprano saxophone, appears well into the piece, its lyrical, plaintively expressive quality dominating the musical terrain for a while. While occasionally joining the others for some "tutti" outbursts, it maintains its position as something of a guest throughout. Of the various thematic ideas that populate this work, a six-note descending line played by the clarinet appearing right at the work's opening and then arching back up, reveals itself as the music unfolds, to become the principal melodic building block of the piece. Its various transformations include the plaintive soprano-saxophone melody appearing in the middle section. Just under twenty minutes in length, the work in its totality can be heard as being in a loose arch form, its ending receding into a distant, darkening horizon, which carries in it the seed of the new dawn that lies beyond.

Program note by the composer, Shulamit Ran

Zaka

As a dictionary might say: Zaka, pronounced "za!-ka," verb: to do the following almost simultaneously and with great speed: zap, sock, race, turn, drop, sprint. *Zaka* was commissioned as part of the national series of works from Meet the Composer Commissioning Music/USA, which is made possible by generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Helen F. Whitaker Fund, the Target Foundation, and through fiscal sponsorship of the Concert Artists Guild.

Program note by the composer, Jennifer Higdon

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

Mau Quiros, piano

Presented in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month

East Building Auditorium
September 19, 12:10

Wild Up

A Portrait: Julius Eastman

Featuring the works of composer, conductor, singer, pianist, and choreographer Julius Eastman.
September 22, 3:30

Sound Sketch

New York Opera Society

Challenging Convention: Spanish Modernism in Art and Music in the 1930s
Music by Rodrigo, Llorca, and others whose music intertwines with Spanish art from the Gallery's collection.
September 27, 12:10

Victory Hall Opera

Heartstrings: Music of the Victorian Parlor
Celebrating Eye of the Sun: Nineteenth-Century Photographs from the National Gallery of Art
Music by Amy Beach, Brahms, Chopin, Stephen Foster, Carrie Jacobs-Bond, George F. Root, and Schumann.
September 29, 3:30

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.

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cover Lewis M. Rutherford, *Photographie de la lune a son 1er Quartier* (detail), 1865, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

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