

An abstract painting with a textured, watercolor-like appearance. The color palette is dominated by deep purples, blues, and earthy browns. The composition features large, vertical, organic shapes that suggest a landscape or architectural forms. The background is a mix of soft purple and blue washes, while the foreground has darker, more defined shapes in blue and brown. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

# National Gallery of Art

81st Season of  
Concerts

May 5, 2024

# Program

**May 5, 1:00 & 3:00 p.m.**

**West Building, West Garden Court**

## **F-PLUS Trio**

Kate Dreyfuss, violin

Erin Cameron, clarinet

Josh Graham, percussion

with members of the

## **Thalea String Quartet**

Lauren Spaulding, viola

Atticus Mellor-Goldman, cello

Dorothy Chan, piano

## **Renaissance Resonance**

Gemma Peacocke (b. 1984)

Flight Recorder

1:00 p.m. concert only

Jonathan Schwabe (b. 1957)

Autumn Seas

3:00 p.m. concert only

George Tsontakis (b. 1951)

Low Bar\*

I. Bird Bath

II. Prelude to What Follows

III. You Really Hate Me

IV. Prelude to What Follows

V. Climbing a Sima Tree

VI. Diptych (Stuttering)



Above and cover detail: Emil Nolde, *Sailboats*, undated, watercolor, National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection, 1945.5.93

Emma O'Halloran (b. 1985)

Dream On

Tsontakis

Selections from Portraits by El Greco, Book I  
and Book II

I. Prelude from Book II

II. Laocoön

III. Agony in the Garden

IV. Christ and the Money Changers

V. Annunciation

\* East Coast premiere. Commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University.

# Musicians

F-PLUS Trio collaborates with contemporary composers to establish a diverse repertoire for their unique instrumentation. The ensemble has performed at Carnegie Hall (New York City), the Art Institute of Chicago, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival (Detroit), and the Ear Taxi Festival (Chicago). F-PLUS has premiered over 45 new works since its inception. It has received grants from the Fromm Foundation, Chamber Music America, and the Barlow Endowment to commission works by Chen Yi, Jessie Montgomery, and George Tsontakis, respectively. Committed to working with the next generation of musicians, F-PLUS has held residencies at Princeton University, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and Duke University.

# Notes

## **Flight Recorder**

A long time ago I had a flatmate who would obsessively watch a TV show that dissected airplane crashes. For years afterwards I thought about an episode that reconstructed a particular plane crash. A passenger jet had been wrongly weighted, and after takeoff, the plane pitched its nose up into the sky and fell back to earth upside down, crashing over the runway from which it had just taken off. The producers overlaid the audio from the cockpit voice recorder and reconstructed the crash using information from the flight data recorder.

When writing this piece I was thinking about the nearly indestructible black boxes that house these recorders. They capture vast, overlapping streams of information and register every technical, environmental, and human input that could influence the outcome of a flight with hundreds of people onboard. — Gemma Peacocke

## **Autumn Seas**

I have long been fascinated by paintings by German expressionist artist Emil Nolde. Many of his works have to do with the sea. To me, an intriguing conflict exists between the rather peaceful seascapes he depicts and the distinctive treatment of color he deploys. My work *Autumn Seas* is a series of vignettes, some placid and introspective, others more active, all inspired by Nolde's works. — Jon Schwabe

## **Low Bar**

Commissioned for F-PLUS by the generous Barlow Endowment, Low Bar is a “play on words” title. It might well be a double entendre if it’s considered satirically. (Low Bar is the reverse of Barlow, and F-PLUS is a “low bar” to surmount!) I think of the work as being in four main movements with two interludes. Some parts are “tongue in cheek,” others are a bit more serious, but each has a cheerful center.

Bird Bath is light and floating. You Really Hate Me was inspired by the Kinks. Climbing a Sima Tree is another play on words (symmetry) and was inspired by Igor Stravinsky’s Firebird. The inertia-filled Diptych serves as the finale. — George Tsontakis

## **Dream On**

Love Hearts are a classic candy made of fruit-flavored hearts embossed with flirty, love-themed messages like “Hot Lips,” “Be Mine,” and “Dream On.” When I think of this retro candy, I am instantly reminded of my childhood, with birthday parties, sports days, freshly cut grass, long evenings, and summer holidays — but it’s more than that. These pastel hearts bring up a bitter-sweet mix of memories: a sweet, naive optimism for the future alongside a sense of shame and embarrassment around my body, and a painful confusion about what it meant to grow up. When I was a kid, I did not have the words to put a shape to these feelings, so I daydreamed to make myself feel better. Writing this musical piece was a way for me to connect with my inner child, to listen to her worries and anxieties, and to tell her that I’ll always have her back. —Emma O’Halloran

## **Selections from Portraits by El Greco, Book I and Book II**

George Tsontakis's Portraits by El Greco (Book 1), written in 2014, commemorates the 400th anniversary of the death of Domenikos Theotokopoulos, the painter known as El Greco. Scored for piano quartet plus clarinet, five of the six movements in the first book correspond to paintings that depict episodes in the life of Christ. Book II was written in 2021 and 2022 for a consortium of the Schubert Club, Festival Mozaic, Colorado College Chamber Music Festival, Arizona Friends of Music, and the Hellenic American Foundation. This is the first performance to combine selections from both books, specifically highlighting two pieces of art in the National Gallery's collection: *Laocoön* and *Christ Cleansing the Temple* (movement titled Christ and the Money Changers). — Josh Graham

# General Information

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](mailto:circle@nga.gov) for more information.

## **National Gallery of Art Podcast: Sound Thoughts on Art**

*Sound Thoughts on Art*, a podcast from the National Gallery of Art, explores the intersection of sight and sound. Hosted by musician and journalist Celeste Headlee, each episode focuses on a work of art in the National Gallery's collection and now features performers Jenny Scheinman, Dom Flemons, Sa-Roc, Delfeayo Marsalis, Daniel Ho, Maria Schneider, Peter Sheppard Skaerved, and others. Listen and dig deeper at [nga.gov/music-programs/podcasts](http://nga.gov/music-programs/podcasts).

## **Upcoming Concerts**

Interested in future music performances at the National Gallery of Art? Visit our calendar page at [nga.gov](http://nga.gov) or scan the QR code below to learn more about future concerts, as well as our permanent collection, current exhibitions, and many public programs.

