

# Juilliard Organists

Students of Paul Jacobs  
With Juilliard Music Students



Juilliard

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Photo by Erin Baiano

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The Juilliard School  
presents

# Juilliard Organists

## Students of Paul Jacobs

### With Juilliard Music Students

Thursday, October 26, 2023, 7:30pm  
Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th Street, New York City

RODERICK ELMS  
(b. 1951)

*Fandango Fantastico* for Guitar and Organ (2002)  
**Alan Liu, Guitar**  
**Aaron Patterson, Organ**

PHOON YU  
(b. 1990)

From Six Pieces for Organ and Trumpet  
Piece No. 5 (2023, World premiere)  
Piece No. 6 (2017)  
**Isaac Lee, Organ**  
**Vincent Yim, Trumpet**

JAN KOETSIER  
(1911–2006)

From Partita for English Horn and Organ, Op. 41 (1954)  
Liberamente  
Larghetto  
Vivace  
**Kara Poling, English Horn**  
**Jacob Gruss, Organ**

YUCHAN LI  
(b. 2004)

*Transcendence* (2023, World premiere)  
**Marco Jimenez, Organ**  
**Bowie Ma, Viola**

*Program continues*

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Please make certain that all electronic devices are turned off during the performance. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not permitted in this auditorium.

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RACHEL LAURIN (1961–2023)	From Fantasia for Organ and Harp, Op. 52 (2009) Misterioso—Allegro Giocosio <b>Aletheia Teague, Organ</b> <b>Amanda Kengor, Harp</b>
ALAN HOVHANESS (1911–2000)	<i>Prayer of St. Gregory</i> , Op. 62 (1946) <b>Ethan Chow, Organ</b> <b>Ryo Morita, Trumpet</b>
NICHAGARN CHIRACHARASPORN (b. 2001)	<i>Mud</i> (2023, World premiere) <b>Eddie Zheng, Organ</b>
DENIS BÉDARD (b. 1954)	From Sonata No. 1 for Alto Saxophone and Organ (1994) Barcarolle Humoresque <b>Coby Petricone-Berg, Alto Saxophone</b> <b>Edward Hewes, Organ</b>
MATTHEW LAM (b. 1999)	<i>Reaching for the Distant Stars</i> (2023, World premiere) <b>Teddy Cheng, Organ</b> <b>Boldizsár Kovács, Percussion</b>
JOHN WEAVER (1937–2021)	Rhapsody for Flute and Organ (1966) <b>Phoebe Rawn, Flute</b> <b>Cecily Demarco, Organ</b>
ALEXANDROS DARNA (b. 1998)	<i>Dialogues</i> (2023, World premiere) <b>Nadia Lesinska, Violin</b> <b>Zachary Schurman, Organ</b>

*Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, without an intermission*

## Introduction

It is said that music can transport people to different times and places, and nowhere is this more true than in today's program. From Athens (Darna's *Dialogues*) to Etchmiadzin (Hovhanness' *Prayer of St. Gregory*); from the earthly mundanities of terra firma (Chiracharasporn's *Mud*) to the beckoning stellar infinities (Lam's *Reaching for the Distant Stars*); and from a community celebration of love (Elms' *Fandango Fantastico*) to an individual life transformed by the same (Li's *Transcendance*), tonight's works will take the audience through a journey encompassing life's experiences—and even beyond.

The pipe organ is an extremely versatile instrument due to its customizability, adaptability, and venerability. This makes it a reliable music-making partner for any other instrument as well as a good canvas for composers to realize their visions. Some composers choose to pay tribute to its age, harkening back to older genres when writing for the instrument (Bédard's First Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Organ, Koetsier's Partita for English Horn and Organ). Others take a freer approach, adopting genres that give them more latitude in expressing their ideas (Laurin's Fantasia for Organ and Harp, Phoon's Fifth and Sixth Pieces for Organ and Trumpet, Weaver's Rhapsody for Flute and Organ). In any case, the organ makes for an excellent collaborator in realizing these goals and, as can be seen by the diversity of composers and instrumentalists featured today, the ways it can do so are legion.

## RODERICK ELMS

### *Fandango Fantastico* for Guitar and Organ

Since graduating from the Guildhall School of Music and Royal Academy of Music, Roderick Elms has been an important fixture in British musical life. Working with most of Britain's major orchestras (including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and BBC Concert Orchestra), he has been a principal keyboard player and soloist for live concerts, recordings, and radio/television broadcasts. He has also recorded music for films (including the epic *Lord of the Rings* trilogy) as well as singers José Carreras and Tony Henry. And he has concertized all over Britain and the world as a soloist and chamber musician—most famously as pianist for cellist Mstislav Rostropovich—and has recorded solo albums as pianist and organist.

Elms has also arranged and composed multiple works that feature regularly in concerts, church services (many of them have a sacred or festive bent), broadcasts, and recordings. He has a particular focus on keyboard, choral, chamber, and sacred and festive music.

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**Roderick Elms**

**Born:**  
October 18, 1951,  
in Ilford, UK

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Written for the wedding of his friends guitarist Victoria Green and organist Stuart Nicholson in 2002, *Fandango Fantastico* represents one of Elms' rare forays into writing for the guitar. It was premiered by the couple on July 14, 2002, in Romford Parish Church. A decade later, Elms wrote a companion piece, *Fandango Frivolo*—which was described as a gentler piece—and retroactively grouped the pair as *Two Anglo Fandangos*.

After a grandiose opening (primarily spearheaded by loud organ chords with accompanying guitar arpeggios), the piece settles into a lively section consisting of a series of motivic exchanges between the guitar and organ. Following yet another outburst of loud organ chords, the piece settles into a softer, and more sedate, section. Here, the organ and the guitar alternate in presenting long, aria-like melodies, which unspool over either guitar strumming or soft organ chords. The organ renders the melody differently as well, favoring solo stops over tutti registration. But this respite does not last long; an increase in tempo and organ registration leads us back to motivic material covered in the first section, before the work concludes in a sparkling organ trill and ascending guitar arpeggio.

## PHOON YU

### Pieces Nos. 5 and 6 from Six Pieces for Organ and Trumpet

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**Phoon Yu**

**Born:**

November 3, 1990,  
in Singapore

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Hailing from sunny Singapore, Phoon Yu (DMA '22, organ) has been active as a performer in both his home country and the U.S. His debut album, *SEVEN—Organ Music of Singapore*, featuring the solo works of up-and-coming Singaporean composers, was released by Centaur Records in 2022; later that year, he performed alongside Jonathan Shin with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra for the premiere of their co-composition *Illuminations—Symphony for Organ, Chorus, and Orchestra*, which was commissioned for the 20th anniversary of the Esplanade.

Aside from his performing work, Phoon Yu has also composed and arranged extensively, with premieres taking place in Singapore, China, and the U.S. His *Fantasia on “Lenggang Kangkung”* for Alto Saxophone and Piano also premiered last year. He has worked on arrangements for the groups Singapore Sounds, the Orchestra of the Music Makers, Spot Pocket Opera Theatre, the Opera People, and the Lorong Boys. His Three Organ Anthems were published by Muziksea in 2020. He was a C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow at Juilliard, where he studied organ with Paul Jacobs and won the Richard F. French Prize for his dissertation.

His Piece No. 5 for Organ and Trumpet, labeled Meditative-Menacing, is a study in contrasts. The meditative sections are softer and more contemplative, with a scalar theme that functions as the motivic building block in the polyphonic structure, while the menacing sections are louder

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and more aggressive with more angular motives, and (due to their tempi and dynamics) serve as the climaxes for the entire piece. Put together, the piece swings between emotional extremes, eliciting both calm and agitation in the listener.

The sixth piece, labeled Majestic, evokes the Baroque concerto grosso form. After a very short introduction consisting of a dialogue between the two instruments, the piece introduces its main theme (or ritornello section, in Baroque parlance), which serves to underpin the piece. In the solo sections, both instruments take on conversational roles and further develop the musical material presented in the main theme. Piece No. 6 received its premiere in Victoria Concert Hall in 2017, performed by the composer and trumpeter Lau Wen Rong.

## JAN KOETSIER

### Partita for English Horn and Organ

Born in the Netherlands, Jan Koetsier moved to Germany in 1913 with his family and would eventually spend most of his life and career there. While clearly a precocious pianist—he was the youngest student of his day to pass the entrance audition in piano to the Berlin Hochschule für Musik—he eventually turned to conducting, working with theater companies and a broadcasting station in Berlin after a brief spell as a répétiteur in Lübeck. He worked at the Kammeropera and the Residentie Orkest in the Hague and with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1941 to 1950 before finally settling in Munich, where he was appointed principal conductor of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra then became professor of conducting and orchestra conductor of the city’s Hochschule für Musik und Theater.

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**Jan Koetsier**

**Born:**  
August 14, 1911,  
in Amsterdam

**Died:**  
April 28, 2006,  
in Munich

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It was only after his retirement in 1976 that Koetsier was able to devote himself fully to composing. While his oeuvre spanned a wide range of instruments, instrumental groups, and genres, he had a soft spot for brass instruments. He was frequently commissioned by various brass ensembles, and brass instruments often feature as soloists in his concertos. Perhaps it is fitting, then, that his most enduring legacy is a foundation that he founded in 1993 with the Munich Hochschule to support brass students, promote brass chamber music, and administer a competition dedicated to brass instruments. Today, his memory is still maintained by the Hochschule—and the legions of brass players worldwide who play his compositions.

Written and premiered in 1954 in Munich, the Partita for English Horn and Organ consists of five movements, evoking (through its title, movement forms, and musical language) elements of Bach’s music—and some of Hindemith’s as well. At tonight’s recital, only the first three movements will be performed. The first movement, *Liberamente*, starts off with a

unison organ solo—a throwback to the fantasia-like openings of organ *ricercars* and free *praeludia*—before the English horn takes over with a more sentimental melody. This introduction serves as a prelude to a lively Allegro section, where an angular quintal motif, initiated by the English horn and picked up by the organ, repeatedly occurs throughout the piece in imitation between the two instruments. The second movement, *Larghetto*, is mildly evocative of a *sicilienne*. A lilting motif, this time presented by the organ, dominates the entire piece alongside a sustained A that never lets up until the end of the movement. The third movement, *Vivace*, is a virtuosic showpiece for the English horn, replete with pointillistic repeated notes, scales, and turns.

In contrast, the fourth movement, *Largo*, is an organ solo that functions more as an interlude, presumably allowing the English horn player to catch a break. Solemn in character, its thrice-repeated melody is supported by parallel dyads and other contrapuntal lines. The last movement, *Andante sostenuto*, is written like a chorale fantasia; over a bed of triplets provided by the organ, the English horn intones the tune of the hymn “*Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*” (How Brightly Shines the Morning Star). At the very end, the English horn surprises the audience by breaking out into the triplet melody introduced at the start of the piece, before the organ concludes the entire *Partita* with a soft, chordal rendition of the hymn’s final lines.

## YUCHAN LI *Transcendence*

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**Yuchan Li**

**Born:**  
June 24, 2004,  
in Beijing

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A bachelor’s composition student of Melinda Wagner at Juilliard, Yuchan Li formerly studied composition and piano at The Tianjin Juilliard School with Niccolo Athens and Xiaohan Wang. Beyond her musical interests (she also plays the viola), Li is obsessed with art and Chinese poetry, and seeks—in her words—to “explore everything that has a meaning to her soul in her compositions.”

Written for her friends violist Bowie Ma and organist Marco Jimenez, *Transcendence* is a musical experience that records the maturation of a person’s mental state of romantic love through time and musical expression. This is reflected in its emotions being sensitive and constantly changing. Li describes the piece, which is of tripartite structure:

From the opening silly and romantic melody to the moment of sudden silences, which share a sentiment of doubt and confusion, to the extremely heartbroken chords played by the organ alone, the first part is a process of emotional change from pure and passionate love to heartbroken disappointment. The fugato in the second part represents a rational and ambitious mind, persuading the id to abandon



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romantic thoughts and to concentrate on itself. However, depression and resignation exist and fight with sanity; in life, rationality cannot control the emotions that are generated by a human's body. Two motives intertwine with each other and after they get into a big chaos, the emotion drives the person to a heart-breaking daze. In the third part, the melody of the passed love appears again, but each time with the disturbances of sanity and self-respect represented by the motives of the second part. The intense love almost consumes the person, but just then their strong rational thoughts pull them back to reality, which is presented by the sudden tempo change based on the second-part motive. Obsessions and conflicts will eventually be reconciled: this peaceful and harmonious contemplation is the final sentence to end the piece.

Li then concludes her note with a cryptic statement: "How much I love you, yet I have the path that waits for me to fulfil."

**RACHEL LAURIN**  
**Fantasia for Organ and Harp**

Before her death earlier this year, Rachel Laurin had established herself as a force in the international music scene, as both a highly sought-after concert organist and a commissioned composer. As a performer, she played multiple organ recitals in major cities throughout her native Canada as well as in the U.S. and Europe, while as a composer, her works were performed and recorded on five continents. Laurin's work always held a special place in the hearts of the American organ community. She received multiple accolades, commissions, and honors from the American Guild of Organists (AGO), with the 2020 distinguished composer award serving as a crowning achievement as well as an acknowledgement of the sheer importance of her musical contributions.

The Fantasia for Organ and Harp was the result of a commission by the AGO for the 2010 Biennial National Convention in Washington, D.C., and was premiered at St. John's of Lafayette Square by organist Jean-Baptiste Robin and harpist Elizabeth Blakeslee. The piece is divided into three movements arranged in a fast-slow-fast format (although true to the title, the piece resists such easy classification). Tonight's performance will only include the first movement, Misterioso—Allegro Giocoso, which begins rather serenely (or perhaps mysteriously?) enough, with the harp and organ taking turns to play series of chords that are occasionally punctuated with harp arpeggios. This gives way to a livelier section, where rapid organ chords and fast passagework are contrasted with harp octaves and glissandi. Eventually, the piece returns to its serene beginnings, concluding in a final harp arpeggio over a bed of organ chords.

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**Rachel Laurin**

**Born:**  
August 11, 1961,  
in Saint-Benoît,  
Quebec

**Died:**  
August 13, 2023,  
in Ottawa

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In the second movement, *Recitativo—Andante Pastorale*, the harp and organ unfurl improvisatory melodies over an atmospheric background generated by organ chords. This lasts briefly before a transition to a more metrically regular section, where both the organ and harp alternate between taking the melody and accompanying. Solo flute stops at the beginning and end of this movement evoke panpipes, further increasing the ‘pastoral’ character of the movement. The third movement (*Presto con spirito*) begins energetically enough; an animated organ introduction is met with a frenetic harp response. However, Laurin suddenly surprises the listener by evoking themes from the previous two movements, producing a sudden about-face in mood. This change turns out to be temporary however, and the movement returns to its original spirited affect. Both instruments continue to vie for supremacy until the very end, where plenum organ chords and harp arpeggios provide an explosive finish for the whole piece.

### ALAN HOVHANESS

#### *Prayer of St. Gregory, Op. 62 (1946)*

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#### Alan Hovhaness

##### Born:

March 8, 1911,  
in Somerville,  
Massachusetts

##### Died:

June 21, 2000,  
in Seattle

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Even in the rarefied world of Western contemporary music, Alan Hovhaness was somewhat of an outsider due to his eclectic tastes and Armenian background. In the 1930s, he developed an interest in Armenian, Kurdish, and Indian music, and he also became an early proponent of the Jean Sibelius. In the 1940s, his knowledge of Armenian culture and music deepened while he was organist of St. James Armenian church, and he began to write music that tapped into his Armenian heritage. Nevertheless, his interests in other styles of music grew; he eventually visited India and Japan, where his studies of the native music traditions there further broadened his musical palette and spawned more works inspired by their respective musical cultures. These influences were supplemented with Hovhaness’ interests in fugue, Renaissance counterpoint, and a neo-Romantic musical approach, creating a musical style that was truly idiosyncratic and separated from the contemporary music establishment of the age.

Hovhaness achieved recognition fairly late in his career; he failed five times to get a Guggenheim Fellowship, and he famously suffered the mockery of contemporaries Copland and Bernstein during an ill-fated experience at Tanglewood. This likely determined the course of his compositions—he primarily wrote solo, chamber, and vocal repertoire in his earlier years (due to the higher chances of such works being performed), and focused more on larger scale works such as symphonic works and concertos after his reputation grew in the 1950s. Despite this, Hovhaness was always determined to compose: Aside from more classical forms of composition, he also wrote music for radio, television, theater, and dance, making him one of the most prolific composers of the 20th century.

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Nowhere are Hovhaness' Armenian roots on bigger display than in his *Etchmiadzin*, an opera commissioned by an Armenian church in New York. Etchmiadzin Cathedral is the mother church of the Armenian Apostolic Church—which Hovhaness worked for—and Saint Gregory the Illuminator is regarded as the patron saint of both Armenia and the church. Saint Gregory brought Christianity to Armenia in the early fourth century, and the location of the cathedral was said to be inspired by a vision of the saint, who saw Jesus Christ descending from the heavens and striking the chosen spot with a golden hammer. *Etchmiadzin* thus united many of Hovhaness's interests—his work for the Armenian church, his interest in his Armenian roots, and his increasing connections with the Armenian community.

*Prayer of St. Gregory* functions as a short interlude in *Etchmiadzin*. Originally composed for solo trumpet and strings, multiple arrangements of the piece have been made (including one for organ solo by Victor Searle). As befitting the title, the piece is in a slow tempo throughout, evoking a reverential and dignified atmosphere. Written in a harmonically diatonic language (it begins in A Minor and ends in the major mode), the piece consists primarily of chords played by the organ, over which the trumpet cantillates periodically. Scalar and recitative-like at times, the trumpet's melody serves as a counterpoint to the canvas of sound provided by the organ.

## NICHAGARN CHIRACHARASPOORN

### *Mud*

Music has always been part of Nichagarn Chiracharaspoorn's life. She started piano lessons at age 4 and followed her passion in music by enrolling in a pre-college program, majoring in classical piano at the College of Music in Mahidol University. She continued her musical studies in composition and is now studying at Juilliard in the studio of Andrew Norman.

Chiracharaspoorn's oeuvre ranges in scale from a small piano piece for children to an orchestra piece. Her works have been performed in Thailand at the Thailand International Composition Festival and in the U.S. at the Lake George Music and New Music on the Point festivals. She has worked with professional ensembles including the TACETi new music ensemble and the Rhythm Method String Quartet as well as musicians from Mahidol and Juilliard. A lover of experimenting, she continues to learn about many kinds of music beyond the Western canon in hopes of finding her own unique voice.

According to Chiracharaspoorn, *Mud* "explores the idea between [the] earthly and ethereal as well as anxiety and euphoria. This piece is trying to reflect on the nature of existence, where the tension is followed by moments of serenity. The music starts with the stillness of deep and low sound—the

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**Nichagarn  
Chiracharaspoorn**

**Born:**  
January 14, 2001,  
in Bangkok

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mud of the title—then the music gradually transforms itself just as living beings grow from mud and continue their life cycle.”

Chiracharasporin also notes that composing for organ is “is one [of] the things I have always wanted to do.” Chiracharasporin dedicated the piece to its first performer, Eddie Zheng, to whom she is greatly indebted for initiating the collaboration and for being “helpful with all the things I need to know when writing for organ!”

## DENIS BÉDARD

### Sonata No. 1 for Alto Saxophone and Organ

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**Denis Bédard**

**Born:**

January 13, 1950,  
in Québec City

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Organist, professor, and composer Denis Bédard has influenced generations of Canadian musicians. Born and educated primarily in Canada (with stints in Paris and Amsterdam), Bédard received first-class honors for his studies in Quebec and was a winner of both the Prix d’Europe and the CBC Radio Talent Competition. He was a professor first at the Conservatoire de musique de Québec (his alma mater) and then at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He was also an organist at St-Coeur-de-Marie and St-Roch churches in Quebec City, and then became organist and music director at Holy Rosary Cathedral in Vancouver. He has also performed in Canada, the U.S., France, and Brazil.

Bédard is a prolific composer, with more than 170 works (with some published by Éditions Cheldar, which he founded) spanning genres and instrumental combinations, and he has received commissions from organizations and musicians in Canada and beyond. His works have been widely performed and several have been recorded. Bédard describes his personal musical style as “essentially tonal and melodic ... characterized by a concern for formal clarity and immediate communication with as vast a public as possible.”

The First Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Organ is one of two such sonatas that Bédard wrote (curiously, the other is titled the Third Sonata; a second seemingly does not exist). This sonata is split into three movements, with its fast-slow-fast arrangement of movements recalling an 18th-century classical aesthetic. The titling of the movements defies this aesthetic however; rather than being labelled with tempo directions, they take on the names of various genres. The first movement, *Invention* (which will not be performed tonight), begins exuberantly and aggressively enough, with a succinct saxophone motif supported by loud, diatonic organ chords. However, the listener is soon surprised by a sudden transition in mood and tempo as the saxophone lapses into a sentimental and rhapsodic cantilena, accompanied quietly and placidly by the organ. This is only temporary however, and the movement soon reverts to its original ebullient self, concluding in G Major as the saxophone enunciates the opening motif for the final time.

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In the second movement, Barcarolle (a boat song sung by Venetian gondoliers), the saxophone presides with a languid, pseudo-improvisatory melody, which the organ supports with regular gentle arpeggios (perhaps imitating the calm waves?). In the middle section, the organ and the saxophone indulge in a series of musical exchanges, before reverting to the *modus operandi* of the movement's beginning. The saxophone also dominates in the third movement, Humoresque, with an agile, playful, and rhythmic melody supported by loud organ chords (often hammered repeatedly in accompaniment). The saxophone then takes a more lyrical tack (accompanied by organ arpeggios), but as before, it eventually returns to the starting humor of the piece, concluding with a bang.

**MATTHEW LAM**  
*Reaching for the Distant Stars*

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Matthew Lam is an active composer and an enthusiast of contemporary music styles. His goal is to explore and experiment on a wide array of sounds and timbre, especially with contemporary instrumental techniques and live electronics.

He has won multiple awards and his works have been featured in various festivals and conferences, including June in Buffalo, International Rostrum of Composers (the Netherlands), Nanhua University International Symposium of Contemporary Music Research (Taiwan), soundSCAPE Festival (Italy), Connecticut Summerfest, SCI National Conference (U.S.), and the Toolbox International Creative Academy and Hong Kong Contemporary Music Festival (Hong Kong). His works have also been played by groups including the Mivos Quartet, Del Sol Quartet, [Switch~ Ensemble], Mise-en Ensemble, Toledo Symphony, Du.O, Cong Quartet, NEXUS Ensemble, Toolbox Percussion, Chung Chi Wind Orchestra, and Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra.

Lam earned his bachelor's with first-class honors from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he studied with Wendy Lee, Kai-Young Chan, and Hau-Man Lo, and he recently completed his master's studies in composition with Marilyn Shrude, Mikel Kuehn, and Christopher Dietz at Bowling Green State University.

*Reaching for the Distant Stars* is structured around a poem that Lam wrote:

Look how beautiful the stars are.  
Shining, sparkling, illuminating the lives of many.  
Could I reach the beautiful, distant stars  
Even if there are layers of clouds and mists?  
Or die as a white dwarf?

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**Matthew Lam**

**Born:**  
August 23, 1999,  
in Hong Kong

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Look how beautiful my dream is.  
Shining, sparkling, illuminating my life.  
Could I reach the beautiful, distant dream?  
Even if there are layers of challenges and trials?  
Or die as a pathetic person?

Written for organ and percussion, the work can be broadly divided into three sections. The outer sections feature the crotales and the suspended cymbal, and heavily feature stepwise intervals and sustained notes in the organ, punctuated by occasional flourishes. The much longer middle section is primarily dominated by vibraphone and supported by the tom-tom and bass drum (although the crotales and suspended cymbal make cameo appearances) as well as an increased note density from the saturation of tuplets and other smaller-value notes. These tuplets as well as multiple repeated notes (chords, in the case of the organ) help build momentum throughout the section—only to yield to the inertia of the third section. Perhaps the excitement of the dream has collapsed before the malaise of real life?

## JOHN WEAVER Rhapsody for Flute and Organ

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### John Weaver

#### Born:

April 27, 1937,  
in Mauch Chunk,  
Pennsylvania

#### Died:

February 1, 2021,  
in Ithaca, New York

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A titan—physically, musically, and intellectually—John Weaver (faculty 1987-2004) rose from humble beginnings to leave an enduring influence on legions of musicians and music lovers worldwide through his teaching, playing, and composing. Studying first at the Curtis Institute of Music and then at the Union Theological Seminary, Weaver would return to teach at both institutions after a stint as organist and choir director at West Point's Post Chapel. He later was the chair of Juilliard's organ department. Aside from his work at these schools (and several others), Weaver was also director of music and organist, first at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, then at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, where he spent the bulk of his career. On top of that, he was also a globe-trotting concertizer and prolific recording artist, performing a vast repertoire of music from memory (whether in concert or for broadcast) and churning out multiple recordings.

Furthermore, he also found time to compose: Weaver harmonized several hymn tunes used by the Presbyterian church, provided several pieces of service music, and also wrote choral and solo organ works (including his famous *Fantasia for Organ*). Despite such a time-consuming schedule, Weaver could still focus on the needs of every individual student who came under his tutelage. As Paul Jacobs, chair of Juilliard's organ department, recalled, Weaver "magnified individual strengths and helped students develop their own unique voices and a personalized approach to the instrument," giving "differently but generously to each student."



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While working at Holy Trinity Lutheran, Weaver met his future wife, Marianne, a church choir member. Aside from being a chorister, Marianne was also an accomplished flutist, and it was for her that Weaver wrote his *Rhapsody for Flute and Organ*, in 1966, when they were married and he was working at Madison Avenue Presbyterian.

The *Rhapsody* begins meditatively enough; an ethereal and seemingly metrically-free flute melody winds around a soft organ accompaniment. This does not last forever—a *ritardando* on the part of the flute is a cue for the piece to move towards a faster and more rhythmic section, complete with louder organ registration. While the flute still dominates melodically (with the organ providing chordal accompaniment), the organ eventually takes over, breaking into a loud and effusive display worthy of the piece's title. At its culmination, the flute comes to the fore again with a recitative-like melody, initiating a melodious middle section with accompanying organ arpeggios. As before, a series of virtuosic scales, runs, and passages by the flute—combined with increased organ registration and a faster tempo—lead to a reprise of the first fast section (complete with another rhapsodic outburst by the organ). The piece eventually returns to its initial meditative section, recalling the ethereal theme before—in a surprise twist—recalling the theme of the faster section, albeit in a much more sedate fashion. It then ends as it began: in a contemplative manner.

## ALEXANDROS DARNA

### *Dialogues*

Influenced by his Cypriot-Cuban family heritage, New York-based composer Alexandros Darna explores his multicultural identity and creates works that are often a vibrant blend of Cuban dance rhythms and Cypriot musical idioms. His latest symphonic work, *Solus*, and a scene from his chamber opera, *Meera's Mask*, were performed at Manhattan School of Music (MSM). His choral work, *Melodies Unheard*, was performed by the MSM Chamber Choir and his *Olukumi* for wind quintet was recorded by the school's resident Windscape Ensemble.

In Cyprus, Darna arranged music for vocalist Alkistis Protopsalti and the TrakArt Pops orchestra directed by Aris Antoniadis, and his work *Festivities* for saxophone orchestra was most recently performed under the direction of Yiannis Miralis at the Strovolos Municipal Theater. Darna's music for film includes *Kamno Pilo*, which was an official selection of the International Short Film Festival of Cyprus and the West Side Mountains Documentary Festival in Athens.

Coming from a very small town in Cyprus, Darna is one of the first Cypriot composers to pursue a degree at Juilliard. Darna holds a bachelor's from MSM. His principal teachers include Mark Stambaugh, Robert Beaser,

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**Alexandros Darna**

**Born:**  
April 18, 1998,  
in Nicosia, Cyprus

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## Notes on the Program (Continued)

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Melinda Wagner, David Ludwig, Amy Beth Kirsten, Juan Piñera, and Javier Iha Rodriguez for composition and Ronnie Oliver for conducting. Darna won the 2023 AXIOM competition and has been honored by other accolades as well: His *Minnaaloushe* for violin, percussion, and piano won the New York Federation of Music Clubs Israel Prize and he was the recipient of the *Vergottis* and the MSM International Advisory Board scholarship awards.

With *Dialogues*, written in response to violinist Nadia Lesinska's "heartfelt request" to compose a piece for her 2023 Juilliard graduation recital, Darna invites the listener to "imagine a musical journey where the echoes of ancient Greece intertwine with the charm of the Baroque era." Like Darna, Lesinska has a deep connection to Greek culture, nurtured through her time in Athens alongside her father, and this connection provided the spark for *Dialogues*. Drawing from the rich musical traditions of Greece, Darna delved into the works of Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis, whose artistry, according to Darna, beautifully captures the essence of Greek music. Thus, he continues:

*Dialogues* took shape—a vibrant conversation between the Baroque and contemporary musical realms, and a personal dialogue between Mikis Theodorakis and myself. It is a lively dialogue, where the violin and organ engage in a spirited interplay, punctuated by syncopated rhythms and virtuosic passages. This composition invites you to traverse a melodic bridge between the echoes of the past with the vibrant sounds of the present, all while celebrating the enduring legacy of Mikis Theodorakis.

The composer's note concludes with a warm dedication to Lesinska and Zachary Schurman, the premiering performers.

*Organist Phoon Yu earned his Doctor of Musical Arts at Juilliard in 2022.*

## About the Juilliard Organ Department

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Led by renowned organist Paul Jacobs, Juilliard's organ department enjoys an outstanding reputation, attracting talented young artists from around the world. Organ students at Juilliard work closely with Jacobs and enjoy many opportunities for solo and ensemble performances. Juilliard organists perform in Alice Tully Hall on its restored Kuhn organ, are featured in recitals at churches throughout New York City, and hold prominent church positions in the New York City area and around the country. Weekly performance classes attract a regular stream of interested visitors. In addition to lessons and master classes, organ majors take courses in service playing, organ literature, and improvisation. Juilliard houses several pipe organs in various styles, including instruments by Holtkamp, Schoenstein, Flentrop, and Noack.

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