

New Juilliard Ensemble



Juilliard



Photo by Claudio Pappalardo

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The Juilliard School
presents

New Juilliard Ensemble

Joel Sachs, Founding Director and Conductor

Dror Baitel, Duanduan Hao, Piano

Ji Soo Choi, Violin

Issei Herr, Marza Wilks, Cello

Tyler Cunningham, Percussion

Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 7:30pm
Studio 309

SANSAR SANGIDORJ

(b. Mongolia, 1969)

Three Tales About My Teacher

(1999; in memoriam Albert Lehman, 1915-98)

Escalera interminable (1999)

Duanduan Hao, Piano

ZHU JIAN-ER

(China, 1922-2017)

Symphony No. 8, "Seeking" (1994)

Senza misura—andante—allegro

Lento meditando

Allegro maestoso—maestoso—lento—allegro

(played without pause)

Issei Herr, Cello

Tyler Cunningham, Percussion

First performance outside China

Intermission

BETSY JOLAS

(b. France, 1926)

Ah! Haydn (2007)

Ji Soo Choi, Violin

Marza Wilks, Cello

Dror Baitel, Piano

New York premiere

(continues)



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.

(continued)

URSULA MAMLOK
(Germany, 1923–2016)

Sextet (1977)
With fluctuating tension
Very calm
Light and airy
(first two movements played without pause)

ROBERTO SIERRA
(b. Puerto Rico, 1953)

Octeto en Cuatro Tiempos (2014)
Intenso
Rapidísimo
Expresivo
Ritmico

Notes on the Program by Joel Sachs

Selected Pieces for Piano SANSAR SANGIDORJ

Sansargereltech (known as Sansar) Sangidorj grew up in an artistic family in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia. His first piano teacher was his father, Choigiv Sangidorj, who was also a composer; his three sisters are all pianists; his first composition teacher was Gonchickssumlaa Samba. Sansar's mother, a doctor and accomplished artist, was his first teacher of drawing. His formal musical education began at the Ulaan Baatar School of Music and Dance (1977-85) and continued at the Ulaan Baatar College of Music and Dance (1986-89) and the Moscow Conservatory, where he received his undergraduate degree in 1995 and continued as a graduate student (1995-97). There his principal teachers were Albert Leman (composition) and Elena Savelieva (piano). He then attended a postgraduate composition course at the Royal Conservatory in Madrid with Antón García Abril. Still an active pianist primarily of his own music, Sansar has given recitals in Ulaan Baatar (Mongolia's capital), Moscow, Zaragoza, and Huesca, Spain, and at the International Composers Workshop in Poland, Huho Hoto Art University in Inner Mongolia (China), and Dartmouth College.

Sansar Sangidorj

Born:
Ulaan Baatar,
Mongolia, in 1969

Although numerous early compositions were performed in Europe and the United States, Sansar described his career as having successes but with enough problems to make him consider changing his profession to painting and drawing. (He had been encouraged by being able to sell his paintings while in Spain.) A decisive moment came in 1999 when he met Professor Theodore Levin of Dartmouth College, who had gone to Ulaan Baatar to investigate potential composers for Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project, which has offered opportunities to composers of the countries along the old silk-trading route from China to Europe. As a result, in 2000, Sangidorj made his first trip to the United States to participate in the Silk Road workshop at Tanglewood. That experience renewed his desire to compose and prompted him to explore ideas for new timbral techniques, especially the use of Mongolian traditional instruments and the traditional vocal techniques of Mongolian long-song and throat singing. *Khara-Khorum*, for a mixture of traditional and western instruments, was composed for the Silk Road Project; a version for western scoring was created for the New Juilliard Ensemble, which premiered it in 2002.

In 2013 his piano concerto *Man and Nature*, dedicated to the memory of his father, was premiered by the Mongolian State Philharmonic, with his sister Saya as soloist and Joel Sachs conducting. Its style was utterly different from either his early piano music or his work for Silk Road; he knew that the Ulaan Baatar audience was conservative and wanted the memorial concert to be a great success (which it was—even the U.S. ambassador attended with her husband). By now, his music has been performed in China, Mongolia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Spain, Brazil, Ecuador, and the U.S. Still active in Mongolia, he has

composed many scores for films and stage plays in his native Mongolia, several of which have won him major prizes. For some years he has lived in both the U.S. and Mongolia.

Of the piano pieces heard tonight, which were composed during his time in Spain, Sangidorj says, "The three pieces about my teacher Albert Lehman are dedicated to his life for music." The meaning of the title *Escalera interminable* ('Endless Staircase') will be clear to the ear.

Symphony No. 8, "Seeking" ZHU JIAN-ER

Zhu Jian-er

Born:
Tianjin, China, in
1922

Died:
Shanghai, China,
in 2017

Zhu Jian-er was brought up in Shanghai, where he died just short of his 95th birthday. Having taught himself music while in middle school and written art songs since age 18, he composed for an art troupe beginning in 1945, started writing film music in 1949, and conducted a military band. In 1955 Zhu enrolled in the composition department of the Moscow Conservatory, studying with Sergey Balasanian. After graduating in 1960, he returned to China, and in 1975—following the Cultural Revolution—he became permanent composer of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and professor of composition at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Extremely productive, he composed 10 symphonies—7 for large orchestra—12 miscellaneous orchestral pieces, a Symphony-Cantata *Heroic Poems*, piano music, chamber music, ensemble pieces for Chinese traditional instruments, and much more. He won many awards and commissions in China and abroad: his 10th symphony was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, and the sextet *Silk Road Reverie* was commissioned by Yo Ma's Silk Road Project, which premiered it at Tanglewood. Symphony No. 6, a remarkable piece for Chinese bamboo flute and string orchestra, was given its first performance outside China by the New Juilliard Ensemble. His Symphony No. 5 concluded last year's Focus! Festival. During a visit to the United States in 1994, Zhu lectured about his distinctive compositional ideas at Juilliard, New England Conservatory of Music, Wesleyan University, and Colby College. In recognition of his many achievements, the Shanghai Municipal Government awarded him its prize for "Outstanding Contribution in Literature and Arts."

Asked about Zhu Jian-er's later years, his daughter Weisu Zhu Nugent wrote, "After the year 2000, my dad composed some chamber music, but he mainly worked on his book, did a lot of proofreading, and revised many of his early works for publication. Around 2005 he stopped teaching but remained a guest professor at the Shanghai Conservatory. His book *Composing Memoir of Zhu Jian-er* was published two years ago, along with a study of his compositions entitled *The Music of Zhu Jian-er*. In his

memoir, he wrote about how he composed each of his symphonies, and how he wrote some of his orchestra works. He also wrote about his life.”

Zhu’s 10 symphonies employ ensembles ranging from large orchestra, chorus, and soloists, to chamber orchestra, percussion ensemble, and even—as in tonight’s performance, the first outside China—cello and percussion duo. Unlike his massive Symphony No. 5, Symphony No. 8—subtitled “Seeking”—is scored only for cello and one percussionist.

On the score is a poem-motto:

The Seeker’s road is far and long
The Seeker’s heart is solitary
The tribulations of seeking are endless
The spirit of seeking is eternal

Weisu Zhu Nugent provided a short statement about the piece:

Zhu Jian-er’s Eighth Symphony is based on a musical tradition within Peking Opera, which utilizes only two instruments: a jinghu (a two-string instrument, like an erhu) and a set of gongs and drums. This symphony similarly relies on two primary instruments: a cello and a set of percussion instruments. The main thematic material of this “two-person symphony” is six notes that mimic the Chinese tones in Zhu Jian-er’s name: C, B, B flat, E flat, G, and A. Although a chamber work, especially in comparison with his many large-scale symphonies, the piece had deep personal significance to him. Each movement symbolizes Zhu’s life journey; despite the endless hardships of life, he wrote, ultimately the human spirit is eternal.

Ah! Haydn **BETSY JOLAS**

Betsy Jolas is the daughter of translator Maria Jolas and poet and journalist Eugène Jolas, founder of the well-known literary magazine *transition*, in which James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* was published as a work in progress. Jolas came to the U.S. in 1940, completed her general schooling, and began studying composition with Paul Boepple, piano with Helen Schnabel, and organ with Carl Weinrich. In 1946, after graduating from Bennington College, Jolas returned to Paris to continue studies with Darius Milhaud, Simone Plé-Caussade, and Olivier Messiaen at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique. In 1975, after replacing Olivier Messiaen in his course at the Conservatoire for three years, Jolas was appointed to its faculty. She continues to live in Paris.

Betsy Jolas

Born:
Paris, France, in
1926

Her career was launched in 1953 when she won the International Conducting Competition of Besançon. She has been honored by the Copley Foundation of Chicago, American Academy of Arts and Letters, Koussevitzky Foundation, and, at home, French Radio, France's Grand Prix National de la Musique, the Grand Prix de la Ville de Paris, and the Grand Prix of SACEM, the composers' rights organization. She became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1983. In 1985 she was promoted to Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres; in 1992, she received the Maurice Ravel Prix International and was named France's Personality of the Year. In 1994 she was awarded the Prix SACEM for the best première performance of the year for her work *Frauenleben*. Jolas was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (in Cambridge) in 1995 and two years later was made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. Her enormous catalog includes works for orchestra, chorus, voices, operas, instrumental solos, and chamber music. She certainly is not slowing down: in 2018 four premieres will have taken place; for 2019 she is composing an orchestral piece jointly commissioned by the Boston Symphony and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, both conducted by Andris Nelsons.

The trio *Ah! Haydn* was commissioned by Eisenstadt's 2009 festival commemorating the bicentennial of the death of Joseph Haydn, and is dedicated to him. It was premiered in Paris by the Esterhazy Trio, then played in Eisenstadt. Its lone American performance before tonight was in San Francisco. Jolas says:

My passionate attraction to Haydn's music originated in childhood with the piano sonatas I was then able to sight-read. Much later came the revelation of the quartets, the oratorios (the extraordinary "Chaos" from *The Creation!*), the Masses, the symphonies ... Yes, there was much Haydn on my mind when I set to work on my trio. I knew the choice was going to be difficult.

After much hesitation, I decided to write a single movement trio on the theme of the last movement of the "London" Symphony, No. 104, one that had haunted me for years for its outspoken simplicity and its strange setting over the sole pedal D, and which in recent years seemed to me even richer with pitch and rhythm potentialities.

I thus immediately singled out its key notes A G D E as a kind of *cantus firmus*. The opening prelude is a reverie on those four pitches which will then be heard again and again in various guises throughout the piece. The following fast section focuses on the rather obsessive rhythmic motives of this theme and, by stressing this aspect more and more, reaches a point where, so to speak, pitch surrenders to rhythm. But this is only temporary. Both components soon recover their just place and the theme is evoked again several times before being left floating away ... as swallowed back in memory.

Sextet

URSULA MAMLOK

Ursula Mamlok, born in Berlin in 1923, had already begun musical studies when she and her family had to flee the Nazis in 1939. They finally arrived in New York after living in Guayaquil, Ecuador, for two years. After sending her youthful compositions to the Mannes College of Music, she received a full scholarship to study with George Szell, who, along with her later teacher Vittorio Giannini, gave her a strict classical training. Having lacked the opportunity to hear any music of the 20th century until attending new-music concerts in New York, she then sought out Stefan Wolpe and Ralph Shapey to learn about their compositional procedures. Their influence, as well as the repertory played at those concerts, led her away from composing tonal music. In the meantime, she interrupted her education to marry. Then in 1956, feeling the need to complete her education, she returned to the classroom, earning her undergraduate and graduate degrees at the Manhattan School of Music, from which she retired after many years on its faculty. She also taught at New York University, Temple University, and City University of New York.

Ursula Mamlok

Born:
Berlin, Germany,
in 1923

Died:
Berlin, Germany,
in 2016

Mamlok received grants and commissions from most major American foundations and institutions, including a Guggenheim Fellowship; her works have been performed by many of the leading contemporary music ensembles and are available through leading American publishers, especially C.F. Peters; Bridge Records is issuing an ongoing series of recordings. (Other recordings have appeared on CRI and Naxos.) In 2006, after the death of her husband, she returned to Germany, settling in Berlin and working very closely with the radio journalist Bettina Brand. There she developed a whole new career, with abundant performances of her music by leading ensembles. In 2013 she was awarded a federal German award for her lifetime services. Her final composition premiered in 2015 at the Berlin Philharmonie. She died in Berlin on May 4, 2016. A foundation in her memory has been established in Frankfurt.

Her Sextet was commissioned by Parnassus, a contemporary ensemble founded by Anthony Korf, which premiered it in 1977. Mamlok long considered it one of her best pieces; in the liner notes for the Parnassus recording, she wrote:

Sextet is built around central tempo (72 quarters notes per minute). In the first movement, marked “with fluctuating tension,” four interrelated tempos are active at the same time, creating a dense texture similar to rapid discourse among six people. A contrasting section follows—a thinner texture of solos and their “mirrors” that preserves the four tempos of the preceding section. The first section is then repeated with varied details. A transition leads to the second movement. This movement, an ABCBA form, presents a very calm and lyrical opening

(Part A), which gives way to a section of intense five-part counterpoint (Part B). After a dance-like ostinato section (Part C), transformed versions of Parts B and A return. A violin harmonic acts as a bridge to the third movement, marked “light and airy.” This cheerful rondo has a bravura conclusion, fortissimo, that leaves the flute and clarinet lines suspended in midair.

Octeto en cuatro tiempos ROBERTO SIERRA

Roberto Sierra

Born:
Vega Baja, Puerto
Rico, in 1953

Roberto Sierra studied composition in Puerto Rico and Hamburg (the latter with György Ligeti), and electronic music in London and Utrecht. His relationship with Ligeti was mutually beneficial: Ligeti frequently credited Sierra for revolutionizing his style by introducing him to Afro-Caribbean drumming.

After returning to San Juan, Sierra was rector of the National Conservatory until a residency with the Milwaukee Symphony launched his larger career. He is currently professor of composition at Cornell University. Sierra's music is regularly played by many major orchestras: *Fandangos* won a prestigious place on the BBC Symphony's opening night of the 2002 BBC Proms. Principally published by Subito and recorded on many labels, he has had two Grammy and two Latin Grammy nominations. Recent projects include a commission by the BravoVail festival for the Dallas Symphony, and *Concierto Virtual*, for automated piano without pianist, composed for the New Juilliard Ensemble and premiered in the 2017 Focus! Festival. Sierra is currently composing a set of individual piano pieces and a saxophone quartet. His compositions draw upon Puerto Rican popular and folkloric and non-referential materials, as well as complex compositional methods in varying proportions.

Octeto en cuatro tiempos (Octet in Four Movements) was commissioned by the Orchestra of St. Luke's with funding from Linda and Stuart Nelson in honor of their friend Charles Hamlen. The composer writes:

The four movements of the octet are based on a scale of nine notes, which provides much of the basis for the melodic and harmonic material, as well as the general formal structure. The pitch material is not intended to be at the conscious level of the listening process, but rather gives the work a sense of harmonic direction. Furthermore, my recent thinking has focused on rhythm and how to create layers that move using different clocks. I have also continued to reimagine and reuse my rich Afro-Caribbean heritage. Many transformations of the basic salsa clave can be heard, as well as melodic contours that allude to Puerto Rican music.

While the work was commissioned as a companion piece to Schubert's Octet in F, I did not use his material in the form of quotes. His approach to the ensemble was basically orchestral in nature; mine is more like chamber music. I do, however, allude to the Octet at the end of the second movement, where I inserted a gesture reminiscent of the beginning of Schubert's work. An important aspect of Schubert's Octet—also present in his other chamber works—is his use of short rhythmic structures as autonomous entities not bound to specific pitch content. His approach ties very much into my own thinking of rhythmic structures.

Meet the Artists



Joel Sachs

Joel Sachs, founder and director of the New Juilliard Ensemble, performs a vast range of traditional and contemporary music as conductor and pianist. As co-director of the internationally acclaimed new-music ensemble Continuum, he has appeared in hundreds of performances in New York, nationally, and throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America. He has also conducted orchestras and ensembles in Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, El Salvador, Germany, Iceland, Mexico, Switzerland, and Ukraine, and has held new music residencies in Berlin, Shanghai, London, Salzburg, Curitiba (Brazil), Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (U.K.), Helsinki, and the Banff Centre (Canadian Rockies). On November 5 he gave a faculty recital in Morse Hall featuring Charles Ives's rarely heard Piano Sonata No. 1, a program he also played last month at St. John's Smith Square, London, as part of a yearlong American music festival; he will repeat it at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne on November 22.

One of the most active presenters of new music in New York, Sachs founded the New Juilliard Ensemble in 1993. He produces and directs Juilliard's annual Focus! Festival and has been artistic director of Juilliard's concerts at the Museum of Modern Art since 1993. A member of Juilliard's music history faculty, he wrote the first full biography of the American composer Henry Cowell, published by Oxford University Press in 2012. He often appears on radio as a commentator on recent music and has been a regular delegate to international music conferences.

A graduate of Harvard, Sachs received his PhD from Columbia. In 2011 he was made an honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard for his work in support of new music and received the National Gloria Artis Medal of the Polish Government for his service to Polish music. In 2002 he was given Columbia's Alice M. Ditson Award for his service to American music.

Dror Baitel

The career of Israeli pianist Dror Baitel, a second-year doctoral student at Juilliard, already includes performances at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall, and in Broadway shows such as Disney's *Mary Poppins*. He has collaborated with artists ranging from singers at the Metropolitan Opera to Broadway star and four-time Tony Award nominee Tovah Feldshuh, and cabaret artists at New York venues Town Hall, 54 Below, Don't Tell Mama, and The Duplex. Dedicated to music education, Baitel has worked at many New York schools and institutions, most recently Stagedoor Manor Camp. As music director and conductor at the Secret Theatre, his credits include *The Wild Party* and *Oliver!* In 2017 he received an MM in collaborative piano at Juilliard, studying with Jonathan Feldman and Margo Garrett. He received his BM at Mannes College under Vladimir Feltsman and Jerome Rose.



- *C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellowship*

Ji Soo Choi

Ji Soo Choi commenced studying violin in South Korea at age 3. After moving to Canada, she continued with Marie Bérard, David Zafer, and Barry Shiffman at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, further developing at the Young Jae Music Academy of the Seoul Art Center and the Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory Orchestra, as part of the 2011 Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition. In 2013, she was featured in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation blog's "30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians under 30," and selected to present a nationally broadcast recital at CBC Radio 2's Music Monday series. She received the 2015 Musical Mentoring Award by the Gold Coast Chamber Players in Lafayette, California. She earned her BM degree from Juilliard, where she is currently pursuing her MM.



- *C. V. Starr Foundation Scholarship*
- *Michael and Ethel Cohen Scholarship*

Tyler Cunningham

A native of the D.C. metro area, Tyler Cunningham is a New York-based percussionist who is passionate about new music and the creation of interdisciplinary art. He has performed across the U.S. and abroad in Europe and Asia and has premiered over 50 solo and chamber works. He is the co-founder of PROMPTUS, a post-disciplinary collective of performing artists engaging audiences in immersive environments through modes other than their own disciplines and headed a commissioning project, *inquiry before snow*, leading to the creation of five world premieres inspired by works of poetry. He currently is in the BM program at Juilliard studying with Greg Zuber.



- *Philip C. Kraus Scholarship*
- *Stephen E. Somers Scholarship*



- *C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellowship*

Duanduan Hao

Duanduan Hao began piano lessons when he was 4. After studies in Shanghai and in Paris, he began touring in Europe, winning many prizes in international piano competitions in Germany, France, Switzerland, China, and Italy, such as the Geneva International Music Competition and the Shanghai International Piano Competition. He received his MM from Juilliard as a student of Jerome Lowenthal and is now in the third year of the school's DMA program, simultaneously completing a doctorate in music at the Sorbonne. His translation of Debussy's *Monsieur Croche* into Chinese was published by People's Music Publishing House in China.



- *Juilliard Scholarship*

Issei Herr

Cellist Issei Herr is committed to a diverse array of music both old and new. Past highlights include concerts featuring the music of Milton Babbitt, recital programs centered on the works of Robert Schumann, and a recording of the complete cello suites of J.S. Bach. He has worked with Mario Davidovsky and Kaija Saariaho and premiered music by Eric Nathan, Roberto Sierra, and Kenji Sakai. In 2016 he performed the New York premiere of Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky's *Hearing Solution* with the New Juilliard Ensemble. Issei has attended the Lucerne Festival Academy and was a fellow at the inaugural Contemporary Performance Institute of the Composers Conference at Wellesley College. Born into an artistic family, he began musical studies at age 5. Having earned his BM degree at Juilliard, he is now in the MM program.



- *Irene Diamond Graduate Fellowship*
- *Zubin Mehta Scholarship*

Marza Wilks

Marza Merophi Wilks is a Peruvian-born cellist who started playing at age 5, studying with Christine Lowe-Diemecke. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree and Graduate Diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Natasha Brofsky and Paul Katz. She is currently completing her master's degree at Juilliard as a student of Natasha Brofsky. She has performed with the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of the Southern Fingerlakes, and Genesee Symphony Orchestra, and she will make her New York debut with the World Civic Orchestra in June 2019. A semifinalist of the Sphinx Competition, Wilks has a strong passion for community engagement and sharing her music with communities that wouldn't otherwise have a chance to. She is a founding member of the Adelphi Quartet.

New Juilliard Ensemble

Joel Sachs, Founding Director and Conductor
Matthew Wolford, Manager

The New Juilliard Ensemble, led by founding director Joel Sachs and in its 26th season, presents music by a variety of international composers who write in the most diverse styles, and premiering some 100 compositions. The ensemble appears annually at MoMA's Summergarden and was a featured ensemble four times at the Lincoln Center Festival. In 2009 the ensemble collaborated with *Carnegie Hall's Ancient Paths, Modern Voices* festival; in 2011 with its Japan/NYC festival; in 2012 with its Voices from Latin America festival, and in 2014 its festival *UBUNTU: Music and Arts of South Africa*. A highlight of the 2013-14 season was a collaboration with the Royal Philharmonic Society's Bicentennial Celebration for the U.S. premieres of works by Magnus Lindberg and Judith Weir. It has also participated in collaborations with London's Royal Academy of Music and the Franz Liszt Music University in Budapest. The ensemble's 2017-18 season included music by John Woolrich, Gerald Barry, Raminta Šerkšnytė, Akira Nishimura, Mauricio Kagel, Giya Kancheli, Shuci Wang, Liu Sola, Salvatore Sciarrino, Kolbeinn Bjarnason, Alejandro Cardona, and Jonathan Dawe.

The ensemble performs in Juilliard's Focus! Festival; recent Focus! festivals include *China Today: A Festival of Chinese Composition* (2018); *Our Southern Neighbors: The Music of Latin America* (2017); *Milton Babbitt's World: A Centennial Celebration* (2016); and *Nippon Gendai Ongaku: Japanese Music Since 1945* (2015). The 2019 festival, *On the Air!*, will salute European and Canadian broadcasters that have commissioned and broadcast some 8,000 compositions over the past 70 years.

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