

Daniel Saidenberg Faculty Recital Series

American Brass Quintet



Juilliard



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The Juilliard School
presents

American Brass Quintet

Kevin Cobb and Brandon Ridenour, Trumpets
Eric Reed, Horn
Hillary Simms, Trombone
John D. Rojak, Bass Trombone

Part of the Daniel Saidenberg Faculty Recital Series

Sunday, March 24, 2024, 3pm
Paul Hall

ERIC EWAZEN
(b. 1954)

Frost Fire (1990)
Bright and Fast
Gentle and Mysterious
Tense and Dramatic

LUDWIG MAURER
(1798–1878)

Morgengruß (c. 1871, ed. Edward H. Tarr)

CARLO GESUALDO
(1566–1613)

Tre sospira (c. 1596, ed. Brandon Ridenour)
Deh, come invan sospiro
Io pur respiro in così gran dolore
Itene, o miei sospiri

DAVID BIEDENBENDER
(b. 1984)

Sacred Geometry (2022)
Ripples
Gaudí
Nautilus
Helix

EWAZEN

Canticum Honoris Amicorum (2014)



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.

Joining the American Brass Quintet for *Canticum Honoris Amicorum* are Louis Hanzlik, trumpet, and students of the ABQ Seminar:

Carys Sutherland, Horn; Theo Swanson, Trombone; and Griffin Cutaiar, Bass Trombone

Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, without an intermission

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Notes on the Program

ERIC EWAZEN

Frost Fire

Eric Ewazen (MM '78, DMA '80, composition; faculty, 1980-present) studied under Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Gunther Schuller, and Joseph Schwantner at the Eastman School and Juilliard (where he received numerous composition awards, prizes, and fellowships). His works have been performed by numerous ensembles and orchestras in the U.S., overseas, and at festivals including Woodstock, Tanglewood, Aspen, Caramoor, Tidewater, and the Music Academy of the West. Ewazen's music is published by Theodore Presser, Brass Ring Editions, Tripla Press, Encore Music, Southern Music Company, Boosey & Hawkes, Seesaw, and Eric Ewazen Publishing. He has been a lecturer for the New York Philharmonic's Musical Encounters Series, vice president of the League of Composers—International Society of Contemporary Music, and composer in residence with the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

Eric Ewazen

Born:
March 1, 1954,
in Cleveland

Ewazen wrote about *Frost Fire*:

Frost Fire was gratefully dedicated to the American Brass Quintet in honor of its 30th anniversary. Over these past years, it has been performed worldwide and has been recorded on the Well-Tempered label. It was commissioned by ABQ in 1989 with support from the Jerome Foundation. The work, based on traditional musical forms and models, is in three movements.

The first movement, marked Bright and Fast, is a joyous celebration of sonorous chords, playful motives, and rhythmic gestures. It is in a strict sonata-allegro form with a clearly defined and classically proportioned exposition-development-recapitulation framed by complimentary introduction and coda sections. The second movement, marked Gentle and Mysterious, has a waltz-like feel to it. In a ternary (A-B-A) form, the outer sections consist of ribbons of melodies being gently passed from instrument to instrument. The middle section is a stately fugue that builds in intensity, volume, and rich-sounding resonance. The final movement, Tense and Dramatic, brings back material from the first movement but sets it in a much more turbulent and frenetic environment. Although this movement is based on the skeletal outlines of a sonata-allegro form, it is much freer and more erratic, with shifting meters and contrasting, interpolated passages, ultimately leading the way to a heroic and dynamic conclusion.

LUDWIG MAURER *Morgengruß*

Ludwig Maurer

Born:

February 8, 1789,
in Potsdam,
Germany

Died:

Saint Petersburg,
Russia

Splitting his career between his native Germany and St. Petersburg, Ludwig Maurer was well known as both a violinist and composer. His technique must have been extraordinary, as his pre-Paganini compositions demand spiccato, multiple stopping, and complex bowing. His Symphony, Op. 67, and Sinfonia Concertante for four violins, Op. 55, were both performed often in his lifetime. Maurer devoted his later years to directing opera in St. Petersburg. In 1871, as a member of the opera committee at the Mariinsky Theater, he joined in a veto of *Boris Godunov*, bitterly disappointing Mussorgsky. They objected not to the bold modern sounds (which Rimsky-Korsakov would later feel compelled to “correct”) but to the lack of a prominent female role and to certain “ungodly” demands inflicted upon the double basses! Maurer’s sons became prominent Russian musicians, and his oldest, Vsevolod, eventually assumed directorship of the Italian Opera in St. Petersburg.

Morgengruß (Morning Greeting) was not part of Maurer’s popular set of 12 “kleine stücke” for brass, though it likely came from the same period as that set, which is some of the earliest music written exclusively for brass. A true gem of the repertoire, the seldom-performed *Morgengruß* is a wonderful example of the pure lyric capabilities of brass instruments.
—Chris Gekker

CARLO GESUALDO

Tre sospira

The nobleman and musician Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa and Count of Conza, composed perhaps the most riveting, agonizing, and highly expressive music of the late Renaissance; by all accounts, it was music that mirrored his mind. He was fully immersed in music but little else as a young man, and his marriage to his first cousin Maria d'Avolos ended tragically. After discovering she had been involved in a love affair with another nobleman, Gesualdo murdered them and placed their mutilated bodies outside his castle walls for all to see. After the murders (followed by the alleged killing of his second son and his father-in-law), in 1554 Gesualdo moved to Ferrara, one of the more progressive Italian cultural centers of the time. His Ferrara residency resulted in a significant creative output, including his first book of madrigals. Reeling from the obvious guilt of these murders, Gesualdo experienced a severe decline in his mental state (cited as severe depression) but a prolific outpouring of highly chromatic and expressive madrigals burst forth.

The harmonic progressions and melodic contours of Gesualdo's madrigals seem incredibly disorganized, even manic in their relationship to one another. Yet each individual phrase is clear and thorough in its intent—small musical thoughts logical on their own, without any apparent relationship to the others. The chordal shifts are unexpected, untraditional, daring, and highly progressive for the time. Moments within these madrigals still sound modern, even up against the new music of today.

We present three of Gesualdo's madrigals that thematically revolve around the pain felt with every breath (*respiro*) and sigh (*sospiro*) from a tormented heart and mind. Although originally vocal works, madrigals were often performed by instrumentalists in Gesualdo's time. The text provided on the following page (likely written by Gesualdo himself) serves to enhance the highly expressive journey each madrigal presents to the listener.

—Brandon Ridenour

Carlo Gesualdo

Born:
March 30, 1566,
in Venosa, Italy

Died:
September 8, 1613,
in Gesualdo, Italy

Notes on the Program (Continued)

Deh, come invan sospiro

Ah! How I sigh in vain,
ah! How I look at you in vain,
since, cruel one, you give joy to all
and to me only death!
Unhappy my fate,
that life for me has become death.

Io pur respiro in così gran dolore

I still breathe through such immense pain,
and you still live, o pitiless heart?
Alas! There is no more hope
to see again my beloved!
Then, death, bring me help,
kill this life off.
Wound me mercifully,
put an end to life and to this great suffering.

Itene, o miei sospiri

My sighs, may you wing
your way to her
who is causing me bitter torment.
For pity's sake, tell her
of my great suffering.
If she will be as merciful
as she is beautiful,
I shall cease my bitter lament
and sing a love song.

DAVID BIEDENBENDER
Sacred Geometry

David Biedenbender is a composer, conductor, performer, educator, and interdisciplinary collaborator who has written music for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations. His work is often influenced by his diverse musical experiences in rock and jazz bands as an electric bassist, in wind, jazz, and New Orleans-style brass bands as a euphonium, bass trombone, and tuba player, and by his study of Indian Carnatic music. An associate professor of composition in the College of Music at Michigan State University, he received his master's and DMA in composition from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and his master's in composition and theory from Central Michigan University. Biedenbender's primary musical mentors include Evan Chambers, Kristin Kuster, Stephen Rush, Michael Daugherty, Bright Sheng, Christopher Lees, David R. Gillingham, José Luis-Maurtúa, and John Williamson. Biedenbender has also studied at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala with Anders Hillborg and Steven Stucky, the Aspen Music Festival and School with Syd Hodkinson, and in Mysore, India, where he studied South Indian Carnatic music, focusing on the mridangam with Vidwan G.S. Ramanujan.

**David
Biedenbender**

Born:
1984, in Waukesha,
Wisconsin

Biedenbauer wrote about *Sacred Geometry*:

Sacred Geometry is inspired by the work of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926), best known for creating la Basílica de la Sagrada Família, a cathedral in Barcelona that has been under construction since 1882. Gaudí integrated symbols of his faith into every detail of the basilica, weaving them into complex geometric forms he studied in the natural world like hyperbolic paraboloids, hyperboloids, helicoids, and cones. He also utilized trencadís, a form of mosaic art made by cementing together recycled shards of tile and chinaware, fashioning beautiful new things out of the broken and discarded. The inside of the cathedral mimics a forest, with treelike columns and branches supporting hyperboloid vaults in spectacular fractals, evoking the infinite—connecting God and creation. I think of this piece like a strange liturgy—or ritual—to meditate on this striking space, to contemplate Gaudí's way of seeing the world, and to discover a similar sense of awe and wonder.

The first movement, Ripples, is quite simple—a chanted invocation in the trumpets with orchestrated reverberations evoking the large spaces inside the cathedral. There are also distant echoes of William Byrd's 1605 setting of *Ave Verum Corpus* in this movement. My favorite moment of Byrd's work is this surprising, fleeting dissonance, the result of a major chord in the upper voices against a weeping, descending minor melody in the bass, coinciding with the text "Miserere—have mercy." It is bittersweet and broken.

The second movement, Gaudí, is playful and whimsical, even irreverent. The Latin root of Gaudí is *gaudere*, which means "to rejoice" or "to take pleasure in." Gaudí threaded the seemingly fantastical aspects of our world into dreamlike designs and surreal structures that seem unnaturally natural—or naturally unnatural. Imagine stopping to marvel at some small, unusual flower like *orchis italica* or hearing the peculiar call of a brown sicklebill or a black-throated loon. I think of this movement as a walk through a garden of strange delights.

A nautilus is a marine mollusk with a shell in the shape of a logarithmic spiral. As the nautilus grows, it lives in the outermost chamber of the shell, sealing off the previous chamber with a wall that prevents it from returning to its old home. As a symbol, it has many meanings and connections, but, for me, I find it to be a powerful metaphor: building anew while always leaving behind an artifact of the past—a stunningly beautiful one, in fact. The third movement, Nautilus, is built on a small, simple phrase that spins and rotates into longer and longer threads and swirling, circular harmonic progressions.

The final movement is titled Helix. The helix also has many connections and connotations, appearing in everything from spiral staircases to seashells, forming the structure for the molecules from which life is built, and lying at the center of mathematical formulas that describe both infinitesimally small subatomic particles as well as the mechanics of the entire universe.

ERIC EWAZEN

Canticum Honoris Amicorum

Canticum honoris amicorum, a nonet for brass, was a celebration of an unprecedented transition in the extraordinary life of ABQ. As one of the legendary chamber music ensembles of our time, ABQ showcases the beauty, grandeur and virtuosic possibilities of brass chamber music and creating the gold standard worldwide for brass performance while adding hundreds of new compositions by the major composers of our times to the repertoire. It has been a beloved musical ensemble to countless students, colleagues, and audiences around the world. The members have truly been musical friends, and this piece is written in honor of that friendship.

This nonet was written as trumpeter Raymond Mase and horn player David Wakefield simultaneously retired in 2014, and Louis Hanzlik and Eric Reed became the newest members of the ensemble. The work honors the glorious contributions of Ray and David's sublime performances and their total dedication to their art, through their unprecedented influence on their students and fellow musicians, through their extraordinary wealth of recordings of the classics, old and new, and through their enduring friendships. The work was designed to be used as a similar celebration of every future transition in personnel, with new membership joining the former in a musical passing of the torch.

Canticum Honoris Amicorum, its Latin title translated as "a song honoring friends," reflects ABQ's great dedication to the works of the composers like Gabrieli, Monteverdi, and the composers of the English Renaissance as well as reflecting amazing close friendships with all they have come in contact with through the years. The work is a festive celebration of this transition, showcasing ABQ's impeccable playing with a madrigal type of approach, alternating contrapuntal virtuosity and heroic chorales singing the praises of dear "older friends" and the new friends who will continue the tradition of great music, great brass playing, and great musical influences for decades to come.

—Eric Ewazen

American Brass Quintet



The American Brass Quintet (ABQ), internationally recognized as one of the era's premier chamber music ensembles, has earned its stellar reputation through its celebrated performances, genre-defining commissioned works, and ongoing commitment to the education of generations of musicians. Since its founding in 1960, ABQ has performed on five continents, made nearly 60 recordings, and premiered more than 150 contemporary works for brass. The ensemble has commissioned works by leading composers that have contributed significantly to both contemporary chamber music and the foundation of the modern brass quintet repertoire, including Elliott Carter, Eric Ewazen, Jennifer Higdon, Anthony Plog, Huang Ruo, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, William Schuman, Joan Tower, Charles Whittenberg, and John Zorn.

The quintet's emerging composer commissioning program produced brass quintets by rising stars Gordon Beeferman, Jay Greenberg, Trevor Gureckis, and Shafer Mahoney. Recent commissions include Ching-chu Hu's *A Distant Hope*, premiered at Chamber Music Columbus; Jennifer Higdon's *Book of Brass*, debuted at Bowling Green State University; and an upcoming work by Tyshawyn Sorrey. The group's latest recording *Perspectives*, one of 12 albums with Summit Records, features music by Robert Paterson, Jay Greenberg, Sebastian Currier, and Ewazen. This season, ABQ can be heard in recital at Aspen; Ashland, Oregon; Westchester County, New York; and Kalamazoo, Michigan. Recent highlights include performances at University of Delaware's Master Players Concert Series, the Chamber Music Society of Wichita, Frost School of Music in Miami, New Orleans Friends of Music, Westchester Chamber Music Society, Arts Council of Moore County in Southern Pines (North Carolina), DePaul University School of Music, Impromptu Classical Concerts in Key West, Tryon Concert Association, Beaches Fine Arts Series in Jacksonville, Danbury Concert Association in Connecticut, and Chamber Music Society of Logan in Utah.

Committed to the development of brass chamber music through higher education, ABQ has been ensemble in residence at Juilliard since 1987 and at the Aspen Music Festival since 1970. In 2018, the group launched the ABQ Seminar @ Aspen, a four-week brass chamber music intensive at the Aspen Music Festival that offers the highest caliber of training for emerging brass quintets and musicians. Since 2000, the quintet also has shared its expertise in chamber music coaching and performance through a program of short residencies that feature regularly in the group's touring schedule. Offering young musicians an intense chamber music experience over several days, the residencies have been embraced by schools and communities throughout the U.S. and in a dozen foreign countries. Among its numerous distinctions and citations, ABQ was the 2013 recipient of the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award for significant and lasting contributions to the field, the highest honor accorded by Chamber Music America.

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