New Juilliard Ensemble

Juilliard



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The Juilliard School presents

New Juilliard Ensemble

Joel Sachs, Founding Director and Conductor

Tuesday, September 28, 2021, 7:30pm Peter Jay Sharp Theater

All World Premieres, Composed for the New Juilliard Ensemble

YE XIAOGANG Strophe, Op. 26b (2020) (China, b. 1955) Composed for the New Julliard Ensemble and the Xinghai Conservatory of Music WILL STACKPOLE Unbeing (for a time) (2020-21) (U.S., b. 1990) Marianna Gailus, Narrator **EVAN ANDERSON** A gust inside the god. A wind (2020, revised 2021) (U.S., b. 1995) MARC MIGÓ Four Songs in Red (2020) I'm a Patriot (Spain, b. 1993) Were Things Any Different in 1917? I'm in Love With Myself How Much? Maggie Reneé, Mezzo-Soprano

Additional support for this performance was provided in part by the Muriel Gluck Production Fund.

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Ye Xiaogang

Born: Shanghai, in 1955

Strophe YE XIAOGANG

Born into a musical family—his father was also a composer—Ye Xiaogang began piano at age 4. During the Cultural Revolution, he, like so many Chinese, was sent to work in the countryside after graduating from high school. Upon finishing his six years of bench work in a factory, he enrolled into the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, studying composition with Du Mingxin. Ye also studied with Alexander Goehr (U.K.) and received a full scholarship from the Eastman School of Music in 1987 to further his education with Samuel Adler, Joseph Schwantner, and Louis Andriessen. Since 1983. Ye has received numerous national and international awards and commissions and has written symphonies, concertos, and chamber music for premieres in Canada, the U.S., Japan, New Zealand, Finland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. He has also composed for about 30 films. He has been awarded the 20th-Century Chinese Music Master prize, grand prize in the Taiwan Symphony's first orchestral composition competition, first prize in the Alexander Tcherepnin Composition Competition (U.S.), Louis Lane and Howard Hanson prizes at Eastman, a Heritage Prize for excellence in creative activity in music from the Li Foundation (San Francisco), best movie music award (Shanghai), China's national best film score prize, Golden Bell Award for Symphony and Chamber Music (China), 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship, and 2013 China Arts Award. Since 1995, his music has been published by Schott. He was vice president of the Central Conservatory of Music-where he is a professor of composition and created the Beijing Modern festival-and a member of the national parliament. Ye was chairman of the China Musicians Association and became the founding dean of the School of Music, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen.

Composing the chamber work *Strophe* has been on Ye Xiaogang's to-do list for more than 20 years. He had always reserved an opus number for it, but it was continually delayed for many reasons, especially pressing obligations for commissioned works. In 2015, when Joel Sachs told him that the New Juilliard Ensemble would like to perform one of his chamber pieces, Ye thought it was the right time to write *Strophe*. Yet it was delayed for several more years. In 2019, over dinner in Beijing, Sachs teased him about the delays. Then Ye asked for a concert date and committed to writing it, although he first had to complete other pieces commissioned by the Tsingtao International Music Festival. He managed to finish them, starting *Strophe* as the environment changed dramatically with COVID-19 sweeping through East Asia. Locked down in Beijing for months, Ye wryly assured Sachs that he had ample time to concentrate on this long-gestating project. It was originally to have been performed in the 2020-21 season. Ye says:

The *Strophe* we hear today is one of the strangest pieces in my catalog: The long period of its gestation—nearly two decades—led me to completely change my original intentions for the piece as I worked on it. Effectively, the music contains 20 years of my life—what I have seen, felt, and thought about the evolution of musical expression; the impact of technology on the content; my free and unrestrained reactions to the world; the incurable pain of the human nature; the unknown to the vast universe; the confusion of the way out of thought that hardly sees the dawn. The piece was finished during a period when I was also partly working for the Xinghai Conservatory of Music and is my first chamber composition dedicated to the Xinghai Conservatory of Music as well as to Joel Sachs.

Unbeing (for a time) WILL STACKPOLE

Will Stackpole (MM '16, DMA '21, composition) began his musical career as an electric guitarist and recording engineer but soon found himself driven to compose for orchestras and chamber ensembles. It was while he was studying at Juilliard that Stackpole's compositional voice was already noted for its approach to orchestration and harmony. His works have been played across the U.S. by ensembles including the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Davin-Levin Duo, and Juilliard Orchestra. An adjunct professor at Stevens Institute of Technology, in Hoboken, where he teaches composition and orchestration, Stackpole received his BM at Stevens and his MM at Juilliard, in the studio of Robert Beaser.

Unbeing (for a time), commissioned by the New Juilliard Ensemble as a result of the ensemble's 2020 audition for Juilliard composition students, was originally scheduled to premiere in April for a concert that was a victim of the pandemic. The composer writes:

When I first encountered Andy Weir's short story *The Egg*, it completely bowled me over. The story is a unique experience. Weir presents the surreal alongside the mundane and somehow lends a perspective on being human that I had never encountered before. For about 10 years, these 1,000 words were glued to my brain, popping into my consciousness at least once a week. Something about living through 2020, and the global struggle to realize and remember the humanity of every single person around us, finally sparked the idea to create a version of this story with music. At first, I even thought of turning it into a single-scene opera, but felt that the gleefully frank and everyday tone of this cosmic and profound text would be lost. I won't say anything about the plot here, since I feel the piece is best experienced for the first time with as little expectation as possible. I do hope this music will help listeners reflect on the nature of their connection to each life around them, their place within the world, and their consciousness within reality.

The composer has requested that the text—which is used by permission of the author—not be printed in the program.



Will Stackpole

Born: Concord, New Hampshire, in 1990



Evan Anderson

Born: Boston, in 1995

A gust inside the god. A wind EVAN ANDERSON

Evan Anderson (MM '20, composition) is a composer and multiinstrumentalist who received his BM from the New England Conservatory, where he studied with John Mallia and Kati Agocs, and his MM from Juilliard under Melinda Wagner and Mari Kimura. He says that his music is inspired by the search for a kind of musical and sonic framework that taps into the deepest of feelings within (and even beyond) the human spirit. The ways in which nature can be erratic and both parallels and conflicts with the human endeavors of meaning and emotion is a present source of inspiration. To this aim, Anderson's music explores an expanded sound palate with extended playing techniques, alternate tunings, and microtonal just intonation. *A gust inside the god. A wind* is one of two commissions by the New Juilliard Ensemble resulting from its competition in April 2019; its premiere was delayed by the pandemic. The composer provides the following program note:

 "....even if your mouth was forced wide open by your own voice—learn to forget that passionate music. It will end.
True singing is a different breath, about nothing. A gust inside the god. A wind."
—Rainer Maria Rilke, from The Sonnets to Orpheus I, 3 (translation by Stephen Mitchell)

Wind, like the very raw material of life, exists outside of us. Gusts of nature are pushed upon us at all times and on all scales, but it is only we who can form into something. So are we god or is nature? Is there something that we strive for? Essential, even truly other, in material, in sound? Or is it pattern, hallucination, an artificial construct of the human brain?

The work perhaps tells a story: At first it is quiet, and shyly pure and harmonic. Though something else is there too and it strives to break free: outbursts with inharmonic darkness. These become more frequent and eventually the muse teaches a difficult lesson. It caresses one last time as it fades away and into the grist of life, or better—the syntactical structure of nature.

Obviously, this syntax is beyond human language. It is labyrinthine in its associations that lead to "nowhere." Yet, for all of this ambiguity, it is evident that certain sounds express vital feelings: They have the power to take us to peak experience, remind us why we are alive, fill us with vibrant color, and then tear us down to the deepest depths. Where does this come from?

Four Songs in Red MARC MIGÓ

After receiving a Deutsche Grammophon CD collection from his grandfather for his 16th birthday, Marc Migó (MM '19, composition) became unexpectedly and passionately drawn to its contents. This discovery led him to seek out guidance from pianist Liliana Sainz. Three years later, he enrolled at ESMUC (Superior Music School of Catalonia). In 2017, thanks to a scholarship from SGAE (Spanish Society of Authors and Publishers), he moved to New York to continue his musical studies at Juilliard, where he was awarded the 2018 Orchestral Composition Prize. In 2019, he received the Pablo Casals Festival Award, a Morton Gould young composers award by ASCAP, and the New Juilliard Ensemble annual commissioning competition prize. He also has been a fellow at the 2020 Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute and a winner of the 2020 George Enescu Prize. Migó is a C.V. Starr fellow at Juilliard under the mentorship of John Corigliano.

Four Songs in Red was commissioned by the New Juilliard Ensemble as a result of its 2019 competition for Juilliard composition students. The world premiere, originally scheduled for April 2020, was delayed by the pandemic, but in the meantime, the piece received the 2020 Enescu Prize for greatest originality. Its Spanish premiere will take place on September 30, at Barcelona's Palau de la Música. The composer writes:

I first came across the work of Belarusian author and Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich in 2015 through the Catalan translation of her *Voices from Chernobyl*. By that time, I was trying to find literature about contemporary Ukraine in order to better understand the country my wife comes from.

Alexievich's style immediately fascinated me. Her journalistic approach has been described as polyphonic, for it intertwines real, everyday people's voices into a highly nuanced, kaleidoscopic work. The tragically powerful stories contained in the book deeply moved me, to the point of considering for the first time setting Alexievich's texts to music. However, the topic of Chernobyl seemed too devastating, and luckily for me too distant to be addressed in an honest and adequate manner. It was not until I read Alexievich's *Secondhand Time* that I knew I had found an exceptional source for a song cycle.

Secondhand Time revolves around the lives of the Soviet people and what the crumbling of the USSR meant for them. It also warns us of a scary realization: that of a time that comes to us once again. Young people who forget who Stalin was wear shirts with his face on them; manipulation through fake news is rampant; popular protests are crushed or encouraged by political leaders for their own interest, sometimes the two at once.



Marc Migó

Born: Barcelona, in 1993 Thanks to the commission of the New Juilliard Ensemble, led by Joel Sachs, I could satisfy my urge to set to music four highly contrasting voices, coming from real interviews conducted by Alexievich during the 1990s in post-Soviet Russia. In order to adapt them into the form of songs, I repeated certain words and omitted others, while always maintaining the original meaning and spontaneity with which they speak to us.

Texts

MIGÓ

Four Songs in Red

(from Svetlana Alexievich's interviews with citizens of the former USSR)

l'm a Patriot

I'm a patriot! Let me have my say. We are living in the most shameful era of our entire history.

Ours is the generation of cowards and traitors. We failed to defend our Motherland. I will never get used to the Russian tricolor flag. I'm a patriot! I will always see the red banner in front of my eyes.

The banner of a great nation. Of the great Victory!

Don't tell me any fairy tales ... about how the CIA took down the Soviet Union. Don't go looking for Judeo-Masonic conspiracy.

We did it ourselves! With our own hands! With our own hands!

We wanted everyone to be able to buy themselves a Mercedes, a plastic VCR. We wanted pornos in the kiosks \ldots

Russia needs a strong hand. An iron hand. An overseer with a stick. Long live the mighty Stalin! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Were Things Any Different in 1917?

We kept turning the dial, but every station was just playing classical music. Just classical music. Moscow was filled with tanks and armored vehicles. We'd read our fill of dissident literature. They'd given us a little air, now everything was going to go on lockdown again.

We'd be like butterflies crushed against the pavement \ldots Catastrophe was at hand \ldots

Then, suddenly, a miracle! Radio Russia started working again: "the legally elected President has been forced to resign \ldots there has been a cynical attempt at a putsch \ldots "

Thousands of people were already out in the streets. Gorbachev was in danger ... To go or not to go. To go or not to go—there was no question. We took all the food out of the pantry. Thousands of people were, like us, headed down to the Metro ...

While others were standing in line for ice cream or buying flowers. Were things any different in 1917?

Some people were shooting while others were dancing at balls. Dancing ... like butterflies ... crushed against ...

I'm in Love With Myself

A boy from my class fell in love with me. "Are you in love with me back?" My reply: "I'm in love with myself."

"I'm in love with myself."

My classmates didn't interest me, the lectures were boring.

Meanwhile, non-Soviet life was roiling all around us at fever pitch! The first used foreign cars appeared. The first McDonald's on Pushkin Square ... What Lenin? What Stalin? That's all in the past! Everything used to be gray, but here came the bright colors, the eye-catching billboards. You wanted it all, you could have it all!

I preferred older men. Bureaucrats and businessmen. Their vocabulary inspires me: offshore accounts, internet marketing, kickbacks, creative strategies. Love is a kind of business. Everyone saves their strength for the leap forward! For their career!

People who see me on the street think that I am rich and happy! I have it all: a big house, an expensive car, Italian furniture ... But I live alone. And that's how I like it! I'm in love with myself!

I love talking to myself ...

first and foremost about myself ...

How Much?

Medals! "For Valor." "For Military Service." I touched them ... caressed them ... I couldn't believe my eyes! "For defending Sebastopol," "For defending the Caucasus." All of them were precious. Medals and uniforms being sold for dollars ...

"How much?" My husband asked, pointing at the "For Valor" medal.

"Twenty dollars. Or, for you, I'll do a grand—one thousand rubles."

"And the Order of Lenin?"

"For you, one hundred dollars."

"And your conscience?"

"Are you nuts? These are relics from the era of totalitarianism."

I did not recognize my Moscow. What city was this? It felt like we were in some kind of film set. Like we were being pranked ...

This isn't theater! This is life! How can you treat it like that? This is life! My life! How can you treat it like that? My life! My life!

Translated by Bela Shayevich

Used with the permission of Svetlana Alexievich



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 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, Mongolia, 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). 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 since 1993 has been artistic director of Juilliard's concerts at the Museum of Modern Art. 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. Sachs 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 presented with Columbia's Alice M. Ditson Award for his service to American music. He has recorded for Naxos and other labels.

Marianna Gailus

Born and raised in New York City, Marianna Gailus is a fourth-year MFA student and a proud member of Group 51 in Juilliard's Drama Division. In 2017, she received her bachelor's degree in history from Yale University, where she studied the intersections among American public history, cultural collective memory, and methodologies of storytelling. As an actor, she has trained with the British American Drama Academy, Chautauqua Theater Company's Summer Conservatory, and Einhorn School of Performing Arts at Primary Stages. When she's not onstage (or on Zoom) at Juilliard, she volunteers at the American Museum of Natural History as a tour guide and exhibit interpreter.

Maggie Reneé

Maggie Reneé (BM '20, voice), a mezzo-soprano from Los Angeles, is a Juilliard honors graduate pursuing her master's studying with Elizabeth Bishop. A 2021 Metropolitan Opera National Council Regional Encouragement award winner, she was an apprentice artist at Santa Fe Opera and covered Olga in *Eugene Onegin*. She sang King Egeo in *Teseo* and Goffredo in *Rinaldo* at Juilliard and Carmen in *La Tragédie de Carmen* with City Lyric Opera, toured Europe with Juilliard's *Dido and Aeneas*, and made solo debuts with the Reno and California philharmonic orchestras. In 2017, she made her European debut as Cherubino in Germany. She writes her own music, has a black belt in karate, and entertains more than 170,000 subscribers on her YouTube channel.



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The New Juilliard Ensemble, led by founding director Joel Sachs and in its 29th season, presents music by a variety of international composers who write in diverse styles. The ensemble appears regularly at the Museum of Modern Art's Summergarden series, was featured four times at the Lincoln Center Festival, and has premiered more than 100 compositions. The 2020-21 season-which, due to the pandemic, comprised video recordings of live performances that will gradually be released to the public-featured music by Oleg Felzer (Azerbaijan), Toshio Hosokawa (Japan), Eric Tanguy (France), Eleanor Alberga (Jamaica/U.K.), George Lewis (U.S.), Bongani Ndodana-Breen (South Africa), Yao Chen (China), Sofia Gubaidulina (USSR/ Germany), and Horacio Fernandez Vazguez (Mexico). In the 2019-20 season, the ensemble featured works by Julian Anderson (U.K.), Oleg Felzer (Azerbaijan/U.S.), Jacqueline Fontyn (Belgium), Deirdre Gribbin (Northern Ireland), Alexander Goehr (U.K.), Balázs Horváth (Hungary), Magnus Lindberg (Finland), Elisabeth Lutyens (U.K.), Ursula Mamlok (Germany/U.S.), Narang Prangcharoen (Thailand), Shulamit Ran (Israel/U.S.), Alfredo Rugeles (Venezuela), Ruth Crawford Seeger (U.S.), Eric Tanguy (France), and Galina Ustvoloskaya (USSR). The New Juilliard Ensemble performs the opening concert of Juilliard's annual Focus festival; its most recent edition was 2020's Trailblazers: Pioneering Women Composers of the 20th Century. Members of the ensemble have performed in Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia. Last season, the group recorded made two video concerts of music by composers from Azerbaijan, Japan, France, South Africa, and the U.S. The rest of this season's concerts are November 9, in Studio 309; the opening of the Focus festival, on January 21 in Alice Tully Hall; and April 11, also in Tully.

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As of March 1, 2021

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