

ALBANY SYMPHONY

2022 AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

TrailBlaze NY

FRIDAY | JULY 1, 2022
MOHAWK HARBOR, SCHENECTADY

DAVID ALAN MILLER, CONDUCTOR
EMPIRE STATE YOUTH ORCHESTRA PERCUSSION
PERCUSSION QUARTET: COLLEEN BERNSTEIN, EMMA GIERSZAL,
YOUNGKYOUNG LEE, OLIVER XU

Bobby Ge

In Search of Standard Time

- I. Adrift
- II. Interlude 1 - The DeWitt Clinton
- III. Toward a Common Perception of Time
- IV. Interlude 2 - Rail Trails
- V. Found Time

Aaron Copland

Appalachian Spring

Viet Cuong

Re(new)al

Woody Guthrie arr. Mitchell McCarthy

This Land is Your Land, sing-along

John Williams

E.T. Main Theme

John Philip Sousa

Stars and Stripes Forever

All programs and artists are subject to change



CELINE & DANIEL KREDENTSER

MARISA & ALLAN EISEMANN

ALBANY SYMPHONY

VIOLIN I

Jamecyn Morey
Elizabeth Silver
Paula Oakes
Heather Frank-
Olsen
Kae Nakano
Sooyeon Kim

VIOLA

Daniel Brye
Tina Chang-Chien
Carla Belloso

CELLO

Erica Pickhardt
Kevin Belloso

VIOLIN II

Mitsuko Suzuki
Barbara Lapidus
Christine Kim
Emily Frederick
Ouisa Forhaltz

BASS

Joshua DuPoint
Mike Fittipaldi

FLUTE

Zach Sheets
Brendan Ryan

OBOE

Boris Baev
Alexis Mitchell

CLARINET

Bixby Kennedy
Christopher Bush

BASSOON

Josh Butcher
Maya Stone

SAXOPHONE

Lois Hicks -
Wozniak
Devin DiMauro

HORN

Victor Sungarian
Matthew Jaimes

TRUMPET

Mark Clodfelter
Eric Latini

TROMBONE

Wes Hopper
Chuck Morris

TIMPANI

Miles Salerni

PERCUSSION

Matthew Gold
Colleen Bernstein

SYNTHESIZER

Blair McMillen

HARP

Lynette Wardle

BOBBY GE

Bobby Ge is a Chinese-American composer and avid collaborator who seeks to create vivid emotional journeys that navigate boundaries between genre and medium. He has created multimedia projects with the Space Telescope Science Institute, painters collective Art10Baltimore, the Baltimore Rock Opera Society, the Scattered Players Theater Company, and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. Ge has received commissions and performances by groups including the Minnesota Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony, the Albany Symphony's Dogs of Desire, the Harbin Symphony Orchestra, Music from Copland House, the Pacific Chamber Orchestra, the Bergamot Quartet, the Boss Street Brass Band, and Mind on Fire. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D at Princeton University as a Naumberg Fellow, and holds degrees from UC Berkeley and the Peabody Conservatory.



BOBBY GE- In Search of Standard Time

All my life, I have lived between America and China in a rather unwieldy setup that has forced me to negotiate multiple time zones for the sake of simple tasks like family calls or work meetings. I often imagine how my friends and collaborators around the world gear up for the same meetings: some set early alarms, others stay up late, while others sandwich their lunch breaks between calls. Regardless, all of us must march to the steady beat of Greenwich Mean Time's baton.

It's funny to think that this global system of synchronized time zones might have its roots in the humble city of Schenectady, NY. Home to the first passenger railroad in America, the city's Mohawk & Hudson line famously cut down a day's worth of travel to less than an hour. To 19th century riders, trains were like time machines, and Schenectady would lead the way in building them for over a century as rails spread across the nation.

Timekeeping swiftly became a necessity as passengers and freight became increasingly dependent on this new technology. The implications of these timetables were not lost on sci-fi author Harlan Ellison, who wrote one of his most celebrated short stories, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," in response to the power of the almighty train schedule. For Ellison, time was a tyrant ruling with a steam-engine fist, commanding the lives of passengers, workers, and manufacturers alike with millisecond precision. When asked where he found his inspiration, he wryly responded, "Schenectady."

Toying with time has always been exciting to me, especially in the context of music. Musicians naturally quantize time into beats and bars and riffs and rhythms; chamber players manage to construct a shared pulse even without the help of a conductor; performances can seemingly stretch and compress lengthy durations at will. This piece, In Search of Standard Time, explores all of these ideas as a tribute to the innovations and rails that led to our world's obsession with time. The music begins senza misura, drifting about peacefully before lurching toward a sense of forward motion. The initial rhythms are unstable and immature, ricocheting through new time signatures and unmeasured passages as they slowly become more and more regular, evoking the rigidity of timetables. At its climax, the piece hurtles forward at breakneck speed, falling to pieces as each part dissolves into furious, uncoordinated flurries of notes. Finally, once all is calm once more, the opening material reappears with leisurely, insouciant motion, evoking the fate of Schenectady's Mohawk & Hudson railroad: a trail walk, meant for hikers to explore at their own unhurried pace.

This piece was commissioned by the Albany Symphony for the 2022 American Music Festival, celebrating the completion of the Empire State Trail.

EMPIRE STATE YOUTH ORCHESTRA PERCUSSION

ESYO is one of the only youth music organizations in the country to host a progressive program consisting of three percussion ensembles. ESYO's Youth Percussion Ensemble is ESYO's most advanced percussion ensemble. The ensemble is comprised of percussionists whose technical skills and musicality are at the highest level. Members of the ensemble explore the diverse sonic platform of percussion ensembles; performing a wide variety of percussion instruments including marimba, vibraphone, timpani, and a host of drums from around the world.

VIET CUONG

Called "alluring" and "wildly inventive" by The New York Times, the music of American composer Viet Cuong has been performed on six continents by musicians and ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, Eighth Blackbird, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Alarm Will Sound, Atlanta Symphony, Sandbox Percussion, Albany Symphony, PRISM Quartet, and Dallas Winds, among many others. Viet's music has been featured in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center, and his works for wind ensemble have amassed hundreds of performances worldwide. Passionate about bringing these different facets of the contemporary music community together, his upcoming projects include a concerto for Eighth Blackbird with the United States Navy Band. Viet also enjoys exploring the unexpected and whimsical, and he is often drawn to projects where he can make peculiar combinations and sounds feel enchanting or oddly satisfying. His recent works thus include a snare drum solo, percussion quartet concerto, and, most recently, a double oboe concerto. He is currently the California Symphony's Young American Composer-in-Residence, and recently served as the Early Career Musician-in-Residence at the Dumbarton Oaks. Viet holds degrees from Princeton University (MFA/PhD), the Curtis Institute of Music (AD), and Peabody Conservatory (BM/MM).



VIET CUONG - *Re(new)al*

I have tremendous respect for renewable energy initiatives and the commitment to creating a new, better reality for us all. *Re(new)al* is a percussion quartet concerto that is similarly devoted to finding unexpected ways to breathe new life into traditional ideas, and the solo quartet therefore performs on several "found" instruments, including crystal glasses and compressed air cans.

And while the piece also features more traditional instruments, such as snare drum and vibraphone, I looked for ways to either alter their sounds or find new ways to play them. For instance, a single snare drum is played by all four members of the quartet, and certain notes of the vibraphone are prepared with aluminum foil to recreate sounds found in electronic music. The entire piece was conceived in this way, and even the accompaniment was written these ideas in mind.

Cooperation and synergy are also core themes of the piece, as I believe we all have to work together to move forward. All of the music played by the solo quartet is comprised of single musical ideas that are evenly distributed between the four soloists (for those interested, the fancy musical term for this is a *hocket*). The music would therefore be dysfunctional without the presence and dedication of all four members. For example, the quartet divvies up lighting-fast drum set beats in the second movement and then shares one *glockenspiel* in the last movement. But perhaps my favorite example of synergy in the piece is in the very opening, where the four soloists toast crystal glasses. We always toast glasses in the presence of others, and oftentimes to celebrate new beginnings. This is my simple way of celebrating everyone who is working together to create a cleaner, more efficient world.

Re(new)al is constructed of three continuous movements, each inspired by the power of hydro, wind, and solar energies. The hydro movement transforms tuned crystal glasses into ringing hand bells as the wind ensemble slowly submerges the soloists in their sound. The second movement turns each member of the quartet into a blade of a dizzying wind turbine, playing seemingly-impossible 90's-inspired drum and bass patterns. The closing movement simulates a sunrise and evokes the brilliance of sunlight with metallic percussion instruments. This piece was originally written with a *sinfonietta* accompaniment, and in its original form was commissioned for the 2017 American Music Festival by David Alan Miller and the Albany Symphony's *Dogs of Desire* in partnership with GE Renewable Energy. A full orchestra version was commissioned in 2018 by the Albany Symphony, and this final version for wind ensemble was commissioned by a consortium of universities and community ensembles. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been involved in any of the three versions of this piece.

COLLEEN BERNSTEIN

Colleen Bernstein is an award-winning percussionist, educator, and creative collaborator recognized for her passionate performances and impactful community engagement initiatives. She has been featured in concerts with GRAMMY winners including Béla Fleck and the Silkroad Ensemble. Colleen won the Ludwig Albert Talent Award at the 2015 Universal Marimba Competition, and she received both 2nd place in the Black Swamp Showcase and 3rd place in the MalletLab International Competition in 2018. Currently, she maintains an active career as both an educator and a freelance performer throughout New York City and beyond. Recent engagements include collaborations with Sō Percussion, International Contemporary Ensemble, and Sandbox Percussion, alongside solo sets at the MATA Festival, New Music Gathering, World Vibes Congress, and Oh My Ears Festival. Colleen is also an original member of American Wild Ensemble, a septet that celebrates American history, culture, and natural spaces through new music. Colleen teaches a wide range



of students in the NYC area, as a faculty member at Hunter College, band director at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, and Director of Percussion for the New Jersey Youth Symphony organization. Finally, Colleen is the producer of Strength & Sensitivity, an initiative she founded in 2018 that utilizes contemporary music and poetry to advocate for gender equality. Alongside numerous commissioned works and solo concerts, Colleen has directed large-scale touring productions of the project in Boston, Chicago, and Ann Arbor, MI to date. Colleen holds a Bachelor's degree from the Eastman School of Music, where she also earned the Arts Leadership Certificate and the prestigious Performer's Certificate. She received two Master's degrees at the University of Michigan, and she was honored with the Patterson Diversity Award. Colleen is an artist endorser for Black Swamp Percussion and Mallettech. Her principal teachers include Albany Symphony members Richard Albagli and Mark Foster, as well as Michael Burritt and Joseph Gramley.

EMMA GIERSZAL

Emma Gierszal is a percussionist, educator, and arts leader living in Rochester, NY. While earning her doctorate at the Eastman School of Music, she teaches percussion at the Hochstein School of Music and is on the board for the local new music ensemble, fivebyfive.

Emma began promoting new music with the John Psathas Percussion Project, a multi-year recording project led by her undergraduate professor, Omar Carmenates. Emma continues to participate in Eastman's Musica Nova and student-run new music ensemble, Ossia, while also appearing in premiere recordings of Michael Burritt's, *spero* and *Iunctio* and John Psathas' *Koolish Zein*. Emma has attended summer festivals including the Grafenegg Academy (2021, 2022), National Repertory Orchestra (2021) where she performed in front of the orchestra, and the Chautauqua Summer Music Festival (2019). In 2018 she won the Mary Ann Starring Memorial Award and performed at Sigma Alpha Iota's national convention.

Emma holds an M.M. degree in Percussion Performance and Literature and an Arts Leadership Certificate from Eastman as well as a B.M. degree in Music Education from Furman University in Greenville, SC. Emma Gierszal is a proud Mallettech artist.



YOUNGKYOUNG LEE

YoungKyoung Lee is a percussionist who specializes in solo and chamber music performance. She has performed in various countries such as Japan, Korea, United States of America, Canada, and Spain as a soloist and chamber musician.

With the love of chamber music, YoungKyoung has been performing as a member of Korean Traditional Percussion Ensemble, Peabody Percussion Group, Yale Percussion Group, and Eastman Percussion Ensemble. She has participated in numerous Music Festivals such as Sō Percussion Summer Institute, Cloyd Duff Timpani Seminar, Brevard Music Center, Norfolk New Music Workshop, and performed at Ciclo de Música Contemporánea de Oviedo as a member of Norfolk New Music Workshop team.

YoungKyoung completed the Bachelor of Music studying with Tom Freer, assistant principal timpanist and percussionist of Cleveland Orchestra, and the world-renowned contemporary musician Robert van Sice at the Peabody Conservatory. While at Peabody, she was the recipient of the Zildjian Scholarship. She continued her studies with Robert van Sice at the Yale School of Music and pursued Masters of Music and Masters of Musical Arts in Percussion Performance as a recipient of the Stephen and Denise Adams, and the Henry and Lucy Moses Scholarships. YoungKyoung is currently based in Rochester, NY, pursuing Doctor of Musical Arts at Eastman School of Music with internationally renowned soloist, pedagogue, and composer Michael Burritt. YoungKyoung is an endorser of Vic Firth, Inc.



OLIVER XU

Percussionist Oliver Xu has been internationally recognized as a solo performer advocating for contemporary music. Based in New York City, he was recently awarded a Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant by The Juilliard School after graduating with his master's degree. In the last year, he has won the Percussive Arts Society Solo Artist Competition and the Great Plains International Marimba Competition. He has also received Third Prize at the Sixth IPEA International Percussion Competition and the Youth Jury Prize at the TROMP International Percussion Competition.

Oliver's most recent performances include a showcase concert at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, where he premiered a new work by Ayanna Woods, and his graduation recital at Juilliard, where he gave the New York premiere of Judd Greenstein's percussion concerto. He has also been featured in performances at Alice Tully Hall on works by Steve Reich and Olivier Messiaen with the Juilliard Orchestra and AXIOM, respectively. In May 2022, he joined the Da Capo Chamber Players for a concert celebrating their 50th Anniversary.