

# ALBANY SYMPHONY

## 2022 AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

# TrailBlaze NY

SATURDAY | JULY 2, 2022  
JENNINGS LANDING, ALBANY

DAVID ALAN MILLER, CONDUCTOR  
RUSTON ROPAC, VOCALIST  
PERCUSSION QUARTET: COLLEEN BERNSTEIN, EMMA GIERSZAL,  
YOUNGKYOUNG LEE, OLIVER XU

Andre Myers	<i>The New Colossus</i>
Aaron Copland	<i>Appalachian Spring</i>
Viet Cuong	<i>Re(new)al</i>
Woody Guthrie arr. Mitchell McCarthy	<i>This Land is Your Land</i> , sing-along
John Williams	E.T. Main Theme
John Philip Sousa	<i>Stars and Stripes Forever</i>

*All programs and artists are subject to change*



**Council on  
the Arts**



**CELINE & DANIEL KREDENTSER**

**MARISA & ALLAN EISEMANN**



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## ALBANY SYMPHONY

### VIOLIN I

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

### VIOLA

Daniel Brye  
Tina Chang-Chien  
Carla Bellosa

### CELLO

Erica Pickhardt  
Kevin Bellosa

### 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

## ANDRE MYERS

Andre Myers (b.1973) is an artist and instructor of piano, composition, and theory based in California's Inland Empire. He serves on the faculty at the University of Redlands School of Music, teaching composition, music theory, and electronic music. Intense and lyrical, his music mixes narrative drama, poetry, and meditations on color to create work that aspires to moments of honesty, poignancy, and depth. A native of Ann Arbor, MI, Myers has three times been commissioned by the Michigan Philharmonic Orchestra, where he served as composer-in-residence for the Philharmonic's CLASSical music outreach program. His second commission from the Philharmonic, a musical adaptation of Holling C. Holling's picture book *Paddle to the Sea*, has been performed regularly since 2005 as a part of the orchestra's "Koncert for Kids" series, and the composer has narrated the work for tens of thousands of school children. Myers received his B.Mus. in composition from the Eastman School of Music, and his M.Mus. and A.Mus.D. in composition from the University of Michigan. His principal teachers in composition were William Banfield, Warren Benson, Samuel Adler, Joseph Schwantner, David Liptak, Robert Morris, Bright Sheng, William Bolcom, Evan Chambers, and Erik Santos. In addition to the University of Redlands, Myers has served on the faculty of Occidental College and Renaissance Arts Academy, both in Los Angeles. Myers currently lives in Redlands, CA with his wife, Andrea, their dogs Charlott e and Walter, and their cat, Jean-Paul.



## ANDRE MYERS- *The New Colossus*

When I first received this commission, I was reading Isabel Wilkerson's moving history of the American Great Migration, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, and was struck by how my parents' and grandparents' migration journeys from Mississippi to Detroit were similar to those of migrants from other countries seeking a better life. I realized then that to celebrate the opening of the Empire State Trail is to do more than welcome biking and running paths across New York state. To celebrate the Empire State Trail is to honor the diverse origins of everyone in this beautiful, complicated, messy, and miraculous place.

The premise of this composition is that the Empire State Trail extends further than Buffalo and New York City. The wise words of poet Emma Lazarus, set upon the foundation of the Statue of Liberty, illustrate how the Empire State Trail begins on the Steppes of Russia, in Ukraine, in Ecuador, Mexico, Guyana, and Jamaica; in India, in Korea, China, and the Dominican Republic; how it begins in Hati and El Salvador. The Empire State Trail begins in the heart, determination, and resolve of every immigrant that strives to fulfill the promise of America. This piece aspires to serve as a gentle reminder that the United States is in a constant state of becoming, and that the work of perfecting our Union is ongoing and a cause for hope.

p.s. I want to acknowledge the victims and survivors of the terrorist attack in Buffalo on May 14th, 2022. That the fates did not place any of us in harm's way that day means that we are called to carry their names with us, now and forever. And to work for change as if our lives depend on it. Because it does.

## THE NEW COLOSSUS

By Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand

Glowed world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

## 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.



## RUSTON ROPAC

New York City-based, Southern California-bred soprano and composer-performer Ruston Ropac is a dynamic musician committed to exploring eclectic vocal soundscapes. An alumna of the Contemporary Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music, she brings her artistry to contemporary chamber music, early music, opera, and beyond.

An active contemporary chamber musician, Ms. Ropac has sung the world premieres of over twenty new works of chamber music. As a composer-performer, Ms. Ropac specializes in vocal chamber music that experiments with theatrical elements and seeks to challenge the performer vocally and dramatically.

Ms. Ropac holds a Master of Music degree in Contemporary Vocal Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with soprano Lucy Shelton, and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of

Redlands in Southern California, where she studied voice with Dr. Melissa Tosh and composition with Dr. Anthony Suter and André Myers. She currently lives in Manhattan and enjoys writing poetry and playing tabletop games in her spare time. She is a part of the cast of the *Dungeons & Dragons* podcast *Nat 1* and *Run*.



## 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 Malletech. 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 *lunctio* 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 Malletech 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 (performed at Kennedy center), 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 (artistic director Martin Bresnick).

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, YoungKyoung 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.