

THE AMHERST COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
PRESENTS

BMOP

Boston Modern Orchestra Project

with

Lew Spratlan and Friends

The Trick of Singularity by Martin Brody

Ways of Being by Eric Sawyer

Pocket Concerto by Scott Wheeler

Chamber Symphony by Lewis Spratlan

featuring

Kristen Watson, Soprano

Krista River, Mezzo-soprano

Friday, October 15, 2021 • Virtual Concert from WGBH • 8 PM

MUSIC AT **AMHERST** SERIES

PROGRAM

Lew Spratlan and Friends

The Trick of Singularity (World Premiere) Martin Brody

Ways of Being (World Premiere) Eric Sawyer

I'd like to be a cloud
Set your sights
Give of yourself
She sees you
In a dream

Pocket Concerto Scott Wheeler
-Intermission-

Chamber Symphony (World Premiere) Lewis Spratlan

Moderato
Largo-mesto
Scherzetto
Finale: Allegro

*This Event will be broadcast live from the studios at WBGH Boston
See amherst.edu/go/musicstream for the FREE virtual concert*

TRIBUTES TO LEWIS SPRATLAN



Lewis Spratlan (Photo by Gigi Caesar)

Scott Wheeler

Lew Spratlan guided my first steps as a composer, but even more important than his invaluable technical advice was his role as a model for me—a composer of course, but also teacher, performer, reader of literature, art connoisseur, bon vivant, and very soon an admired and essential colleague. His influence on me is so great that I don't know how to describe it—I can't quite imagine my life in music without Lew.

Lew's influence on my music has been both pervasive and oblique. I don't think I've ever modeled a piece on one of Lew's, but I've always loved the way his music can be rigorous, challenging, and kick-ass fun, all in the same piece. That's both a challenge and a release for me, an invitation to go as far as possible, and in any direction.

Eric Sawyer

Though I was never Lew Spratlan's student, I have been fortunate to have him as a frequent and insightful sounding board for nearly two decades at Amherst. It has been a double benefit—I also had the opportunity to encounter many of the new works of this extraordinary American composer before nearly everyone else. What an inspiring dialogue it has been with a composer I truly admire, one who values craft, a deep knowledge of repertory and tradition, and a sense of restless adventure. We shared an interest in mixing traditions, though in different ways, with Lew surprising

the ear with unannounced cameos from popular music, jazz, ragtime, while my own interest gravitated towards blurring boundaries. Lew gave terrific feedback, his ears so cultivated, his outlook similar to mine in appreciation of music while having a distinctive creative intent, and I will always be grateful for it.

This concert arose out of one of my sessions with Lew from a few years back. Lew had completed his *Chamber Symphony* and shared a score and a MIDI recording, noting the lack of plans for a premiere. The work struck me as one of Lew's finest, and I was excited at the possibility that the unveiling of such an important work from the Spratlan catalog might take place at Amherst College on the occasion of the composer's 80th birthday, surrounded by music from some composers who had worked with Lew at Amherst. Gil Rose and Boston Modern Orchestra Project agreed to make this idea a reality. Due to the pandemic, the concert is now commemorating Lew's 81st birthday, and it is wonderful to see it come to fruition.

Martin Brody

I divide my college years into two parts: Before Lew and After Lew. In effect, that means that I divide my life into two unequal parts, since it was only "After Lew" that studying and composing music began to seem a lifelong calling.

Not long "Before Lew," the music scene at Amherst was congenial but sleepy. Our Yoda was Henry Mishkin, a bona fide wise man with no appreciable involvement in contemporary music. We were briefly graced with the presence of a two quirky, brilliant, but transient faculty composers—Peter Westergaard and Philip Rhodes. We studied harmony in the Octagon (a numinous but sub-optimal facility) and hopped on the Five College Bus to perform chamber or orchestral music. The most exciting development in my musical life came at the beginning of my sophomore year, when I joined a rock band.

Then the climate changed quickly. The music building opened. Lew's friend, the composer, Donald Wheelock, joined the faculty. The hum from our new practice rooms grew louder and more cacophonous, and the new space was soon populated by dedicated music students. Among them were Scott Wheeler and Paul Salerni, now both distinguished composers.

Around then, the tornado hit. With Lew's arrival, the prospect of living a musical life suddenly seemed real. Simply put, Lew was a force, galvanizing the musical community on all fronts at once. There was a fine synergy between Lew and Don, our two faculty composers, and Buckley quickly became a laboratory for musical creativity and contemporary music performance. Lew founded the Amherst-Mount Holyoke Orchestra and soon wrote music for the new ensemble. He inspired by his example as a triple threat—composer, instrumentalist, conductor—but he also seized every opportunity for his students. With his support, I was able to form the Asparagus Valley Contemporary Music Ensemble. Lew and Don both wrote pieces for it. Until late in my junior year, it had never dawned on me to write music or become a composer. In a matter of weeks, it seemed, following Lew's path became inevitable—hardly a choice at all.

What did I learn from Lew? Three words jump to mind: courage, force, and mirth. Because Lew's musical technique is so complete and secure, his artistic courage has always seemed to me to involve little struggle. This can't be true—but it is true that he has happily married flawless technique and irrepressible expressivity in his music throughout the half-century I've known him. In any event, I've learned how to struggle as a composer on my own, without his help. In working through my own artistic struggles, the force and mirth of Lew's music remain an enduring example—and a challenge, to strive for as happy a marriage of flawless technique and irrepressible expressivity that his music has modeled throughout the half-century I've known him.

PROGRAM NOTES

Scott Wheeler

Composer Scott Wheeler's operas have been commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, the Guggenheim Foundation, and White Snake Projects. His music has been performed by violinist Gil Shaham, conductor Kent Nagano, and singers Renée Fleming, Sanford Sylvan, and Susanna Phillips.

Mr. Wheeler has appeared as conductor in New York, Berlin, Boston, and on several recordings, often with the Boston-based ensemble Dinosaur Annex, which he co-founded and directed for many years. He has also conducted many productions of opera and musical theatre works and has appeared as a pianist in a wide repertoire of classical, jazz, and cabaret.

Scott Wheeler studied at Amherst College, New England Conservatory, and Brandeis. His principal teachers were Lewis Spratlan, Arthur Berger, and Virgil Thomson, along with studies at Dartington with Peter Maxwell Davies, and Tanglewood with Olivier Messiaen. His many awards include the National Endowment for the Arts, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, the Bogliasco Foundation, the American Academy in Berlin, and the Classical Recording Foundation. He is Senior Distinguished Artist in Residence at Emerson College in Boston, where he teaches musical theatre and songwriting.

Scott Wheeler's notes on *Pocket Concerto*

My Pocket Concerto from 1985 is one of a series of pieces in three-movement concerto form, the first of which was the *Sextet* I wrote as my 1973 Amherst honors thesis, for which Lew was my advisor. *Pocket Concerto* was preceded by my 1983 *Postcard Overture*, in a conscious progression culminating in my 1987 symphony *Northern Lights*. I'm honored to have *Pocket Concerto* on a program honoring Lew Spratlan.

Eric Sawyer's operas *Our American Cousin*, *The Garden of Martyrs*, and *The Scarlet Professor* have received New England premieres in recent years. A new cabaret musical written with Harley Erdman, *My Evil Twin*, was scheduled for a summer run in Northampton before COVID precautions intervened. A new opera, *The Onion*, is in process. Sawyer's musical

vocabulary brings together traditions in American music, and a number of larger works spring from American history and literature. His *Fantasy Concerto: Concord Conversations*, a triple concerto based on the American Transcendentalists, was performed recently by Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Claremont Trio. A recipient of the Joseph Bearn Prize and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Mr. Sawyer teaches at Amherst College. His music is available on the Albany Records and BMOP/sound labels.

Eric Sawyer's notes on *Ways of Being*

Ways of Being continues an interest in exploring genres and traditions of song. I wanted to bring to the art song genre some of the experience I've had writing popular and theater-based songs in recent years. I aimed to channel the strengths and beauties of the classically-trained voice together with some of the aspirations of other song styles: informality, clarity and naturalness of diction, a slight colloquial feel, transparent if sometimes chromatic harmonies. The original texts are more lyrics than poetry. Each song explores a "character" with a distinct life philosophy, each interrogated through being pushed to a slight extreme. The soprano and mezzo alternate singing words and a tailored vocalise accompaniment that serves as a subconscious mirror for the text.

Ways of Being
Music and words by Eric Sawyer

Note: These five songs represent extremes of character, bits of which we may find within ourselves. The two voices take turns singing the text and commenting with vocalise, a sort of unconscious subtext.

1. I'd like to be a cloud

I'd like to be a cloud
Descending from a ridge
Along a mountainside.
I'd like to be a shell
Pushed outward by the surf,
Pulled inward by the tide.
And if I were a breeze,
A breath upon the seas,
A stirring on the plain,
I'd shuttle to and fro,
Swept eastward with a blow,
Sucked westward back again.
And if I were the mouth
Of the wind,
I'd softly sing
The tones of long before,
The notes of some celestial score
Engraved in the motions of the globe
Around its poles.
I'd like to be the thought

Behind the arc of earth
Set spinning on through space.
I'd like to be the guide
Conceiving of its course,
Assigning time and place.
And if I were the clock keeping time,
I would faithfully ring out my chime,
Here and now, this place,
In step to my own time.

2. Set your sights

Set your sights on the highest hill.
Scale the heights through your force of will.
Then set sail for the farthest isle.
Catch the wind for the swiftest mile.
Leave pursuers behind.
Pay detractors no mind.
Let them come and find you
Holding court on the highest throne.
No one's deeds can surpass your own,
Wielding might and providing light
To the meek and the seekers that follow in your wake.
You strive for their sake,
Remembering, this achievement is yours alone.

3. Give of yourself

Give of yourself till you can give no more.
What you can share is what's worth living for.
Share a friend's pain, with no care how you gain
As you give every breath of your humanity.
Come to my aid; give me your hand.
I can't repay; please understand.
All that you do, it will return to you.
Care without debt is a gift from above.
Truest of gifts are those made out of love.
Why, if you learn to fly
Would you not learn to lift,
To raise a spirit set adrift,
Infuse it with the precious gift,
Of yourself.

4. She sees you

She sees you, like you're the only one on earth.
She hears you, like every word's of golden worth.
She reads you, like you were written in a book.
She knows you, and shows with just one single look
She was put on earth to hear your song,
Knowing every word to sing along.
She was put on earth to make you strong.

She hears you, as if the night's turned into day.
She sees you, and her expression seems to say
You were put on earth to be right here,
Reaching to her open mind and ear,
Saying what you think and hope and fear.
She will understand,
And reach out to touch your hand,
Lighting you the way,
Understanding how all of the words that you say
Hold sense.
She sees your essence; she feels your presence.
She hears your voice and
She's with you all along the way.

5. In a dream

We're living in a dream.

Martin Brody is Catherine Mills Davis Professor emeritus of Music at Wellesley College. He served as Fromm Resident in Musical Composition at the American Academy in Rome in 2001 and as Andrew Heiskell Arts Director at the Academy from 2007 to 2010. He is the recipient of awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment of the Arts. He has also received residency fellowships from the Fromm Foundation, the William Walton Estate in Ischia, and the Liguria Arts and Humanities Center in Bogliasco. An active advocate of modern and contemporary music, he serves as President of the Stefan Wolpe Society and a trustee of the American Academy in Rome.

Martin Brody's notes on *The Trick of Singularity*

For many years, I wanted to write an alternative version of the overture to Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* incidental music. The opportunity came ten years ago, when Gil Rose asked me to write a piece for BMOP. After performing *Touching Bottom*, Gil suggested that I write a set of Shakespeare pieces, five more, each with a similar premise: Each would be a concert piece, about ten minutes long, that was 1) inspired by a Shakespeare play, 2) alluded to and/or quoted a prior musical setting related to that play, and 3) centered on one of the play's secondary characters.

One of these six pieces is being premiered on this concert: *The Trick of Singularity* was inspired by *Twelfth Night*, and it plays with various themes, among them, twins, shipwrecks, and anagrams. It focuses on the character of the Feste, the fool, and obliquely references one of his songs, "O Mistress Mine," especially as set by Gerard Finzi.

Lewis Spratlan

Lewis Spratlan, recipient of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize in music and the Charles Ives Opera Award (2016) from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was born in 1940 in Miami, Florida. His music, often praised for its dramatic impact and vivid scoring, is performed regularly throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. He holds undergraduate and graduate

degrees from Yale University, where he studied with Mel Powell and Gunther Schuller. From 1970 until his retirement in 2006 he served on the music faculty of Amherst College, and has also taught and conducted at Penn State University, Tanglewood, and the Yale Summer School of Music.

He is the recipient of an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Composition, as well as Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Bogliasco, NEA, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and MacDowell Fellowships.

In October 1989 Spratlan toured widely in Russia and Armenia as a guest of the Soviet Composers' Union. *Apollo and Daphne Variations* for orchestra was premiered on this tour and *Penelope's Knees*, a double concerto for alto saxophone and bass, was presented in Moscow's Rachmaninoff Hall under Emin Khatchatourian.

Recent works include the one-act opera *Earthrise*, on a libretto by Constance Congdon, commissioned by San Francisco Opera; a piano quartet, *Streaming*, commissioned by the Ravinia Festival for its centennial celebration; *Sojourner* for ten players, commissioned for Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress; *Zoom*, for chamber orchestra, commissioned by the New York ensemble Sequitur; *Wonderer*, commissioned for the pianist Jonathan Biss by the Borletti-Buitoni Trust; *Shadow*, commissioned by the cellist Matt Haimovitz; *Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra*, a consortium commission by thirty saxophonists across the country; and *A Summer's Day*, commissioned by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose, conductor, was premiered at Jordan Hall in May 2009.

Spratlan's opera *Life is a Dream*, on a libretto by James Maraniss after Calderón's *La vida es sueño*, received its world premiere by the Santa Fe Opera in 2010, under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. *Hesperus is Phosphorus*, commissioned by the Crossing Choir and Philadelphia's Network for New Music, received performances in Philadelphia and New York in June 2012, and was recently released on an Innova CD. *Architect*, a chamber opera based on the life and work of the architect Louis Kahn, appears on a CD/enhanced DVD released by Navona Records in the fall of 2013. He has recently completed *Shining: Double Concerto for Cello and Piano*, commissioned by cellist Matt Haimovitz and pianist Christopher O'Riley. In the fall of 2014 The Boston Modern Orchestra Project released a CD of *A Summer's Day*, *Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra*, and *Apollo and Daphne Variations*.

In April 2016, *Of War*, for large chorus and orchestra, was premiered under the direction of Andrew Megill at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. *Bangladesh* for solo piano, commissioned by Piano Spheres, premiered in 2015, at REDCAT, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, with Nadia Shpachenko. *Common Ground*, for soloists, chorus, and chamber orchestra was premiered June 2016, by the Crossing Choir and ICE at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral and repeated at Merkin Hall in New York as part of the Mostly Mozart Festival in August 2016. *Dreamworlds, for piano, four hands*, was commissioned by Dana Muller and Gary Steigerwalt and premiered at Mount Holyoke College in February, 2018. A recording of this piece was released in the fall of 2019 on the Parma label.

Spratlan has recently completed his fourth opera, *Midi, a black French-*

Caribbean Medea, ca. 1930. An all-Spratlan concert including, *Six Preludes for Piano, Piano Quartet No. 2,* and *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano* took place at Brooklyn's Bargemusic, as part of their Music Now series, on June 16, 2017. *New England Concordance*, for TTBB chorus and piano, received its premiere performance in Lexington, MA, in 2018, with the Boston Sangerfest Men's Chorus, Thomas Berryman, conductor, and has had subsequent performances by the Harvard and Rutgers Glee Clubs. *Six Rags* was premiered at San Francisco's Center for New Music by Nadia Shpachenko on June 18, 2019, and *Travels* was presented by the Carmel Bach Festival on July 21, 2019, Andrew Megill conductor. On January 20, 2021, The Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra presented a retrospective of six of Spratlan's works as a Zoom webcast, concentrating on the Santa Fe Production of *Life is a Dream*.

Lewis Spratlan's notes on *Chamber Symphony*

As I approached my 80th birthday, I decided it was time for me to write a symphony, the dominant genre in Western instrumental music since at least the time of Haydn. I had written much orchestral music, including accompaniments to four operas and to solo instrumental concertos, as well as programmatic tone poems and dance music. But I hadn't taken on the task of composing a multi-movement work that spanned a single unified idea. I was hesitant mainly because of the difficulty of getting a symphony orchestra to play it, and hence the notion of a symphony for chamber orchestra. Gil Rose and BMOP agreed to perform the piece, with the generous support of Amherst College.

This symphony falls within the boundaries of two distinct sonorities, one very low, the other very high, that open the first and fourth movements and that recur at key moments. One might think of them as the earth and the heavens, the boundaries of the territory where we live out our lives. The first movement, *Moderato*, is largely martial in character, led by the trumpet and its partner the alto saxophone. War seems, alas, to be a human preoccupation and a few battles break out here, relieved by a little waltz and a slow, soothing middle section featuring solos from the cello, French horn, and bassoon. The snare drum leads into a martial conclusion.

The slow second movement opens and closes with solo strings, mourners mourning (*mesto*). Winds join in, and the strings answer with their music at a faster pace. (Yes, yes, we know.) A new texture, vibraphone and piano, appears with music that seems to console, transcending the prevailing misery. The brass take up the new tone and the whole ensemble proceeds to a triumphant, nearly hymn-like annunciation, perhaps of newfound peace. But memories of war intrude, and the movement subsides into renewed mourning.

Some respite occurs in the third movement, a very fast, chromatic, and maybe chaotic scherzetto.

More or less clear tonality, based on E, appears in the form of a sarcastic, lead-footed, polka in the Trio.

The finale opens with the high/low, heaven/earth, sonorities that begin the symphony. It consists of a joyous, but not untroubled, dance that is

interrupted several times by mysterious, enigmatic, slow music, mainly in the strings. This may be an intrusion of a wholly new way of thinking about how we manage life on earth, one marked by calm and containment—free of coveting, full of generosity. Two other interruptions to the dance appear, dominated by the piano, with an insistent quintuple rant that recalls the old, contentious way of doing things. The dance seems to win out, leaving us spinning in space between earth and heaven.

PERFORMER BIOS

Gil Rose

Acknowledged for his “sense of style and sophistication” by *Opera News*, noted as “an amazingly versatile conductor” by *The Boston Globe*, and praised for conducting with “admirable command” by *The New York Times*, Gil Rose has been called “one of the most adventurous conductors in the world” by KUSC Radio. Gil Rose is a musician helping to shape the future of classical music. Over the past two decades, Mr. Rose has built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile conductors before the public. His dynamic performances on both the symphonic and operatic stages as well as over 75 recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP has won fourteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and was selected as Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra to receive this distinction. Mr. Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

In September 2013, he introduced a new company to the Boston opera scene, Odyssey Opera, dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire. Since the company’s inaugural performance of Wagner’s *Rienzi*, which took the Boston scene by storm, Odyssey Opera has continued to receive universal acclaim for its annual festivals with compelling themes and unique programs, presenting fully staged operatic works and concert performances of overlooked grand opera masterpieces. In its first five years, Mr. Rose brought 22 operas to Boston, and introduced the city to some important new artists. In 2016 Mr. Rose founded Odyssey Opera’s in-house recording label with its first release, Pietro Mascagni’s *Zanetto*. Subsequent releases include a double disc of one act operas by notable American composer Dominick Argento, and the world premiere recording of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Formerly, Mr. Rose led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company’s first Artistic Director. He led Opera Boston in several American and New England premieres including Shostakovich’s *The Nose*, Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, and Hindemith’s *Cardillac*. In 2009, Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Zhou Long’s *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011.

Mr. Rose also served as the artistic director of Opera Unlimited, a contemporary opera festival associated with Opera Boston. With Opera Unlimited, he led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr's *Toussaint Before the Spirits* and the New England premiere of Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison's *Full Moon in March*, and the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America*.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He has since returned to City Opera in 2017 (as conductor and director) and 2018 conducting a double bill of Rameau and Donizetti's *Pigmalione*. In 2019, he made his debut conducting the Juilliard Symphony in works of Ligeti and Tippett.

As an educator, he has served on the faculty of Tufts University and Northeastern University as well as worked with students at a wide range of colleges such as Harvard, MIT, New England Conservatory, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of California at San Diego.

In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a five-time Grammy Award nominee and won Best Opera Recording in 2020 for Tobias Picker's *Fantastic Mr. Fox*.

The Boston Modern Orchestra Project is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A unique institution of crucial artistic importance to today's musical world, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) exists to disseminate exceptional orchestral music of the present and recent past via performances and recordings of the highest caliber. Hailed by *The New York Times* as "one of the most artistically valuable [orchestras] in the country for its support of music either new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be", BMOP was the recipient of Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year award, the first symphony orchestra in the organization's history to receive this distinction.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span nine decades. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall, as well as in a series that offers the most diverse orchestral programming in the city. The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Louis Andriessen's *Trilogy of the Last Day*, and Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2003 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP's independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP's extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today's most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of six Grammy Award nominations and its releases have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, *NewMusicBox*, and others.

Kristen Watson, Soprano

Soprano Kristen Watson, hailed by critics for her "blithe and silvery" tone (*Boston Globe*) and "striking poise" (*Opera News*) has made solo appearances with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, American Classical Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Group, Handel and Haydn Society, and Boston Baroque at such venues as Walt Disney Concert Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall and Boston's Symphony Hall.

Opera audiences have heard Ms. Watson in productions with Boston Lyric Opera, Opera New England, Opera Boston, Opera Providence, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Intermezzo Opera, Five College Opera, and Boston University Opera Institute in such roles as Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Voice of the Fountain in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* directed by Peter Sellars.

A versatile crossover artist, Ms. Watson has made several solo appearances with the Boston Pops under Keith Lockhart, performed as a featured soprano alongside Greek tenor Mario Frangoulis, and shared the stage with veteran actress Shirley Jones in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*. Praised for her "keen musicianship, agility and seamless control" (*San Antonio Express*), Ms. Watson has been recognized by the Concert Artists Guild, Oratorio Society of New York, Joy in Singing, American Bach Society, and Louisville Bach Society competitions, and was awarded both the Virginia Best Adams Fellowship at the Carmel Bach Festival, and the Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellowship with Emmanuel Music.

Additional solo performances include the North Carolina Symphony, Trinity Wall Street, San Francisco Early Music Society, Masterwork Chorus of New Jersey, Duke Chapel Choir, Gulf Coast Symphony, Topeka Symphony, Handel Society of Dartmouth, Boston Early Music Festival, Aston Magna Festival, Cape Cod Symphony, Rhode Island Philharmonic, Boston Modern Orchestra Project and A Far Cry. Originally from Kansas, Ms. Watson holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and Boston University.

Krista River, Mezzo-soprano

Hailed by *Opera News* for her “lovely clarity and golden color,” mezzo-soprano Krista River is at home in repertoire ranging from the Baroque period to the 21st century. In January of 2020, Ms. River won a Grammy award for her role as Mrs. Fox in Boston Modern Orchestra Project’s recording of Tobias Picker’s *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. She has also been a winner of the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and a grant recipient from the Sullivan Foundation. Recent notable performances include the International Water and Life Festival in Qinghai, China, *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall with the Masterworks Chorale (NJ), and recitals at Jordan Hall in Boston and the Asociación Nacional de Conciertos in Panama City, Panama. *The New York Times* praised her recital at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, lauding “her shimmering voice...with the virtuosity of a violinist and the expressivity of an actress.”

Recent opera appearances include the title role in *Carmen* at Mechanics Hall in Worcester, Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito* with Emmanuel Music, Dido in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* with Mercury Baroque (Houston) and the Connecticut Early Music Festival, Cherubino in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* with the North Carolina Symphony, Annio in *La clemenza di Tito* with Opera Boston, Narcissus in Boston Baroque’s *Agrippina*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Crested Butte Music Festival, and the title role in Handel’s *Xerxes* with Arcadia Players. Ms. River made her Tanglewood debut in the role of Jordan Baker in John Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby*.

Ms. River’s orchestral engagements have included appearances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society, Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, Harrisburg Symphony, York Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, Florida Orchestra, Pittsburgh Bach and Baroque Ensemble, the Cape Cod Symphony, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. She has performed as a guest artist at music festivals including John Harbison’s Token Creek Chamber Music Festival, Monadnock Music, Music from Salem, Saco River Festival, Meeting House Music Festival on Cape Cod, and the Portland Chamber Music Festival in Maine.

A contemporary music advocate, Ms. River has premiered works by numerous composers including Tom Cipullo, Howard Frazin, and Herschel Garfein. She created the role of Genevieve in Brian Hulse’s chamber opera *The Game* at the Kennedy Center, as part of its Millennium Stage series. She sang the world premiere of Scott Wheeler’s *Turning Back* at her 2008 solo recital at Weill Recital Hall, and is featured on two of Wheeler’s CDs — *The Construction of Boston*, recorded live with Boston Cecilia, and *Wasting the Night: Songs*— both released on Naxos Records.

Ms. River began her musical career as a cellist, earning her music degree at St. Olaf College. She resides in Boston and is a regular soloist with Emmanuel Music's renowned Bach Cantata Series.

BMOP Musicians

Sarah Brady, Flute
Jennifer Slowik, Oboe
Gary Gorzcyca, Clarinet
Greg Newton, Bassoon
Phillip Staeudlin, Saxophone
Neil Goodwin, French Horn
Ryan Fossier, French Horn
Terry Everson, Trumpet
Hans Bohn, Trombone
Robert Schulz, Percussion
Nick Tolle, Percussion
Ina Zdorovetchi, Harp
Yoko Hagino, Piano
Heidi Braun Hill, Violin
Paolo Caballero, Violin
Peter Sulski, Viola
Jing Li, Cello
Katherine Foss, Bass

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Amherst College Music Department Upcoming Events

October 2021

- 21** **Jazz@Friedmann Room.** Keefe Campus Center. 9 PM
- 22** **Amherst College Choral Society Family Weekend Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 23** **Amherst College Jazz Ensemble Family Weekend Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 12 PM
- 23** **Amherst College Symphony Orchestra (ASO) Family Weekend Concert.** Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 24** **M@A Masterclasses:** Catalyst String Quartet 10 AM,
Anthony McGill, Clarinet 5:30 PM. Buckley Recital Hall
- 24** **M@A Presents: Catalyst Quartet with Anthony McGill, Clarinet.** Buckley Recital Hall. 3 PM

November 2021

- 6 Senior Theses: William Fishell '21 and Elijah Quastler '21**
Buckley Recital Hall. 7 PM and 8:30 PM
- 12 Amherst College Jazz Ensemble Homecoming Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 13 Amherst College Choral Society Homecoming Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 6 PM
- 13 Amherst Symphony Orchestra (ASO) Homecoming Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8:30 PM
- 15 Senior Thesis: Seohyun Hong '22, Flute.**
Buckley Recital Hall. 4 PM

December 2021

- 3 Amherst College Jazz Ensemble Concert (ACJE)**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 4 Amherst Symphony Orchestra (ASO) Concert.**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 5 Amherst College Choral Society Vespers.**
Johnson Chapel. Time TBD

Unless noted, all concerts held in Buckley Recital Hall
413.542.2195 / concerts@amherst.edu
Alisa Pearson, Manager of Concert Programing, Production and Publicity