

# Temple University New Music Ensemble

Sepehr Pirasteh, director

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 · 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

1715 N. Broad St.

Philadelphia, PA 19122



## Program

*mil cuartos blancos en línea recta*\*\*  
(thousand white rooms in a straight line)

James Díaz

The Gays and Their Trauma\*

Bobbi Lewandowski

Six to Go

Maurice Wright+

- I. Going fast
- II. Going bad
- III. Going out

Catherine Huhn, flute  
Sihan Chen, clarinet  
Jacob Treat, percussion  
Sarah Lee, piano  
Yuan Tian, violin  
Sofiya Solomyanskaya^, violin  
Meghan Holman^, viola  
Mima Majstorovic, cello  
Sepehr Pirasteh, conductor

\**world premiere*

\*\**U.S. premiere*

+ *Boyer faculty member*

^ *guest musician*

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The use of photographic, audio, and video recording is not permitted.

Please turn off all electronic devices.

Two hundred seventh performance of the 2023-2024 season.

## Program Notes

*mil cuartos blancos en línea recta*

James Díaz

"a thousand white rooms in a straight line" is inspired by the visual imagery of a thousand white rooms arranged meticulously in a straight line. This composition delves into the interplay between structure and freedom, creating a sonic landscape that ebbs and flows between pristine clarity and abstract complexity." Chatgpt wrote that; it's a good description. Let's continue. "The piece opens with precision and organization as if each instrument represents a distinct room in this orderly arrangement." No bad. But Chatgpt did not hear anything. Let's continue. "The piano provides a rhythmic foundation, guiding the ensemble forward with its driving ostinato patterns." Pretty good! I'm exploring an Andes-area rhythmic pattern called "pasillo." It's like a cool polyrhythmic type of waltz. Let's finish. "The instrumentation interjects with fleeting patterns that meander through the musical textural landscape, disrupting the linear progression and introducing moments of psychedelic-electronic-music-inspired introspection." Decent. I invite the audience to close their eyes while listening to "a thousand white rooms in a straight line."

The work was commissioned for the 2023 Sonidos y Sentidos' Bogotá Chamber Music Season, sponsored by the Bolívar Davivienda Foundation.

**The Gays and Their Trauma**

**Bobbi Lewandowski**

This piece was written to underscore a scene of a bisexual woman, orphaned from infancy, opening up to her lover about her history of being bullied for her sexuality throughout her time at the orphanage and, in her adult life, being left out of queer circles due to her ethnicity. The piece is meant to have an air of nostalgia and hope, but primarily communicates the fear, despair, and longing that often comes with socially inflicted trauma, specifically through a queer lens.

In some ways this piece is an observation on the rushed sense of time that permeates life in the early 21st century. In the first movement, ideas fly by without much development, one after another, and then the movement ends as suddenly as it begins. The title meant “moving quickly,” but also “becoming fixed and unable to move.” The second movement is a slow-movement rendering of the Sots song, “Smile *na sae* sweet, my bonnie babe.” The lyrics tell a sad and grisly tale. A young woman gives birth (out of wedlock) to a son, who is rejected by the father, who is also the mother’s employer. If she keeps the child, she will lose her job and her lodging, and both she and her son will starve. Instead, she kills the child. Later she sees a young boy at the play and calls out to him, and he replies that he is her dead son whom she buried. The final movement comprises a series of musical scenes and includes two brief references to German opera: Alberich’s sneezing scene from Richard Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, and the concluding scene of Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck*.

## About the Composers

Called “stark, haunting elegance” with “intimate focus” by *The Washington Post* and “ethereal” by *The Wire*, the music of Colombian-born composer and electronic musician **JAMES DÍAZ** embodies a spectrum of compositional practices, blending digital techniques and collaborative exploration. From electronic compositions to amplified solo works, orchestral pieces, and multimedia creations, his music strives to evoke distinctive sonic textures, assemble resonant sound masses, and construct immersive environments.

Recently, the New York Philharmonic and the Juilliard MAP Orchestra premiered his work “and does the Moon also fall?” at the Lincoln Center. Additionally, in May, Díaz was selected New Artist of the Month by Musical America Worldwide.

Díaz has won multiple international and national awards. In 2022, Díaz was selected as one of the commissioned composers for the Composition Inclusion program and one of the winners of the National Sawdust’s Digital Discovery Festival New Works Commission in 2020. In Colombia, Díaz has won all the major composition awards, such as the 2015 National Prize of Music in Composition and the 2014 National Prize for the Reopening of the Teatro Colón from the Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia, the 2018 Bogotá Philharmonic Prize in Composition, for his orchestral piece “Frack[in]g”, as well as the 2015 Bogotá Philharmonic Prize for Wind Band, and the 2012 Bogotá Philharmonic Prize for Chamber Music.

Díaz’s works have been performed by leading orchestras including the Basel Sinfonietta, the Cologne Radio Orchestra (WDR Sinfonieorchester), the Sinfónica Nacional de Colombia, La Nueva Filarmonía, American Composers Orchestra, Orquesta Filarmónica de Medellín, Xalapa Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, and the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and by ensembles such as Longleash, Sō Percussion, Yarn/Wire, Unheard-of//ensemble, HUB New Music, TAK Ensemble, National Sawdust Ensemble, among

others. Díaz's music has been featured in festivals such as Time:Spans in New York, ACHT BRÜCKEN, and SinusTon in Germany, Culturescapes in Switzerland, and the International Winter Festival of Campos Do Jordao in Brazil. Similarly, in collaboration with filmmaker/producer Leticia Akel, his film music has been presented at the SIFF Seattle International Film Festival ShortsFest, Palm Springs International ShortFest, Madrid FCM-PNR Festival, Cinemaissä Festival (Finland), and the Huesca, Quito, Sao Paulo, and Santiago international festivals.

Díaz, serving as the first-time ever composer-in-residence for the Medellin Philharmonic, premiered "RETRO," his largest work for orchestra and electronics in 2019.

Díaz is working on his studio album "[speaking in a foreign language]" with violinist Julia Suh; the album will be released in 2024.

Díaz's music is exclusively published by Schott New York (PSNY).

**BARBARA**, or **BOBBI**, **LEWANDOWSKI** is a music composition major and theatre minor at Temple. She is a first-year student and is pursuing a career in writing for musical theatre.

**MAURICE WRIGHT**'s musical life began as a percussionist, when he performed a solo on a toy glockenspiel in a one-room schoolhouse in Buckton, Virginia. Shortly thereafter, he began to study piano, and within two years gave a public recital at the Bethel Community Church, which included "The Daring Young Man On The Flying Trapeze." He also began to experiment with electricity, wiring up a battery-powered telephone that ran from the basement of the family's house outside to an old maple tree. He ended piano lessons as he began to compose, and later began to study the trombone, playing in a brass quartet with friends, and composing short pieces for the group.

At age 13, his family moved to Tampa, Florida. He attended Florida State University's summer music camp, winning its Musicianship Award. While studying the Hindemith Trombone Sonata with Douglas Baer, Principal Trombonist of the Tampa Philharmonic, Wright spent a year with the Tampa Police Dance Band, rehearsing with armed musicians and performing at police social functions across the state. He also experimented with tape recorders, and studied FØRTRAN programming as a continuing education student at the University of South Florida. His compositions began to take on more substance, and, at the urging of a musician friend, he submitted two of them (Sonatina for piano, and Two Preludes for trombone and piano) with his application to Duke University.

A Mary Duke Biddle Scholar at Duke University, he was graduated Magna Cum Laude with Distinction in Music, and became a President's Fellow and Harriman Scholar at Columbia University, from which he received his masters degree in 1974 and doctorate in 1988. At Columbia, he studied electronic music with Mario Davidovsky and Vladimir Ussachevsky, computer music with Charles Dodge, instrumental composition with Chou Wen-Chung and Charles Wuorinen, music theory with Jacques-Louis Monod, and opera composition with Jack Beeson.

Outstanding ensembles and soloists have performed his work, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Emerson String Quartet, and the American Brass Quintet. His visual music and electroacoustic music compositions have been performed on five continents. The American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Fromm Music Foundation, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Independence Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts have recognized and supported his work. Recordings of his work appear on New World, Innova, Equilibrium, everglade, CRI, and other labels. His compositions are published by APNM, Theodore Presser, Schott, and by the composer. He is Laura H. Carnell Professor of Music Studies at Temple University's Boyer College Of Music and Dance.



## About the Director

**SEPEHR PIRASTEH** is a composer and conductor born in Shiraz, Iran. His compositions draw on Persian classical and folk as well as contemporary classical music vocabularies to express his concerns and fears about the political and social realities of the world we are living in. Pirasteh's works have been performed by ensembles such as Argus String Quartet, PRISM saxophone quartet, Pushback Ensemble, Unheard-of Ensemble, Orquestra Criança Cidadã, Hole in the floor, fivebyfive, and members of the Fifth House Ensemble. He has been commissioned by Susan Horvath Chamber Music, ENA chamber opera ensemble, Philadelphia Student Composers Project, Detroit Composers' Project, YInMn project, Pushback Collective, Fresh Inc. Festival, Yara Ensemble, Central Michigan University's (CMU) Percussion Ensemble, and the CMU Saxophone Ensemble. His music has been performed in Argentina, Brazil, Iran and the United States. Pirasteh has also been a fellow in festivals and residencies such as Harvard University's Fromm Foundation Fellowship (Composers Conference), CCI Initiative, and Fresh Inc Festival.

As a conductor, he has been focusing on premiering new music written by young and emerging composers as well as conducting the classical repertoire. Pirasteh served as the director of the CMU New Music Ensemble, Pierrot Ensemble, and Concert Orchestra, and Vintage community orchestra in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. He was also the assistant conductor of the CMU Symphony Orchestra. In 2020 he started serving as the director of Temple Composers' Orchestra (TCO).

Pirasteh currently is a Ph.D. student in music studies at Temple University. He pursued his MM in composition and orchestral conducting at Central Michigan University. Pirasteh studied composition with Dr. Jose-Luis Maurtua, Dr. Evan Ware and conducting with Dr. Jose-Luis Maurtua. He received his BA in composition from Tehran University of Art (Iran). He plays a Persian Kamancheh and Tanbour and is currently based in Philadelphia.

## **Boyer College of Music and Dance**

The Boyer College of Music and Dance offers over 500 events open to the public each year. Students have the unique opportunity to interact with leading performers, composers, conductors, educators, choreographers and guest artists while experiencing a challenging and diverse academic curriculum. The Boyer faculty are recognized globally as leaders in their respective fields. Boyer alumni are ambassadors of artistic leadership and perform with major orchestras, opera and dance companies, teach at schools and colleges and work as professional music therapists, choreographers and composers. Boyer's recording label, BCM&D records, has produced more than thirty recordings, five of which have received Grammy nominations.

[boyer.temple.edu](http://boyer.temple.edu)

## **The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts**

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts consists of the Boyer College of Music and Dance, School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater and the Temple Performing Arts Center. The School of Theater, Film and Media Arts engages gifted students with nationally and internationally recognized faculty scholars and professionals. A hallmark of the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts is the Los Angeles Study Away program, housed at historic Raleigh Studios. The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater engages visiting performers, guest artists, set designers, playwrights and other Broadway professionals. The Temple Performing Arts Center (TPAC), a historic landmark on campus, is home to a state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium and 200 seat chapel. More than 500 concerts, classes, lectures and performances take place at TPAC each year.

[arts.temple.edu](http://arts.temple.edu)

## **Temple University**

Temple University's history begins in 1884, when a young working man asked Russell Conwell if he could tutor him at night. It wasn't long before he was teaching several dozen students—working people who could only attend class at night but had a strong desire to make something of themselves. Conwell recruited volunteer faculty to participate in the burgeoning night school, and in 1888 he received a charter of incorporation for "The Temple College." His founding vision for the school was to provide superior educational opportunities for academically talented and highly motivated students, regardless of their backgrounds or means. The fledgling college continued to grow, adding programs and students throughout the following decades. Today, Temple's more than 35,000 students continue to follow the university's official motto—*Perseverantia Vincit*, or "Perseverance Conquers"—with their supreme dedication to excellence in academics, research, athletics, the arts and more.

[temple.edu](http://temple.edu)

# Temple University 2023-2024

## Upcoming Events

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### **Thursday, February 29 at 4:30 PM**

Rite of Swing Jazz Café: Fabien Enger Quintet

TPAC Lobby

### **Thursday, February 29 at 5:30 PM**

Student Recital: Wonyoung Seo, soprano

Rock Hall Auditorium

### **Friday, March 1 at 3:00 PM**

Master Class: Daedalus Quartet

Presented in partnership with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society

Rock Hall Auditorium

### **Friday, March 1 at 5:30 PM**

Student Recital: Ke Xu, piano

Rock Hall Auditorium

### **Friday, March 1 at 7:30 PM**

Doctoral Chamber Recital: Rachel Anemone, piano

Rock Hall Auditorium

### **Tuesday, March 5, all day**

Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Festival

Temple Performing Arts Center

### **Monday, March 11 at 5:30 PM**

Master's Recital: Sendi Vartanovi, violin

Rock Hall Auditorium

### **Monday, March 11 at 7:30 PM**

Master's Recital: Leigh Brown, cello

Rock Hall Auditorium

**Tuesday, March 12 at 10:00 AM**

Master Class: Amy Frost Baumgarten, cello  
Rock Hall Auditorium

**Tuesday, March 12 at 5:30 PM**

Student Recital: Trey Serrano, trumpet  
Rock Hall Auditorium

**Wednesday, March 13 at 4:30 PM**

Jazz on Broad: Dan Wilson, guitar  
TPAC Lobby

**Wednesday, March 13 at 5:30 PM**

Soundprints III  
Klein Recital Hall

**Wednesday, March 13 at 7:30 PM**

Jazz on Broad: Dan Wilson, guitar  
TPAC Lobby

**Wednesday, March 13 at 7:30 PM**

Senior Recital: Daniel Farah, piano  
Rock Hall Auditorium

**Thursday, March 14 at 4:30 PM**

Rite of Swing Jazz Café: Pat Bianchi Trio  
TPAC Lobby

**Thursday, March 14 at 7:30 PM**

Master's Recital: Zhanara Makhmutova, violin  
Rock Hall Auditorium

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All events are free unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change without notice.

For further information or to confirm events, please call 215.204.7609

or visit [www.boyer.temple.edu](http://www.boyer.temple.edu).