

# Temple University New Music Ensemble

Sepehr Pirasteh, director

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 · 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

1715 N. Broad St.

Philadelphia, PA 19122



## Program

Fusion of the Broken Souls \*

Hallie Morton

we are the vine, reaching ever upward \*

Dan Maguire

Apophenia

Ari Sussman +

Catherine Huhn, flute  
Sihan Chen, clarinet  
Jacob Treat, percussion  
Sarah Lee, piano  
Yuan Tian, violin  
Mima Majstorovic, cello  
Sepehr Pirasteh, conductor

*\*world premiere*  
*+ Boyer faculty member*

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

Please turn off all electronic devices.

Twenty-fifth performance of the 2023-2024 season.

## Program Notes

### **Fusion of the Broken Souls**

**Hallie Morton**

*Fusion of The Broken Souls*, composed in early 2023 by composer Hallie Morton, is a complex piece that follows the haunting of their childhood home. As the title suggests, the haunted and the one doing the haunting somehow bond over their suffering. The piece begins in a dream-like state that ends with panic. Eventually a fabricated sense of calmness takes over, only for the anxieties and troubles to wash over again. As others mock the distressed state, the "haunter" seems to be the only stable aspect to hold on to. A broken soul created by the agonies of life begins to understand a broken soul that still lingers due to death. As one must move on from the other, the piece comes to an unsatisfying end.

### **we are the vine, reaching ever upward**

**Dan Maguire**

*we are the vine, reaching ever upward* is inspired by the ever-changing and adapting systems that drive our world. Just as a vine searches for a surface to climb, life in its many forms searches for structure to support its growth and development. When these structures change or fall apart, life continues to adapt and survive. This piece explores what happens when rigid systems break down, and examines how the structure of what came before informs what grows anew.

### **Apophenia**

**Ari Sussman**

I paint in color  
All the things we cannot see,  
let the Eye hear them.

## About the Composers

**HALLIE MORTON** is a composer and multi-instrumentalist from Northern Virginia. They are currently a student in Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance, majoring in Music Technology and Composition. Inspired by a wide range of genres, she has created numerous pieces that analyze and express the complexities that exist within every conceivable aspect of 'being.' Their pieces "Affectionate Aggression" and "Dispute I" were performed during conTemplum's 2022-23 SoundPrints programs. As she continues to experiment with new sounds and skills, Morton hopes to reflect all angles of human experience.

**DAN MAGUIRE** has lived an unsettled life, shaped by change and movement. Growing up in a military family – across three time zones and three thousand miles – has immersed him in a variety of geographical and social landscapes. Maguire writes music (for theater, dance, web shorts, chamber ensembles, punk bands, choirs, and numerous other outlets) that examines states of change, conflict, and contradiction; in-betweens, pass-throughs, transient solitudes, and liminal anxieties.

By juxtaposing disparate musical elements, Maguire meditates on discomfort, and finds the common ground between cultures and idioms. Music allows for a unique dialogue – it communicates emotion, history, geography, and understanding beyond the capability of words. Using this dialogue, he aims to bridge social and political gaps while fostering greater communication between and within communities.

While change is ever-present, music gives a sense of consistency. The ideas, emotions, and experiences distilled in music hold firm in any time or place. His music asks listeners to sit in their discomforts, to inhabit their fleeting memories, and to engage with new ideas and emotions. Music creates community – no matter where one listens.

Maguire holds a M.M. in composition from the Mannes College of Music and a B.S. in Music Theory and Composition from Hofstra University. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in composition at Temple University.

Praised for his “sophisticated writing” (GTM) and work that “weave(s) a trance-like mystical aura” (Zamir Chorale), **ARI SUSSMAN** is a Philadelphia based pianist, clawhammer banjoist, and composer of vocal, chamber, orchestral, choral, and electronic music. His music has been featured, commissioned, or performed throughout the United States and Europe by the KC VITAs Chamber Choir, soprano Tony Arnold, NPR, Zamir Chorale of Boston, Ensemble Ipse, Bang on a Can, American Modern Ensemble, New York Youth Symphony, Juventas New Music Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, the Tanglewood Music Center, and others. Kabbalah, the natural world, cosmology, meditation, metaphysics, ancient and contemporary poetry, the human condition, and Interactionism are among Sussman’s non-musical influences and interests. As a result, Sussman’s music illustrates equivocal worlds of sounds that are ambient, euphonious, and ethereal in nature.

Recently named composer-in-residence with the Boise-based ‘208 ensemble,’ Sussman has won the American Composers Forum: Philadelphia Chapter: Young Composers Scholarship, two Honorable Mentions for the Guild of Temple Musicians Young Composers Award, the University of Michigan Brehm Prize in Choral Composition, and a “First Music” commission from the New York Youth Symphony. Sussman has received an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award, a BMI Student Composer Award, and fellowships from the Blackbird Creative Lab, the Bang on a Can Summer Festival, and the Tanglewood Music Center.

An accomplished concert pianist, Sussman has performed many concerts and recitals throughout the Philadelphia, Boston, and Ann Arbor metro areas. With a fondness for musical theatre, Sussman has held music directorships for productions of Hairspray, Les Misérables, The Last Five Years, and many others. With a love for American traditional/roots music, Sussman plays piano and clawhammer banjo for English country dance bands, Contra-dance bands, and Old-time bands.

Sussman holds Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees with honors in Composition from the New England Conservatory of Music where he received the Donald Martino Award for Excellence in Composition, and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition from the University of Michigan. In addition to serving as Director of Music at Temple Adath Israel

of the Main Line, Sussman is currently an Adjunct Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the Temple University Boyer College of Music and Dance, and the West Chester University of Pennsylvania Wells School of Music. His primary musical mentors include Michael Gandolfi, Kati Agócs, Evan Chambers, and Kristin Kuster.

Sussman enjoys long walks, playing basketball, drinking tea, Curb Your Enthusiasm, mancala, cheesecake, and avidly rooting for Philadelphian and University of Michigan sports teams. Sussman is a member of BMI and the Landscape Music Composers Network.

## 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, Pierrat 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 Mautua, Dr. Evan Ware and conducting with Dr. Jose-Luis Mautua. 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.