

Temple University New Music Ensemble

Sepehr Pirasteh, director

Monday, December 11, 2023 · 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

1715 N. Broad St.

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

Gra for solo clarinet	Elliott Carter
speckled the green and blue	Katherine Balch
Thirteen Ways	Erin Busch+
Tide*	Josiah Pervis
New Addresses	Christopher Cerrone

**world premiere*
+ Boyer faculty member

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

Please turn off all electronic devices.

One hundred fifty-first performance of the 2023-2024 season.

Program Notes

Gra

Elliott Carter

Gra ('game' in Polish) for solo clarinet, was written as a tribute to my dear friend, Witold Lutoslawski, to commemorate his 80th birthday. During the twenty-five or so years that I have known Witold, I have never ceased to admire his impressive works and his gracious personality. This clarinet piece, frequently-changing and playful in character (yet based on the same material throughout), recalls to me my many delightful visits with the composer in America and Poland.

speckled the green and blue

Katherine Balch

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds, After the white-gray sails taut
to their spars and ropes, Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up
their necks, Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship, Waves of
the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying, Waves, undulating waves,
liquid, uneven, emulous waves, Toward that whirling current, laughing and
buoyant, with curves

Behold, the sea itself, And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;

See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue

- excerpts from Leaves of Grass, (book XIX. Sea-Drift) by Walt Whitman

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird
by Wallace Stevens (1879–1955)

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

IV

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

I wrote this piece after taking a several month hiatus from composing. I had just graduated from my masters degree in composition, and was feeling very tired and a bit creatively lost. This piece came out of a place of patience, of allowing myself to take the time I needed to rejuvenate and find the joy of composing again.

The title **New Addresses** was suggested by a collection of poetry by Kenneth Koch, a member of the much-beloved New York School of poets. I was inspired by the immediacy of Koch's poems and wanted to reflect that in my quartet for the fabulous Boston-based quartet, Hub New Music. Koch's poems in this collection are addressed, in the second person, to a specific object of interest (the Italian Language, my Father's Business, Piano Lessons). Each of the three interconnected movements in *New Addresses* are inspired by one of the poems from this collection. The first, "To Breath," features the insisting chuffing of the flutist through his instrument. The second "To My Heart at the Close of Day" suggests, via a long violin solo, the author's shifting mood at dusk. And the last "To 'Yes'" moved me to write a rhythmic, energetic march that insists, affirmatively, on a same note. It is dedicated, with affection, to Hub.

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.