

CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING AND CINEMATIC ARTS

Boyer College of Music and Dance

Faculty Recital:

Works by
Erin Busch,
David Bennett Thomas and
Maurice Wright

Friday, February 27, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

1715 North Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

Plaints and Airs (2024)

Maurice Wright (b. 1949)

- I. *The Turning Sky*
- II. *The Reluctant Suitor*
- III. *The Bird's Song*
- IV. *Walk; I'll walk until I'm there*
- V. *The Pipe and the Drum*
- VI. *'Tis sad, my fate*

Chelsea Meynig, flute

Daniel Espie, piano

Sonata for Cello Solo (2005)

David Bennett Thomas (b. 1969)

Robust

Lament

Galloping

Elegy for Elwin Jones

Vivace

Jeffrey Solow, violoncello

Intermission

perennial (2023)

Erin Busch (b. 1991)

- i. *overwinter*
- ii. *seedling : chrysalis*
interlude
- iii. *braiding waters*
- iv. *into the soil*

Elisa Muzzillo and Chelsea Meynig, flute and alto flute
Socrates Villegas, clarinet
Sean Bailey, bass clarinet
Alexandr Kislitsyn, violin
Yoshi Nakano, viola
Branson Yeast, cello
Brent Edmondson, bass
Evan Kassof, conductor
Jacob Kelberman, guitar
Gusten Rudolph, drumset
Savannah Green and Jerard Palazo, dancers
Elliot deBruyn, cinematographer

Sean Bailey, electronics and audio engineering

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

Please turn off all electronic devices.

Two hundred twelfth performance of the 2025-2026 season.

About the Composers

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 to experiment with electricity, using parts from discarded telephones. He also began to compose, and to play the trombone.

At age 13, his family moved to Tampa, Florida. While studying with Douglas Baer, principal trombonist of the Tampa Philharmonic, Wright spent a year with the Tampa Police Dance Band, rehearsing with armed musicians who performed throughout the state. He experimented with tape recorders, and studied FØRTRAN programming. At the urging of a musician friend, he applied to Duke University.

A Mary Duke Biddle Scholar at Duke, he graduated Magna Cum Laude and continued composition study at Columbia University, from which he received his 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. 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. He is Laura H. Carnell Professor of Music Studies at Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance.

"The real star of the afternoon, however, emerged with "Plaints and Airs" ... by Temple University professor of composition Maurice Wright. What a fantastic ear Mr. Wright owns! An absolutely original sound, unmistakable performance from the first notes, modern and fresh and completely natural but concealing a good deal of compositional craft.... it was that rare thing—a genuinely successful piece of new music. More from Mr. Wright, please. Much more!" (Timothy Gilligan, *New York Concert Reviews*, June 2005)

DAVID BENNETT THOMAS is a prolific composer who has composed music for chamber groups, soloists, and choruses around the world, with performances in 27 countries, including the rarescale ensemble, the choral arts societies in Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, and Chicago, Singing City, Relache, and many others. His music has been called “immediately engaging ... meticulously structured ... playful, soulful, technically dazzling, and acutely communicative” (*Philadelphia Music Makers*); and “convincing on both structural and emotional levels ... music that speaks with no pretension” (*The Classical Source*).

Thomas has had several performances at the World Choral Symposiums, as well as commissions from The National Flute Association, and ClarinetFest, for premieres at their recent conferences. Thomas has been composer in residence with the Adirondack Festival of American Music with the Gregg Smith Singers, as well as residencies with Naked Voices (Jerusalem), and Missouri Western State University. Additionally, he is active performing and recording in the jazz realm, leading ensembles at jazz festivals in the Philadelphia region, and composing original jazz for albums featuring Joel Frahm, Vic Juris, John Swana and many others. Thomas has received commissions, grants, and awards from organizations to release many albums of both classical and jazz music. He also has an active life on YouTube, where his music theory and original composition videos have millions of views. Thomas is on the faculty at Temple University and Kean University, where he teaches composition, theory, orchestration, and piano. For more information, please visit www.davidbthomas.com

ERIN BUSCH is a composer and cellist residing in Philadelphia. She has been commissioned and performed by the Yale Glee Club, Rowan University Wind Ensemble, Composers Conference, American Composers Forum and the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, Albany (NY) Symphony, Pennsbury Middle Schools, the Amorsima Trio, Orchestra 2001, and the Philadelphia Charter – A String Theory School, among others. Erin received her PhD in composition from the University of Pennsylvania with advisor Tyshawn Sorey.

Named one of Yamaha's 40 under 40 music educators, Temple University's 30 under 30, and *Philadelphia Magazine's* 2022 "Luminary Leader," Erin is the Founder and Executive Director of Wildflower Composers, a 501c3 nonprofit in Philadelphia that supports female, transgender, nonbinary, and genderqueer composers. She also serves as the Co-Founding Director of the Gabriela Ortiz Composing Studio by OAcademy and is the Director of Music Ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing. Erin currently teaches composition at Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance.

About the Artists

CHELSEA MEYNIG is recognized for her rich and versatile tone, as well as captivating narrative power in her playing. She is principal flute of The Revolution Winds and the ENA Ensemble, as well as a past member of Network for New Music. Chelsea frequently works with composers premiering and recording new music. She has appeared on several recordings as a soloist and chamber musician.

Chelsea frequently performs with The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, The Philly Pops, The Capital Philharmonic, The Ocean City Pops and other regional orchestras. Most Recently Chelsea played the world premiere of “Hope is the thing with feathers” for solo flute and narrator written by Heidi Jacob. In addition, Chelsea has toured internationally and domestically, performing as a soloist, orchestra member and chamber musician. Her performances have ranged from as close to home as Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center and New York’s Carnegie Hall to as far as Sydney and Perth Australia.

Chelsea graduated from Temple University with her Master’s Degree in 2016 where she studied with David Cramer. Since then, Chelsea has had the opportunity to study in international Masterclasses with Lorna McGhee, William Bennett, and Denis Bouriakov. In 2014 Chelsea graduated from Shenandoah Conservatory in flute performance where she studied with Jonathan Snowden, one of Britain’s première flute players, as well as Frances Lapp Averitt. Her previous primary teacher was Margaret Newcomb.

Philadelphia-based pianist **DANIEL ESPIE** has been performing internationally for over fifteen years. Having received his MMus from the Royal Academy of Music London in 2017 and his BM from Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance, Daniel has performed with large ensembles including the No-Name Pops, Ocean City Pops, and the Philadelphia Boys Choir Orchestra, as well as smaller chamber groups including Philadelphia-based ENA Ensemble.

Daniel is active in the Philadelphia musical theater community, having served as the Associate Music Director for the Walnut Street Theatre's productions of *Rocky the Musical* (2022), *The Little Mermaid* (2021) and *Young Frankenstein* (2019), and Music Director for the University of the Art's productions of *Promenade* (2021) and *The Wild Party* (2019). He conducted productions of *Mary Poppins* (2022) at Quintessence Theatre and *Head Over Heels* (2023) at Theatre Horizon. He recently finished an extended run as Associate Music Director of the Arden Theatre's production of Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* (2023) and the Wilma Theater's production of the new opera, *Hilma* (2024).

Accolades include the Jacobs Music Steinway Award (2013) and the Dr. Millard E. Gladfelter Tribute Scholarship (2012). Daniel placed in the Delius Prize at the Royal Academy of Music (2015) and was the 2018 recipient of the Williamson Foundation Grant to continue studies in piano repertoire with Steven Smith of Penn State University.

Cellist **JEFFREY SOLOW** has performed as soloist with orchestras worldwide and has been a guest artist at many national and international festivals. Born and raised in Los Angeles, he earned a degree in Philosophy magna cum laude from UCLA while studying with and assisting the legendary Gregor Piatigorsky at USC. He has recorded for numerous record labels, including several works by David Bennett Thomas, and received two Grammy Award nominations. His editions are published by Henle Urtext, the International Music Company, Ovation Online editions, and Theodore Presser. A noted teacher, Jeffrey has been professor of cello at Temple University since 1989 and received the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching in 2020. He is past president of the Violoncello Society of NY and of the American String Teachers Association.

Dancer **SAVANNAH GREEN** was born and raised in New York City, where she attended the famed LaGuardia High School for Music, Art and the Performing Arts as a Dance Major. She studied at Manhattan Youth Ballet on a full merit scholarship, performing featured roles in professional level repertoire including George Balanchine's *Stars and Stripes*, *Emeralds*, and *Serenade*, as well as Jerome Robbins' *Interplay*.

Savannah graduated from University of California, Santa Barbara in June 2017 with a BFA in Dance and a minor in Political Science. In her final year at UCSB, she was a member of the Student Dance Company and spent the year touring internationally and performing works by José Limón, Andrea Miller, Anna Halprin, among others. During that time, Savannah was privileged to be a featured soloist in Limón's tribute to Isadora Duncan, *Dances for Isadora*.

In May 2017, she travelled to New York City with the Student Dance Company to perform as part of The Radical Bodies Exhibition at Hunter College. Savannah also worked with Buglisi Dance Theater, performing new works in New York City and the Kaatsbaan International Dance Center. She also had the opportunity to perform in Jacquelyn Buglisi's *Table of Silence* at UCSB as well, as in New York City. Last summer, she performed at the Vail Dance Festival in Merce Cunningham's *Antic Meet*, staged by Melissa Toogood.

She spent a season as a Dance Fellow with BalletX, before being asked to join as a company member for the 2020-2021 15th Anniversary Season.

ELLIOT DEBRUYN is a cinematographer and photographer based in Brooklyn, NY. He has created narrative films, documentaries, and commercials for Airbnb, the Disney Corporation, The Economist, CNN, BalletX, Apple, the Glen Foerd Foundation, and Google, among many others. He is currently a video journalist for the *New York Times*.

About the Program

Plaints and Airs

Maurice Wright

Many of the melodies in this piece come from Patrick McDonald's *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs*, published in 1784, and the others sound as if they might have. Some of the tunes in his collection resemble other tunes, notably the last melody borrowed for *Plaints and Airs*, "Tha mulad, tah fg'ios orm," which has much in common with the Appalachian folksong, "Star of the County Down", and the hymn tune "Kingsfold," as adapted by Ralph Vaughn Williams. These associations are to be expected, because the same tunes were used as vehicles for a wide variety of texts by singers, and because the pentatonic modes on which they are based limits the number of useful melodic patterns.

Some of the songs in McDonald's collection have titles in English, others in Scots Gallic. The translation of the Gallic titles was quite difficult. Several knowledgeable individuals looked over the phrases and concluded that they are good examples of the non-standard quality of old Scots and offered helpful hints about some of the words. The score contains the following printed titles as a guide for the performers:

The Turning Sky

The Reluctant Suitor

Chiu-ri-ruo (The Bird's Song)

Theid, 'sgun d' theid mi thairis (Walk; I'll walk until I'm there)

The Pipe and the Drum

Tha mulad, tah fg'ios orm ('Tis sad, my fate)

The piece is less a collection of folksongs than it is a reflection on the process of transformation brought about by emigration, wandering, and the enduring qualities of culture that can be carried without weight in the body of a song.

The piece was originally (2005) a trio (flute, oboe and piano) commissioned by Prema Kesselman and her brother Jeremy. This new version was composed for Chelsea Meynig.

Sonata for Cello Solo was composed in 2005 for Jeffrey Solow, who suggested we work together on a solo cello piece after recording my *Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano* for a CD with the Temple New Music Trio (with flutist Cynthia Folio and pianist Charles Abramovic). We remained in touch over the decades, during which I wrote him another large piece (*Duo for Cello and Piano*), and even roped him into a jazz album. I am grateful for his hands-on advice in the composition of this piece, which is dedicated to him. Jeffrey is a dream performer for any composer, going beyond the norm in his dedication to making the piece be all that it can be. He played this piece on a number of concerts, from a tour in China to a barge in Brooklyn.

The piece is in five contrasting movements, in which I explored the instrument in a solo context for the first time. The first movement, "Robust," gets a lot of intensity out of the cello, by way of fortissimo multiple stops, fast runs, and furious energy. The second movement is a slow and reflective "Lament," with emotional and lyrical melodic lines. "Gallop," the third movement, is entirely pizzicato, an idea I was excited to challenge myself with. It is in a lilting 12/8 meter, and utilizes various plucked techniques, such as strumming chords and quick chord arpeggiations. The fourth movement is an emotional "Elegy for Elvin Jones," written in memory of the great jazz drummer who passed away while I was composing this piece. This movement is an atmospheric and moody one, with soft, muted double stops throughout most of its duration. The final movement "Vivace," is a whirlwind finale that sends the piece flying to its conclusion, virtuosic and full of fire and energy.

perennial is a four-movement work with an interlude that is scored for violin, viola, cello, bass, flute, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, electric guitar, and drum set. This genre-elusive piece centers around perpetual cycles of growth and decay and explores verdant textures, wandering harmonies, and continuous pulse, all of which lead to inevitable disintegration. I started to write this piece about a year into the pandemic just after receiving my first covid vaccine, when I was simultaneously eager to reenter the world and see people again, but also feeling a deep sense of loss and a desire to withdraw. It was incredibly strange for me to feel both of these sensations so strongly. Through the four movements of the piece (and one interlude!), I tried to depict this cyclical nature of grief.

The film stars dancer Savannah Green and supporting dancer Jerard Palazo, who are both company dancers at BalletX, and was created by cinematographer Elliot deBruyn. We filmed principally in Wissahickon Valley Park here in Philadelphia, as well as my living room (with and without furniture). I'm grateful to the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation for supporting this work.

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

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

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

Temple University Upcoming Events

Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Festival

Tuesday, March 3

Temple Performing Arts Center

High School Choral Jazz Festival

Thursday, March 5

Temple Performing Arts Center

Student Recital: Nam Hoang Nguyen, piano

Monday, March 9 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Studio Recital: Cello Students of John Koen

Monday, March 9 at 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Master's Recital: Chen Yi, soprano

Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

CPCA Open Mic and Cabaret

Wednesday, March 11 at 4:30 PM

Temple Performing Arts Center Lobby

Electronic Music Ensemble

Wednesday, March 11 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Rite of Swing Jazz Café: John Swana Ensemble

John Swana, EVI and trombone

Chris Farr, saxophone

Jake Kelberman, guitar

Joao Bueno, piano

Sam Harris, bass

Mekhi Boone, drums

Thursday, March 12 at 4:30 PM

Temple Performing Arts Center Lobby

Student Recital: Eric McNeill, tenor

Thursday, March 12 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Senior Recital: Laela Brown, jazz voice

Friday, March 13 at 5:30 PM

Klein Recital Hall

Spring MFA Dance Thesis Concert II

Point of Departure

Featuring choreography by Olivia Mohsen Alsamadi, Yihang Li and Esmeralda Luciano

Friday, March 13 at 7:30 PM

Saturday, March 14 at 7:30 PM

Conwell Dance Theater

Master's Recital: Jeffrey Dalton, jazz drums

Friday, March 13 at 7:30 PM

Klein Recital Hall

Senior Recital: Philippe Jean-Louis, jazz voice

Saturday, March 14 at 5:30 PM

Klein Recital Hall

Master's Recital: Bryana Crockett, jazz drums

Saturday, March 14 at 7:30 PM

Klein Recital Hall

World Music: African Dance: Sena Atsugah

5:00 PM Class I

6:15 PM Class II

Sunday, March 15

Arronson Hall

Master's Recital: Madalyn Sadler, viola

Sunday, March 15 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

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.