

TRANSIENT CANVAS
Turn Your Hand

Presented by Spitting Image Collective
April 30, 2022 • Studio Z, St. Paul, MN

Program

Converse II (2020)	Yiyang Wang (b. 1995)
Superior (2016)	Katherine Bergman (b. 1985)
Suite excentrique (excerpts) (2017) U.S. PREMIERE <i>Enthralled</i> (Overture) <i>Enchanted</i> (Allemande I) <i>Entombed</i> (Pavane) <i>Enraptured</i> (Courante)	Jonathan Posthuma (b. 1989)
Song of Unktehi (2015)	Daniel Nass (b. 1975)
Voight-Kampff (2022) WORLD PREMIERE	Joshua Clausen (b. 1981)
Ton yo han mek fashan (2021)	Mikhail Johnson (b. 1989)

Amy Advocat, bass clarinet
Matt Sharrock, marimba

Boston-based contemporary duo **Transient Canvas** is on a mission to revolutionize the modern concert experience. Since 2011, their innovative performances have been praised as “superb” by the Boston Globe and “disarming” by Cleveland Classical, with the San Francisco Chronicle lauding “the versatile imagination they both display and inspire in others.” Bass clarinetist Amy Advocat and marimbist Matt Sharrock relish the creative potential of working with living composers, having amassed a varied repertoire of over 80 commissioned works in addition to working with hundreds of student composers from all over the world. Since 2017, they have hosted their annual paid Composer Fellowship Program that is free and open to composers of all ages. They maintain an active touring schedule with recent performances at the Charlotte New Music Festival, Music on the Edge, Composers, Inc., Music at the Forefront, and People Inside Electronics, among others. Recent educational residencies include the University of Southern California, University of Pittsburgh, North Carolina NewMusic Initiative, and Divergent Studio at Longy School of Music. They have three albums, *Sift*, *Wired*, and *Right Now, in a Second*, all released on New Focus Recordings. Transient Canvas proudly endorses Henri Selmer Paris and Marimba One. For more information, visit www.transientcanvas.com.

Program Notes

CONVERSE II | YIYANG WANG

Converse II is a short, fast, and exhilarating burst of energy.

SUPERIOR | KATHERINE BERGMAN

Inspired by the view of Lake Superior at dusk from Split Rock Lighthouse State Park along Minnesota's north shore, *Superior* is part of a body of work depicting the beauty and diversity of wilderness areas throughout the state of Minnesota. The music portrays slowly rolling waves, an ever-evolving, colorful night sky, and the magnitude of this enormous lake.

SUITE EXCENTRIQUE | JONATHAN POSTHUMA

Early in the process of creating *Suite Excentrique*, I wanted to explore Baroque dance forms, especially those associated with the genre of the keyboard suite. Historically, these dances borrowed from national traditions, but over time, they were warped and molded into new traditions. In traditional keyboard suites, each dance is in the same key and follows conventions of rhythm and form. Rather than establishing a key, this suite uses a finite set of motives, all derived from a chromatic row of pitches: Bb Ab F A C# B G Bb E D B D# F# E Ab C A# G# E F#

Though ambiguous, this melody seems to resolve on E and suggests an E lydian mode. It was this "E-centric" motive that gives the suite its name and movement titles, all of which begin with the letter E. Curiously, when finding adjectives that expressed the mood of these dances, I found that many of these words are synonyms of one another and also cognates or derivatives of words in French: esclave, ensorceler, enchanté, ensevelir, enveloppé, entourer, enterré, englouti. These adjectives suggest various moods through the piece, some more abstract and some more narrative in nature. While some of the dances adhere more strictly to the conventions of Baroque dance forms, many wander distantly from their sources in order to explore their more 'eccentric' natures. The descriptive titles should inform the overarching narrative of the suite, which could be enacted like scenes of a ballet or accompanied by film or images.

SONG OF UNKTEHI | DANIEL NASS

The word Unktehi is derived from a legend of the Dakota and Lakota Sioux Native American tribes. According to the mythology, Unktehi — god of waters and evil — was a great horned serpent that lived below the waters of St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis. After living in this area for a number of years, and learning of this folktale, I was inspired to compose a work in which I would try to capture the spirit of the falls, assigning the serpent character to the bass clarinet.

VOIGHT-KAMPPFF | JOSHUA CLAUSEN

Voight-Kampff is named after the fictional machine in 1982's *Blade Runner*, which measures miniscule changes in the subject's heart rate, eye dilations, breathing patterns, etc. while asking the subject disturbing questions. In the movie the Voight-Kampff machine is used by police to analyze emotional responses, which can reveal whether the subject is a replicant (an android physically indistinguishable from a human being).

TON YO HAN MEK FASHAN | MIKHAIL JOHNSON

This piece is inspired by two instruments in the Jamaican Mento Band. The first is the rumba box or in other countries called the marimbula. It is like a large thumb piano, and it provides the "bassline" of the band. This instrument has only five to six fixed pitches tuned like a scale, so the bass is implied as it will not always be in tune with the other instruments. It however, adds great rhythmic effect. The second instrument is the clarinet. Although a familiar Western instrument, in this context, the sounds produced are very bold, honky, reedy, earthy, unrefined, as the instrumentalists are self-taught. Nevertheless, they produce highly virtuosic improvisatory themes, or improvisations on folk songs; full of character and life congruent to the moment in which this mento music is being played.

The marimba mimics the rumba box very well, and the bass clarinet is already of the clarinet family. The advantage of these two instruments lie in their extended upper/lower ranges, making it possible to play with the dynamic of their interaction. Starting from the traditional role of melody-accompaniment, I reverse, warp, or even abandon these roles so these instruments can even represent other instruments found in the mento band (i.e. the guitar, banjo, or drums). The result is somewhat a set of variations on the theme of a two-man band.

The title *Ton yo han mek fashan* (literally translated: turn your hand [and] make fashion) is a proverb with two meanings: To make of what could be deemed useless, fashionable. It also means to make the most of an unfortunate situation. I originally wrote the piece making the most of two instruments to create elements of a full mento band. Ironically, this piece was written in the year that endured a global pandemic, in which I was creatively paralyzed for eight months. Now, had to make use of an unfortunate situation (the pandemic), break through my darkest times, and create a work that I always wanted to be highly optimistic and full of joy.

Composer Bios

Yiyang Wang holds a BA in music from Reed College, and is currently pursuing MM in composition at the Peabody Conservatory. A native of Zhejiang, China, Yiyang started playing piano at a young age, but found her passion in music composition while studying at Reed. She won the Grand Prize in the Chamber Music Northwest Composition Competition, and was the recipient of the Kaspar T. Locher Creative Fellowship and Rothchild Stipend. Yiyang attended festivals such as RED NOTE, Atlantic Music Festival, and The Walden School, and has collaborated with ensembles and performers such as Transient Canvas, Mivos Quartet, Steven Beck, Fear No Music, and Wintergreen Tramp Orchestra. She's currently studying with Harold Meltzer, and studied in the past with Chris Cerrone, Gilda Lyons, Yuan-Chen Li, and David Schiff.

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Katherine Bergman (b. 1985) is a Minnesota-based composer who draws on literature, environmentalism, and found materials to create music that has been described as hypnotic and visceral. She has received commissions and performances from leading ensembles throughout the United States, including the U.S. Coast Guard Band, Estonian Police and Border Guard Orchestra, Encore Wind Ensemble, Hub New Music, Zeitgeist, Seen/Hear Trio, Minnesota Percussion Trio, The Dream Songs Project, and many others. Her music has been presented at ISCM World Music Days, The Midwest Clinic, North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference, College Band Directors National Association Conference, and The Upper Midwest Chamber Winds Symposium, and her compositions have received support from the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Jerome Foundation, the Metro Regional Arts Council, and New Music USA.

Katherine holds a master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa School of Music, where she studied composition with Jonathan Schwabe and Alan Schmitz. She earned a bachelor's degree in music from Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota with composition instructors including Michele Gillman and Steve Wright. She has studied extensively with Mary Ellen Childs, and has received individual instruction from Samuel Adler. Recent and upcoming projects include new works for 10th Wave Chamber Collective, Transient Canvas, Nautilus Music-Theater, and a new work for oboe and wind ensemble commissioned by Susan Miranda, Dordt University, and a consortium of university wind bands.

Katherine is Co-Founder and Artistic Co-Director of Spitting Image, a composer collective that brings together composers, listeners, and performers to strengthen the Twin Cities contemporary music community.

www.katherinebergman.net

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Jonathan Posthuma (b. 1989) is a freelance composer in Saint Paul, Minnesota. His musical style seeks to combine lyricism, evocative imagery, and intense emotional contrasts, yet maintains clarity in form and function at their deepest levels.

He recently received his Masters in Music Composition from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where he studied with Stephen Dembski and Laura Schwendinger. His orchestral work, Fili di Perle received 3rd Prize in the Karol Szymanowski International Composers Competition in Katowice, Poland and was premiered in March 2016. As part of his degree requirement, Jonathan composed and recorded, The God of Material Things, a song cycle for narrator, soloist, chorus, and orchestra, which sets the poetry of David Schelhaas, professor emeritus of Dordt University, where Jonathan studied composition privately with Luke Dahn while completing his Bachelors in Music Education.

Other recent large ensemble works include An Isthmus Aubade, dedicated to Scott Teeple and the UW-Madison Wind Ensemble and premiered in April 2015 and Concerto Grosso No. 1 for strings, percussion, and piano, commissioned and premiered by the Madison Area Youth Orchestra and Clocks in Motion in June 2015. In August 2017, he participated in the International Workshop of Orchestral Composition at the Federal University of Paraná, where the scherzo from his Chamber Symphony "Beams of Heaven" was premiered by the student orchestra. Among his other awards are 2011 BMI Student Composer Award for Five Studies for Piano: Two Pencils and a Hymnbook and an award for sound design from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival for his incidental music for The Glass Menagerie.

Jonathan is an active member of the Twin Cities choral community and has sung with VocalEssence Chorus, Kantorei, and impulse (MPLS). Several of his choral works have received premieres by these ensembles, including two composed for VocalEssence as part of their ReMix program, designed for emerging composers of choral music, which were premiered at the ACDA National Festival in March 2017 and at Minnesota's ACDA Festival in November 2017. Recently, he was selected as a participant for the inaugural Mostly Modern Festival, where selections from Paul Klee: Painted Songs, an ongoing collection of chamber works inspired by the visual art of Paul Klee were premiered in addition to a performance of two movements from his Chamber Symphony with the American Modern Orchestra. Jonathan also works in the Development office of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

www.jonathanposthuma.com

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The music of **Daniel Nass** (b. 1975) has been reviewed as “playful,” “eerie,” and “witty.” He has received numerous awards and recognitions, including ASCAP awards, as well as invitations to SEAMUS and SCI national conferences, the Seoul International Computer Music Festival, and the International Computer Music Conference in Singapore. He has been awarded prizes in the ISU Carillon Composition Competition, the UMKC Chamber Music Composition Competition, and was one of three composers awarded a commission to write a new choral work for the Young New Yorkers’ Chorus. Other recent commissions include the Spitting Image Collective, Caprice Saxophone Quartet, Zeitgeist, clarinetist Sarah Porwoll-Lee, and the dream songs project.

A native of Howard Lake, Minnesota, Nass holds degrees from Saint Olaf College, the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory of Music, and the University of Texas at Austin. Past teachers include Kevin Puts, Donald Grantham, James Mobberley, Chen Yi, and Peter Hamlin. His works are distributed through his self-publishing company, Daniel Nass Music, and professional recordings are available on the Innova, Centaur, Crescent Phase, and Avid Sound Records labels.

www.danielnassmusic.com

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Described by Public Radio International as “powerful” and “poignant,” **Joshua Clausen’s** works frequently fuse strong rhythmic textures and intricate patterning with narratives from history, mass culture and current events.

Clausen is a 2018-2019 McKnight Composer Fellow, currently collaborating with ARENA DANCES and artist Kim Heidkamp on THERMAL, an interdisciplinary installation and evening-length performance at the American Swedish Institute, the chamber ensemble 10th Wave, and ceramic artist Anna Metcalfe. Other recent collaborations include Hold My Hand with ARENA DANCES (Fitzgerald Theater), Crossfire with HUB New Music (Boston), a mass choir performance of Requiem at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, and the film VESSEL with members of the FIX collective, directed by Joe Horton (Minneapolis Institute of Art).

Previous honors include awards from the Jerome Foundation Fellowship, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, the American Composers Forum and the Minnesota State Arts Board. Performances include the 2018 Tribeca New Music Festival, Lincoln Center’s David Geffen Hall, Ensemble Mise-En, ShoutHouse, Verdant Vibes in Providence RI, and the American Composers Forum showcase. Clausen’s music has been featured on PRI’s The World with Marco Werman and Classical Minnesota Public Radio.

Clausen is a member of the Spitting Image Collective, and a board member of the 113 Composers Collective, both Twin-Cities groups dedicated to composer-curated programming,
www.joshuaclausen.com

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Mikhail Johnson (1989-) born in the rural hills of Maroon Town in the parish of St. James, Jamaica, is one of the country’s most promising pianists and composers. He was winner of the Jamaica Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition for Young Musicians Senior Division in 2009, and in the same year, won the piano section of the Jamaica Music Teachers’ Association Music Competition. He has won numerous gold medals and national awards in the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) Festival of the Performing Arts, and he was also a finalist in the 2017 American Prize Music Competition for Piano (collegiate division). In 2021 he was two-time First Prize winner of the Charleston International Music Competition and the first Jamaican to enter the competition.

As a composer Johnson’s compositional style merges traditional European classical music and the avant-garde with traditional Jamaican cultural idiosyncrasies. His compositional output is being published on his publishing label Johno Muzik, and comprises of: sacred and patriotic choral works, African American Spiritual arrangements, song cycles and instrumental works. Johnson’s many commissions from universities and music organizations, and his wins and finalist placements in several competitions and score calls, has resulted in his works being performed by several ensembles. This includes: The Cleveland Chamber Symphony, The Cantus Ensemble of London, The North/South Consonance Ensemble, The Concordia Ensemble of the University of Notre Dame, the Departure Duo and Transient Canvas.

Johnson has also been invited as chief adjudicator for several international music competitions in the categories of piano and composition. Johnson holds degrees from Bowling Green State University, and Texas Tech University.

<https://mikhail2406.wixsite.com/mikhail-johnson>