



UGA
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24|25 SEASON

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA WIND ENSEMBLE
NICHOLAS ENRICO WILLIAMS, conductor

THURS, FEB 20, 7:30 pm

Hodgson Concert Hall

Supported by
FRIENDS OF JANE KING

 **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**
Hugh Hodgson School of Music

Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and audio recording, and texting are prohibited during the performance.



EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

LINA ANDONVOSKA, flutes

ZACHARY GOOD, clarinets

MAIANI DA SILVA, violin

AARON WOLFF, cello

MATTHEW DUVALL, percussion

LISA KAPLAN, piano

PROGRAM

NICO MUHLY (b. 1981)

Doublespeak [10:00]

ARI SUSSMAN (b. 1993)

to no end [9:00]

JOAN TOWER (b. 1938)

Into the Night [20:00]

Eighth Blackbird

INTERMISSION

OSCAR NAVARRO (b. 1981)

Legacy [23:00]

Michelle Moeller, oboe

Nicholas Enrico Williams, conductor

University of Georgia Wind Ensemble

VIET CUONG (b. 1990)

Vital Sines [16:00]

Eighth Blackbird

Nicholas Enrico Williams, conductor

University of Georgia Wind Ensemble

to no end was commissioned by Justus and Elizabeth Schlichting for the Blackbird Creative Lab.

Doublespeak was commissioned by the MusicNow! Festival.

Into the Night was commissioned for Eighth Blackbird by Harry Santen in honor of the birthday of his wife, Ann.

Vital Sines was commissioned for Eighth Blackbird by the United States Navy Band.

Program is subject to change. Timings are approximate.

PROGRAM NOTES

Doublespeak

Nico Muhly (b. 1981)

We're lucky to have so many adventures and one of those took us to Cincinnati at Bryce Dessner's MusicNow festival. On this particular occasion, it was Philip Glass's 75th birthday, and so Bryce had this idea to commission Nico to write music for Philip's birthday that we would perform. Nico was a copyist for Philip as a precocious teenager (he's still precocious). We've all performed together in different configurations, and recorded together (see: Eighth Blackbird, Grammy-winning *Filament*) and this is all just to say that this composition comes from a place of lots of friends having lots of fun together. Because Nico has such a personal compositional connection with Philip Glass, he reverently nods to him from within *Doublespeak*.

Nico writes: I wanted to point back to the 70's, when classical music perfected obsessive repetition. The piece begins by applying an additive process to a small cell on the solo violin. This is the defining gesture of the piece, and is subject to much variation. Occasionally, the busy textures give way to drones under which we begin to hear chords from Philip's insanely beautiful *Music in Twelve Parts* (1971-1974). The piece unfolds in similar episodes: fast music offset by slow, melancholic memories of the music of the late 1960's and 1970's (aren't those the intervals from *Violin Phase?* Was that a cell from *In C?*). Towards the end of the piece, the language of Philip's *Music in Twelve Parts* becomes more dominant, and gradually overtakes all the busy material and the piece ends in a stylized dream state.

to no end

Ari Sussman (b. 1993)

Ari wrote *to no end* during his time spent with us at our Blackbird Creative Lab (look it up!). Eighth Blackbird was hosting The Lab at the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin (look it up!). Imagine: An iconic center for the study of astrophysics, the largest refracting telescope in the world housed in a 10 story dome, and a building best described as Hogwarts Castle... all rolled into one. This is a setting for boundlessly unpredictable creativity and *to no end* is how Ari responded when prompted by the observatory itself. We got to premiere this composition in that observatory dome, with that telescope soaring above us, and our realization of Ari's imagination lofted weightlessly into the unknown, and it was utterly magical.

Ari writes: While I am by no means religious, I do consider myself a proud cultural and spiritual Jewish American. Naturally, I often gravitate toward and find fascination and solace in traditional Jewish music and chant. *to no end* paraphrases the cantillation chants of two excerpted verses of the Book of Genesis regarding the stars and celestial beings (the original Hebrew is translated below). While both verses are similar in tone, meaning, sentiment, and nature, the perpetual and unremitting chant-like melodies serve as the foundation for this work; it is

constantly evolving by building, compressing, deconstructing, decompressing, "melting," and mutating.

*"Then God brought him (Abraham) outside and said: 'Look up to the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to number them.' (Genesis 15:5)
Then God said..."*

"I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky, and I will give your descendants all of these lands. And through your descendants, all peoples and nations will be blessed." (Genesis 26:4)

Translation by Ari Sussman, via Bible Gateway

Into the Night

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Joan writes: "The title *Into the Night* was taken from the last movement of my cello concerto *A New Day*, which was dedicated to my husband who passed away in November of 2022. The decline and loss of a partner of fifty years creates a major and complex challenge of emotions that involve sadness, love, anxiety, and too many other emotions to describe in words. I guess this piece has helped me go through a journey of those feelings through a musical expression - my beloved and supportive friend - which I am so blessed to have in my life. I want to thank Eighth Blackbird for playing my piece so very beautifully."

This is no small thing, to take a work born from such a deeply emotive place—to take responsibility for it—and aspire to be the ambassador of an expression so personal. Eighth Blackbird and Joan began their relationship at a music festival in 1996, where Joan was a faculty member and Eighth Blackbird was a group of undergraduate students trying to figure out what this whole chamber ensemble thing is about. Joan knows Eighth Blackbird. She knows for whom she was composing, and we feel that connection in these parts formed from love. She believed in us then, and she believes in us now, and it means the world to us.

Legacy

Óscar Navarro (b. 1981)

The passage of time is something we cannot stop. We can remember moments from the past, enjoy the present and imagine the future. Along life's path we leave indelible marks: on places, on people, and there are the moments in life that leave their marks on us... The oboe is a faithful instrument that has survived the passage of time from antiquity and to which many composers have dedicated their most profound inspiration since time long passed. In the history of music great works have been dedicated to this instrument and over time they continue to be a part of our lives. With this concerto, I wish to leave my mark or Legacy, looking to the past, the present and the future, which is symbolized in a large part of the work with a hidden "tick-tock" of a clock. This "tick-tock" transports us through various time periods of our history. —*Program note by the composer*

Óscar Navarro is a Spanish composer. Navarro began studying the clarinet at an early age, and studied music at the Conservatorio Superior Oscar Espla in

Alicante, Spain. He is the recipient of many national and international music awards for composition, and his music is performed and commissioned by many orchestral and wind ensembles throughout the world. Navarro combines his busy agenda composing with master classes and lectures. He has been invited to speak at several music festivals and universities, including Chapman University, California, 25th Film Symposium Jove in Valencia, Spain, CIFICOM (Sci-Fi Film Festival of Madrid), II Symposium of Wind Ensembles of Medellin, Colombia, Music Festival of the Symphony of Manizales, Colombia, and the University of Southern California.

Vital Sines

Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

Vital Sines is dedicated to my father's memory as the guardian of my musical life, as well as the many moments during my life when I found sanctuary in music. The creation of this particular piece, though challenging, was a way of finding solace when I needed it most. Throughout the piece, I employ several musical sequences and chaconne forms, all of which use repetition as a means of development. The overarching structure of the piece thus bears a resemblance to the visual depiction of the sine wave, rising and falling like the tracing of breaths and heartbeats. There is of course comfort in the familiarity of continued repetition. But I also followed memories back to my teenage years in band, when that community had the extraordinary ability to not just bring me comfort but heal my heart. What I then realized was that all the other musical communities I have become a part of since then, band or not, hold this same healing power.

With this concerto for the Eighth Blackbird and the U.S. Navy Band, I am tremendously honored to bring together the wind band and new music communities, both vital to me and so many others. Thank you to Eighth Blackbird and the U.S. Navy Band for giving me an opportunity that I dreamed of for many years, as well as for your patience as I navigated this time in my life. Finally, thank you to my father for helping me find my way all those years ago. This one's for you.—*Program note by the composer*

Called “alluring” and “wildly inventive” by The New York Times, the music of American composer **Viet Cuong** has been performed on six continents by musicians and ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, Eighth Blackbird, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Alarm Will Sound, Atlanta Symphony, Sandbox Percussion, Albany Symphony, PRISM Quartet, and Dallas Winds, among many others. Cuong's music has been featured in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center, and his works for wind ensemble have amassed several hundred performances worldwide. Passionate about bringing these different facets of the contemporary music community together, his recent projects include a concerto for Eighth Blackbird with the United States Navy Band. Cuong also enjoys exploring the unexpected and whimsical, and he is often drawn to projects where he can make peculiar combinations and sounds feel enchanting or oddly satisfying. His works thus include a snare drum solo, percussion quartet concerto, and double oboe concerto. He is currently the Pacific

Symphony's Composer-in-Residence and serves as Assistant Professor of Music Composition at The University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Cuong holds degrees from Princeton University (MFA/PhD), the Curtis Institute of Music (AD), and Peabody Conservatory (BM/MM).



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

Eighth Blackbird moves music forward through innovative performance, advocacy for music by living creatives, and its growing legacy of guiding an emerging generation of artists.

Accolades include: Four Grammy Awards for Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance | The MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions | The Concert Artists Guild Competition Grand Prize | The Musical America Ensemble of the Year | The Chamber Music America Visionary Award | The APRA AMCOS Art Music Awards Performance of the Year.

Creative Output Includes: Commissions and World Premieres of hundreds of works by established and emerging composers | Fully Produced Theatrical Chamber Music Productions | Chamber Ensemble Concertos with both orchestras and bands | An Extensive Recording Catalog

In addition to chamber music performance, the members of 8BB value their roles as curators, educators, and mentors. Beginning exclusively as a chamber music

ensemble, 8BB has expanded in recent years to represent multiple mission-driven initiatives: Eighth Blackbird | Blackbird IV | The Blackbird Creative Lab | The Chicago Artists Workshop | Blackbird Productions. Beginning in 2025, Eighth Blackbird began a new partnership as Artists-in-Residence with the Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture.

The name “Eighth Blackbird” derives from the eighth stanza of Wallace Stevens’s evocative, imagistic poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*: “I know noble accents / And lucid, inescapable rhythms; / But I know, too, / That the blackbird is involved / In what I know.”

Matthew Duvall and Lisa Kaplan, Artistic co-Directors
eighthblackbird.org

Matthew Duvall proudly endorses Pearl Drums and Adams Musical Instruments, Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets, Zildjian Cymbals, and Black Swamp Percussion Accessories. Lisa Kaplan is a Steinway Artist.

NICHOLAS ENRICO WILLIAMS

Nicholas Enrico Williams is a Professor of Music and serves as the Director of Bands at the University of Georgia, where he coordinates one of the country’s largest and most comprehensive university band programs, conducts the University of Georgia Wind Ensemble, and oversees the graduate wind band conducting area. Prior to his time in Athens, he was the Director of Wind Bands at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (Melbourne, Australia). Before venturing to Australia, Dr. Williams flourished for sixteen years as the Assistant Director of Wind Studies, the Conductor of the Wind Ensemble, Brass Band, and Concert Band, as well as the Director of Athletic Bands at the University of North Texas.

For a decade, he was the Conductor of the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Wind Symphony and continues to be a frequent guest conductor of the Dallas Winds (formerly Dallas Wind Symphony), one of America’s few professional civic wind bands. Professor Williams earned the Bachelor of Music (music education), MM (performance-conducting), and DMA (conducting) degrees from the University of North Texas.

As an advocate of chamber music, Professor Williams was the founder and conductor of the East Plano Brass and was the principal guest conductor for the Harmoniemusik chamber ensemble. In the wind band world, he has been a guest conductor with the World Youth Wind Symphony at the Interlochen Arts Camp; Royal Australian Navy Band; United States Air Force Band; Dallas Wind Symphony; Lone Star Wind Orchestra; at the annual Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, Illinois; the College Band Directors National Association regional conference; the Texas Bandmasters Association Convention; and the Texas Music Educators Association Annual Clinic/Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Williams is active in Australia, Canada, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the United States as a conductor, clinician, adjudicator, consultant, and arranger; his arrangements and transcriptions for wind band, percussion ensembles, drum

corps, and school pageantry ensembles are performed by outstanding organizations throughout the world. A member of the Recording Academy (GRAMMYS), he is a sought-after recording session producer, associate producer, editor, and conductor, having been involved with numerous CDs and DVDs on the Klavier, Mark Records, and GIA labels, as well as UNT projects, including the 2019 worldwide release of “FIESTAS” by the University of North Texas Wind Ensemble. In addition to his work in the recording arts, he has written several conductor study guides published in the multivolume series of *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*. He is a primary consultant of Women of Influence in Contemporary Music and is an honorary member of Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity for women. His professional affiliations include the Georgia Music Educators Association, Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, College Band Directors National Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and Phi Beta Mu, an international bandmasters fraternity.

MICHELLE MOELLER

Michelle Moeller is in her second year of doctoral studies at the University of Georgia, studying under the direction of Dr. Reid Messich. She currently teaches oboe at Furman University and the Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities in Greenville, South Carolina. Michelle serves as the Librarian for the University of Georgia’s band department and teaches private lessons at the Community Music School.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Michelle is an active performer, regularly playing with the Aiken and Augusta Symphony Orchestras. In the summers, she loves attending festivals performing with musicians from all over the world. Most recently, Michelle participated in the National Orchestral Institute at the University of Maryland, where she performed as Principal Oboe on Mahler’s *Symphony No. 1* under the baton of Marin Alsop, alongside select members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This ensemble toured to Chicago and performed at the Ravinia Festival as part of the National Seminario Ravinia: Orchestras for All.

The Legacy Oboe Concerto beautifully portrays the passage of time—a theme that resonates deeply with Michelle. Performing the concerto with the UGA Wind Ensemble has been an incredibly meaningful experience as she gets to perform this piece with her friends and colleagues. She has known Dr. Williams since her sophomore year of high school in Dallas, Texas, and she is so excited to play this piece with him as she nears the completion of her doctoral studies. The concerto’s final moments—a whirlwind of chaotic clockwork that accelerates to an energetic, virtuosic conclusion—capture the essence of life’s fleeting nature, marking both an ending and a new beginning, much like Michelle’s own musical journey. Michelle holds a Bachelor of Music from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, where she studied with Linda Strommen. She then pursued further studies in New York City, earning a Masters of Music at the Mannes School of Music with Julia DeRosa and Ryan Roberts, fulfilling her long-held dream of studying in the City.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
WIND ENSEMBLE

Flute

Kimkie Bateman
Heesoo Jeong
Sam Malave
Shana Stone

Oboe

Michelle Moeller
Ashley Na
Brenna Sexton
Amanda Withrow

Clarinet

Sarah Christie Frois
Ryan Hanling
Riley Hartman
Elise Larson
Jonathan Mack
Yash Mahadkar
Avery Pate
Garrison Rider
Jaden Skelton
Taylor Spires

Bassoon

Jazmyn Barajas-Trujillo
Caleb Jackson
Daniel Johnson

Saxophone

Addison Aycock
Owen Cotton
Carter Naughton
Yun Que Tan
Christopher Victor

Horn

Peter Dixon
Jacob Evarts
Gracie Gambrell
Joseph Johnson
Jake Wadsworth

Trumpet

Cameran Butryn
Adriano Estraiotto
Palmer Hartley
Toby Johnson
Ben Stocksdale
James Vaughn

Trombone

Eli Boudreaux
Zachary Nelson
Ian Wolff

Bass Trombone

Trip Drennan
Jonas Ventresca

Euphonium

Tianxing Gu
Andrew Haynes

Tuba

Hunter Kane
Jacob Norris

String Bass

Leonardo Lopes

Piano

Eva Panagou

Harp

Isabel Hardy

Percussion

Henry Campbell
Tanner Fallin
Carrington Lauck
Rachel Martin
Reece Moseley
Mackenzie Roquemore
Angelina Vasquez

Upcoming Performances



Georgia Bertazzi

TETZLAFF QUARTET

Sun, Mar 30, 3:00 pm
Ramsey Concert Hall

“Supremely lyrical, exactingly detailed playing combined with impeccable balance and unanimity, resulting in an overwhelming performance.”

— *New York Times*

It's always a pleasure to welcome a lauded, seasoned string quartet to Athens for the first time, and the performance by this German ensemble promises to become an instant favorite with its “superlative technique and invigorating intensity” (*New York Times*). The performance features an all-Austrian program by three of Vienna's superstar composers: Mozart, Anton Webern, and Schubert.



Marco Borggreve

Kaia Smith

BRANDON PATRICK GEORGE, flute MAHAN ESFAHANI, harpsichord

Fri, Apr 18, 7:30 pm
Ramsey Concert Hall

“Brandon Patrick George is a flutist who has gained much attention and accolades with his virtuosity and gorgeous round flute tone.”—*Sound in Review*

Brandon Patrick George is a leading flute soloist and a member of the Grammy Award-winning Imani Winds who has been praised as a “knockout musician with a gorgeous sound” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*). Iranian-American harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani, whose Bach performances have been called “revelatory” (*The Guardian*), combines scholarship with showmanship to bring his instrument into the 21st century. The two virtuosos will dazzle us with gems by a legendary father/son duo: J.S. and C.P.E. Bach.



Felix Brodde

JERUSALEM QUARTET

Fri, May 2, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

“Passion, precision, warmth, a gold blend: These are the trademarks of this excellent Israeli string quartet.” —*Times of London*

The Jerusalem Quartet is highly regarded for its warm, full sound as well as its command of a wide-ranging repertoire and stunning depth of expression. The ensemble's signature style maintains a balance between individual interpretation and respectful presentation of the composer's work. The quartet returns to Athens with an irresistible program by a trio of composers who each made considerable contributions to the chamber music canon: Haydn, Shostakovich, and Brahms.

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