

# 21st Century Consort

January 20, 2024

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
301 A Street, SE, Washington, DC

# 21st Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director  
Boyd Sarratt, Manager

Paul Cigan, clarinet  
Lisa Emenheiser, piano  
Daniel Foster, viola  
Mikhail Johnson, organ  
Regino Madrid, violin  
Marissa Regni, violin  
Matthew Ross, flute  
Lucy Shelton, soprano  
Rachel Young, cello

H. Paul Moon, Film Maker  
Mark Huffman, Recording Engineer

Saturday, January 20, 2024

Pre-concert Discussion 4:00 p.m.

Concert 5:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
301 A Street, SE, Washington, DC



The 21st Century Consort's 2023-2024 activities are sponsored by the Nicolae Bretan Music Foundation; the Paul M. Angell Foundation; the Amphion, Dimick, and Fuller foundations; and the Board and Friends of the 21st Century Consort.

[www.21consort.org](http://www.21consort.org)

## Pre-Concert Discussion

Christopher Kendall with Mikhail Johnson and Lucy Shelton

## Program "Singular Beauty"

<i>Voodoo Dolls</i> (2008)	Jesse Montgomery
<i>Glances / I Don't Belong Here:</i> (2019)	Hannah Kendall
Mr. Foster, Mr. Madrid, Ms. Regni, Ms. Young	
<i>Praise the Mother of Jamaican Art</i> (2023)	Mikhail Johnson
Ms. Emenheiser, Ms. Shelton	
<i>Parajota Delate</i> (1988)	Tania Leon
<i>CryptOlogiE</i> (2014)	Shawn Okpebholo
Mr. Cigan, Ms. Emenheiser, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Regni, Mr. Ross, Ms. Young	
Intermission	
<i>Si Di Staar Deh!</i> (2022)	Mikhail Johnson
Mr. Johnson	
<i>Angel Chile</i> (1974)	Jeanne Lee
Ms. Shelton Improvisation with pre-recorded performance by the composer	
<i>Pasa Pasa</i> (2021)	Mikhail Johnson
Mr. Cigan	
<i>Jamaican Medley</i> (1983)	Eleanor Alberga
Ms. Emenheiser	
<i>The Jury</i> (2022; poetry by Rhina Espaillat)	Jon Deak
Mr. Foster, Mr. Madrid, Ms. Regni, Ms. Shelton, Ms. Young	

## Program Notes

As an art enthusiast sandwiched between mother and daughter ceramists, I've been really happy that a master of that under-appreciated medium has achieved Simone Leigh's place of recognition in the art world. The U.S. representative at the 2022 Venice Biennale and subject of a current solo exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum, Leigh "has embraced a polyphonic artistic vocabulary that elaborates on Black feminist thought, an intellectual tradition which values and centers the experiences of Black women.... Leigh's monumental bronze, 'Satellite' (2022) which stood sentry outside the U.S. Pavilion in Venice, has been installed at the entrance to the Hirshhorn on the southern plaza to signal the exhibition's arrival." Inside the Venice Pavilion, visitors were greeted with a film about Leigh entitled "Conspiracy," after the 1975 recording of that name by the jazz singer and composer Jeanne Lee; we have centered the second half of our program—after a celestial organ prelude—around that artist's exquisitely intimate recording of "Angel Chile" (recorded, with live improvisation).

As the Hirshhorn's exhibition materials observe, "Simone Leigh grew up in Chicago, daughter of middle-class Jamaican immigrants. She was used to toggling daily between worlds—West Indian, African American, white." Our program endeavors to mirror this aspect of Leigh's cultural experience in a veritable pepperpot of music. "During visits to Jamaica she grasped how colonialism and resistance, rather than being contradictory, produced complex, continually renewing, social values and aesthetics. 'I think like someone from the Caribbean,' she said. 'I like how complicated it is, seeing beauty in something that was horrifying at the same time.'"

Along with composers familiar to Consort audiences, we're very happy to introduce new voices, including Jamaican composer/pianist Mikhail Johnson. We'll hear three of his wonderful works on the program, one performed by the composer himself. These are works that mine the cultural DNA of Simone Leigh's Caribbean ancestry, in some cases encoded in the works' elements, like Jeanne Lee's daughter's name in her improvisation, Shawn Okpebholo's family in the rhythms and pitches of "CryptologiE," and Tania Leon's tribute to composer Joan Tower in the title of her work. Jon Deak's "The Jury" is his inimitable setting of a timely text by Jamaican-American poet Rhina Espaillat, taking up the eco-theme of the composer's "Ingmar and the Bear, a Tale for Our Time," premiered by

the Consort in December. All told, we hope you enjoy this tribute to an extraordinary visual artist, and the musical artists whose works resonate kaleidoscopically with hers.

For a direct experience of Simone Leigh's extraordinary work, I urge a visit to the Hirshhorn Museum before her exhibition closes on March 3rd. A schedule of tours featuring the exhibition is available at the Museum event page: <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/events/photo/page/2/>.

– Christopher Kendall

## Voodoo Dolls

## Jesse Montgomery

Jessie Montgomery is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. She is the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, and her works are performed frequently around the world by leading musicians and ensembles. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, poetry, and social consciousness, making her an acute interpreter of 21st century American sound and experience. Her profoundly felt works have been described as "turbulent, wildly colorful, and exploding with life" (*The Washington Post*). Her growing body of work includes solo, chamber, vocal, and orchestral works. Some recent highlights include *Shift, Change, Turn* (2019) commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, *Coincident Dances* (2018) for the Chicago Sinfonietta, and *Banner* (2014)—written to mark the 200th anniversary of "The Star-Spangled Banner"—for The Sphinx Organization and the Joyce Foundation, which was presented in its UK premiere at the BBC Proms on August 7, 2021. Summer 2021 brought a varied slate of premiere performances, including *Five Freedom Songs*, a song cycle conceived with and written for Soprano Julia Bullock for Sun Valley and Grand Teton Music Festivals, San Francisco and Kansas City Symphonies, Boston and New Haven Symphony Orchestras, and the Virginia Arts Festival (August 7); a site-specific collaboration with Bard SummerScape Festival and Pam Tanowitz Dance, *I was waiting for the echo of a better day* (July 8); and *Passacaglia*, a flute quartet for The National Flute Association's 49th annual convention (August 13). Since 1999, Jessie has been affiliated with The Sphinx Organization, which supports young African American and Latinx string players, and has served as composer-in-residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the Organization's flagship professional touring ensemble. A founding member of PUBLIQuartet and a former member of the Catalyst Quartet, Jessie holds degrees from the Juilliard School and New York University and is currently a PhD

Candidate in Music Composition at Princeton University. She is Professor of violin and composition at The New School. In May 2021 she began her three-year appointment as the Mead Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. L

The composer writes:

*Voodoo Dolls* was commissioned in 2009 and choreographed by the JUMP! Dance Company of Rhode Island, a collaborative work among their faculty and students. The choreography was a suite of dances, each one representing a different traditional children's doll: Russian dolls, marionettes, rag dolls, Barbie, voodoo dolls... The piece is influenced by west African drumming patterns and lyrical chant motives, all of which feature highlights of improvisation within the ensemble.

### *Glances / I Don't Belong Here*

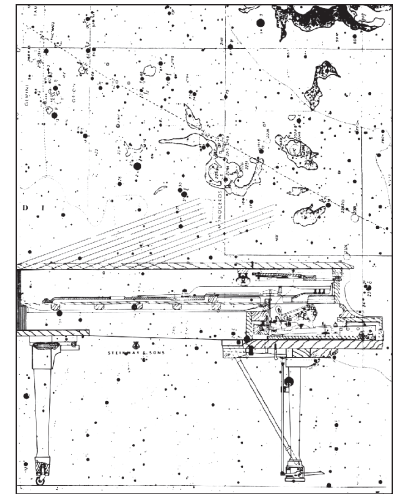
**Hannah Kendall**

Known for its attentive arrangements and immersive world-building, Hannah Kendall's music looks beyond the boundaries of composition. Her work bridges gaps between different musical cultures, both honoring and questioning the contemporary tradition while telling new stories through it.

Her "Tuxedo" series is named after an artwork by American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. His eponymous piece provides one of many graphic scores that Kendall has used as inspiration throughout her career. Rather than create 'representations' of these images, she uses them to spark her writing process. Building pieces from a place of intuition, her compositions are just as likely to become abstracted, turned inside out by surprises she finds along the way, as they are to have a firm narrative.

Kendall's work has been widely celebrated. She has created pieces such as *Disillusioned Dreamer* (2018), which the *San Francisco Chronicle* praised for having a "rich inner life," as well as *The Knife of Dawn* (2016), a chamber opera that received critical acclaim for its involving and claustrophobic representation of the incarceration of Guyanese political activist Martin Carter. Kendall's work has been performed extensively, and across many platforms. She has worked with ensembles including London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, The Hallé, Ensemble Modern, and London Sinfonietta, but she is also found collaborating with choreographers, poets and art galleries;

crossing over to different art-forms, and celebrating the impact these unique settings have on sound. In 2022 she was the recipient of the Hindemith Prize for music composition, and nominated for an Ivor Novello Award in the Small Chamber category. In 2023, Hannah won the Ivor Novello Award for Best Large Ensemble Composition for "shouting forever into the receiver," and "Even sweetness can scratch the throat" was nominated for Best Chamber Ensemble Composition.



Born in London in 1984, Kendall is currently a Doctoral Fellow in composition at Columbia University. Her music is published by Ricordi (Berlin).

The composer writes:

*Glances / I Don't Belong Here: Vik; Eryri; Kaieteur; Vigia; Portrush; Henlow; Argyll* is a collection of seven miniatures inspired by the British-Guyanese artist Ingrid Pollard's *Pastoral Interludes*, a series of photographs in which her Black British subjects are posed in the Lake District, the epitome of rural Britain, exploring the notion of alienation and 'otherness' in such spaces. In a similar way, this collection of seven miniatures includes musical snapshots of my most cherished non-urban settings, and the experiences that can accompany each visit.

### *Praise the Mother of Jamaican Art*

**Mikhail Johnson**

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.

Deemed by Spoleto Festival USA as “a composer who invites us to consider and reframe our sonic sensibilities,” Johnson’s compositional style merges traditional European classical music and the avant-garde with traditional Jamaican cultural idiosyncrasies.

Johnson’s music has been performed by the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, The Cantus Ensemble in London, The North/South Consonance Ensemble, The Concordia Ensemble of the University of Notre Dame and The Northwest Sinfonietta. He has also been performed by artists such as Departure Duo, fivebyfive, Verdant Vibes, and Transient Canvas and at events such as the International Clarinet Association Clarinetfest. In 2022 Johnson made his Spoleto Festival USA debut with his composition *Evil’s Peak* to critical acclaim.

Johnson has received commissions from the University of North Carolina (Greensboro), Bowling Green State University and Texas Tech University, and music organizations such as the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the Cincinnati Song Initiative (CSI), the Brooklyn Art Song Society and Seattle Opera.

He was winner of the 2016 NEOSonicFest Young and Emerging Composers Composition; 2019 Composer-in-Residence at the University of Notre-Dame, South Bend, Indiana; 2020 winner of the Transient Canvas Composition Fellowship; recipient of 2021-2022 National Association of Teachers of Singing NATS Mentorship Program for Composers; the 2022 Alea Publishing & Recording Dolphy Prize; the 2022-2023 Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA) Composer Residency Fellowship; and composer for the 2022-2023 Seattle Opera Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab for a new chamber opera, making Johnson the first black composer to have an opera commissioned and performed by the company in their 60-year history.

Mikhail has also served as chief adjudicator for several international music competitions in the categories of piano and composition.

Johnson holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from Texas Tech University and a double Masters of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance and Music Composition from Bowling Green State University.

The composer writes:

*Praise the Mother of Jamaican Art*, for soprano and piano, was commissioned by the Brooklyn Art Song Society. The song uses Jamaican Poet Laurette Lorna Goodison’s poem “Who was the Mother of Jamaican Art.” The poem was inspired by Tekla Mekfet’s article that spoke about enslaved women who made carvings of human figures, representing the children they had sold away from them. Goodison believes unequivocally the first mother of Jamaican art was an enslaved African woman whose art was born out of unspeakable circumstances and whose work would have been unsigned.

While the poem speaks from the vantage point of the many gifted people who were lost to the world because of something as vile as the Atlantic slave trade, I expand this narrative to provide a form of commentary on the exploitation of modern visual artists holistically: a vantage point where the attainers of the art do not know the artist’s names but possess their work as merely an artifact of tourism. In the same breath of revealing the artist’s struggle, I seek to give recognition and praise for the legacy the first mothers have left, so new artists can thrive and amplify their voices.

### **Praise to the Mother of Jamaican Art**

By Lorna Goodison

She was the nameless woman who created images of her children sold away from her. She suspended her wood babies from a rope round her neck, before she ate she fed them. Touched bits of pounded yam and plantains to sealed lips, always urged them to sip water. She carved them of wormwood, teeth and nails her first tools, later she wielded a blunt blade. Her spit cleaned faces and limbs; the pitch oil of her skin burnished them. When woodworms bored into their bellies she warmed castor oil they purged. She learned her art by breaking hard rockstones. She did not sign her work.

## Parajota Delate

## Tania Leon

Tania León (b. Havana, Cuba) is highly regarded as a composer, conductor, educator, and advisor to arts organizations. Her orchestral work *Stride*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, was awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Music. In 2022, she was named a recipient of the 45th Annual Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime artistic achievements. In 2023, she was awarded the Michael Ludwig Nemmers Prize in Music Composition from Northwestern University. Most recently, León became the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Composer-in-Residence—a post she will hold for two seasons, beginning in September 2023. She will also hold Carnegie Hall's Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair for its 2023-2024 season.

Recent premieres include works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, NDR Symphony Orchestra, Grossman Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, Modern Ensemble, Jennifer Koh's project *Alone Together*, and The Curtis Institute. Upcoming commissions feature a work for the League of American Orchestras, and a work for Claire Chase, flute, and The Crossing Choir with text by Rita Dove.

A founding member and first Music Director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, León instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert Series, co-founded the American Composers Orchestra's *Sonidos de las Américas* Festivals, was New Music Advisor to the New York Philharmonic, and is the founder/Artistic Director of Composers Now, a presenting, commissioning, and advocacy organization for living composers.

Honors include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement, inductions into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and fellowship awards from ASCAP Victor Herbert Award and The Koussevitzky Music and Guggenheim Foundations, among others. She also received a proclamation for Composers Now by New York City Mayor, and the MadWoman Festival Award in Music (Spain).

León has received Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Colgate University, Oberlin, SUNY Purchase College, and The Curtis Institute of Music, and served as U.S. Artistic Ambassador of American Culture in Madrid, Spain. A CUNY Professor Emerita, she was awarded a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship, Chamber Music America's 2022 National Service Award, and

Harvard University's 2022 Luise Vosgerchian Teaching Award. In 2023, Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library acquired Tania's León's archive.

The composer writes:

*Parajota Delaté* was commissioned by the Da Capo Chamber Players as a birthday tribute to composer and pianist Joan Tower. They premiered the work at New York's Merkin Concert Hall on October 24, 1988. The title translates simply as "For J. from T."

## CryptologiE

## Shawn Okpebholo

GRAMMY®-nominated for his latest solo album "Lord, How Come Me Here?"—a collection of reimagined Negro spirituals—and named one of the 2023 Musical America Top 30 Professionals of the Year, Nigerian-American composer Shawn E. Okpebholo's music has earned widespread acclaim from critics and audiences. He has garnered awards from The Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Prize in Composition, the Music Publishers Association, and ASCAP, and was the Inaugural honoree of the Leslie Adams-Robert Owens Composition Award.

Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, Barlow Endowment for the Arts, Illinois Arts Council, Tange-man Sacred Music Center, The Mellon Foundation, Wheaton College, and many others have supported the composer's work. Some notable commissions include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; United States Air Force Strings; Copland House Ensemble; Tanglewood, Aspen, and Newport Classical Music Festivals; Philadelphia Chamber Music Society; Imani Winds; Sparks and Wiry Cries; Urban Arias; and the Kennedy Center. His art songs have been presented in concert by the Chicago Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Portland Opera, and Des Moines Metro Opera. His chamber music has been performed by eighth blackbird, Copland House Ensemble, Picoso, Fifth House Ensemble, Lincoln Trio, and others. Orchestras including the Chicago, Cincinnati, and Houston Symphonies and the Lexington Philharmonic have featured his music. Okpebholo has also collaborated with renowned solo artists including vocalists J'Nai Bridges, Lawrence Brownlee, Rhiannon Giddens, Will Liverman, Michael Michael Mayes, Ryan McKinney, and Tamera Wilson; pianists Aldo-López Gavilán, Mark Markham, Paul Sánchez, and Howard Watkins; and instrumentalists including Rachel Barton Pine, Steven Mead, and Adam Walker. His extensive artistic reach has led to

regular performances at prestigious venues like Carnegie and Wigmore Halls, Lincoln, Kennedy, and Kimmel Centers, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Okpebholo's compositions are featured on twelve commercially released albums, three of which are GRAMMY®-nominated.

As a pedagogue, Okpebholo has conducted masterclasses at various academic institutions worldwide, including two universities in Nigeria. His research interests have led to ethnomusicological fieldwork in both East and West Africa, resulting in compositions, transcriptions, and academic lectures. He earned his master's and doctoral degrees in composition from the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the University of Cincinnati. During his upbringing, a significant part of his music education came from The Salvation Army church, where he received free music lessons regularly. Inspired by that altruism, Okpebholo is deeply passionate about music outreach to underserved communities.

Currently, he serves as the Jonathan Blanchard Distinguished Professor of Composition at Wheaton College-Conservatory of Music and the Saykaly Garbulinska Composer-in-Residence with the Lexington Philharmonic. The composer is based in Wheaton, IL, a suburb of Chicago, with his wife, violist Dorthy, and their daughters, Eva and Corinne.

The Composer writes:

Everything I compose is about something—a response to, inspired by, a study in—not music for music's sake. *CryptOlogiE*, a quintet for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, is selfishly about what I treasure most in life: my wife and two daughters. Cryptology is the study of codes, or the art of writing and solving them. Full of confidence, color, and coded messages, the source material for this work is a calculated serial pitch set of our birthdays [3,2,8,11,1,7,10,9]; a Morse code rhythm [. ...- .- / —- -.- .— . .-... .... —- .-.. —-] that decodes my oldest daughter's name [EVA OKPEBHOLO]; and intentional repeated ostinato and recurring pitches of the first letters of my wife's and daughters' names (C, D, E). The mood of this work is an amalgamation of their personalities: highly energetic, sweet, and methodical.

## *Si Di Staar Deh!*

**Mikhail Johnson**

(See composer biography on page 7)

The composer, who gave the U.S. premiere and performs it tonight, writes:

*Si di Staar Deh!* (translates: Look! There's the Star!) was composed for the David Bruce 5 Composers, 1 Idea Challenge. I was commissioned to write a one-minute work for the organ of Gloucester Cathedral using any theme on the night sky or stars. This piece focused on mutation and mixture stops (usually used in a supporting role) as primary stops creating these indistinct nuances that become more distinct as the piece progresses by adding more fundamental stops. I used the theme "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" in fragments to depict the stars glistening and shimmering, and eventually it shifts where an onlooker sees a particular star and starts to levitate toward it. As they get closer and break the barrier between earth and space and see the vastness of the domain, that once little star they were so focused on, they will realize it is just this big ball of light.

## *Angel Chile*

**Jeanne Lee**

Jeanne Lee was born in New York City. Her father, S. Alonzo Lee, was a concert and church singer whose work influenced her at an early age. She was educated at the private Walden School, and subsequently at Bard College, where she studied child psychology, literature, and dance. During her time at Bard she created choreography for pieces by various classical and jazz composers, ranging from Johann Sebastian Bach to Arnold Schoenberg. On graduating in 1961, she performed as a duo at the Apollo Theater's Amateur Night contest with pianist Ran Blake, a fellow Bard alumnus, and after winning made her first record, *The Newest Sound Around*. The album gained considerable popularity in Europe, where Lee and Blake toured in 1963, but went unnoticed in the US.

During the mid-1960s, Lee was exploring sound poetry, happenings, Fluxus-influenced art, and other multidisciplinary approaches to art. She was briefly married to sound poet David Hazelton, and composed music for sound poetry by poets such as Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles, becoming active in the California art scene of the time. In the late 1960s, she returned to the jazz scene and started performing and recording, quickly establishing herself as one of the most distinctively independent and creative artists in the field. Only a few years after her return she had a major

role in Carla Bley's magnum opus, *Escalator over the Hill* (1971), and recorded albums with eminent musicians including Archie Shepp, Enrico Rava, and Marion Brown. In 1967, while in Europe, Lee began a long association with vibraphonist and composer Gunter Hampel, whom she eventually married.

In 1976 she represented the African-American spiritual musical tradition in John Cage's *Apartment House 1776*, which was composed for the U.S. Bicentennial. The experience inspired Lee to devote more attention to her composing, and create extended works. The immediate result was *Prayer for Our Time*, a jazz oratorio.

Lee continued to perform and make recordings until her death in 2000, recording for labels such as Birth, BYG Actuel, JCOA, ECM, Black Saint/Soul Note, OWL and Horo. She sang on a large number of albums by Gunter Hampel. In her late years, she ran the Jeanne Lee Ensemble, which performed a fusion of poetry, music and dance, and collaborated and toured extensively. Lee was also active as an educator. She received a MA in Education from New York University in 1972 and taught at various institutions both in the US and in Europe.

**Angel Chile** was the seventh track on Jeanne Lee's innovative 1974 recording "Conspiracy." In it, Lee used the sounds of her daughter's name, Naima, as the raw material for an extended improvisation. One critic described it "as a back-and-forth treatise on finding the space between sound and silence where magic exists. Lee's cathartic and mesmerizing vocal workouts show incredible power but beneath a worn-down sheen of quiet vulnerability. It's impossible not to be transfixed." In *The New York Review*, Adam Shatz writes that in *Angel Chile*, "Lee's laughter slowly turns into syllables, which eventually form the word 'Naima,' her daughter's name. The name splits apart, then forms again, in a gripping sequence of sonic effects and textures that seem to evoke the kaleidoscope of feelings that a child conjures in a mother's imagination," and "...what makes Lee's most extreme work so alluring, and so gentle, is the way she speaks to her audience, teaching us how to listen, inviting us to join her conspiracy. A poet and composer as well as an interpreter of other people's songs, she loved words and seemed to caress as much as sing them...."

We have considered Lee's recording of *Angel Chile* an opportunity for a call and response improvised counterpoint by soprano Lucy Shelton, who uses Simone Leigh's daughter's name Zenobia as her raw material.

## *Pasa Pasa*

**Mikhail Johnson**

(See composer biography on page 7)

The composer writes:

*Pasa Pasa* was inspired from a well-known dancehall event, or street dance/gathering that started on Spanish Town Road in the Tivoli Gardens section of Kingston, Jamaica in 2003. Still a popular event today, the dance occurs on a Wednesday night, many times finishing at 8am Thursday morning.

In the context of Jamaican vernacular however, it means to chat, converse, gossip or talk about something; any incident or time marked by drama, scandal, confusion or conflict.

I evoke both meanings in tandem throughout the piece: The idea of conversation using one of the prominent features of Jamaican music which transcends our culture, and speaks to that of our African ancestry—the call and response. While simultaenously depicting the Jamaican music used in the Pasa Pasa dance... the end of the piece is indicative of the attendees heading home at daybreak and as they move away from the dance site, the music plays on.

## *Jamaican Medley*

**Eleanor Alberga**

Eleanor Alberga is a highly regarded mainstream British composer with commissions from the BBC Proms and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden. With a substantial output ranging from solo instrumental works to full-scale symphonic works and operas, her music is performed all over the world.

Born 1949 in Kingston, Jamaica, Alberga decided at the age of five to be a concert pianist. Five years later, she was composing works for the piano. In 1968 she won the biennial Royal Schools of Music Scholarship for the West Indies, which she took up in 1970 at the Royal Academy of Music in London studying piano and singing. A budding career as a solo pianist—she was one of three finalists in the International Piano Concerto Competition in Dudley, UK in 1974—was soon augmented by composition with her arrival at The London Contemporary Dance Theatre in 1978. Under the inspirational leadership of its Artistic Director Robert Cohan, she became one of the very few pianists with the deepest understanding of modern dance, and her company class improvisations became the stuff of legend. These in turn led to works commissioned and conceived for dance by the company, and Alberga later became the company's



Musical Director—conducting, composing, and playing on LCDT’s many tours.

It was on leaving LCDT that Alberga was able to fully embark on her calling as a composer. Since then, interest in her music across all genres—orchestral, chamber, vocal, as well as works for stage and screen—has accelerated, while her output has continued to grow. In 2015 her commissioned work *ARISE, ATHENA!* for the opening of the Last Night of the BBC Proms was seen and heard by millions and cemented a reputation as a composer of huge originality and consummate skill.

Alberga has gathered a number of awards, most notably a NESTA fellowship in 2000 and a Paul Hamlyn Award in 2019. In 2020 she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. At different times, Alberga was a member of the African Dance Company Fontomfrom, and played guitar and sang with the Jamaican Folk Singers. She was part of the duo Double Exposure with her husband the violinist Thomas Bowes, and more recently they have together founded and nurtured Arcadia, an original festival in the English countryside where they live. Alberga was awarded an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2021 for services to British Music.

The composer writes:

*Jamaican Medley* was written in 1983 for a special concert to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Jamaica’s Independence. The vast majority of the piece is made from a selection of Jamaican folk songs.

## *The Jury*

**Jon Deak**

Jon Deak was born in Hammond, Indiana, on April 27, 1943. He grew up in an artistic environment—his father was a sculptor, his mother a painter. He himself has worked in sculpture. But music seized his attention; he studied double bass and composition at Oberlin, Juilliard, the University of Illinois and as a Fulbright Scholar taught at the Conserfatorio di Santa Cecilia, in Rome. The greatest influence on his work has come from Salvatore Martirano and John Cage and from the Soho performance art movement of the late 1960s and early ‘70s. A prominent instrumentalist, Jon Deak was for many years the Associate Principal Bassist of the New York Philharmonic. As a composer, he has written over 300 works and has had his music played by orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony, the National Symphony, and the New Hour Philharmonic. His *Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra*, *The Headless Horseman*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1992. His music may also be heard

on several TV series and many recordings. Spending much of his professional life as a performer rather than as an academic has no doubt contributed to his interest in what is known as “performance art”—a creation that involves more than simply the notes on the page, that comes alive only in the person of the executants.

Of course, all music is really a performance art; the printed score is not the work, but only a blueprint of it. But Jon Deak’s works, as we have seen in these concerts, are performance scores in a different sense; the work has a visual and theatrical element that transcends the customary relationship of pitch and rhythm. They are a kind of “Story Theater,” to borrow the name of the 1970s that produced elaborated versions of fairy tales in which actors began by narration (as outsiders observing the story), and then gradually became the characters they had been describing. Similarly, in Jon Deak’s many “concert dramas” (the term he has come to prefer for this kind of work), there can be soloists who both narrate and enact the story, and the instrumentalists themselves take part in various ways, both by word and sound.

Deak will often turn to an old story—whether folk tale or, as here, a work of literary fiction. Other examples in his output include *The Ugly Duckling and The Bremen Town Musicians* and *Lucy and the Count* (based on Bram Stokers’ *Dracula*). All make use of speech rhythm turned into music. The words of the tale become music, which sometimes takes over the storytelling entirely and sometimes supplies the background to the declamation. The instrumentalists evoke words “woven into the music and a sound event.” As the composer explained, he is sometimes “more concerned with the sound event than with the meaning of the words.”

The composer writes:

How do I approach the composing of a work involving a string quartet? Those of us who love and play these instruments know that they are alive; they live, breathe, flourish, fight, and love like any of us humans—or for that matter, any living being on Earth. In this case they are Birds! Though our feathered friends of course do sing and express themselves with an indescribable beauty, still we don’t exactly understand their language. So as is customary in such circumstances, one makes use of—what? An interpreter, of course. Adding a vocalist of great skill and beauty not only can make clear the words the birds say to each other, but can provide one more dimension to our musical work of Art, rather like looking at a work of sculpture from a different angle.

If the conversation of these birds is based on the text of a stunning, great work of Poetry—a work of probity, depth, humor, anger, sadness and manifold layers of meaning—we are presented with an opportunity just bursting with possibilities. Can you imagine the excitement of, and the pressure on, a composer presented with the chance to pull all these resources together in a musical work?

When David Yang, Artistic Director of the Newburyport Chamber Music Festival contacted me with the opportunity to compose a work for his festival, I demurred until he sent me several works by the great poet Rhina Espaillat. From the moment I read *The Jury*, I was hooked. I jumped. I flew. I loved it, I didn't change a word and as I composed, those layers of meaning I mentioned only then became clear to me. Four Birds— like a true Jury, passing judgment upon Humanity! The **Violin I** becomes Eagle, the stern leader and Foreman of the Jury. The **Viola** becomes Pigeon, who starts off as comic relief, suddenly turning to caustic irony. **Violin II**, as Sparrow, gives us a contrasting, more lyrical love of humanity, and **Cello**, well! As Vulture, she loves Humanity in quite a different, ghastly way. (Each instrument-bird uses a different scale pattern.)

The decision? One might think it cynical, hopeless.

But that depends upon your viewpoint . . .

I'm honored to have written this work for David Yang and his Newburyport Chamber Music Festival. And, of course, I couldn't be more pleased to have this performance by the supreme artistry of our treasured 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consort. While writing *The Jury*, I was saddened by the passing of a dear, longtime friend, Jack Hoeschler. The work is dedicated to his memory.

The poet writes:

I was delighted when Jon Deak chose “The Jury,” because I like stories that pretend to be for children but are actually very adult, and often even dark. The poem was physically written in 1983, but had been conceived and begun in the 1970s, mulled over, worked on, and finally finished to my satisfaction in 1983, when I had left teaching, and again had the luxury of time for writing. I had been teaching bright, angry high school students whose futures were threatened by the very unpopular Vietnam War and other political messes that followed. Two of my own sons had already received

“early invitations” from Uncle Sam. I could understand all of the varied attitudes toward that moment in the history of this country, as expressed by the four birds, including the naively positive words of Vulture. I was mortified at the thought of risking promising young lives like those of my sons and students—an entire generation!—and the possible danger to my beloved adopted country, where my parents and I had found refuge from a Caribbean dictatorship, and for which my equally beloved Bronx-born teen-aged husband had risked his own life fighting World War II. I found John Deak's musical response to my poem perfect, sensitive to both my unspoken feelings and the opinions of human beings expressed by the birds, performed by the four musicians, and conveyed by the singing—and dramatic gestures—of the soprano.

—Rhina Espaillat

#### THE JURY

Rhina P. Espaillat

In a bare tree,  
four strangers gathered from afar  
slipped into talk, as travelers do.  
First Eagle said, “How strange they are,

these creatures lately come to climb  
our cliffs and spy upon our brood.  
They have no constancy, but drift  
from mood to mood:

first, wanton slaughter, and now zeal  
to build our hunted tribe again.  
I cannot fathom them at all.”  
“They are called Men,”

said Pigeon, “and I know them well.  
I've learned their secret. All they use,  
from day to day, to guide their steps,  
is just their shoes.

It's true, my friends. In new spiked boots  
yesterday's farmer struts the street,

turned killer, and tomorrow dies  
derelict, with rag-bound feet.

More out of sympathy than need,  
I gather their spilled crumbs to know  
toward what new grief  
their wayward shoes would have them go.”

“And yet,” said Sparrow, “I have known  
some who would leave their lighted nest  
to scatter seed, through razor winds,  
for our sake, lest

we hunger through December days.  
I’ve seen them fling their gaze above  
their comforts, to pursue us with  
something like love.”

“True,” Vulture said, “for they love me  
and have my welfare much in mind.  
In Leningrad, in Lebanon  
men were most kind

and nourished me with their own young.  
Vietnam, Verdun, Angola, Troy,  
Thermopylae...the love of men  
is my chief joy.”

“Well, that’s as may be,” Eagle said,  
“but they are feeble things at best.  
Condemned to winglessness, they creep  
in their own shadow, flight-obsessed,

a sad smudge upon the earth,  
half-willingly erased at last.  
We will possess our own again,  
when they have passed.

## Artist Bios

Appointed to the National Symphony Orchestra clarinet section by Maestro Leonard Slatkin, PAUL CIGAN enjoys a career as orchestral clarinetist, chamber musician, teacher and concerto soloist. In addition to the NSO, Mr. Cigan can frequently be heard performing with the 21st Century Consort, Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, and the Smithsonian Chamber Players as well as on recordings with those ensembles on the Dorian, Bridge, and Naxos labels. In 2012 Mr. Cigan premiered Donald Crockett’s *Dance Concerto* with the 21st Century Consort and performed a special wind ensemble version of the piece with the University of Maryland Wind Orchestra in 2015. Mr. Cigan has been concerto soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra, Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, and San Antonio Symphony. Mr. Cigan has held principal posts with the San Antonio Symphony, Colorado Symphony, and Virginia Symphony, and has been guest clarinetist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and The Philadelphia Orchestra. Mr. Cigan is an active teacher and coach through the National Symphony Orchestra’s Youth Fellowship and Summer Music Institute programs and has held teaching posts at the Peabody Institute of Music and the University of Maryland. Other musical activities include performing with the Halcyon Chamber Music Festival, the Grand Teton Music Festival, and returning as coach to the University of Maryland’s National Orchestral Institute and the Philadelphia International Music Festival. Mr. Cigan is a graduate of Temple University, studying with Anthony Gigliotti, former principal clarinetist of The Philadelphia Orchestra

Steinway and Spirio Artist LISA EMENHEISER has been heralded for her “intense music-making and pianism.” A graduate of Juilliard School, Ms. Emenheiser earned both Bachelor’s and Master’s of Music degrees and was a winner of the “Young Artist in Recital” and “National Arts Club” competitions. She has performed as both soloist and chamber musician in countless venues and performs regularly with musicians of the National Symphony Orchestra. Her vast orchestral performances are equally as extensive, having served as a keyboardist with the NSO for the past 30 years. Lisa is an avid performer of contemporary music. As pianist for the 21st Century Consort, she has premiered numerous works and recently performed the world premiere of Stephen Jaffe’s “Tableaux,” a major work for solo piano commissioned for Lisa by the 21st Century Consort. Additionally, Lisa was featured on national television as an expert artist commentator and performer in the PBS documentary entitled “Exploring Your Brain,” in which she performed Ginastera’s *Piano Sonata No. 1* and discussed the topic of memory. Ms. Emenheiser has recorded Respighi’s “Three Preludes on Gregorian Melodies” and Rzewski’s “Winnsboro Cottonmill Blues” and “Down by the Riverside” for the Steinway Spirio Collection. She has also recorded for the Bridge, Albany, Decca, and Naxos labels, among many others. A committed teacher, Lisa was inducted into the

Steinway Teacher's Hall of Fame and awarded the Steinway & Sons Top Teacher Award, with many of her students achieving recognition in both local and international competitions. She holds a private studio in her home.

DANIEL FOSTER, violin, has had a varied career encompassing orchestral, chamber, and solo playing, as well as teaching. After winning the first prize in both the William Primrose and Washington International competitions, Mr. Foster became a member of the National Symphony's viola section in 1993 and was appointed principal by music director Leonard Slatkin in 1995. Mr. Foster has appeared frequently as soloist with the National Symphony since his appointment. Mr. Foster is a member of the critically acclaimed Dryden Quartet, along with his cousins Nicolas and Yumi Kendall and National Symphony concertmaster Nurit Bar-Josef, and is also a founding member of the Kennedy Center Chamber Players. Mr. Foster is on the faculty at the University of Maryland and has given master classes at Oberlin and Peabody Conservatories, the University of Michigan, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has been a faculty member for the National Orchestral Institute, and is a member of the International Principals faculty at the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan.

CHRISTOPHER KENDALL, Artistic Director, is professor emeritus at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance. During his decade as the school's dean (2005-2015), he was responsible for increasing the diversity of the school and hiring almost half the faculty, for significantly increasing the School's endowment, for renovating and expanding the school's physical plant, and for launching the interdisciplinary enterprise ArtsEngine and its national initiative a2ru (Alliance for the Arts at Research Universities). In Washington, in addition to his work with 21st Century Consort, he is founder and co-director of the Folger Consort, ensemble-in-residence at the Folger Shakespeare Library since 1977. The ensemble has toured and recorded extensively, and has produced a series of collaborations with Sir Derek Jacobi, in performances at the Globe Theatre in London, in California's Napa Valley, and at Strathmore Hall and the Kennedy Center. Kendall was associate conductor of the Seattle Symphony from 1987 to 1992, and director of the Music Division and Tanglewood Institute of the Boston University School for the Arts from 1993 to 1996, director of the University of Maryland School of Music from 1996 to 2005, and has guest conducted many orchestras and ensembles in repertoire from the 18th to the 21st centuries. His recordings can be heard on the British ASV, Arabesque, Bard, Bridge, Centaur, Delos, Innova, None-such, and Smithsonian Collection labels.

REGINO MADRID, violin, from Los Angeles, CA, is currently the concertmaster of The American Pops Orchestra frequently featured on PBS and "54 Below" in NYC, the associate concertmaster of NatPhil at Strathmore, a member of the Sound Impact collective, the Chiarina Chamber Players, the Smithsonian

Chamber Society, and "Quintango," a tango band that plays regularly at Blues Alley in Georgetown. Mr. Madrid was the associate concertmaster of "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Chamber Orchestra and played at the White House for 20 years. Mr. Madrid has appeared as guest concertmaster for the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, National Gallery Orchestra, Chesapeake Orchestra at St. Mary's River Concert Series, the Alexandria Symphony, and the Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio. Mr. Madrid currently plays with the National Symphony Orchestra and has played with the Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Canton Symphonies. In 2021, he recorded Kyle Werner's violin sonata for the premiere of Silas Farley's new work with The Washington Ballet on Marquee TV. Mr. Madrid received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music after pursuing a Physiological Science degree from UCLA. Mr. Madrid plays on a J.B. Vuillaume violin from 1845-50. Mr. Madrid resides in VA where he enjoys photography and Scandinavian mid-century design and architecture.

MARISSA REGNI is principal second violin of the National Symphony Orchestra, a position she assumed in September of 1996. Before coming to Washington, D.C., she was a member of the Saint Louis Symphony, where she served as assistant principal second violin. Regni is a member of the critically acclaimed Manchester String Quartet and is a founding member of the Kennedy Center Chamber Players. With the Chamber Players, she performed concerts on a transatlantic crossing of the Queen Mary 2 and at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires. From May 2020 to 2021 she was the co-creator and host of the 53-week web series "NSO@HomeLive." Regni has made solo and chamber music appearances throughout the United States, Germany, and Mexico. She has collaborated with such artists as Christoph Eschenbach, Joseph Silverstein, Julius Baker, The Angeles Quartet, Arturo Delmoni, The Walden Chamber Players, and 20th Century Consort. Solo appearances with orchestras include the Saint Louis Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Virginia Chamber Orchestra, Livingston (New Jersey) Symphony, and the Ridgewood (New Jersey) Symphony. She has been a featured artist on NPR and The MacNeil/Lehrer Report. In addition to her orchestral, chamber, and solo work, Regni has a strong passion for educational concerts. She developed a popular series of children's programs, which she performs at the Kennedy Center, around greater Washington, D.C., and throughout the United States. She has been the co-creator and host of the National Symphony Orchestra's Young People's Concerts since 2014. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Regni received her bachelor's and master's degrees and was awarded the school's prestigious Performer's Certificate in Violin. She also has a diploma from The Juilliard School of Music, where she was a student in the Pre-College Division.

MATTHEW ROSS, flute, was appointed second flute of the National Symphony Orchestra in 2023 by Gianandrea Noseda. Prior to joining the NSO, he held

the same position with the Albany Symphony (NY) since 2019, and was acting principal during most of his tenure. He concurrently completed his fellowship at The Orchestra Now (T N) at Bard College, earning him a second master's degree in 2020. He has also appeared with the Baltimore Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, and Dayton Philharmonic, was principal flute at the Bard Music Festival, and was a fellow at the National Music Festival. As a soloist, Ross has earned prizes in young artist competitions across the country, including Philadelphia Flute Society, New York Flute Club, Raleigh Area Flute Association, Mid-South Flute Society, Houston Flute Club, Texas Flute Society, and South Carolina Flute Society. In 2012, he was named a Yamaha Young Performing Artist. In recent years, he has gone on to judge many of these same competitions. Ross grew up on Long Island, NY, and began playing flute at age fifteen. He attended The Juilliard School's Pre-College Division, then completed his Bachelor's and Master's of Music degrees at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He has studied flute with Randy Bowman, Marisela Sager, Dr. Bradley Garner, and Lauren Ausubel, and piccolo with Joan Voorhees and Heather Verbeck.

The only artist ever to have won two Walter W. Naumburg Awards, as chamber musician and solo vocalist, internationally acclaimed soprano LUCY SHELTON has premiered over 100 works, many of which were written expressly for her vocal talents. She has worked closely with major composers of our time such as Elliott Carter, Charles Wuorinen, David Del Tredici, Milton Babbitt, Shulamit Ran, Oliver Knussen, Kaija Saariaho, Gyorgy Kurtag, Joseph Schwantner, and Pierre Boulez. Shelton has performed across the globe with major orchestras and conductors in repertoire of all periods. As a chamber musician she has been a frequent guest with ensembles such as Emerson String Quartet, eighth blackbird, Da Camera of Houston, 21st Century Consort, Da Capo Chamber Players, Schoenberg-Asko Ensemble, London Sinfonietta, Nash Ensemble, and Ensemble InterContemporain. Among the many Festivals in which she has participated as both faculty and soloist are Aspen, Tanglewood, Santa Fe, Ojai, Banff, Yellow Barn, Chamber Music Northwest, BBC Proms, Aldeburgh, Kuhmo, and Salzburg. Her supreme musicality has been captured on over 50 recordings. Shelton has taught at New England Conservatory, Juilliard, Cleveland Institute, and Curtis and is currently a faculty member at Manhattan School of Music's Contemporary Performance Program. She recently made her grand opera debut in the role of The Teacher in Kaija Saariaho's last opera "Innocence," with performances in Aix-en-Provence, Helsinki, London, Amsterdam, San Francisco, and Adelaide. Shelton has received honorary doctorate degrees from both Pomona College and Boston Conservatory, and was the 2023 recipient of the Bogomolny Lifetime Achievement Award from Chamber Music America. Her primary mentor was the legendary American mezzo-soprano Jan de Gaetani, whose integrity and intensity in music-making continue to be an inspiration.

A National Symphony cellist since 1998, RACHEL YOUNG brings a diverse musical background to her work, ranging from an avid engagement in chamber music to a strong interest in new music. She joins NSO colleagues as a member of the Last Stand Quartet and the 21st Century Consort. Prior to joining the Symphony, Ms. Young served as principal cellist of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. An enthusiastic chamber musician, she has appeared with the Fortas Chamber Music Series and Mason Bates' KC Jukebox at the John F. Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Chamber Music Society, Jackson Hole Chamber Music, Garth Newel Music Center, the Odeon Chamber Series, the Strathmore Mansion, the White House, and the American Embassy in Madrid, as well as on radio stations WGMS, WETA, and WGBH. Her discography includes performances with the 21st Century Consort and the Smithsonian Chamber Players. Young has also enjoyed occasional forays into new arenas, collaborating with the Paul Taylor Dance Company, movie producer Bill McKenna, songwriter Randy Barrett, and saxophonist Al Regni. Ms. Young was born and raised in Washington, DC. She began studying music at the age of 4, and quickly knew she wanted to become a cellist. In high school, Young trained in the NSO's Youth Fellowship Program, studying with principal cellist David Hardy. She went on to play with the Contemporary Music Ensemble at the Peabody Institute and found the challenge and discovery of performing contemporary music incredibly rewarding. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the New England Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Laurence Lesser, and her Master's degree in cello performance with Stephen Kates at the Peabody Conservatory. She was a Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center and attended the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies in England where she studied with William Pleeth. Young is a teaching artist with the National Symphony Orchestra's Youth Fellowship and SMI programs as well as a chamber coach for the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra. She serves on the boards of the Kindler Cello Society and the 21st Century Consort. She resides just outside of Washington with her husband, bassist Anthony Manzo, their 2 children, 3 basses, 3 cellos and 3 cats. She often commutes to work on her bike.

## 21st Century Consort Board of Directors

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## Future 21st Century Consort concerts

At the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Concerts are free (tickets required at the Hirshhorn) with pre-concert discussions at 4:00 pm and concerts at 5:00 pm. (Programs subject to change)

**“Quinquagenarians” ■ APRIL 6, 2024**

*at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden*

2024 marks the Hirshhorn Museum's 50th anniversary and the 21st Century Consort's 50th season in 2024-25. The occasion of the Museum's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition serves as the launching point for a program featuring mid-20th century classics paired with new compositions, paralleling the Hirshhorn's extraordinary collection of modern and contemporary art. Over the following season, we plan an extended celebration of these two redoubtable institutions of contemporary art and music at their half-century mark. For the Consort, it will be a signal opportunity to revisit works the ensemble has championed, along with new musical creations.

The 21st Century Consort gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Friends of the 21st Century Consort:

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