



QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA

presents

QUO -FEST

TUNING
MEDITATION

JOY

RHAPSODY
IN YOU

OLD, NEW, &
BORROWED & BLUE

Fri, Sat, & Sun March 14, 15, & 16 2025
St. Ann & The Holy Trinity **157 Montague St. BKLYN**
David Bloom, Artistic Director QueerUrbanOrchestra.org

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the Arts

From Our Artistic Director

Dear friends,

Thank you for joining us for Queer Urban Orchestra's first-ever QUOfest! This festival embraces so much of what makes our orchestra and our community so special. Every month is Pride month for QUO, so we decided not to wait for June for this veritable explosion of queer artistry in the midst of our 15th anniversary season. There's so much we're excited to share with you!

On Friday night's chamber program, *JOY*, eighteen of our stellar musicians take center stage as soloists in an intimate program of musical dialogues. The program is built around *Joy Boy* by composer Julius Eastman, whose words resonate strongly with QUO's purpose, "What I am trying to achieve is to be what I am to the fullest. Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, a homosexual to the fullest."

On Saturday, our Associate Conductor and resident sound healer Derek Weagle leads us through an afternoon of community bonding through music, including music by three queer women whose impact on experimental music cannot be overstated.

Saturday night, the full orchestra celebrates ten years of marriage equality in the United States with a musical wedding gift: *Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue*. Our guest soloist is renowned pianist James Adler, husband of founding flutist and treasurer extraordinaire, Scott Oaks. They met 39 years ago while performing the work James will play with us: George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Additionally, I am thrilled to welcome back to the podium Nolan Dresden, a member of QUO since 2010 and the orchestra's Artistic Director 2012-2014.

Then on Sunday, we invite our young friends to join us for a family concert, *Rhapsody in YOU*, where they will compose a piece just for QUO, which we'll premiere moments later! James and Nolan join us again, and we're also joined by composer Yaz Lancaster and QUO's Conducting Fellows, Nick Sienkiewicz and Eric Shen.

Honoring the anniversary of a queer victory like marriage equality in this country feels particularly poignant in the current moment, as our leaders are taking swift and severe action to limit the basic rights of queer people. These actions are causing pain for many, but they cannot change who we are. **In the midst of this difficult time, QUO offers what we do best: nurturing a safe space for our whole community.** Thank you for taking part in this essential work.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Bloom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.



David Bloom is a conductor equally at home in orchestral repertoire, opera, and new music, noted for his “dazzling precision and grace” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), “intelligence, elegance, and passion” (*Opera News*), “lively and openly dancing” (*The New York Times*) presence on the podium, and his “breathtaking and inspired programming” (*Shepherd Express*).

He dedicates his work to collaborating with artists and communities to inspire creativity, empathy, and joy. He is Artistic Director of Queer Urban Orchestra, the only orchestra in the Northeast rooted in the LGBTQ+ community, Principal Conductor of the orchestras at New York University, Co-Artistic Director of Contemporaneous, and Principal Conductor of Present Music.

In such venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, MoMA, and Park Avenue Armory, Bloom has guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Washington National Opera, American Composers Orchestra, Opera Omaha, Tri-Cities Opera, and Beth Morrison Projects among others, and worked with such soloists as Dashon Burton, David Byrne, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Helga Davis, Isabel Leonard, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Courtney Love, Hila Plitmann, Dawn Upshaw, and Andrew Yee. He has conducted over 500 world premieres, including Raven Chacon’s *Voiceless Mass*, which went on to win the 2022 Pulitzer Prize.

Photo by Jiyang Chen





Musician/Educator/Wearer-of-Many-Hats
Derek J. Weagle (they/them) is a Brooklyn-based artist and healer invested in the disruption of social and academic barriers around classical music, as well as the preservation of music-making as an act of joyful humanness. With a practice rooted in syncretism, Derek can be found equally comfortable in roles ranging from conductor to composer, performer to teacher. They hold a B.M. in Music Education from UMass Lowell and an M.M. in Composition with a minor in Choral Conducting from New England

Conservatory, as well as a Certificate in Sound Healing from the Sage Academy of Sound in Woodstock, NY. Derek will complete a certification in Biosonic Sound Repatterning from the Shift Network with Dr. John Beaulieu in December 2025 and an Artist Diploma in the Gabriela Ortiz Composition Studio at the OAcademy Music Conservatory as a member of a select cohort of twelve international artists in June 2026. Current engagements include work as an independent Sound Healing Artist, House Practitioner at Official Ritual, Founding Artistic Director of Bloom Sound Collective, Founder of the Khôra Consort, Associate Conductor of the Queer Urban Orchestra, Music Director of the Adelphi Vocal Ensemble, Music Director of the Adelphi Symphony Orchestra, Core Member of The Why Collective, Resident Music Director and Composer with Lucada Mélange, and the Refugee Orchestra Project Board of Directors. Their work as a composer has received recognition both nationally and internationally, including the American Prize in Composition, the International Horn Society, and the International Composition Competition Harelbeke. For more information on Derek's artistic practice and services offered, see their website at www.derekjweagle.com.



James Adler is a pianist who “can create whatever type of music he wants at the keyboard” (*Chicago Sun-Times*) and a composer who writes “with uncommon imagination” (*Atlanta-Journal-Constitution*).

Mr. Adler made his orchestral performing debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and has appeared in recital on the Orchestra’s Allied Arts Piano Series, and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts Series. His appearances have brought him from Chicago’s Grant Park, to London’s Royal Albert Hall (broadcast by the BBC), to Thessaloniki, Greece, to New York’s Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space, and the Paramount Theatre at Madison Square Garden.

His extensive list of compositions is headed by *Memento mori: An AIDS Requiem*. Performed worldwide, recorded by AmorArtis Chorale and Orchestra, and published by Alfred Music, *Memento mori* features a “range of expression [that] is expansive” and is “a unique, well-crafted, emotionally rich piece” (*American Record Guide*). His works have premiered at The Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the opening of the 43rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, Carnegie Hall, and the Centennial Celebration of the Statue of Liberty.

As performer and composer, Mr. Adler can be heard on recordings from Albany Records, Capstone, Navona, and Ravello Records. His albums have won three silver medals in the Global Music Awards: two for *Reflections* and one for *That Star in the Picture*. The latter was also a double award winner in the 2024 Intercontinental Music Awards Pangea Classical Category. He is a member of the Arts Department at Saint Peter’s University, a National Arts Associate in the Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity, and an advisory board member of Sound Espressivo, which presents the “James Adler Audience Favorite Award” during their Laureates Gala at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

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I have been fortunate enough in my life to be a cog in many creative endeavors, in many different capacities. I have been on-stage, backstage, inside the ensembles and in front of them. These experiences have helped shape me into the musician and artist that I am today.

After attending university, I performed professionally for six years in musical theater and opera, and a few seasons as Music Director of a theater company outside of Chicago. At that point I had come to a fork in the road; do I pursue a

conducting career or a performance career? Feeling that I had more to offer as a conductor and feeling more artistic fulfillment in that field, the choice was clear.

In 2009, I started to make my way up the instrumental conducting ladder here in New York City. I have had a fantastic amount of opportunity to build a creative and eclectic repertoire list. I have hit all the various marks, from standard orchestral works like Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 to lesser known pieces like *Two Cine Pastrali* by Toru Takemitsu. I pride myself in programming outside of the box, in order to create an experience for the audience to venture through with the ensemble.

I feel that every concert experience should allow the audience to feel and not think. Having always struggled with the term "tone poem", I feel like all music should set a scene, or create an environment around us that transports us to another place. A place without cell phones, without stress, and without the MTA. By using my background of performing and score study, I feel like I can offer a unique mix of artistic integrity, technical know-how, and storytelling. Are you ready for the ride?

If you look throughout history, in every culture, the one thing that will always bring people together are stories. Well, and food, but that's a different bio. Sitting down and trading stories and swapping tales is part of humanity. It's who we are. It's our journeys through life that molds us. It marks us, and often in ways we don't realize. I want to make it my goal to use music to pull those experiences to the surface so that we can share in them together.

- **Nolan N Dresden**



QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA

David Bloom, Artistic Director
Derek Weagle, Associate Conductor

March 14th - 16th, 2025

St. Anne and the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, NY

QUOfest

Celebrating 15 years of Queer Urban Orchestra

JOY

Friday, March 14, 2025 | 8 pm

Soloists from Queer Urban Orchestra perform music by two New York queer composers in dialogue with three pillars of the chamber music repertoire.

Tuning Meditation

Saturday, March 15, 2025 | 3 pm

QUO's Associate Conductor and resident sound healer, Derek Weagle, leads a participatory event of community bonding through music.

Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue

Saturday, March 15, 2025 | 8 pm

Celebrating 10 years of marriage equality in the United States, the full orchestra delivers a bespoke wedding gift from the heart, featuring pianist James Adler and a guest appearance by conductor Nolan Dresden.

Family Concert: Rhapsody in YOU!

Sunday, March 16, 2025 | 3 pm

In this hour-long, interactive concert for ages 6-12 and their families, Queer Urban Orchestra gives kids a chance to compose! Plus, hear the orchestra play some great music to get the creative vibes going.

About QUO: The Queer Urban Orchestra

Queer Urban Orchestra (QUO) is the Northeast's only orchestra rooted in the LGBTQ+ community. Celebrating queer artistry from its membership to featured composers and performers, the orchestra promotes equity and empathy. QUO was founded in 2009 as New York City's first orchestra specifically serving the LGBTQ+ community. Since its inaugural concert, the orchestra's membership has grown to over 100 musicians, and the group's collaborations with the Danspace Project have resulted in praise from *The New York Times*.

The orchestra has premiered numerous works and has collaborated with Anthony Roth-Costanzo, Ariadne Greif, Ryan Roberts, Andrew Yee, Jasmine Rice LaBeija, Empire City Men's Chorus, Youth Pride Chorus, and Stonewall Chorale. Since 2023, QUO has been led by Artistic Director David Bloom and Associate Conductor Derek Weagle. Previous Artistic Directors have included Ian Shafer, Julie Desbordes, Nolan N Dresden, and Brandyn Metzko.

QUO Board of Directors & Staff

David Lohman, President

James DiMeglio, Vice-President

Bob Wei, Secretary

Scott Oaks, Treasurer

Lynn Caron, Julia Case, Navin Manglani, Hilton Marcus, Dustin Zuelke -
Members at Large

Brian Shaw, Orchestra Manager

Nick Johnson, Orchestra Librarian



Thank you for spending your weekend with us.

Queer Urban Orchestra

Derek J. Weagle, Associate Conductor

presents

JOY

Friday, March 14, 2025 | 8 pm

from *Petite Suite* (1886-1889, arr. 1999)

Claude Debussy,
arr. Stefaan Brakkee

- I. *En bateau* (Sailing)
- II. *Cortège* (Retinue)

branching patterns (2021)

inti figgis-vizueta

Decet (1906)

Georges Enescu

- I. Doucement mouvementé
- II. Modérément
- III. Allègrement, mais pas trop vif

— *Intermission* —

Joy Boy (1974, arr. 2025)

Julius Eastman, arr. Derek Weagle

Souvenir de Florence (1887-1892)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

- I. Allegro con spirito
- II. Adagio cantabile e con moto
- III. Allegretto moderato
- IV. Allegro con brio e vivace

Queer Urban Orchestra

Derek Weagle, Sound Healing Practitioner ♦

presents

Tuning Meditation

Saturday, March 15, 2025 | 3 pm

Entrance music:

Resolutions (1984)

Ruth Anderson

Participatory:

Sound Portrait: Hearing a Person (1973)

Ruth Anderson

Sound bath

Derek Weagle

Tuning Meditation (1971)

Pauline Oliveros

Exit music:

For Ruth (2021)

Annea Lockwood

*In an effort to fully honor the true purpose of this afternoon's Tuning Meditation,
please take a moment to silence mobile phones.*

**Please join us for this evening's performance of
Old, New, Borrowed and Blue**



Queer Urban Orchestra

David Bloom, Artistic Director & Conductor

presents

Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue

Saturday, March 15, 2025 | 8 pm

from *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Wedding March* (1842) Felix Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 35 in D, *Haffner* (1782) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

I. Allegro con spirito

II. Andante

III. Menuetto

IV. Presto

Solace (2024)

Yaz Lancaster

East Coast premiere

I. *Homecoming Suite*

II. *I Remember*

III. おまけ (*Omake*, “Bonus”)

Nolan N Dresden, Conductor

— *Intermission* —

Overture in D minor (1717, orch. 1923) George Frederic Handel, orch. Edward Elgar

Winter Astral (1986, orch. 2025) Beverly Glenn-Copeland, orch. David Bloom
world premiere orchestration

Gobbledigook (2008, orch. 2025) Sigur Rós, orch. David Bloom
world premiere orchestration

Rhapsody in Blue (1924, orch. 1942) George Gershwin, orch. Ferde Grofé
James Adler — piano

Queer Urban Orchestra

David Bloom, Artistic Director & Conductor

presents

Family Concert: *Rhapsody in YOU!*

Sunday, March 16, 2025 | 3 pm

Gobbledigook

Sigur Rós, orch. David Bloom

Winter Astral (1986, orch. 2025)

Beverly Glenn-Copeland,
orch. David Bloom

Compositional demonstration

Yaz Lancaster, Leader

from *Solace*: III. おまけ (*Omake*, “Bonus”)

Yaz Lancaster

Nolan N Dresden, Conductor

Symphony No. 35 in D, *Haffner* (1782)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

II. Andante

Nick Sienkiewicz — conductor (QUO Conducting Fellow)

I. Allegro con spirito

Eric Shen — conductor (QUO Conducting Fellow)

Rhapsody in YOU!

composed by the audience

Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin

James Adler — piano

The Musician of QUO: The Queer Urban Orchestra

JOY

Violin

Rafael Albertini

Arielle Lubin

Flute

Craig Devereaux +

Justin Lee

Viola

Andrew Holland

Michael Lee

- Tchaikovsky

LeiOra Hughes

- figgis-vizueta

Oboe

Matthew Hadley +

Brian Shaw

Clarinet

Jesse Langston

Justin Xayarin

Cello

Bjorn Berkhout

Michael Viljoen

Bassoon

David Lohman

Kevin O'Brien

French Horn

Brian Jacobowitz

Kyle Walker

The performances of the following pieces were made possible by the following donors:

Souvenir de Florence (1887-1892)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Sponsored by Claire D

from *Petite Suite* (1886-1889, arr. 1999)

Claude Debussy,

arr. Stefaan Brakkee

Symphony No. 35 in D, *Haffner* (1782)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Rhapsody in Blue (1924, orch. 1942)

George Gershwin, orch. Ferde Grofé

Sponsored by Navin Manglani

Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue & Rhapsody in YOU!

Violin I

Phong Ta †
Jen Doyle
Brian Harrington
Andro Kim
Elaine Lee
Connor Madsen
Richard Nguyen
Johann Palo
Joey Plaster
Soph Le Goff-
Pollack
Thomas Purcell
Spencer Robelen
Nic Salas
Nick Sharpsky
Dane Stalcup
Navida Stein
Elizabeth Taub
Liann Wadewitz

Violin II

Tank Tan *+
Jeanne Azzouni
Christian Balmaseda-
Lucca
Jonathan Balsano
alva bostick
Julia Case
Carla Eilo
Peter Fifield
Andre Gillard
mel martini
Liam O'Brien
CoryAnn Pitts
Ligia Sakurai

Holly Melissa-
Seefeldt
Bob Wei

Viola

Noah Green*
James Di Meglio +
Sawyer Goldsmith
Marion Lederer
Hali Linn
Hilton Marcus
Maggie O'Connor
JohnMark Ofrasio
Mark Peters
Mason Pilevsky
Nicholas Singletary
Nathan Threlkeld
Lauren Xue
Dustin Zuelke

Cello

Navin Manglani +
Rogerio Shieh ^
Madison Dong
Claire Hebert
Alex Humesky
Maurice Lee
Michelle Leidecker
Steve McLure
Kate Penrose
Michael Richman
Caroline Troake
Penglong Zhu

Bass

Jared Chamoff *+
George Nicholson
Andrew Op't Hof
Hirokazu Yokoyama

Flute

Bianca Morris*
Thomas Lei
Scott Oaks

Piccolo

Scott Oaks

Oboe

Taemin Ahn ^
Jeanne Azzouni
Heath Koch
Christian Smythe

English Horn

Alan Hyde

Clarinet

Francis Novak*
Daniel Olson+

Bass Clarinet

Donald Moy

Bassoon

Rosalie Avery
Katherine Munoz

Contrabassoon

Austin Wegener

French Horn

Lynn Caron +
 Christopher Jones
 Lance Lucas
 Wesley Richter

Trumpet

Julia Cohen*+
 Ron Nahass
 Ryan Yacos

Cornet

Julia Cohen
 Ron Nahass

Trombone

Ryan Gochee*
 Ryan McTernan**
 Nick Denton

Bass Trombone

Alex Arellano +

Tuba

Adam Rosenberg

Alto Saxophone

Brett Dolotina
 Kyle Quirion

Tenor Saxophone

Steven Albanese

Percussion

Alvaro Rodas +
 Nolan N Dresden +
 Meredith
 Butterworth
 Billy Jiang
 Michaela Kiberstis
 Eva Smith

Piano

Heath Koch

† **Concertmaster**

* **Principal**

^ **Acting Principal**

+ **Section Leader**

** **Co-Principal**



About the Music

JOY

Claude Debussy, arr. Stefaan Brakkee: excerpts from *Petite Suite* (1886-1889, arr. 1999)



A third of **Claude Debussy's** (1862-1918) songs are set to the poetry of Paul Verlaine, reflecting the poet's profound influence on the composer. Verlaine's style, which favors suggestion over direct statement, closely aligns with Debussy's musical approach—one that relies on

subtle, fleeting impressions rather than grand structural revelations.

The opening movement of Debussy's *Petite Suite* (originally for piano, four-hands) is inspired by Verlaine's poem from the 1869 collection *Fêtes galantes*. In *En bateau* (*Sailing*), partygoers drift across a dark lake at dusk, their thoughts preoccupied with romance. Debussy's music beautifully captures this tranquil, dreamy atmosphere. Yet Verlaine's poem introduces an element of longing. While romance is desired, it remains unfulfilled, and despite the poem's cheerful tone, it closes with a wistful undercurrent—promise left unrealized:

Meanwhile comes the moon and beams
as the sailboat gaily skims
briefly over waves of dreams.

Debussy's music subtly mirrors this sense of dreaming and yearning, never stating it outright, but merely hinting at it. The playful, lighthearted charm of the second movement, *Cortège* (*Retinue*), is similarly deft.

inti figgis-vizueta: *branching patterns* (2021)

This past year has me focusing on sounds changing around me. Sitting long hours by windows and the fire escape brings through the patterns of the wind on leaves and the birds in their song cycles. Moments break through of spontaneous order, where the cicadas sing in waves and lines or all the layers of devices beeping and trucks wailing align into counterpoint. *Branching patterns* is a piece focusing on those fleeting moments, giving materials and parameters as well as a great deal of freedom in how the music itself (patterns & motion) might manifest. In shared

beginnings yet loose ends or soloistic moments over supporting, fluctuating cycles the goal is always to be searching for the emergence of fading structures.

This work and the players are living however, so perhaps you can hold tightly as forms appear and cultivate their growth among you.

— inti figgis-vizueta



inti figgis-vizueta (b.1993) is a composer and educator who works to reconcile historical aesthetics and experimental practices with trans & Indigenous futures. Described as a “rising new music star” (*LA Times*), with “smooth and serrated melodies” (*New York Times*) and an “intriguing...highly integrated sound” (*Gramophone*), “wrought from a language we’d do well to learn” (*Washington Post*), inti has been commissioned and performed by leading artists including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Dallas Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, Ojai Music Festival, and Spoleto

Music Festival, among many others. inti’s work has been featured at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Walt Disney Hall Concert Hall, Symphony Center, REDCAT, National Concert Hall (IE), Southbank Centre (UK), Philharmonie de Paris (FR), Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ (NL), and Konzerthaus Berlin (DE).

inti studied with Marcos Balter, Felipe Lara, Donnacha Dennehy, and George Lewis. Her mentors include Tania León, Nico Muhly, Angélica Negrón, Derek Bermel, and Andrew Norman, among many others. inti honors her Quichua bisabuela who was the only woman butcher on the plaza central and used to fight men with a machete.

Georges Enescu: Decet (1906)



Romanian composer **Georges Enescu** (1881–1955) wrote his Decet (or Dixtour) for a combination of two wind quintets: two flutes, oboe, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two French horns. Cast in three movements, the piece is symphonic in nature, beginning with a sonata form first movement. The second movement encloses a lively scherzo within two slow, song-like passages featuring the oboe and English horn. In the concluding movement, moments of modal harmony hint at the strong Romanian influence on its musical style.

Enescu was a composer, violinist, pianist, and conductor and is commonly regarded as Romania's greatest musician. A child prodigy, he studied in Vienna and Paris, excelling in composition and performance. His works blend Romanian folk influences with rich harmonic language. He was also one of the most influential violin pedagogues of the 20th century, his students including Yehudi Menuhin and Arthur Grumiaux.

Julius Eastman, arr. Derek Weagle: *Joy Boy* (1974)

Between the hostile diminutives of Southern U.S. racism that give the term “boy” its fraught legacy, and the reclamation of Black innocence and enjoyment by Black people who demand the language back on its own terms, lives Julius Eastman's *Joy Boy* — a composition that objectifies the ecstatic self in order to reclaim it in a world that projects suffering onto the Black psyche before it even has a chance to assert jubilation. Echoes of vocals that mimic displaced giggling give the composition a haunted atmosphere, as if the sound's potential for conjuring joy is smeared with dread for its very own delights — or the dread of the backlash that Black delight might inspire. Is Black joy an indulgent form of self-deception, this music asks. Can its subject, a self-actualized Black man, override its stigma without succumbing to rage or self-sabotage?

There can be no answer but to play and replay it, to meet doubt with the resolve to go again, and fear with an allegiance to pleasure.

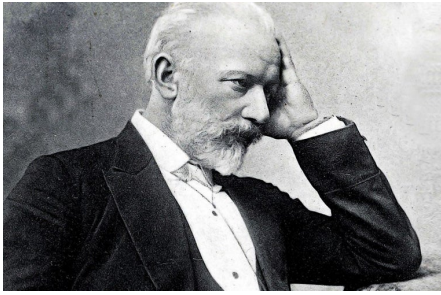
— Harmony Holiday for NPR



Julius Eastman (1940-1990) was a composer, conductor, singer, pianist, and choreographer. A singular figure in New York City's downtown scene of the 1970s and 80s, he also performed at Lincoln Center with Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic, and recorded music by Arthur Russell, Morton Feldman, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Meredith Monk. "What I am trying to achieve is to be what I am to the fullest," he said in 1976. "Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, a homosexual to the fullest."

Despite his prominence in the artistic and musical community in New York, Eastman died in obscurity in a Buffalo, NY hospital. His death went unreported for eight months, until an obituary by Kyle Gann appeared in the *Village Voice*. Eastman left behind few scores and recordings, and his music lay dormant for decades until a three-CD set of his compositions titled *Unjust Malaise* was issued in 2005 by New World Records. In the years since, there has been a steady increase in attention paid to his music and life, punctuated by newly found recordings and manuscripts, worldwide performances and new arrangements of his surviving works, and newfound interest from choreographers, scholars, educators, and journalists. "The brazen and brilliant music of Julius Eastman...commands attention: wild, grand, delirious, demonic, an uncontainable personality surging into sound," writes Alex Ross for *The New Yorker*.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: *Souvenir de Florence* (1887-1892)



Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) worked on this sextet over several years, beginning his first sketches in 1887 and continuing to revise it until 1892. However, the bulk of the composition took place in 1890 after he returned from a stay in Florence, which inspired the title *Souvenir de Florence*.

Composing the sextet provided a refreshing change from his intense work on the opera *The Queen of Spades* and the ballet *The Nutcracker*. It was also intended as a gift for his patron, Nadezhda von Meck, who was unwell and unable to travel. In a letter to her, Tchaikovsky expressed his enthusiasm for the piece, writing, “I know you love chamber music and I am glad you will be able to hear my sextet... I wrote it with the greatest enthusiasm and with the least exertion.”

The first movement opens with a bold and energetic theme, later contrasted by a melody that stands out for its light, Italianate lyricism. The second movement, Adagio, begins with a slower version of the first movement’s theme before transitioning into a graceful melody accompanied by pizzicato strings. The middle section shifts away from lyricism, instead creating a striking sound effect with rapid, delicate bowing. The third movement is bright and carefree, featuring a trio section that hints at the influence of *The Nutcracker*, which was occupying Tchaikovsky’s mind at the time. In the lively finale, he introduces a simple, folk-like tune and develops it with astonishing deftness before concluding with a dazzling finish.

Tchaikovsky was born in what could be called the sticks in Russia, and although he was no child prodigy, watching his mother and governess play piano and sing kindled an early obsession with music. When he enrolled in a school at age 9, he was bullied mercilessly and looked to music to find solace. He wrote at the time, “I never leave the piano, which makes me feel happy when I feel sad.” He became one of the first students to enroll at The St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1862, and his unique music merging Western forms with Russian and Ukrainian folk music eventually made him Russia’s first fully professional composer.

Tchaikovsky was gay, and though homosexuality in Russia was not repressed to the degree of Victorian England, social convention forced Tchaikovsky to keep even his most ardent affairs discreet, and he felt pressure from his family to marry. In 1877, at virtually the same time as he confessed his love for one of his male students, he started receiving love letters from Antonia Milyukova. The two married the same year, but spent only a month together before Tchaikovsky left her. “There is nothing more fruitless than not wanting to be that which I am by nature,” Tchaikovsky wrote from Florence in 1878. After this point, he felt guilt over his treatment of his wife (who never accepted a divorce), but no tumult over his homosexuality.

— notes by David Bloom, except where otherwise indicated

Tuning Meditation

Even as the terms “sound bath” and “sound healing” work their way into the mainstream jargon, there seems to be a paradoxical increase in the mystery, intrigue, and even confusion around what they actually mean. You may hear your friends talking about “raising their frequency” or social media advertising spiritual tourism experiences that combine hallucinogens and sound. Members of, what I call, the Wellness Industrial Complex make bold (and inaccurate) claims that certain frequencies can instantly repair your DNA or completely cure certain illnesses. In all of the buzz, you may be finding yourself wondering what is true? What does modern science or Western medicine say about these practices? Or simply, what actually *is* sound healing?

The idea that sound has a tangible effect on the body isn’t a difficult one to grasp. Most of us have felt goosebumps while listening to one of our favorite songs, felt the primal power of the bass in EDM music, or even regularly consume ASMR (Auto Sensory Meridian Response) recordings as a means of stress relief. These are all ways in which sound brings a positive affect to our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. The concept of “sound healing” isn’t one that is exclusive to our modern wellness buzz, it has ancient roots — tied to lineages from every corner of the globe that center the use of sound as a holistic way of helping people. From the *Curanderos* in Peru who use medicine songs as a means of enhancing plant medicine, to the gong practices associated with the *Yogas*, to the music used in the *Sema* ceremonies of the Mevlevi Order, sound is used in conjunction with movement, breath, substances, and, perhaps most importantly, ritual, to heighten the human experience. As I’ve come to understand from my years of participation, training, and practice, it is a way for us to achieve a state

of peace and equilibrium that allows our body the space and energy it needs to care for itself.

So how does sound healing work? I always tell people there are both spiritual and scientific explanations. While the spiritual realm is one for the individual to explore on their own, I'm always excited to share the modern science behind the practice! The modality works primarily through the stimulation of our parasympathetic nervous system, or what many people know better as their "rest and digest response." As vibration is introduced to the body, it stimulates the creation of a biochemical called Nitric Oxide in our cells that, as it's released into our bloodstream, helps lower our body into a more relaxed state. As our body relaxes, it is able to produce more of our primary "happy chemicals:" dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, endorphins, and anandamide, which in turn allows our body to more effectively regulate and heal itself. As my mentor, Dr. John Beaulieu says, our job as practitioners is to help your body become "nature's drugstore." With much, *much* more complicated research being done in the fields of biology, neurology, psychology, and even quantum physics around the effects of sound on the body, this is perhaps the most direct explanation.

As a hybrid musician-healer, today's program is one that is very special for me. Not only do I get to introduce people to a modality that may be unfamiliar to them through the use of what we may call "raw sound," we also get to experience together the profound artistry and philosophy of three queer pioneers: Ruth Anderson, Annea Lockwood, and Pauline Oliveros.

Many of you may know Pauline's name and her piece *Tuning Meditation* (which we will perform together today) but not as many people know about the philosophy and practice she coined: *Deep Listening*. The key principles Oliveros outlined for the Deep Listening approach include: expanding consciousness through listening to *all* sounds, both intentional (musical) and unintentional (environmental), an active approach to engaging with sound through active listening versus hearing (a passive physiological function), listening to the environment and how sound behaves in space, listening to the body, and, most importantly, building empathy by listening in community. This practice of Deep Listening was ever present in Ruth and Annea's body of work and intimate relationship with each other. And it's not just philosophy or identity that unites these composers on today's program, but the importance of their relationships and connection to New York. As Ruth Anderson sought a substitute instructor for her courses at Hunter College during her sabbatical in 1973, it was Pauline who

connected Ruth with Annea Lockwood, bringing her from London to New York. It was from that time that Ruth and Annea developed a deep connection, becoming life partners, and sharing almost five decades of artistic collaboration until Anderson's death in 2019. To this day, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Kingston, NY is the home to the Center for Deep Listening, an organization that serves as stewards for the practice, innovation around the creative approach, and Pauline's legacy.

I consider these three artists an integral part of my lineage as a practitioner of the sound healing modality and it's such a joy and honor to create an experience centered around them. The model of medicine we have here in the West (what we call *allopathy*) tends to focus on what we consider to be the "evidence based" effects of sound: deeper sleep, reduced anxiety, improved gastrointestinal function, amongst others. But it's important to acknowledge and fully examine what it means to experience empathy. Coming together today is not just a celebration of the connection between the body and sound, or the beauty of queer connection, but ultimately an affirmation that community is the most powerful force for unification, change, and healing.

♦ *Derek Weagle is QUO's Associate Conductor as well as a sound healing artist with certifications in generalized sound healing practices from the Sage Academy of Sound in Woodstock, NY and in Biosonic Sound Repatterning from the Shift Network with Dr. John Beaulieu, ND, PhD.*

Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue

**Felix Mendelssohn: from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:
Wedding March (1842)**



The magical creatures and whimsy of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* made it a favorite among the Mendelssohn children. **Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847) and his two sisters would read it aloud, acting out the different parts. As a teenager, Mendelssohn wrote a stunning orchestral overture as a kind of brief musicalization of the whole story, and 16 years later, he returned to the story to complete the music to be performed alongside the play. As

before, a childish sense of wonder courses through the veins of this miraculous music.

The *Wedding March* is undoubtedly Mendelssohn's best-known music, which merges grandeur and ardor. It is closely associated with traditional weddings and is almost invariably played in a stately manner as the newlyweds exit recess down the aisle. To start off this celebration of 10 years of marriage equality in the United States, QUO instead brings you the joyous spirit of 2015, when queer couples weren't walking slowly down the aisle — they were running to the courthouse!

something old

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Symphony No. 35 in D, *Haffner* (1782)



Mozart's Haffner Symphony was born out of his association with Salzburg's most prominent family. In 1776, Sigmund Haffner, Sr. commissioned Mozart to compose the Haffner Serenade for his daughter's wedding. His son, Sigmund Haffner Jr., was a childhood friend of Mozart, though their relationship seemed to fade once Mozart relocated to Vienna.

In 1782, Sigmund Jr. was elevated to nobility, and to mark the occasion, the Haffner family requested a celebratory composition from Mozart, which would become the Haffner

Symphony. The request came through Mozart's father, Leopold, who remained in Salzburg and managed many of his son's local connections. However, Mozart was overwhelmed with responsibilities at the time — working on multiple compositions, preparing for the premiere of his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, arranging his upcoming marriage, and moving into a new home. His packed schedule delayed his work on the symphony, and the symphony didn't arrive until two days after the ennoblement ceremony.

Leopold, likely frustrated by his son's apparent disregard for an important Salzburg patron, later took his own form of revenge. When Mozart needed the

symphony back for a concert in Vienna, Leopold intentionally delayed returning the score for three months. Upon finally receiving it, Mozart was stunned to rediscover his own work, admitting in a letter that he had forgotten every note of it. “My new Haffner symphony positively amazes me,” wrote Mozart when he finally saw the Symphony for the first time in half a year, “for I had forgotten every single note of it.”

For the Vienna premiere, Mozart made several revisions to the piece. He removed a march and a second minuet, transforming it from a serenade into a full symphony, and enhanced the orchestration by adding flutes and clarinets to the outer movements—an adjustment necessitated by Vienna’s orchestral resources, as Salzburg’s ensemble lacked clarinets.

The resulting symphony is a strikingly energetic and commanding work. The opening movement bursts with vitality, featuring bold leaps, rapid scales, and dramatic, sweeping chords. The second movement, an Andante, exudes aristocratic elegance and refinement, followed by a powerful and stately minuet. The symphony concludes with a dazzling and rapid finale, reinforcing its brilliance and excitement.

something new

Yaz Lancaster: *Solace* (2024)

In writing *Solace*, I found myself thinking about nostalgia. Childhood memories and pastimes often bring us a sense of comfort as adults. I feel that many of us have shared in this indulgence over the past few years due to the pandemic and further descent into late-stage capitalism — seeking out things we did when we were younger, or that feeling of wanting to experience whimsy and youthful energy while the world around us becomes more chaotic and depressing. The first movement, *Homecoming Suite*, moves through several referential sound worlds, from traditional orchestral music I learned in school that led me to pursuing a life in music, to the playful and adventurous music of film scores. *I Remember* is a more introspective movement, the title referencing both the long-form poem by Joe Brainard of the same name and a quote from the beloved Studio Ghibli film *Spirited Away*. It conjures sentimentality and longing through softer, sparklier textures — as though reaching for a soft plushie or blanket. The final movement おまけ, or “*omake*” (“bonus” in English) refers to “special features” or “extras” in Otaku culture; surprise additional content found in manga or DVDs. As a Gen

Z/millennial cusp, I grew up with the Internet and digital (sub)cultures and with anime and video games, all of which inform the glitchy, “tongue-in-cheek” musical style.

— Yaz Lancaster



Yaz Lancaster is an experimental artist whose practice is grounded in queer, DIY, and liberatory frameworks. Their work utilizes improvisatory forms, electroacoustic composition, sampling/collage, and relational aesthetics. Cultivation of care & intimacy, Marxist praxis, and accessibility are priorities of their artistic ethos.

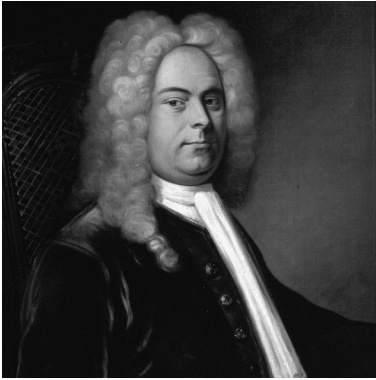
Yaz performs as violinist, vocalist, electronic musician & steel pannist in a variety of genres and settings. They’ve

had the opportunity to perform at Lincoln Center, The Shed, MoMA, National Sawdust, Public Records, Roulette, Trinidad and Tobago Carnival, MASS MoCA and The Poetry Project. Their debut album *AmethYst* released in April 2023 on people | places | records. They’ve worked with artists including Andrew Noseworthy, Charles Gaines, Dorothy Carlos, Leilehua Lanzilotti, Lisel/Eliza Bagg, JACK Quartet, Nyokabi Kariuki, and Wadada Leo Smith. Yaz has been commissioned by A Far Cry, Beth Morrison Projects, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Castle of our Skins, Minnesota Philharmonic, and Opera Philadelphia. Recent projects include scoring + music directing Asia Stewart’s evening-length *Fabric Softener* at The Shed and a large chamber work for International Contemporary Ensemble (2025).

They enjoy powerlifting, poetics of horror, QTPOC-led raves, and being an Aquarius stellium. Yaz lives in Lenapehoking (Harlem, NYC) with their little dog Nori.

something borrowed

George Frederic Handel, orch. Edward Elgar: Overture in D minor (1717, orch. 1923)



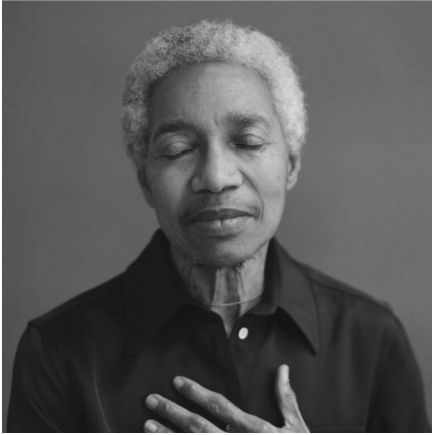
QUO's "borrowed" gift to you tonight comes in the form of a bouquet of orchestral music that comes from a completely different medium, from Baroque instrumental ensemble to keyboard synthesizers to post-rock band. To begin with, British composer **Edward Elgar** (1857-1934) resets the music of honorary Englishman George Frederic Handel (1685-1759), who was known for doing quite a lot of borrowing of his own. Handel wrote his Chandos Anthem No. 2 while he was resident

composer for the Duke of Chandos in 1717, and in 1734, he indulged his habit of plagiarizing himself when he copied the work's overture as the beginning of a Concerto Grosso.

Elgar's admiration for Handel's music was well known — a friend recalled how Elgar spoke of Handel with great emotion, sometimes with tears in his eyes. Elgar wrote that he had cherished the D minor Overture since childhood and had always dreamed of presenting it on a grander orchestral scale. His dream came true when Elgar conducted the premiere of his orchestral transcription at the Worcester Festival in 1923.

Handel is best known for his 42 operas and numerous oratorios, all of which are a testament to his dramatic genius. Very little is known of his private life. We do know that he never married, once shrugging off King George II's inquiries about his love life by insisting that he had no time for anything but music. He also moved in circles in which homosexuality was an open secret. Dr. Ellen Harris' authoritative research on queer themes in Handel's music has taken the conversation to new depths, but many scholars contribute only vitriol and attempts to quash any inquiry into the sexuality of the composer of *The Messiah*. In response, critic Joshua Kosman asks, "Where, after all, is the outrage over music historians' interest in deducing the identity of Beethoven's 'Immortal Beloved,' or charting Wagner's extramarital affairs?"

Beverly Glenn-Copeland, orch. David Bloom:
Winter Astral (1986, orch. 2025)



The diverse work of legendary singer, composer, and transgender activist **Beverly Glenn-Copeland** (b. 1944) has been gathering momentum in recent years thanks to the widespread discovery of his acclaimed masterpiece *Keyboard Fantasies* (1986), an ahead-of-its-time synth exploration which combines the essence of new-age minimalism, early Detroit techno and the warmth of traditional songwriting.

Beverly Glenn-Copeland (Glenn to his friends and acquaintances) was born into a musical family and studied the classical piano repertoire from ‘cradlehood,’ listening to his father playing the piano four to five hours a day. He moved from his home-town of Philadelphia to study classical music at McGill University, Montreal in 1961 (focussing on the European song repertoire) before he suddenly felt called to write music that would weave influences from the myriad musical cultures he had come to love. After many years of absence from the concert stage, Glenn-Copeland has resumed performing with his new band, Indigo Rising, in Canada and Europe.

Winter Astral is the second track on *Keyboard Fantasies*, which Glenn-Copeland recorded entirely with layered keyboard synthesizers. QUO recommends listening to the original album and checking out Posy Dixon’s documentary by the same title.

Sigur Rós, orch. David Bloom: *Gobbledigook* (2008, orch. 2025)



Icelandic post-rock band **Sigur Rós** formed in 1994 in Reykjavík. Known for their ethereal sound, frontman Jónsi's falsetto vocals, and their use of bowed guitar, Sigur Rós incorporate classical and minimal aesthetic elements. Openly queer, Jónsi has

often incorporated themes of love and identity into his music. His vocals are sung in Icelandic and non-linguistic vocalisations, the band terms Vonlenska.

Gobbledigook is the first track from the band's fifth full-length studio album *Með suð í eyrum við spilum endalaust* (*With a Buzz in Our Ears We Play Endlessly*), and the song's title is a tongue-in-cheek reference to their tendency toward nonsense lyrics. The song's lyrics are excerpted below:

You make hats fly into the air
You turn umbrellas inside out too often
Oh no, don't

You blow roofs out into the stormy sea
You stroke hair and blow hems
Prankster boy

Wind in the hair

You blow sand in eyes, tears
You throw gum in hair, stuck

(plus a great many lalala's and ooh's)

something blue

George Gershwin, orch. Ferde Grofé: *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924, orch. 1942)

What can I say about this piece, this Art Deco-era gem that has not yet been offered?

Paul Whiteman asked Gershwin to compose “something” for his symphonic jazz concert at New York's Aeolian Hall, February 1924. Gershwin nearly forgot about it, but realized he wanted to compose “something” more important than a straight-symphony concept or a “blues” work. He worked the concept out in his head and, in 3 weeks, produced this sparkling masterwork.

Is it a symphony? Jazz? A piano concerto? Or a fusion of all these disparate genres? Whatever it is, *Rhapsody in Blue* remains thoroughly American in outlook.

While Gershwin composed this for piano and jazz band, Paul Whiteman's brilliant orchestrator, Ferde Grofé, first scored the work. A huge success at its world premiere, *Rhapsody in Blue* — due to great demand — was recast in a fuller orchestration for symphony orchestra. It retained Gershwin's intent, but allowed for orchestras and pianists throughout the world to embrace this American classic. Again, Grofé was consulted on these scoring duties. The clarity and transparent brilliance of the original, the Gershwin-Grofé-Whiteman urtext, remains.

— James Adler



George Gershwin (1898-1937) was an American composer and pianist, renowned for blending classical music with jazz and popular styles. He was born to Jewish emigrants from Odessa, Ukraine and raised in New York City tenements. He demonstrated no musical interests until age 10, when his parents acquired a piano for the family. He became inseparable from the instrument and soon became a “song plugger,” promoting songs on Tin Pan Alley and recording hundreds of piano rolls. After writing a few hit Broadway songs, *Rhapsody in Blue* became his big break, and he went on to compose such iconic works as *An*

American in Paris and *Porgy and Bess*, which continue to shape American classical and popular music.

He was friendly with many leading composers of the day, including Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Nadia Boulanger, Arnold Schoenberg, and Maurice Ravel. Gershwin met the latter in New York in 1928 and took him to listen to jazz at the Savoy Ballroom and the Cotton Club in Harlem. Gershwin requested lessons with the French composer, and in one (probably apocryphal) account, Ravel responded something to the effect of, “With the money you’re making, I ought to be studying with you!”

When Schoenberg escaped Nazi Germany and eventually made his way to Beverly Hills, he became close with Gershwin. The two shared much: both were Jewish immigrants who escaped religious persecution, neither had a formal music education, they were both amateur painters, and each greatly admired the other's work. They played tennis weekly, and when Gershwin died at age 38 of an aggressive brain tumor, Schoenberg said in a broadcast, "Music to him was the he breathed, the food which nourished him... I want to express the deepest grief for the deplorable loss to music. But may I mention that I also a friend whose amiable personality was very dear to me."

— notes by David Bloom, except where otherwise indicated



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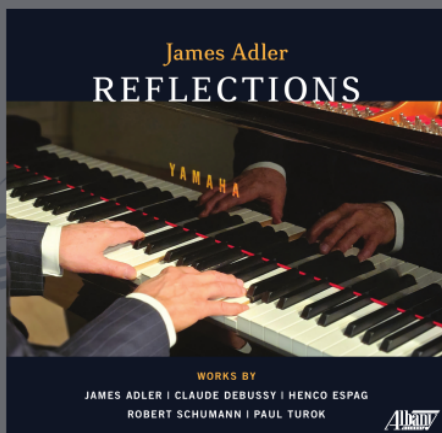
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