



24/25
NMC's
54th
Season

New Music Concerts Presents

Dark Tales:
**An Immersive
Journey into Music,
Light, and Legend**

Artistic Director
Brian Current

**Director of Operations
and Communications**
Emily Schimp

54th Season
— 435th Event

Sat, Nov. 9, 2024
Studio Theatre at the
Meridian Arts Centre
5040 Yonge St.

Land Acknowledgment

New Music Concerts acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Today, Toronto is now home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples from across Turtle Island and around the world. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. We are grateful to have the opportunity to meet, work, and live on this island. As an organization dedicated to commissioning and performing works to inspire listeners, we are grateful to all Indigenous peoples for their valuable, past and present, contributions to the arts and music. At New Music Concerts, we acknowledge and respect the importance of Indigenous musical traditions in advancing reconciliation and trusting relationships with Indigenous communities, and are grateful for the Indigenous artists whose sharing and knowledge continues to expand our understanding of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and arts.

24/25 Concert Season

Artistic

Director

Brian Current

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and Communications

Emily Schimp

Dark Tales: **An Immersive** **Journey into Music,** **Light, and Legend**

FEATURING:

Nancy Dahn — Violin

Timothy Steeves — Piano

54th Season

— 435th Event

Nov.9.24

Studio Theatre at the

Meridian Arts Centre

5040 Yonge St.

Music by Alice Ping Yee Ho

Animation by Duncan Major with

illustrations by Veselina Tomova

Program

7:15pm Pre-Concert Talk with Alice Ping Yee Ho

7:45pm Young Artist Overture

Alice Ping Yee Ho (CA) *Dark Waters* (2005, rev 2024) for Wind Quintet and String Quintet, performed by musicians from The Glenn Gould School.

8:00pm Main Show

Alice Ping Yee Ho (CA) *Dark Tales* (2024) for Violin, Piano and Immersive Digital Animation.

A Message from NMC Artistic Director, Brian Current & Director of Operations & Communications, Emily Schimp



NMC is thrilled to embark on our 54th season, continuing our mission of bringing the world's exceptional adventurous music to Toronto. This year, we invite you to explore an alternate reality of sound and storytelling, where familiar musical landscapes flow into new forms, and boundaries dissolve into uncharted realms of possibility.

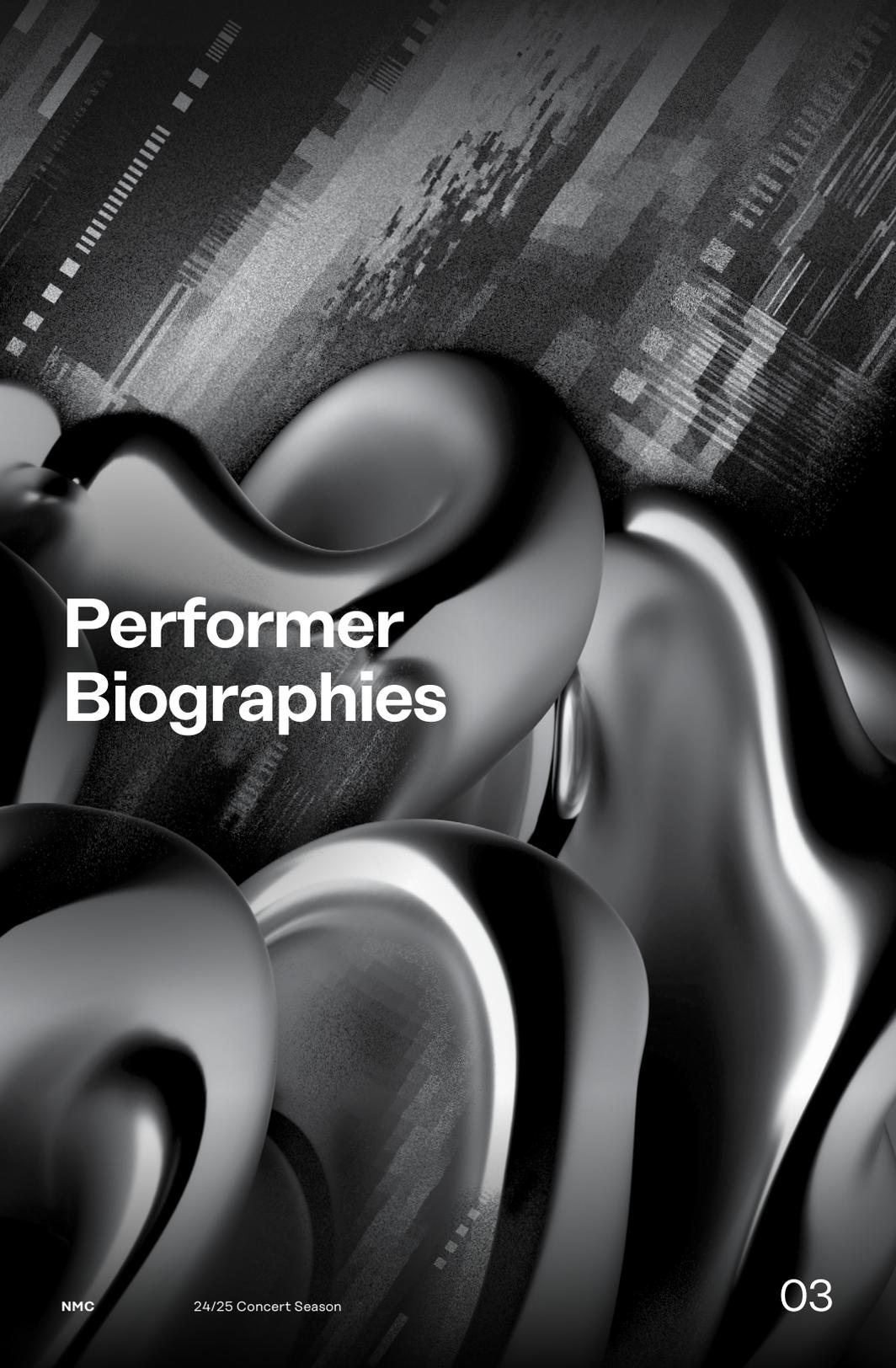
Our 2024/2025 season highlights the power of transformative musical narratives. Schnee invites you to experience Hans Abrahamsen's 21st-century masterpiece about snow, where crystalline music melts into Toronto's winter cityscape. *Dark Tales* offers a haunting journey through ghost stories and folklore, brought to life alongside fluid, evocative projections.

We are especially proud to present *Glimmer*, a groundbreaking collaboration by Thierry Tidrow at Buddies in Bad Times

Theatre during Toronto's renowned Pride celebrations. We also honour the revival of Julius Eastman's *Gay Guerrilla*, a groundbreaking late 20th-century work, whose powerful structures reclaim their place on today's world stage. Finally, our MAKEWAY program empowers early-career creators, ensuring that the future of contemporary music remains bright and inspiring for all.

As always, our performances are designed as both encounters with exceptional music and opportunities for connection, conversation, and community. Whether you're a long-time supporter or new to the world of contemporary music, you'll find a welcoming home at NMC. Let's continue to push the boundaries of what music can become, together.

-Brian Current, Artistic Director & **Emily Schimp**, Director of Operations and Communications



Performer Biographies

The Glenn Gould School (GGS) New Music Ensemble



The Glenn Gould School (GGS) New Music Ensemble is one of Canada's premier training grounds for contemporary music performance. Directed by acclaimed composer and conductor Brian Current, the ensemble is composed of top-level students from The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Known for its dynamic interpretations of 20th and 21st-century repertoire, the ensemble regularly performs groundbreaking works by Canadian and international composers, often including world premieres as well as alongside cutting edge technology. The GGS New Music Ensemble is celebrated for its commitment to innovation, artistic excellence, and nurturing the next generation of adventurous musicians.

Duo Concertante



For twenty-four years through live performances and acclaimed recordings, violinist Nancy Dahn and pianist Timothy Steeves have built an international career in the Canadian chamber ensemble Duo Concertante. Their name comes from the inscription over Beethoven's "Kreutzer" sonata, "in stilo molto concertante," which implies the two performers are equal, dynamic voices. This defines their unique artistic relationship and the "deeply integrated performances that flow naturally as if the music were being created on the spot" (Gramophone). Outstanding musicians, champions of new Canadian music, visionary artistic directors, and inspiring mentors, Duo Concertante have forged a musical legacy and strive to provoke thought and engagement through music in innovative ways.

After their first concert in 1997, the Halifax Chronicle-Herald called Duo Concertante "two packages of musical dynamite that would credit any stage on the planet." Since then, they have performed in more than 700 concerts across North America, Europe, Central America and China. Their recitals have received numerous accolades including

the following critical quotes from national and international press:

Grace and fire... fury and repose...a triumphant mass of non-stop energy – Wholenote

Majesty, passion and excitement. Inspiring! – Wiener Zeitung (Vienna)

Artistry, poetry and impeccable technique – La scena musicale

Duo Concertante's recordings have set the benchmarks for musicians around the world. Of their epic recording Beethoven: Complete Sonatas for Violin and Piano (a 3 CD album), preeminent critic John Terauds stated "...these beautiful interpretations are so good right down to the tiniest of details that they deserve to be called a reference in... contemporary performance". Gramophone writes that Dahn and Steeves "do Atlantic Canada proud in this splendid new set" and describes their interpretation as a "miracle of... knowledge and poetry". The album received critical praise in German, Austrian, British and Canadian media; it was featured for months on Air Canada's entertainment system and is heard on CBC radio almost weekly.

Duo Concertante Continued

Duo Concertante have twelve other acclaimed recordings on top Canadian labels ATMA, Centrediscs, and Marquis, many of which have won awards and special recognitions. The all-Canadian works CD *Wild Bird* includes Murray Schafer's Duo for Violin and Piano which won a 2011 Juno Award (Classical Composition of the Year). A two-disc set of J.S. Bach's Sonatas for Violin and Keyboard, received the first of three consecutive ECMAs for Classical Recording of the Year, followed by *Incarnation* in 2018 and *Perfect Light* in 2019. Their Franz Schubert: Music for Violin and Piano was selected by CBC Music as one of "Canada's Top 20 Classical Albums of 2020." *Ecology of Being*, released in 2022, features music written especially for Duo Concertante and inspired by the climate emergency. It has been praised as "a powerful and deeply moving album performed with world-class expressiveness and musicality This release is a stunning collection of highly personal works wonderfully performed by the duo." (The Wholenote)

Duo Concertante are the founders and artistic directors of the Tuckamore Festival – an internationally acclaimed chamber musical festival held for two weeks each August. For 22 years, Tuckamore – a major contributor to the cultural life of Newfoundland and Labrador – has put the province on the map by welcoming leading artists and emerging musicians worldwide to St. John's. The Tuckamore Festival has presented more than 140 outstanding guest artists; mentored more than 400 young musicians and composers representing 10 countries around the globe; travelled to more than two dozen

communities for school tours and performances; and produced more than 500 performances and events. In addition to Tuckamore, Duo Concertante regularly perform and collaborate with other artists of international stature at summer music festivals throughout North America, including the Ottawa International Chamberfest, Cactus Pear Music Festival, Toronto Summer Music, Festival of the Sound, Indian River Festival, Domaine Forget and Music Niagara.

As champions of Canadian music, Duo Concertante have few equals, and their lasting impact will be a legacy of new works created through their unprecedented commitment to commissioning new works. To date the duo has been responsible for sixty-nine new works and original arrangements for violin and piano by leading composers. This includes works by Andrew P. MacDonald (Double Concerto for violin and piano, Op. 51), Alice Ho (Capriccio Ballo, Cœur à cœur), Chan Ka Nin (Cool Mountain Water, Late in a Slow Time, *Incarnation*), Denis Gougeon (Chants du cœur), Omar Daniel (Wild Honey), Jean Lesage (Portrait of a Sentimental Musician in a Distorting Mirror), Kelly-Marie Murphy (Dance Me to Your Beauty with a Burning Violin), Brian Current (Faster Still with string quartet), Linda Bouchard (Spill Out), Kati Agócs (Supernatural Love), Andrew Staniland (The River within Us..., The Ocean is Full of its Own Collapse) and Jocelyn Morlock (Petrichor, Asylum). The Duo regularly includes new Canadian pieces alongside standard repertoire in such prestigious venues as Wigmore Hall (London), Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall (New York City), Shanghai City Theatre, the

Duo Concertante Continued

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Roy Thomson Hall and the Four Seasons Performing Arts Centre (Toronto), the National Arts Centre (Ottawa), and the Forbidden City Concert Hall (Beijing), among others.

Duo Concertante uses music as a means of drawing attention to issues of historical and social importance, often in collaboration with composers, writers, dancers, and actors. They also enjoy performing for children; their Ecology of Being and What life Throws at You programs have been shared with over 1500 students across Newfoundland and Labrador. Since 2020, Duo Concertante has been active creating unique music videos. Melissa Hui's piece from the Ecology of Being project was made into a 21-minute film and won Best Experimental Film and Best Original Score at the 2020 IndieX Filmfest (Los Angeles). In 2022, the Duo created SOLACE – four films with music by

Dawn Avery, Alice Ho, Jessie Montgomery and Cesar Franck. The Jessie Montgomery film, End of the Line, was an award winner at the Los Angeles Women's Independent Film Festival.

Upcoming projects and commissions for 2023-2024 include a 60-minute dramatic/musical piece by playwright Robert Chafe and composer Randolph Peters which addresses issues relating to ocean change and sustainability, a new sonata written for the Duo by German composer Stefan Heucke, and a 40-minute multimedia piece by composer Alice Ho and animator Duncan Major inspired by Tom Dawe's Newfoundland ghost stories.

Nancy Dahn and Timothy Steeves are Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada, University Research Professors and John Lewis Paton Distinguished Professors at Memorial University. They are also the proud parents of Clara and Sasha.

Nancy Dahn – *Violin*



Nancy grew up in rural Nova Scotia surrounded by chickens, pigs, and three smart older brothers. When she was two, her mother rescued a violin destined for the trash heap, proclaiming, “Nancy will play that.” She started taking private violin lessons at age eleven.

Timothy Steeves – *Piano*



Born in Saskatoon, Tim was the son of two university biology professors who introduced him to the wonders of music at a very young age. For a long time, he was unsure whether to be a pianist or French horn player. (Looks like he made the right decision.)





The Composers and Their Music

Alice Ping Yee Ho

— *Dark Waters* (2005, rev 2024) for Wind Quintet and String Quintet, performed by musicians from The Glenn Gould School.

— *Dark Tales* (2024) for Violin, Piano and Immersive Digital Animation.



Program Note for *Dark Waters*: “*Dark Waters*” is an imaginary title that paints a mental picture of the mysterious “altered state” of nature. By using the unique timbre of a woodwind quintet and strings, the music describes the vicious cycle or transformation of water. The quiet rumbling woodwinds gestures against slow moving sustained strings lines represents a persistent energy which is everlasting. This musical gesture is subdued at first but becoming increasingly volatile, and rises to an intense “tutti” figure that symbolizes the unifying force of destruction.

Program Note for *Dark Tales*: *Dark Tales* is an immersive musical and visual journey inspired by the eerie ghost stories, folklore, and childhood

memories found in Tom Dawe’s *An Old Man’s Winter Night*, with illustrations by Veselina Tomova. This work combines original compositions by award-winning Canadian composer Alice Ping Yee Ho with mesmerizing visuals by animator Duncan Major. Performed by the renowned Duo Concertante—violinist Nancy Dahn and pianist Timothy Steeves—the experience highlights the evocative power of concert music, enhanced by the dynamic integration of animated visuals.

Conceived as a live concert event, *Dark Tales* is designed for both 3D and 2D presentations, integrating moving images with live performance. The five movements, each about 10 minutes long, seamlessly unfold without intermission, each drawing from a different ghostly narrative in Dawe’s collection. Audiences, seated close to the performers and surrounded by projected animations, are invited into a magical world filled with phantoms, fairies, fetches, and other figures from folklore.

The opening movement, *An Old Man’s Winter Night*, recounts stories of malevolent spirits that take animal form. The second movement, *Landwash Spirits*, depicts shipwrecks and the restless souls lost at sea. Sheba, the third tale, tells of a

Alice Ping Yee Ho Continued

trapper saved from a storm by the ghost of a dog he once betrayed. In *The Woman in the White Dress*, the spirit of a bride haunts those who recall her tragic death before her wedding day. The final tale, *The House in the Dook*, revolves around a haunted house cursed by being built on a fairy ring.

Immersed in this unique sensory environment, *Dark Tales* delves into the mysteries of the supernatural while reflecting on universal themes of desire, love, grief, and regret. The performance captivates the imagination, offering a new dimension to the art of storytelling.

Biography: One of the most acclaimed composers writing in Canada today, Hong Kong-born Alice Ping Yee Ho has written in many musical genres and received numerous national and international awards, including the 2022 Symphony Nova Scotia's Maria Anna Mozart Award, 2022 Barlow Endowment Commissioning Prize, 2019 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize, 2016 Louis Applebaum Composers Award, 2014 Prince Edward Island Symphony Composers Competition, 2014 Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Friendship Orchestral Composition Competition, 2013 Dora Mavor Moore Award "Outstanding Original Opera" for her opera *The Lesson of Da Ji*, 2013 Boston Metro Opera International Composition Competition, K.M. Hunter Artist Award, du Maurier Arts Ltd. Canadian Composers Competition, MACRO International Composition Competition, Luxembourg Sinfonietta International Composition Prize, and International League of Women Composers Competition.

Critics have called her music dramatic and graceful, while praising its "organic flow of imagination," "distinctly individual" style, "colourful orchestration", and "emotive qualities". Influences evident in her proudly eclectic approach include Chinese folk and operatic idioms, Japanese Taiko, jazz, pop culture, and other contemporary art forms. Her ongoing goal is to explore new musical styles that are provocative to the ears.

"Colors and tonality are two attractive resources to me: they form certain mental images that connect to audiences in a very basic way." [AH]

Often featured at national and international new music festivals such as ISCM World Music Days, Ottawa Chamberfest, Denmark's CRUSH New Music Festival, and Asian Music Week in Japan, etc. Her works have also been performed by major ensembles and soloists including Finnish Lapland Chamber Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, China National Symphony, Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, Polish Radio Choir, Estonia's Ellerhein Girls' Choir, the Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Victoria, Nova Scotia, Hamilton, Kitchener Waterloo, and Windsor Symphonies, the Luxembourg Sinfonietta, Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, New Music Concerts, Penderecki String Quartet, TorQ percussion quartet, Duo Concertante, violist Rivka Golani, pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico, percussionists Sumire Yoshihara, Evelyn Glennie, and Beverley Johnston, flutist Robert Aitken, Patrick Gallois, and Susan Hoepfner.

Alice Ping Yee Ho Continued

A twice JUNO Award Nominee (2015 and 2018), she has an impressive discography released on the ATMA, Navona, Centrediscs, Naxos, Marquis Classics, Blue Griffin, Electra, Leaf Music, and Phoenix labels. She has nine solo discs devoted to music written for different genres: "Ming" for percussion, "Glistening Pianos" for two pianos, "The Lesson of Da Di" features her Dora award winning opera The Lesson of Da Ji, "Mysterious Boot" for flute, cello, and piano, "The Monkiest King" features her children's opera with the Canadian Children's Opera Company, and "Venom of Love" presents a full length recording of her electronic ballet music. Her 2022 to 2023 release includes "A Woman's Voice" for female voices and piano on Leaf Music label, "Blaze" for solo piano featuring Canadian idol Christina Petrowska Quilico, and a full length recording of her new opera CHINATOWN commissioned by City Opera Vancouver, with renowned Canadian writer/librettist Madeleine Thien and Hoisanese co-writer

Paul Yee was released in September, 2023 by Leaf Music label. The opera has received a successful premiere concert production in September, 2022 at the Vancouver Playhouse, and will be receiving a full staged production end of 2025 in Vancouver.

Alice holds a Bachelor of Music degree in composition with high distinction from Indiana University and a Master of Music degree in composition from the University of Toronto. Her teachers have included John Eaton (USA), Brian Ferneyhough (Germany), and John Beckwith (Canada).

She is a noted classical pianist and an active advocate of contemporary music. She had performed in many new music festivals, including a solo piano recital recorded by CBC Radio 2 in which she premiered Tan Dun's solo piano work "Traces II". She now makes her home in Toronto.

*All program notes and biographies provided by Composer, unless otherwise specified.



The Artists

Veselina Tomova — *Illustrator*



Dark Tales was inspired by *An Old Man's Winter Night*, written by Tom Dawe and illustrated by Veselina Tomova, published by Running the Goat Books & Broadsides.

Biography: Born in Sofia, Bulgaria, Veselina Tomova graduated from Leipzig's School of Graphic Art and Book Design before moving to Newfoundland and Labrador. A graphic designer and award-winning artist, she has illustrated several books for Running the Goat, including PB's *Comet*, *Daphne's Bees*, and *The Wall & the Wind*, which she also wrote. Veselina divides her time between St. John's, Newfoundland, where she lives in a small house overlooking the harbour, and Rusalya, Bulgaria, a village chock full of memorable characters, where she tends her family's huge vegetable garden and enjoys the antics of Bucky the dog and Ginger the cat.

Duncan Major — *Projection Animator*



Biography: Based in St. John's, NL, Duncan is an artist, designer and animator with a particular interest in the relationship between music and visuals. In the summer of 2024, he collaborated with pianist James Hurley to launch a live audiovisual series called *Immersive Improvisation*, with another performance scheduled for November. He is the director and animator of short films *Little Big Bang* (2016) and *Imprint* (2025), both produced by the National Film Board of Canada. @walpurgispress

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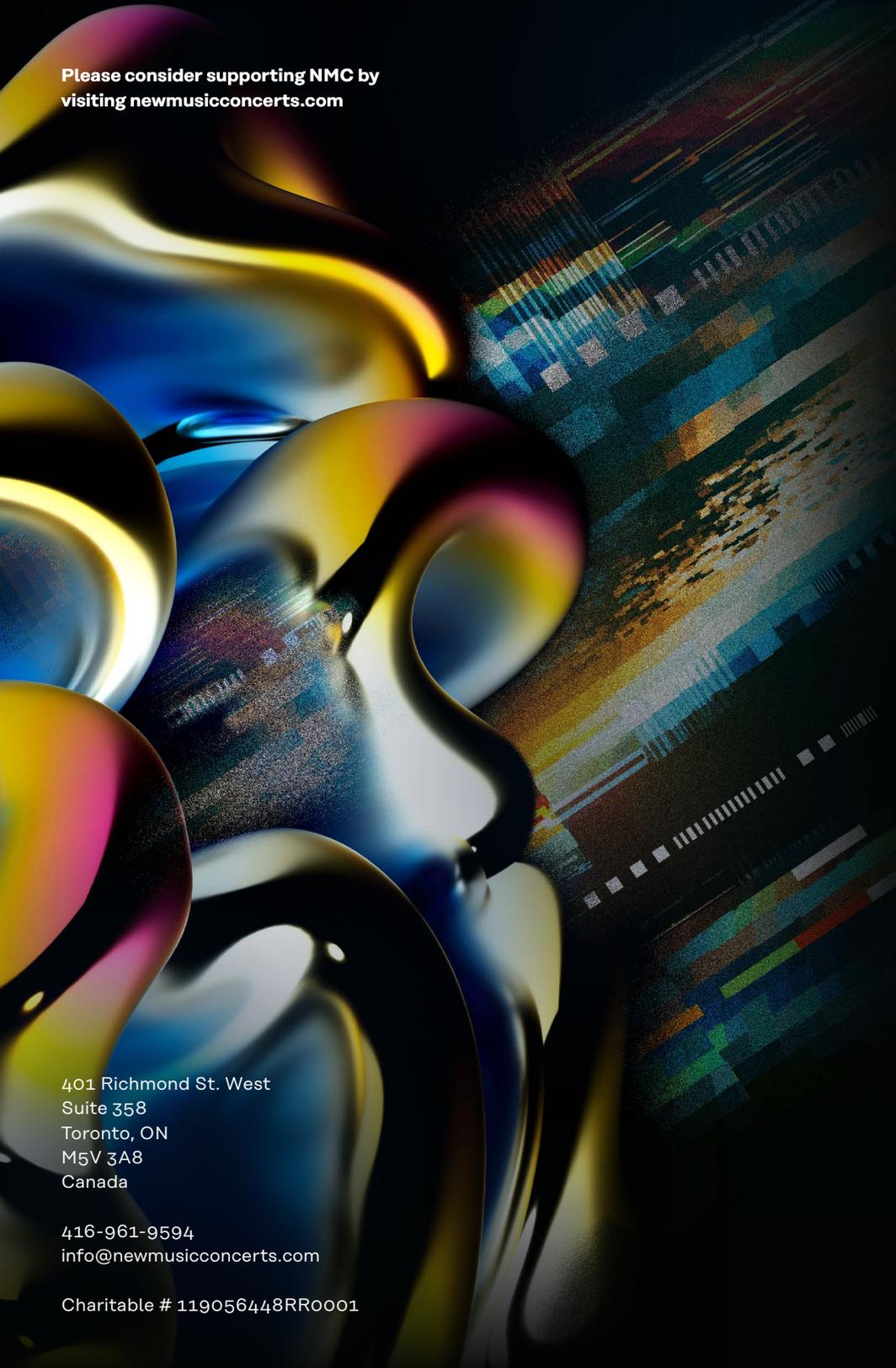
An abstract, colorful background featuring swirling, metallic-looking shapes in shades of blue, yellow, pink, and black. A vertical white line runs down the right side of the image.

Our Next Event:

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A Window
into Winter**

**Saturday,
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