



24/25
NMC's
54th
Season

New Music Concerts Presents

Schnee: A Window into Winter

Artistic Director
Brian Current

**Director of Operations
and Communications**
Emily Schimp

54th Season
— 436th Event

Sat, Feb 8, 2025
Snell Hall at
St. James Cathedral
Centre Event Venue
65 Church 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

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Schnee: A Window into Winter

FEATURING:

Amahl Arulanandam — Cello
Gillian Chreptyk — Trumpet
Stephanie Chua — Piano 2
Olivia Esther — Horn
Catherine Gray — Viola
Leslie Newman — Flute (doubling Piccolo and Alto Flute)
Gregory Oh — Piano 1
Clare Scholtz — Oboe (doubling English Horn)
Ryan Scott — Percussion
Cathy Stone — Trombone
Anthony Thompson — Clarinet in B_♭ and A (doubling E_♭
Clarinet and Bass Clarinet in B_♭)
Andréa Tyniec — Violin

54th Season

— 436th Event

Feb.8.25

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Program

7:15pm Pre-Concert Talk

with Rashaan Allwood (NMC Composer in Residence) Allwood and Dr. William Gough (Professor of Climatology, University of Toronto)

7:45pm Young Artist Overture

Norma Beecroft (CAN) *Jeu III* (1987) for Viola and Tape, performed by Mary Deck (The Glenn Gould School).

8:00pm Main Show

Linda Catlin Smith (CA) *We've gone forth for dancing* (2023 World Premiere) for Trumpet, Horn and Trombone

Rashaan Allwood (CA) *Black Ice* (2024 World Premiere) for Nine Instruments

Hans Abrahamsen (DNK) *Schnee: Ten Canons for Nine Instruments* (2008)

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.

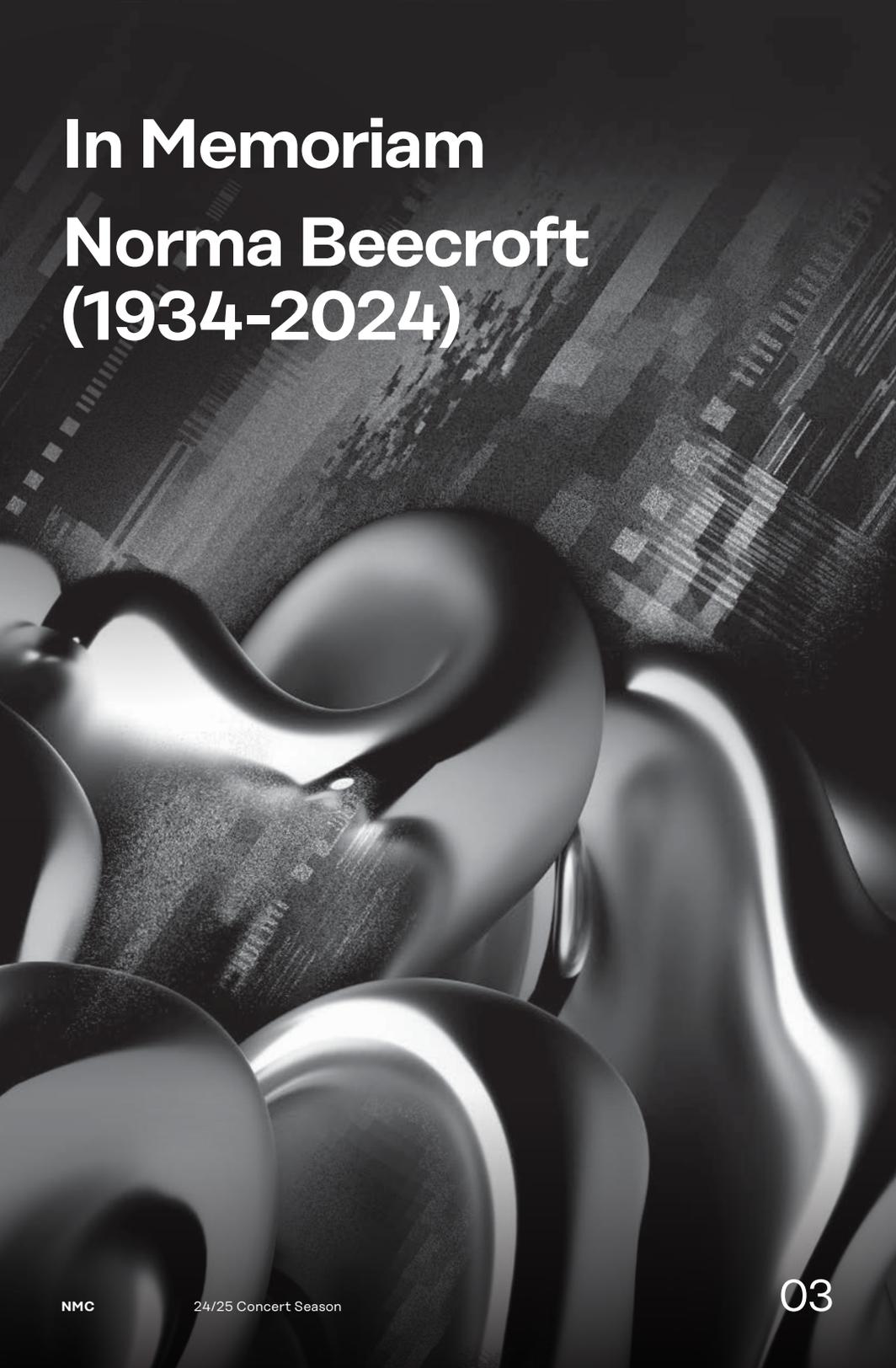
Our 2024/2025 season highlights the power of transformative musical narratives. Schnee invites you to experience Hans Abrahamsen's 21st-century masterpiece about snow, where crystalline music melts into Toronto's winter cityscape. Dark Tales offers a haunting journey through ghost stories and folklore,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



In Memoriam Norma Beecroft (1934-2024)

In Memoriam

Norma Beecroft (1934-2024)

We can't think about contemporary music in Canada without thinking of Norma Beecroft. With her passing this week at 90, we're reminded how, in these moments, an artist becomes the sum of every chapter they've written.

Norma was a true force in adventurous music. As NMC's co-founder, she knew that detailed, artful compositions—lovingly crafted and meticulously performed—could unlock entirely new worlds for any audience.

Her innovative spirit continues to inspire, most especially in her pioneering work with electronic music, which she began exploring in the 1960s. There are captivating photos of her in her early 30s in the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio surrounded by the seemingly magical equipment of the time, an exciting maze of buttons, knobs, and tangled wires. In 1967, this was cutting-edge technology—large machines that allowed composers to manipulate sound in ways never heard before, and a stark contrast to the sleek, digital tools we use today. Even now, we marvel at how Norma could create musical textures that feel both intimate and distant—familiar, alive, yet also otherworldly.

She also made waves as a broadcaster and producer, particularly through her work with CBC Radio, where she became a passionate advocate for contemporary Canadian composers. Her dedication to adventurous music extended to her leadership at New Music Concerts, which she co-founded in 1971 with Robert Aitken. Serving as president for many years, Norma helped shape NMC into the risk-taking, innovative organization it remains today, committed to championing bold new voices and pushing the boundaries of what music could be.

Norma's vision even took us beyond Canada's borders, culminating in the landmark 1976 European tour—a daring feat of intricate logistics, tight budgets, and transporting instruments for unfamiliar works. This journey became a luminous moment for Canadian music, unveiling the boundless talents of our composers to the world.

At NMC, we are reminded daily how much of our identity stems from Norma. Her electronic innovations, broadcasts, compositions, and leadership all flowed from a deep passion for pushing music forward. It's a passion we continue to share, living out the adventurous musical spirit she embodied. For that, we are forever grateful and in her debt.

-Brian Current, Artistic Director, NMC

Norma Beecroft

— *Jeu III* (1987) for Viola and Tape



Program Note: *Jeu III* for solo viola and tape is part of a larger series of works by Norma Beecroft that explores the interplay between live performance and pre-recorded electronic textures. This series, including works like *Jeu II* and *Jeu IV*, reflects Beecroft's fascination with recontextualizing "found" material and blending it with electronic transformations to create a dialogue between historical and contemporary music.

In *Jeu III*, the electronic track was crafted at the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio using then-cutting-edge tape and digital technologies. The piece reimagines fragments from both Bach and Alban Berg's Violin Concerto, alongside gestures developed in *Jeu II*. By simplifying the instrumentation to solo

viola and electronics, Beecroft sharpens the focus on the interaction between the viola's expressive capabilities and the layered textures of the tape.

The work is dedicated to viola soloist Rivka Golani. (B.C.)

Biography: Norma Beecroft, composer, broadcaster (b at Oshawa, Ont 11 Apr 1934). Studying composition first in Toronto with John WEINZWEIG, and then in the US and Europe, Beecroft has worked in a number of mediums. She was one of Canada's most active early practitioners of electroacoustic music. Drawing on a wide range of stylistic elements, she has created dramatic, orchestral, vocal and chamber compositions combining traditional instruments, voice and electronically produced or altered sounds, with appealing individuality. One of her best-known works, *From Dreams of Brass* (1964) for soprano, narrator, choir, orchestra and tape, is typical of Beecroft's style which is always concerned with the final timbral result. Like *Rasas II* (rev. 1975) and *The Living Flame of Love* (1967), it uses text written or translated by her sister, poet and painter Jane Beecroft. During the 1980s she began to combine digital sound sources usually with acoustic instruments.

An enthusiastic promoter of Canadian music, Beecroft has produced programs for CBC Radio and became widely known as host of "Music of Today." Her documentary "The Computer in Music" (1976) won the Major Armstrong Award for excellence in FM broadcasting. She continued her promotion of Canadian

Norma Beecroft Continued

and contemporary music as producer and music director at CJRT-FM. For 20 years she was president and general manager of Toronto's New Music concerts, which she co-founded in 1971. Beecroft directed electronic music at York University and then was course director of the Music Writing Workshop from 1984 to 1987. For the Stratford Festival she has created a number of electronic music scores, including *Macbeth* (1983) and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1984). She has twice been awarded (in 1978 and 1989)

the prestigious Victor M. Lynch-Staunton Award for distinguished artists. In 1994, to celebrate Beecroft's 60th birthday, New Music Concerts premiered 3 of the composer's new works: *Images* for woodwind quintet, *String Quartet* and *CJRT* (1994) for bass flutes and percussion. In 1996 she received an honorary doctorate from York University, Toronto. In 2003 Centredisques released the two-CD Beecroft set in the Canadian Composers Portraits series.



The Composers and Their Music

Linda Catlin Smith

— *We've gone forth for dancing* (2023 World Premiere) for Trumpet, Horn and Trombone



Program Note: *We have gone forth for dancing* (2024) was commissioned by Tim Moody. Tim came to me with an idea for a new work for brass trio, and invited me to think about a bit of text from the Rig Veda (Hymn XVIII, Various Deities – his translation) as a point of inspiration for the work:

*Divided from the dead are these,
the living...*

*We have gone forth for dancing and
for laughter, to further times prolonging
our existence.*

*Here I erect this rampart for
the living...*

*May they survive a hundred
lengthened autumns, and may they
bury Death beneath this mountain.*

*Live your full lives full ap! find old
age delightful, all of you striving one
behind the other.*

The text has both an elegiac and joyful quality, which I tried to imbue, and the text “all of you striving one behind the other” gave me the idea of the staggered independence of the three instruments. I wanted to create a slightly lilting dance between the three instruments, with the trumpet having a kind of questioning or searching role. The work is dedicated to Tim Moody, with my thanks.

Biography: Linda Catlin Smith grew up in New York and lives in Toronto. Her music has been performed by: BBC Proms, Vancouver and Victoria Symphony Orchestras, Tafelmusik, BBC Scottish Orchestra, Tectonics Festival (Glasgow), and many others. Recordings include: *Dark Flower* with Thin Edge Collective, *Thought and Desire*, with Eve Egoyan, and six recordings: *Dirt Road*, *Drifter*, *Wanderer*, *Among the Tarnished Stars*, *Ballad and Flowers of Emptiness* with 'another timbre'. Her string trio *Meadow*

Linda Catlin Smith Continued

and her choral work *Folio* were both recorded by the Louth Contemporary Music Society. In 2019, her orchestral work, *Nuages*, (commissioned by the BBC Proms), was premiered by the BBC Scottish Orchestra at Royal Albert Hall, and received its Canadian premiere in 2023 with the Vancouver Symphony.

Her works are available through Composers Edition and the Canadian Music Centre. Linda has taught composition privately and at Wilfrid Laurier University (1999-2020). She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Music from the University of Victoria in 2023.

Rashaan Allwood — *Black Ice* (2024 World Premiere) for Nine Instruments



Program Note: *Black Ice* explores fragility, danger, and the peril of invisibility. Inspired by the hidden menace of ice on frozen roads, it reflects the precarious existence of marginalized communities—especially Black lives—too often unseen and scapegoated.

The work unfolds in two movements. The first captures the tension and chaos of a car crash—anxious, fragmented, unpredictable. The second breathes with greater space, inviting reflection through haunting vocalizations of the words

"black ice," fractured and reshaped by the performers.

A striking ensemble of three pianos (one transformed through percussive extended techniques), electronics, strings, winds, and whispers conjures a sound world that is sleek, elusive, and dangerously beautiful.

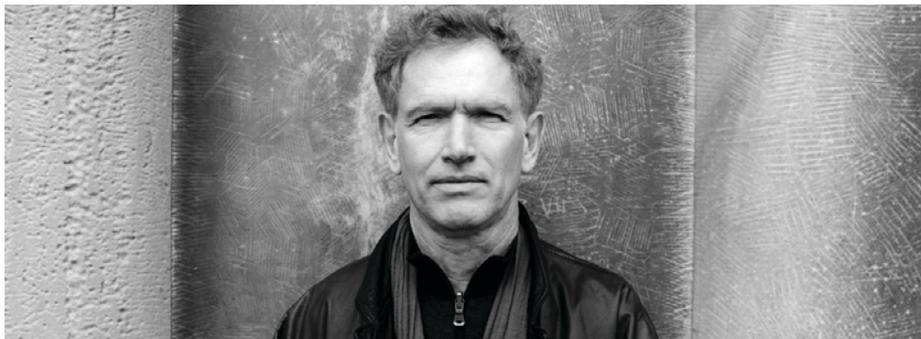
Black Ice asks us to confront what we fail to see—whether on the road or in society—and to feel the elegance and peril of invisibility.

Rashaan Allwood Continued

Biography: Rashaan Rori Allwood is a versatile composer and researcher currently pursuing a PhD in composition at Western University. His diverse work spans from contemporary, to world and medieval music, reflecting his innovative approach to composition. Recently, Rashaan collaborated with the Bozzini Quartet for Bozzini Lab 2024 and received commissions from the American Guild of Organists, including the Marilyn Mason Award in 2022 and in 2023 the RCCO for their 2023 National Convention. His new film, *Streams of Self-Consciousness*, premiered as part

of the Celebrations and Revelations 2023 concert series, a Black History Month initiative sponsored by TD to expose the public to new and inspiring Black art. This film is a part of his doctoral research and thesis, exploring the intersection of cultural impact and performance art. Rashaan is excited to be working with New Music Concerts Toronto on several new commissions and exciting projects. Engaged with a global audience through social media, Rashaan continues to push the boundaries of contemporary music and interdisciplinary exploration.

Hans Abrahamsen — *Schnee: Ten Canons for Nine Instruments* (2008)



Program Note: In the beginning of the 90s, I arranged some of J.S. Bach's canons for ensemble – in total seven single standing works from his entire life span. I became totally absorbed into

this music and arranged them with the intention of the music being repeated many, many times, as a kind of minimal music. Obviously, I didn't know which durations Bach had in mind, but by

Hans Abrahamsen Continued

listening to his canons in this way, a profound new moving world of circular time was opened to me.

Depending on the perspective on these canons, the music and its time can stand still or move either backwards or forwards.

In my own work, an ongoing idea has persisted, of at somepoint writing a work consisting of a number of canonical movements that would explore this universe of time. And when I was offered the commission for Ensemble Recherche and Wittener Tage, it felt as the right time to do this.

In *Schnee*, a few simple and fundamental musical questions are explored. What is a Vorsatz? And what is a Nachsatz? Can a phrase be answering? Or questioning?

The guideline or rule for the canons is very simple: We start out with an answering Vorsatz, followed by a questioning Nachsatz. Throughout the time of the piece, these two are intertwined more and more, as more and more dicht geführt canons, until, at the end, they are interchanged. Now the question and then the answer. The two canons are identical like a painting in two versions, but with different colors. And where the first one does not include the space, the second one does, as well as containing more canonical traces.

The nine instruments are divided into two groups: the first one situated to the left consists of piano 1, violin, viola and cello, and the second group on the right of piano 2 (pianino), flute, oboe and clarinet. In the middle is the percussion.

- Hans Abrahamsen

Biography: Hans Abrahamsen studied French horn and composition at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen and in Århus (Jutland) with Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and Per Norgård. He also trained with György Ligeti. In 1978, with other students of the Royal Academy, he co-founded the "Gruppen for Alternativ Musik" in reaction to the Academy's conservative approach. With an extremely simple melody built around just three notes, his early Symphony in C (1972) was written in the spirit of the "New Simplicity" movement embraced by many Danish composers of that time.

A year later, Abrahamsen's first string quartet, *Préludes*, a series of remarkable character studies, won audiences over immediately. In rapid succession, Abrahamsen composed a number of other works that added to his renown: *Stratifications* (1973-1975) weaves polyphony and polyrhythms together with traits from the "New Simplicity" movement to produce a striking, complex whole. *Nacht und Trompeten* (1981), commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, was written for full orchestra by request of Hans Werner Henze, who conducted the premiere.

During the 1980s, he worked closely with the London Sinfonietta, a collaboration which led Abrahamsen to devote himself largely to composing ensemble music. *Winternacht* (1976-1979), composed for the ISCM World Music Days in Helsinki in 1978, is one of the early fruits of his work with the Sinfonietta, which later commissioned *Märchenbilder* (1985) and *Lied in Fall* (1987-1990) from him. These works, along with *Six Pieces* for violin, horn,

Hans Abrahamsen Continued

and piano (1984), were influenced by serialism. In them, Abrahamsen affirms tremendous liberty of expression within strict structures in an effort to intertwine form and freedom.

This early period of his career is characterized by new simplicity and concreteness, as well as by transparency and objectivity. Later, however, Abrahamsen would seek more immanently poetic forms of expression, inspired by the German Romantics. In the 1990s, he devoted himself mostly to other composers, transcribing works by fellow Danes such as Carl Nielsen and Per Nørgård, as well as Satie and Schumann.

Abrahamsen's concerto for piano (1999-2000) was a kind of condensation of his creative thinking of the previous decade and marked a stylistic turn. This third period of his career is characterized by pieces such as *Three Little Nocturnes*, for accordion and string quartet, and *Four Pieces For Orchestra*, performed at BBC Proms by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 2005. Among his more recent works, *Schnee* was first performed in its entirety by the ensemble *recherche* in Witten in 2008.

A third String Quartet was also premiered that same year. Other new pieces, such as *Traumlieder* and *Liebeslied*, whose titles were inspired by the German Romantics, were premiered in 2009 and 2010, respectively. His fourth string quartet premiered at the 2012 Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik, performed by the Arditti Quartet. In 2013, he composed *Let me tell you* for soprano and orchestra, inspired by Paul Griffiths' eponymous novel. Performed by Barbara Hannigan and the Berliner Philharmoniker, *Let me tell you* received multiple prizes, including the 2015 Royal Philharmonic Society Award, the 2016 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition, and the 2016 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Contemporary Music.

Hans Abrahamsen has been teaching instrumentation at the Royal Danish Academy of Music since 1982, and composition since 1995. Since 1988, he has been the artistic director of the Esbjerg Ensemble. He is the recipient of multiple prizes, including the Anne Marie Carl-Nielsens Hæderspris (in 1989) and the Wilhelm Hansen prize (in 1998).

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PROGRAM NOTES AND COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES PROVIDED BY THE COMPOSER
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The Performers

Mary Deck — Young Artist Overture: Norma Beecroft (CAN) *Jeu III* (1987) for Viola and Tape



Biography: Hot off the heels of a pair of successful French premières, Mary Deck is an engaged, passionate violist and violinist who is equally at home performing the storied masterworks of chamber music, working with emerging composers, or playing fiddle music for dancers. This summer she performed in Quintessential Quintets, a chamber music series she organized with her colleagues, featuring works by Schubert and Dvorak with double bass. She also attended and performed in Creative Dialogue France, a multi-generational contemporary chamber music festival in the Loire Valley. Mary brings a keen intellect and burning passion in equal measure to every project in which she participates.

Mary is currently pursuing an Artist Diploma in viola at the Glenn Gould School in Toronto, where she

studies with Steve Dann. She recently completed her Bachelor of Music in violin performance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she had the honour of receiving the Perlman Piano Trio Scholarship, serving as the violinist for two years. Mary has performed professionally at chamber festivals such as Midsummer's Music Festival in Door County, WI, and has performed in the viola section of the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Other recent highlights include performing John Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis* from the high catwalks above a concert hall, free improvising onstage with some of the performers and composers at the vanguard of her generation, and performing Pascal Dusapin's *Ohimé* for violin and viola in a beautiful French cathedral.

While chamber music may have been the reason Mary decided to pursue music professionally, it was watching the fiddle players at social dances that initially sparked her desire to pick up an instrument. She often plays fiddle music for the local Scottish Country Dance group when she is home in Wisconsin.

Linda Catlin Smith — *We've gone forth for dancing* (2023 World Premiere) for Trumpet, Horn and Trombone

Gillian Chreptyk — Trumpet

Olivia Esther — Horn

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Clare Scholtz — English Horn

Ryan Scott — Percussion

Anthony Thompson — Contrabass Clarinet

Andréa Tyniec — Violin

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Anthony Thompson — Clarinet in B_♭ and A (doubling E_♭ Clarinet and Bass Clarinet in B_♭)

Andréa Tyniec — Violin

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