



Mizzou New Music Initiative
University of Missouri

University of Missouri School of Music
2026-2027 Series

Mizzou New Music Ensemble

Hanna Noh, flutes
Sophie Browning-Brodack, clarinets
Zachary Beran, trumpet
Juliana Vieira, violin
Danny Postlethwait, cello
Tristan Alderton, percussion
Tanner Prewitt, percussion
Michelle Lam, piano
John Zhu, piano

Stefan Freund, Artistic Director

Guest Conductors

Selim Göncü, Manny Guzman,
Tiffany Skidmore, Christian Noon

7:30 PM
Sunday, October 4, 2026
Sheryl Crow Hall

PROGRAM

cheating, lying, stealing.....David Lang (b. 1957)

Directed by Dr. Selim Göncü

Culture Fusion III.....Mon leong Cheok Kai (b. 2000)

I. 境外仙境 *The Outside World*

II. 與內心的對抗 *Internal Struggle & Battle*

Directed by Manny Gonzalez

‘a chantar...(lacuna)’.....Santa Bušs (b. 1981)

Directed by Dr. Tiffany Skidmore

Portal..... Andy Akiho (b. 1979)

Directed by Dr. Christian Noon

Program Notes

***cheating, lying, stealing* (1993)**

A couple of years ago, I started thinking about how so often when classical composers write a piece of music, they are trying to tell you something that they are proud of and like about themselves. Here's this big gushing melody, see how emotional I am. Or, here's this abstract hard-to-figure-out piece, see how complicated I am, see my really big brain. I am more noble, more sensitive, I am so happy. The composer really believes he or she is exemplary in this or that area. It's interesting, but it's not very humble. So I thought, What would it be like if composers based pieces on what they thought was wrong with them? Like, here's a piece that shows you how miserable I am. Or, here's a piece that shows you what a liar I am, what a cheater I am. I wanted to make a piece that was about something disreputable. It's a hard line to cross. You have to work against all your training. You are not taught to find the dirty seams in music. You are not taught to be low-down, clumsy, sly and underhanded. In *cheating, lying, stealing*, although phrased in a comic way, I am trying to look at something dark. There is a swagger, but it is not trustworthy. In fact, the instruction in the score for how to play it says: "Ominous funk."

– David Lang

***Culture Fusion III* (2025)**

Culture Fusion III is dedicated to Kyrsten Wehner, Meghan Brown, Alexandre Da Silva Negrao, Dean Wibe, Jinhong Yoo, and Seda Balci of the Mizzou New Music Ensemble (2024-2025). It strives to bridge the gap between composers, performers, and the audience by incorporating familiar and recognizable music from diverse styles and cultures around the world. I hope this initiative will enhance the appreciation and understanding of music, transforming it into a shared and collaborative journey for all individuals.

– Mon leong Cheok Kai

'a chantar...(lacuna)' (2025)

The piece '*a chantar... (lacuna)*' is inspired by trobairitz, the Occitan female troubador tradition, and the poetry of the trobairitz, which seems quite progressive for its time and even today, while still touching upon age-old problems and situations experienced by women throughout history.

Troubadours often wrote from women's viewpoints, yet the works of the trobairitz often brought a woman's much more personal view of themselves into the lyrics, using beautiful word painting to depict the meaning of the poetry. They were not afraid to engage in harsh political discussion or speak of sexual exploits, even if at the time those subjects might be considered forbidden.

There are not many works survived by these women and the only trobairitz song for which music has been preserved is the canso '*A chantar m'er de so qu'eu no volria*' by Comtessa de Dia. This exceptional gem serves as one of the starting points for the piece I originally composed for EnsembleSpectrum.

The notation that the troubadours used may have conveyed a wealth of information to the musicians who were familiar with its vocabulary, but modern eyes cannot interpret those details... And it is exactly in this unknown territory and lack of certainty, in gaps of information caused by time and distance, where my composition comes to life... And that's also where something I refer to as 'lacuna technique' becomes an essential part of decoding and interpreting the material...

Lacuna... the gap in a manuscript, inscription, text, painting, or musical work... a lexical gap in a language... an extended silence... the lack of a law or legal source to address a situation... an intention to encourage someone to create their own stories... lacuna... words, sentences, or whole passages that are missing or illegible... caused by weathering, decay, and other damage to old manuscripts or inscriptions.

– Santa Bušs

***Portal* (2023)**

Portal was inspired by the landscapes and energy of New Mexico, particularly the towns of Santa Fe, Taos, and Angel Fire. Every drive between these eternal townships, and every hike or run through the hills and mountains felt as if there were mystical forces emitting boosts of intense energy and inspiration. The culmination of dizzying altitudes, mesmerizing landscapes, exciting musicians, and perpetual portals to other dimensions (at least in my mind) all contributed to this piece.

Portal may be performed by any combination or number of instruments and performers. It is encouraged that the musicians make it their own by exploring individualized timbres, articulations, dynamics, and orchestrations, while possibly incorporating moments of subtle improvisation.

The world premiere of *Portal* was performed by 18 amazing musicians for the 40th Anniversary of *Music from Angel Fire*, directed by Tara Helen O'Connor and Danny Phillips in 2023.

– Andy Akiho

About the Composers

Andy Akiho is a “trailblazing” (*Los Angeles Times*) Pulitzer Prize finalist and seven-time GRAMMY-nominated composer whose bold works unravel intricate and unexpected patterns while surpassing preconceived boundaries of classical music. Akiho has earned international acclaim for large-scale works that emphasize the natural theatricality of live performance.

Recent engagements include commissioned premieres by the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony, China Philharmonic, Guangzhou Symphony, Oregon Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Music@Menlo, The Industry, and a sold-out run of *Seven Pillars* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, choreographed by Benjamin Millepied and performed by Sandbox Percussion and LA Dance Project.

Akiho has been recognized via many prestigious awards and organizations including the Rome Prize, American Academy of Arts and Letters, Lili Boulanger Memorial Prize, Harvard University Fromm Commission, Barlow Endowment, New Music USA, and Chamber Music America. His compositions have been featured by organizations such as Bang on a Can, American Composers Forum, The Intimacy of Creativity in Hong Kong, and the Heidelberg Festival.

Akiho is currently based in Portland, OR and New York City.

Santa Bušs studied piano, organ, theory, and composition at the Zvejniekiems School of Music, the Vidzemes Jūrmala School of Music, the Alfrēds Kalniņš Cēsis College of Music, and the Latvian Academy of Music. In 2008, she received a DAAD stipend for study at the Bayreuth Summer University in Germany. In 2009, she received a Master's Degree in Music Composition under advisor Rolands Kronlaks and went on to study composition with Dr. Manfred Stahnke and multimedia composition with Professor Georg Hajdu at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg.

Santa Bušs actively works in the field of music research and journalism, writing about music and art. In 2003, she was awarded 1st Place in the Young Music Journalist Competition and in 2004, her book, *Operas libretu leksikons (Lexicon of Opera Librettos)*, was published.

In 2012, she received the American Latvian Association Culture Fund, Okolo-Kulaks Memorial Fund creative scholarship and in 2013, she won the Festival Mixtur 2013 competition Open Call in Spain and the ensemble mise-en / IAWM New Work Project Competition in the United States.

Since 2010, Bušs has member of the Latvian Composers' Union. She has been composer-in-residence at the Casa Pantrova in Lugano, Switzerland; the Le Ville Matte in Teulada, Sardinia; the Fundación Valparaíso Mojacar, Spain; the Visby International Composers' Center in Gotland; Villa Sträuli in Winterthur, Switzerland; the Druskininkai Artists' Residence in Lithuania, the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris; and the Château de Monthey in Monthey, Switzerland. Her music has been performed in 17 countries in major festivals, including the Donaueschinger Musiktage in Germany.

Mon Cheok Kai leong is from Macau, China, and currently pursuing his master's degree in both percussion and composition at the University of Missouri-Columbia (Mizzou) studying percussion with Dr. Megan Arns and Dr. Julia Montag and composition with Dr. Stefan Freund and Dr. Utku Asuroglu. He earned his bachelor's degree in music performance from Sam Houston State University, where he studied percussion under the guidance of Dr. John Lane, Dr. Brian Graiser, and Dr. Craig Hauschildt, and composition with Dr. Kyle Kindred.

David Lang is one of the most highly esteemed and performed American composers writing today. His works have been performed around the world in most of the great concert halls.

Lang's *the little match girl passion*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall and premiered by Paul Hillier and Theatre of Voices, was recently listed by The Guardian as "one of the top 25 works of classical music written in the 21st Century." It won the Pulitzer Prize in 2008 and the recording received a GRAMMY Award in 2010. *simple song #3*, written as part of his score for Paolo Sorrentino's acclaimed film *YOUTH*, received many awards nominations in 2016, including the Academy Award and Golden Globe.

His opera *prisoner of the state* (with libretto by Lang) was co-commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, Rotterdam's De Doelen Concert Hall, London's Barbican Centre, Barcelona's l'Auditori, Bochum Symphony Orchestra, and Bruges's Concertgebouw, and premiered June 2019 in New York (conducted by Jaap van Zweden). *prisoner of the state* received its UK premiere in January 2020 with the BBC Symphony (conducted by Ilan Volkov) and its EU premiere in May 2023 with the Bochum Sinfoniker (conducted by Steven Sloane).

Lang is a Professor of Music Composition at the Yale School of Music. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can. His music is published by Red Poppy Music and G. Ricordi & Co., New York (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by the Universal Music Publishing Group.

Mizzou New Music Ensemble

The Mizzou New Music Ensemble is dedicated to promoting new music at Mizzou through performances on and off campus. The Ensemble is the repertory group for the Mizzou New Music Initiative, working with faculty, students, and visiting composers, and giving public performances on campus and in the community. The Ensemble is comprised of eight University of Missouri graduate students under the direction of Stefan Freund, a cellist, composer, conductor, professor of composition, and artistic director of the Mizzou New Music Initiative at the University of Missouri School of Music.

Mizzou New Music Initiative

The Mizzou New Music Initiative brings together an array of programs intended to position the University of Missouri School of Music as a leading center in the areas of composition and new music. The Initiative is the direct result of the generous support of Dr. Jeanne and Mr. Rex Sinquefield, and the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation. The Sinquefields' vision is to create an incubator for the composition and performance of new music, and to position Missouri as a major center for the music of tomorrow.

Upcoming MNMI Events

TAK Ensemble

7:30 PM Tuesday, November 10, 2026, Sheryl Crow Hall (SCH)

Tyondai Braxton: Extended Play *presented with Dismal Niche Arts* **also featuring MU's Creative Improvisation Collective**

7:00 PM Friday, November 13, 2026, SCH

Non-MU attendees may purchase tickets via [Eventbrite](#).

New Music Ensemble with Landlocked Opera

7:30 PM Sunday, December 6, 2026, Sheryl Crow Hall (SCH)

Visit newmusic.missouri.edu for a full list of events and opportunities!

Requests for accommodations related to disability should be made to building coordinator, Susan Worstell, 206 Sinquefield Music Center, 573-884-2604 at least seven days in advance of event date. Events are subject to change.

For up-to-date information, please visit our web site: www.music.missouri.edu

Please consider visiting our partner organizations:

University Concert Series • www.concertseries.org | Odyssey Chamber Music Series • www.odysseymissouri.org | Columbia Civic Orchestra • cco.missouri.org | We Always Swing Jazz Series • www.wealwaysswing.org | CAAM • www.ChoralArtsAllianceofMissouri.com | KMUC Classical 90.5 FM • www.kmuc.org