

Artist Biographies

Tim Deighton is professor of viola at Penn State University. He enjoys a wide variety of performance opportunities, including regular work with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, both of which he has also recorded and toured with internationally. He has joined the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra as guest principal violist on several occasions. He has presented the prestigious William Primrose Memorial Concert at BYU, and has appeared at four previous International Viola Congresses as a performer, panelist, and clinician. He has collaborated with the American String Quartet and the New Zealand String Quartet, and with musicians outside the traditional classical field, including Taongo Puoro instrumentalists in New Zealand. He has been associated with dozens of music festivals in numerous countries as a performer, teacher, and artistic director.

Having long held a fascination for new music, he has performed premieres of more than fifty new works for viola, most of which were commissioned by or written for him. His solo CD, *Viola Aotearoa*, featuring music for viola by New Zealand composers, was released in 2002 on the Atoll label. His playing on this disc was described in *The Strad* as “brilliant.” As a member of the contemporary music duo *The Irrelevants*, he and saxophonist Carrie Koffman commissioned, premiered, and recorded many new works, and released a CD, entitled *Dialogues*.

A committed teacher, Deighton has received several teaching awards, including the Pennsylvania-Delaware String Teachers Association’s String Teacher of the Year, an Outstanding Teaching Award from Penn State, and the American Viola Society’s 2016 Maurice W. Riley Award. Recent teaching engagements include master classes throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, Oceania, and in South and Central America. His former students hold positions in professional orchestras and on the faculties of music schools throughout the world.

Dr. Patricia Weitzel has appeared as soloist, chamber musician, orchestral performer, and teacher in several countries including Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, Chile,

China, England, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, the Netherlands and the United States. Prior to her appointment as Assistant Professor of Double Bass at Penn State University, Dr. Weitzel served as the Lecturer of Double Bass at Columbus State University. She has been on faculty positions at Augustana College, Central College, Grinnell College, St. Ambrose University, and Drake University. She is a former member of the Columbus, Des Moines, and Quad City Symphonies.

Dr. Weitzel has collaborated and worked with renowned artists such as the Daedalus Quartet, pianist Soyeon Kate Lee, bassist Volkan Orhon, and pop singer Lizzo. She spends her Summers performing worldwide, teaching and serving as Dean of Faculty and Artistic Affairs of the Sphinx Performance Academy at the Juilliard School, University of Colorado-Boulder, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, as well as teaching and performing in the Wintergreen Music Festival.

In addition to being a performing artist and educator, Dr. Weitzel continually receives recognition for her leadership and advocacy of diversity, excellency, and inclusion in the Arts. As a member of the 2019 Global Leaders Program Cohort and one of the recipients of the Sphinx Organization's Mpower Artist Grant, she was involved in the development of initiatives that offered opportunities of music education to underserved youth.

Dr. Patricia Weitzel is the former Membership Chair and current Marketing Chair of the International Society of Bassists, an organization with approximately 3000 members in over 40 countries whose mission is to encourage excellence in bass performance, pedagogy, research, composition, and lutherie.

Program Notes

Eight Duos by Nalah Palmer

Even though I'd been playing violin for thirteen years and composing music for four, I'd never considered writing a violin duet before my violin professor asked me to produce *eight* for a student recital. As a performer, I am not a fan of soloistic violin; I'd rather play in an ensemble or orchestra, and so it was difficult for me to write, in a way, sixteen violin solos. I will always favor the lower strings—another reason why I struggled with these pieces—but now I've been given the opportunity to rewrite them for viola and bass; quite ironic. Regardless of the instrumentation, these pieces will always hold a special place in my heart as some of my first professional pieces for strings.

Courantithesis by Joshua Davis

Courantithesis was commissioned by violinist Jennifer Sacher Wiley as a substitution movement for the Double that Bach composed to follow the Courante in the eight movement Partita No. 1 in B minor for Solo Violin, BWV 1002. The intention of this commission was to fold modern Jazz elements into short reflection pieces following each of Bach's original dance movements. The work originated during a retreat in Ucross, Wyoming, population 24 at the time. The quiet was a time of reflection and remembrance, largely of my stepfather Frank McGraw, who had recently passed.

Fisherstreet Duo by Evan Chambers

The name of the town of Doolin, County Clare Ireland is still shown on some maps simply as Fisherstreet—when I first visited the place there did indeed remain some confusion as to whether or not it was a small village or merely a road from the ferry dock inland, with a few houses, a couple of shops, and three pubs along it. Now of course, it has become a famous destination for lovers of traditional music. Composed in 1997, the first movement, Lament for JaFran was written in memory of my friend and teacher,

JaFran Jones, who directed the gamelan at Bowling Green State University. The second movement, *The Barnacle and the Nautilus*, consists of two jigs with nautical titles; the first one a slow jig evocative of some crusty old soul (with a blues slant), and the second a more self-consciously angular, tightly wound and circular fast tune.

Compass by Baljinder Sekhon

Compass consists of eight musical segments of which all eight segments, or any subset, can be performed in any order. This work has the potential to move in many different musical directions, and the titles related to the Vastu Shastra (an Indian directional concept in architecture). In this iteration of the work, *Vayu* (northwest) and *Niruthi* (southwest) and *Yama* (south) are presented.

Maracatu Lento para Viola e Contrabaixo by Ricardo Herz

Ricardo Herz draws on both classical and traditional Brazilian folk music as his influences. The viola and the double bass are particularly inspiring, due to the lyrical melodies and rhythms they can produce. The result is a piece that seeks to connect with a broad and diverse audience.

Microcentro by Andrés Martín

Microcentro was originally composed 2017 for two basses, and is one of three tangos, each of which is a kind of musical postcard portraying a different neighborhood in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Microcentro is the economic heart of Buenos Aires. The area encompasses nearly sixty city blocks and includes banks, businesses, government buildings, and the Buenos Aires Stock Exchange. According to a 2010 census, over one million people circulate through Microcentro daily. The fast-paced, big-city energy of this area is captured from the first gesture of the piece with fast sixteenth notes racing up and down tetrachords in both parts. This running figure begins quietly, as if signifying the morning commutes to work, which even in the quiet morning hours, is fast moving. As

the movement progresses, there are moments of relief from this running motive, but they never last, a reminder that the economic center of the city is always going.

Composer Biographies

Evan Chambers (b. 1963) is currently Professor of Composition at the University of Michigan. His 2007 orchestral song cycle *The Old Burying Ground* was performed in Carnegie Hall in February 2008; a recording is available on Dorian/Sono Luminus. Chambers' compositions have been performed by the Cincinnati, Kansas City, Memphis, New Hampshire, and Albany Symphonies, among others; has also appeared as a soloist in Carnegie Hall with the American Composers Orchestra. He won first prize in the Cincinnati Symphony Competition, and in 1998 was awarded the Walter Beeler Prize by Ithaca College. His work has been recognized by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Luigi Russolo Competition, Vienna Modern Masters, NACUSA, and the American Composers Forum. He has been a resident of the MacDowell Colony and Yaddo, and been awarded individual artist grants from Meet the Composer, the Arts Foundation of Michigan and ArtServe Michigan. His composition teachers include William Albright, Leslie Bassett, Nicholas Thorne, and Marilyn Shrude, with studies in electronic music with George Wilson and Burton Beerman. Recordings have been released by Albany Records, the Foundation Russolo-Pratella, Cambria, Clarinet Classics, Equilibrium, and Centaur. His solo chamber music disk (*Cold Water, Dry Stone*) is available on Albany records.

Joshua Davis (b. 1971) was appointed as the Director of Jazz Studies at Penn State in Fall 2022. Dr. Davis joined the faculty in 2018 as a lecturer teaching classical and jazz double bass and ensembles. *Pictures of Your Next Decision*, Joshua's most recent commission for orchestra and double bass solo, premiered in November 2018 with the West Shore Symphony Orchestra in Camp Hill, Pa. Other recent commissions include *Overflow and Convergent Mirrors*, a one-hour program for Artichoke Dance Company's concert series featuring double bass improvisation, and *Ableton Live, R Trainversations*, a choral work for Bella Voce Singers, and *Partita Reflections*, a four-movement contemporary reflection on Bach's *B minor Partita for Solo Violin*, featuring improvising double bass and violin. *Known Garden*, his most recently released CD, features Joshua's compositions played by contemporary jazz performers. *Squashua*, Joshua's first feature

recording as an arranger and leader, showcases Romantic Era symphonies and the music of Sting.

Ricardo Herz (b. 1978) reinvented the Brazilian violin. His technique brings to the instrument the snort of the accordion, the roar of the fiddle and the beautiful melodies of traditional and modern choro. With the influence of Dominginhos, Luiz Gonzaga, Egberto Gismonti, Jacob do Bandolim, among others, the violinist mixes Brazilian and African rhythms and the sense of jazz improvisation.” Herz is a classically trained violinist who has studied at the renowned Berklee College of Music (USA) and at the Centre des Musiques Didier Lockwood, school of the distinguished French jazz violinist. Since returning to Brazil in 2010, Herz has created and developed a violin sound and technique that channels the folkloric sounds of rural accordion and fiddle traditions of Brazilian music, while collaborating with many of the most important musicians in Brazil, such as Yamandú Costa, Dominginhos, Nelson Ayres, and Proveta, and as a soloist with a wide variety of orchestras. With his Ricardo Herz Trio, he has recorded three albums, including one of children’s music. 2023 marks his debut with the Deutsche Grammophon label with a recording by the nationally acclaimed Sphinx Virtuosi.

Andrés Martín (b. 1981) has full time schedule as a composer, writing hours of new works every year, performed and commissioned by renowned soloists, chamber ensembles and orchestras around the world. His "Concerto no.1" for double bass (2012) became a standard work in the double bass repertoire, performed in more than 25 countries around the world and was recently chosen as final round piece by winners of the 2017 Bradetich Foundation International Double Bass Competition, International Society of Double Bassists Double Bass Competition and 2019 One World Symphonic Festival Camerata. This concerto was also chosen as a required work for the 2017 Bradetich Foundation International Double Bass Competition and 2020, 2021 and 2022 Sphinx Strings Competition. In 2019 Andres received a Composition Recognition Award for his outstanding contribution to the double bass literature, by the International Society of Bassists (ISB).

Nalah Aiden Palmer (b. 2003) is an African-American multi-genre composer and violinist. Palmer currently studies music composition at Penn State University with Dr. Baljinder Sekhon after graduating from Duke Ellington School of the Arts with an arts diploma in violin performance (2021). Palmer has composed pieces for distinguished ensembles including SydeBoob Duet and the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, the latter of which was performed live and broadcasted for the Prague Proms 2022 Music Festival. Her background in violin performance allows an insightful perspective into string writing and plays a large role in her compositional expression. Palmer also composes for a wide variety of instruments and ensembles excluding strings- including electronic music- and has a relevant history with musical theatre, having composed and performed (violin) for Broadway Records on multiple occasions. She is currently affiliated with Living Music and has been partnered with Maestra and MUSE since 2020, all of which strive to create space for living composers and performers of all backgrounds.

The music of **Baljinder Sekhon** (b. 1980) has been presented in over 600 concerts in twenty-six countries. From works for large ensemble to solo works to electronic music, Sekhon's music demonstrates a wide range of genres and styles. His works have been performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Seoul Arts Center (Korea), and National Recital Hall (Taiwan). Fifteen commercial recordings of his work have been released, with his most recognized output being his contributions to the percussion and saxophone genres. *Alchemy*, the second full album of Sekhon's work, features compositions for saxophone and was released on Innova Recordings October 22, 2021, with the first portrait album entitled *Places & Times* featuring works for percussion. Sekhon currently serves as Associate Professor of Composition at Penn State University. He holds the PhD and MA from the Eastman School of Music where he is a three-time recipient of the Howard Hanson Orchestral prize, and holds a BM from the University of South Carolina.