



## **Participant Bios and Notes**

### **Jacob Bancks**

Praised as “invitingly lyrical, colorfully orchestrated” (*The New York Times*) and “highly caffeinated” (*The Boston Globe*), the music of composer Jacob Bancks (b. 1982, Fairmont, Minnesota) has been performed by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the U.S. Marine Band, the Quad City Symphony, the Sarajevo Philharmonic, the Annapolis Symphony, the New York Youth Symphony, the South Dakota Symphony, American Modern Ensemble, Spektral Quartet, and many others. Recordings of his music have been released by American Modern Recordings and broadcast on BBC Radio 3, American Public Media’s Performance Today, and WFMT-Chicago Classical Radio. He has earned awards, honors, and commissions from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, BMI, the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, the U.S. Department of Education, Soli Deo Gloria, the International Double Reed Society, the Hanson Institute for American Music, and the Commission Project. Passionate about connecting with and developing audiences, he is a frequent commentator on WVIK public radio and serves as program annotator for the Quad City Symphony.

A student of Shulamit Ran, Marta Ptaszynska, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and Augusta Read Thomas, he also participated in master classes with Luca Francesconi and Louis Andreissen. His other mentors include Cliff Colnot, Daniel Horn, and Ray and Sue Sidoti. He holds degrees from the University of Chicago, Eastman School of Music, and Wheaton College (IL) and serves as Assistant Professor of music theory and composition at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL.

### **About the Piece – Rock Island Line**

*There is an old, low bridge connecting Rock Island, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa, not far from my home. Though the posted speed limit is low, I have found that driving it is actually kind of exhilarating, with the Mississippi River below and railway tracks above. With the convergence of various modes of transportation, it's the ultimate place on the way to some other place, right in the heart of “flyover country.”*

*In a similar fashion, I wrote two kinds of music into Rock Island Line: train music and river music. The train music is motoric, clanging, maybe a little rusty, but full of anticipation and expectation. The river music, on the other hand, is sweeping, broad and lyrical, and more prone to hesitation and diversion than is the train. In the final third of the piece, after a brief homage to Jazz trumpeter and Davenport native Bix Beiderbecke, the two kinds of music meet. The result*

*is, I hope, similar to the sensory experience of driving over that bridge. In the piece's final moments I invoke the classic blues tune from which the work borrows its title.*

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### **Michael Laurello**

Michael Laurello is an American composer and pianist. He has written for ensembles and soloists such as Sō Percussion (Brooklyn, NY), the Yale Philharmonia, Sandbox Percussion (Brooklyn, NY), the Yale Percussion Group, [sound icon] (Boston, MA), the 15.19 ensemble (Pavia, Italy), NotaRiotous/The Boston Microtonal Society, guitarist Flavio Virzì, soprano Sarah Pelletier, pianist/composer John McDonald, and clarinetist and linguist/music theorist Ray Jackendoff. Upcoming collaborations include a new piece for two pianists and two percussionists, and a large multi-movement work for the Triplepoint Trio (Brooklyn/New Haven).

Laurello studied composition at Yale, where he received the Jacob Druckman Scholarship and the Rena Greenwald Memorial Scholarship for 2014-15. His primary composition teachers were Martin Bresnick, David Lang, and Christopher Theofanidis. He holds an M.A. in composition from Tufts University, where he studied under John McDonald, and a B.M. in music synthesis (electronic production and design) from Berklee College of Music. Recent honors include the Woods Chandler Memorial Prize, participation in the 2015 EarShot Berkeley Symphony Readings, a Baumgardner Fellowship from the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival's Chamber Choir and Choral Conducting Workshop, a commission from the American Composers Forum, and an Emerging Artist Award from the St. Botolph Club Foundation (Boston, MA). He has attended composition festivals at highSCORE (Pavia, Italy) and Etchings (Auvillar, France), and was a composition fellow at the 2015 Bang on a Can Summer Festival.

### **About the Piece – Promises**

*When I started writing Promises in September of 2014, I imagined the orchestra as an enormous machine relentlessly chugging away to accomplish some sort of task, or moving towards a goal of some kind. But, even as I got a little deeper into composing the piece, I still wasn't sure what the goal was. Should the music grow bigger? Should it get smaller and smaller? Should it push so hard that it breaks apart? Eventually, someone said to me: "This music seems like it's promising something. You just have to decide whether or not it's going to break its promise." This made me think not only about the concept of a musical promise, but also about some of the promises that I've kept and those that I've broken in my life. The music started to represent something more personal and profound, and I composed the bulk of the piece with these thoughts in mind. In the end, I don't know whether the piece keeps its promise, but I like to think it does.*

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### **Daniel Schlosberg**

Lauded by the *Wall Street Journal* as "witty" (2015), composer and pianist Daniel Schlosberg's work has been performed by the Dover Quartet, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Amphion Quartet, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Antico Moderno, New Morse

Code, and Lorelei Ensemble, at such venues as Carnegie Hall (New York), Victoria & Albert Museum (London), St. John's Cathedral (Hong Kong), Central Conservatory of Music (Beijing), and Melbourne Recital Centre (Melbourne). Recent work includes a hybrid theatrical/operatic adaptation of Federico García Lorca's *Once Five Years Pass* for the Williamstown Theatre Festival in August 2015, music for Portland-based BodyVox Dance Company's May 2015 production *Cosmosis*, as well as commissions for Chamber Music Northwest, Simon Carrington and the Norfolk Music Festival, the Mousai Ensemble, and the Yale Symphony Orchestra. Schlosberg continues to perform around the world, and has collaborated with such luminaries as David Shifrin, Peter Wiley, Ani Kavafian, and Allan Vogel. He recently music directed and performed in Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Yale Repertory Theatre, premiering a new score by David Lang. He cofounded the composer/performer ensemble INVISIBLE ANATOMY, which debuted this past spring with concerts in New York City and at the Beijing Modern Music Festival. Schlosberg received a 2014 Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and 2014 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. He received his BA from Yale University and his MM from the Yale School of Music, where he completed the residential portion of his doctoral degree in 2014.

**About the Piece – My reflection ran away with my eyes**

*For Italo Calvino, who created systems of systems of systems of memory.*

*For Antonio Vivaldi, who cut into silence like a razor.*

*For Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach, whose looking glass was most deliciously twisted.*

*And for that moment in the rickety hall of mirrors where, surrounded by my image projected into infinity, I caught a glimpse of a shadow of some unimaginable horror. A strange sense of déjà vu... a second later, the shadow had vanished.*

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**Gabriella Smith**

Gabriella Smith (b. 1991) is a composer from the San Francisco Bay Area. Her current commissions include upcoming performances by the Aizuri Quartet, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Latitude49, ZOFO, Gabriel Cabezas, and the New York Youth Symphony. Gabriella's music has been performed throughout the United States and internationally by eighth blackbird, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop, PRISM Quartet, Aizuri Quartet, and Ensemble39, among others. Gabriella is the recipient of the 2014 ASCAP Leo Kaplan Award and three ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards (2009, 2013, 2015), the Theodore Presser Foundation Music Award (2012), and First Place Prize in the 2009 Pacific Musical Society Composition Competition.

Gabriella is a 2015-16 ArtistYear Fellow at the Curtis Institute of Music dedicating a citizen-artist year of national service in the Philadelphia region. She is a doctoral candidate at Princeton University, where she has studied with Steve Mackey, Paul Lansky, Dan Trueman, Dmitri Tymoczko, Donnacha Dennehy, and Ju Ri Seo.

She received her Bachelor's of Music from the Curtis Institute of Music where she studied with David Ludwig, Jennifer Higdon, and Richard Danielpour. Before beginning her studies at Curtis,

Gabriella performed as a violinist in the Superdelegates (an improv avant-garde classical/blues string quartet), the Formerly Known as Classical new music ensemble, and the Young People's Symphony Orchestra. She has also enjoyed singing and performing with the Princeton University Georgian Choir. When not writing music, she can be found backpacking, birding, playing capoeira, or working on small-scale organic farms around the world.

### **About the Piece – Tumblebird Contrails**

*Tumblebird Contrails is inspired by a single moment I experienced while backpacking in Point Reyes, sitting in the sand at the edge of the ocean, listening to the hallucinatory sounds of the Pacific (the keening gulls, pounding surf, rush of approaching waves, sizzle of sand and sea foam in receding tides), the constant ebb and flow of pitch to pitchless, tune to texture, grooving to free-flowing, watching a pair of ravens playing in the wind, rolling, swooping, diving, soaring—imagining the ecstasy of wind in the wings—jet trails painting never-ending streaks across the sky. The title, Tumblebird Contrails, is a Kerouac-inspired, nonsense phrase I invented to evoke the sound and feeling of the piece.*

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### **Sonnet Swire**

With instrumentation described as “a stroke of genius,” by Oliver Knussen, Sonnet Swire has proven herself to be an engaging, young composer emerging quickly in the music scene.

She started her musical journey relatively late; she picked up the tuba at age twelve, and didn't start learning the theory behind the music until her sophomore year of high school, where she was required to compose a short piece as a final exam in her music theory class. The horrendous piece, aptly named “Train Wreck”, has since been discarded, but she loved the process behind writing music so much that she continued unrelentingly.

The tuba took a back seat as her composer aspirations led her to the New England Conservatory where during her freshmen year, she was referred to as a “Freshwoman (!) setting an exhilarating vernal tone” by the Boston Musical Intelligencer regarding her Jordan Hall debut in Boston in the spring of 2013. In addition to this, Sonnet is a former Co-Director of the Tuesday Night New Music Concert Series in Boston, where she still premieres many of her new works she has written at the Conservatory.

Sonnet's work is starting to be recognized and performed across the United States and Canada, and she recently had her European debut in Paris, France in July of 2014. She currently continues her studies with composers, John Heiss and Michael Gandolfi, with additional mentorship by Lyle Davidson, as a senior at the New England Conservatory.

### **About the Piece – Antagonisme**

*Antagonisme is inspired by and dedicated to all the people who have been victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, intimidation, and stalking, but whose struggles were ignored to protect the image of an institution or group of people. This piece attempts to capture the fear*

*and inner conflict felt by those victims struggling to live their lives without the protection of society or institutions.*