

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

GUEST ARTIST SERIES: BALANCE CAMPAIGN
“Echoes of Tomorrow”

BALANCE
CAMPAIGN

Thursday, March 13, 2025 • 8PM

GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**

University of Maryland School of Music
Presents

**GUEST ARTIST SERIES:
BALANCE CAMPAIGN**

Meghan Shanley Alger, *flutes*

Jennifer Tscheulin, *clarinets*

Gracie Carney, *violin*

Erin Murphy Snedecor, *cello*

Elizabeth G. Hill, *piano*

Emory Hensley, *percussion*

Pass the Torch! Kirsten Volness
(b. 1980)

Lullaby..... Alexandra T Bryant
(b. 1985)

within deep and cavernous resonances... layered memories unfolding.. Jeffrey Mumford
(b. 1955)

World Premiere

ANIMAL Nathan Lincoln-DeCusatis
(b. 1982)

mono-cellular – fungal – reptilian – amphibian – avian – near extinction –
subterranean – mammalian – humanoid – final extinction



BALANCE CAMPAIGN is a contemporary classical sextet that believes in relevant programming and thoughtful collaboration as a powerful force for change towards equal representation in new music. As part of their musical mission, they create opportunities to collaborate with musical voices that are too frequently undervalued or excluded from the classical canon to create programs of diverse musical stories. By leading these creative endeavors and other partnerships with local musicians, artists, composers and presenters, Balance Campaign aspires to showcase the unique musical landscape of their home in the Maryland and Washington DC area. Performance credits include AMP at Pike & Rose, Fordham University, George Peabody Library, Atlas Performing Arts Center, Boulanger Initiative's Annual WoCo Fest and Little City Concerts in Falls Church, VA.

Balance Campaign also strives to empower the next generation of musicians through their workshops for higher education students in the DMV. The group has been Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, University of Maryland, College Park and Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where they debuted ten new scores for silent film at the National Gallery of Art. Past partnerships include positions at The Women's Composers Festival of Hartford, Avaloch Farm Music Institute and a 2019 residency with District New Music Coalition, where Balance Campaign performed programs of works written exclusively by DC area composers in all stages of their careers, from local undergraduates to seasoned professionals.

Tonight's program is made up entirely of works commissioned and premiered by Balance Campaign. The ensemble is thrilled to combine all of these works on one program to highlight the incredible composers they have had the privilege of working with. This program also showcases the unique ensemble voice of Balance Campaign itself, which has evolved into a distinctive blend of deep listening and joyful grooving.

***Pass the Torch!* (2023)**

KIRSTEN VOLNESS

Internationally recognized composer Kirsten Volness (she/her) creates sublimely intimate and emotive soundscapes that inspire immersive listening. Through the refined use of electronics and modern composition techniques overlaid with jazz and pop influences, Volness's music is both groovy and graceful, "irresistible" (San Francisco Chronicle) and "nothing short of gorgeous." (New York Arts). Each of her compositions reveals "an exquisite sound world" (New Classic LA) with disparate, suggestive musical elements and idioms woven together to create sonic atmospheres that hold listeners in beauty and fascination. Inspired by nature, myth, spirituality, and environmental and sociopolitical issues, Volness's music is smart, relevant, timeless, and transcendent.

Pass the Torch! embodies my recent rumination about growing up, generational succession, nostalgia, and coming to terms with unfulfilled, perhaps misguided, expectations. Who holds a torch and with whom do they share it—when, how, and why? Passing the torch also conjures thoughts of mutual aid efforts, community building, and the Phoenix scenario of dismantling and rebuilding systems that work against one's journey to self-actualization, whether settler colonialism, prejudice, or the exploitations of capitalism. Commissioned by the Women Composers Festival of Hartford for its 2024 festival, this energetic outburst of playfulness and longing was written to showcase the talents of the DC-based ensemble, Balance Campaign.

– Program note by Kirsten Volness

Lullaby (2024)

ALEXANDRA T BRYANT

Born in Western Washington, Dr. Alexandra T Bryant is a graduate of the University of Maryland where she taught written theory, aural skills, and music fundamentals. She was a recipient of the school's Flagship Fellowship and the School of Music's Dean's Fellowship and has studied with Mark Wilson and Lawrence Moss. During her time at University of Maryland, College Park, she met the members of Balance Campaign, who premiered many of her compositions for workshops, concerts, and readings during the academic year.

Balance Campaign commissioned *Lullaby* in 2022, which remembers the ups and downs of new motherhood from the enormous joy to the most difficult sleepless nights. A simple, chorale-like melody sets the scene for the wonder, awe and uncertainty every first-time parent experiences before the music swirls into two paths- one lyrical and spacious, the other restless and churning. Though we hear resonant, beautiful tonalities throughout the piece, the music rests only in moments of abrupt silence; unpredictable, short and soon interrupted by another idea, another texture, another task.

Dr. Bryant currently lives in the Twin Cities region with her husband Nicholas, their children Cole and Linden, and their dog Maple. She is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Gustavus Adolphus College.

– Program note by Erin Murphy Snedecor

within deep and cavernous resonances...layered memories unfolding

JEFFREY MUMFORD

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1955, composer Jeffrey Mumford has received numerous fellowships, grants, awards and commissions. Awards include the "Academy Award in Music" from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, a Fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation, and an ASCAP Aaron Copland Scholarship. He was also the winner of the inaugural National Black Arts Festival/Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Composition Competition.

Commissioned by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program with additional funding from the Mellon Foundation, *within deep and cavernous resonances ...layered memories unfolding*, was written for the Washington, D.C. based new music ensemble Balance Campaign and dedicated to Susan Dadian, CMA's Director of Artistic Planning and a dear friend of long standing.

As the title suggests the work exists on many layers, registrally, timbrally and developmentally.

The opening motive sets the tone for the entire work and reappears throughout the ongoing narrative in different contexts often initiating new material, which then proceeds on its own developmental journey.

The reference to memories for me is multifold as it both rekindles memories of growing up in D.C. as well as structurally recalling previously stated materials in juxtaposed and simultaneously overlapping relationships.

Each player is given ample opportunity to display their wares through various behavioral and expressive elements, commenting upon and often reinforcing the other instruments' material, ultimately celebrating the sonic possibilities inherent in this collection of instruments.

– Program note by Jeffrey Mumford

ANIMAL (2019)

NATHAN LINCOLN-DECUSATIS

Nathan Lincoln-DeCusatis is a jazz and classical composer based in New York City. His music encompasses a wide variety of media and styles including his jazz piano trio MOB RULE, the 10-piece improvising ensemble Micro-Orchestra, and classical pieces for orchestra, sinfonietta and chamber ensembles with a special emphasis on music evoking natural landscapes and wilderness spaces. His music has been described in Gramophone as “a dazzling, often momentous slice of life...” All About Jazz calls him “a musician that has absorbed the stylistic vocabularies of the greats and distilled them into his own personal approach both muscular and lyrical.”

ANIMAL traces the evolutionary development of an imaginary living organism, starting from a single pulsating de-tuned unison blip (mono-cellular) through a constantly shifting tableau of increasingly fantastical fungi, amphibious reptiles, birds and mammals. At one point the species is on the verge of extinction when it has to “start over” at the half-way point from the detuned blip of a mono-cellular creature. It survives as a subterranean offshoot and finally morphs into its final humanoid manifestation with the original motive transformed into the giant stomping footsteps of an intelligent being walking upright. But just as the music starts to soar into the highest register of the ensemble, the humanoid suddenly transforms into a grotesque monstrosity in a final furious march that leads to its own extinction.

– Program note by Nathan Lincoln-DeCusatis

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND



24 > 25
SEASON

*at The Clarice Smith
Performing Arts Center*

