Music on the edge

Music on the Edge
and the
University of Pittsburgh Department of Music
present

The New York New Music Ensemble

Saturday, March 7, 2026 • 8:00 PM
Bellefield Hall Auditorium, University of Pittsburgh

315 S Bellefield Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213

University of Pittsburgh

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Music

PROGRAM

Maggies **(1997)** — **Mathew Rosenblum (b. 1954)**

REng **(2026)** — **Ali Sadeqi (b. 1997)**

WORLD PREMIERE

Cineshape 4 **(2015)** — **Amy Williams (b. 1969)**

Where Do You See Yourself In 5 Years **(2023)** — **Eric Moe (b. 1954)**

New York New Music Ensemble
Emi Ferguson, flutes; Bixby Kennedy, clarinets;
Karen Kim, violin; Chris Finckel, cello;
Daniel Druckman, percussion; Steve Gosling, piano;
Eduardo Leandro, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

Maggies was commissioned by the Fromm Foundation for the California EAR Unit and received its New York premiere at Miller Theater by the New York New Music Ensemble in 1998. *Maggies* combines live instrumental music with sampled ambient sounds and pre-recorded texts by Donald Barthelme, Gordon Lish, and Roger Zahab. The inspiration for the piece was the rhythms and sounds of these texts but especially as they are given contour and musical qualities by the chosen reader, Maggie Lane (my wife). The brief text by Donald Barthelme, positioned at the beginning of the piece, is taken from his *book Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts*, and is the prelude to the rest of the work. The text by Roger Zahab, *Bales in Ayr*, is a parody of a section from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* and provides a very "open ended" recurring narrative throughout. The story by Gordon Lish strings together familiar cliches in a "stream of consciousness" manner and is excerpted from *The Merry Chase*. This text is used in the middle and at the end of the piece and provides a second pseudo narrative. Maggies was originally conceived using short passages from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. After a year of trying to get permission from Joyce's estate to use the texts in this piece, the grandson of Mr. Joyce, Stephen James Joyce, refused, stating that his grandfather had very particular tastes in music and that he would not have liked my music. He added, as well, that neither he, nor his wife, cared for my music either! After relating this story to my dear friend Roger Zahab, Roger proclaimed that he had read *Finnegan's Wake* no less than three times and offered to write a parody of the Joyce text for me. The resulting text is a gem of "deliverative porphyry" and I am extremely grateful. —MR

REng: Lately, I've been experimenting with how visuality translates in music—visuality not as an external layer, but as something embedded in the way the music unfolds. Visual thinking, from timbral brushstrokes to refracted layers of sound, has become a way of shaping sound for me. On the other hand, my experience with playing setar (a Persian traditional instrument) and its associated repertoire tends to find its way into my work. "Reng" in Farsi is a dance genre with a long history, typically played at the end of performances. Its rhythmic and melodic gestures are fashioned to evoke an embodied, subtle movement in both players and listeners. ***REng*** draws on this sensibility; explores color, motion, and gesture to fold into a space where music becomes—however fleetingly—something we might see. —AS

Cineshape 4 for solo piano takes structural elements from the German film "Run Lola Run" as a point of departure. This film is divided into three episodes; Lola repeats the same day three times, starting in exactly the same way, but each time hoping that a slight modification of her actions will save the life of her boyfriend. This simple concept—that minor choices impact the unfolding of events—leads to a multifaceted structure. Much like the film, the piece is high-paced and energetic, literally running from start to finish with only occasional moments to stop and take a breath. —AW

Where Do You See Yourself In 5 Years takes its title from a classic job interview question, a question that is becoming increasingly difficult to answer honestly (of course, in actual job interviews, honest answers are neither expected nor desired). One of WDYSYI5Y's concerns is the difference between contemporary reality and the neoliberal imaginarium, that unsustainable fantasyland of unlimited growth that is astonishingly often thought of as "the real world." The piece incorporates sampled phrases of actual corporate interview questions as part of its sonic fabric — questions for the spectators, the performers, and the composer to imagine their own answers to.

Where Do You See Yourself In 5 Years was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University for Collage New Music's 50th season. Special thanks also to Rob Frankenberry, who impersonates the disembodied corporate interviewer. — EM

The New York New Music Ensemble

Since 1976, the **New York New Music Ensemble** (NYNME) has been on a mission to push the boundaries of contemporary chamber music. The ensemble has commissioned, performed, and recorded some of the most groundbreaking composers of our time—often before the world knew their names. NYNME produces thrilling, unexpected, sometimes controversial—but always unforgettable concerts. Learn more about the New York New Music Ensemble at **nynme.org**.

About the Composers

Mathew Rosenblum's compositions offer "an ear-buzzing flood of sound, rich in unusual overtones" (The Boston Globe). A wide array of groups have commissioned, performed and recorded his music such as the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra,

the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, FLUX Quartet, Mantra Percussion as well as many others. Using a variety of tuning systems, his work does not live within traditional boundaries, creating a compellingly fresh landscape. His music has been performed throughout the world including at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Prince Mahidol Hall in Bangkok, the China-ASEAN Music Week in Nanning, the Tonhalle in Düsseldorf, Sala Nezahualcóyotl in Mexico City, and at Carnegie Recital Hall, Merkin Hall and Miller Theatre in New York City. Honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, three Fromm Foundation Commissions, a National Endowment for the Arts Music Fellowship Grant and a Barlow Endowment Commission. He received degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music and Princeton University and is co-director of the Music on the Edge new music series and former Chair of the Department of Music at the University of Pittsburgh. His works appear on the MODE, New World Records, Cantaloupe Music, Albany, New Focus Recordings, BMOP/sound, Capstone, Opus One, Blue Griffin, and CRI Emergency Music labels and is published by C.F. Peters Corporation and Plurabelle Music (distributed by Subito Music Corporation). www.mathewrosenblum.com.

Ali Sadeqi is an Iranian composer, setar performer, and multimedia artist based in Pittsburgh. His work draws on Persian traditional music, poetry, and political issues, while integrating contemporary performance practices, visual media, and technology. Visual art plays a central role in both Ali's compositional thinking and performance practice. Inspired by ideas of color, brushstroke, and spatial movement, he treats timbre and gesture as a visual artist would treat their materials, often building sonic structures that unfold like images. In live performance, he makes this visual logic explicit through projection and video design and allows image and sound to work in tandem rather than as separate layers. His chamber and orchestral works explore timbral and microtonal possibilities, often pushing instruments to their limits, yielding new colors and sonic textures. Alongside his acoustic practice, he designs custom electroacoustic instruments and musical interfaces that challenge established modes of music-making and expand the live performance environment. He has collaborated with ensembles such as Momenta Quartet, New Thread Quartet, Modern Medieval Voices, and Hub New Music. Ali holds an M.M. from Binghamton University and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Music Composition and Theory at the University of Pittsburgh.

The “fresh, daring and incisive” (*Fanfare*) compositions of **Amy Williams** have been presented by leading international performers, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, JACK Quartet, Bent Frequency, Ensemble Musikfabrik, Wet Ink, International Contemporary Ensemble, Junction Trio, Orpheus, pianist Ursula Oppens, soprano Tony Arnold and bassist Robert Black. Her pieces appear on the Albany, Parma, Blue Griffin, Centaur and New Focus labels. As a member of the Bugallo-Williams Piano Duo, she has performed throughout Europe and the Americas and recorded six critically acclaimed CDs for Wergo (works of Nancarrow, Stravinsky, Varèse, Feldman and Kurtág), as well as appearing on the Neos and Albany labels. Ms. Williams has been awarded a Fromm Music Foundation Commission, Guggenheim Fellowship, Koussevitsky Music Foundation Commission, two awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Fulbright Scholars Fellowship to Ireland, a MacDowell fellowship and the 2024 Henri Lazarof International Commission Prize. Ms. Williams holds a Ph.D. in composition and a Master’s degree in piano performance from the University at Buffalo. She has taught at Bennington College and Northwestern University and is currently Professor of Composition at the University of Pittsburgh. She is Artistic Director of the New Music On The Point Festival in Vermont. Learn more at www.amywilliamsmusic.com

Eric Moe, composer of what the NY Times calls "music of winning exuberance", has received numerous grants and awards for his work, including the Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Guggenheim Fellowship; commissions from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Fromm Foundation, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Barlow Endowment, and Meet-the-Composer USA; and residencies at MacDowell, Yaddo, Bellagio, Camargo, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Millay, Ragdale, Montana Artists Refuge, Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians, UCross Foundation, and the American Dance Festival, among others.

Fanfare magazine described his work as “wonderfully inventive, often joyful, occasionally melancholy, highly rhythmic, frequently irreverent, absolutely eclectic, and always high-octane music”. His sit-trag/one-woman opera *Tri-Stan* was hailed by the New York Times as “a tour de force”, that “subversively inscribe[s] classical music into pop culture”. All-Moe CDs are available on New Focus, Naxos, New World, bmop/sound, Albany Records, and Centaur.

Moe studied composition at Princeton University (B.A.) and at the University of California at Berkeley (M.A., Ph.D.). He is currently the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Music at the University of Pittsburgh.

Music on the Edge

Music on the Edge, co-directed by Eric Moe, Mathew Rosenblum, and Amy Williams, presents cutting-edge contemporary music ensembles from around the world. Recent concerts have featured the JACK Quartet, TAK Ensemble, Dal Niente, Ekmeles, and Third Coast Percussion. Concerts take place at venues on and off the campus of the University of Pittsburgh, including regular collaborations with the Andy Warhol Museum. Large-scale events have included the Beyond: Microtonal Music festivals, a residency with NewBand and the Harry Partch Instruments, the Music on the Edge Chamber Orchestra conducted by Roger Zahab, festivals and symposia dedicated to the late works of Morton Feldman and to intersections between Chinese and American music. MOTE is the only presenting organization in Pittsburgh dedicated exclusively to contemporary chamber music.

Music on the Edge is generously supported by the University of Pittsburgh Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, the Bessie Pearl Snyder Music Legacy Fund, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Opportunity Fund, The Alice M. Ditson Fund, and the Amphion Foundation. Special thanks to Dr. Owen Cantor, Lisa and Harry Levinson, and Kathleen Montgomery.

Upcoming Music on the Edge Events

~Nois Quartet
Saturday, April 4, 2026 | 8:00 PM
The Andy Warhol Museum – 117 Sandusky St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Co-presented with The Andy Warhol Museum

For their first MOTE appearance, this “fiendishly good” Chicago-based saxophone quartet will perform works by Elijah Daniel Smith, Kelly Sheehan, Bobby Ge, Ethan Isaac, Luis Delgado and Danny Fratina.



Visit pi.tt/mote or
scan the QR code to obtain tickets
for upcoming MOTE events!