

**Thom Cardoso-Grant, artifact iv  
for alto saxophone and percussion**

artifact iv is a piece that focuses on intimacy, as if the performers were in a practice room rehearsing with no one but themselves. Repetitive grooves are established, searching to find the perfect iteration of a particular cell. The consequence of this repetition is its effect on the audiences' entrainment which fades in and out of focus, just like the discrepancies between repetitions of similar musical ideas.

**Thom Cardoso-Grant** is a composer and pianist from New Brunswick, currently based in Montréal, Québec. His works have been performed throughout the maritime provinces. Thom is currently working on completing the artifact series, which explores the fine line that continues to dissolve between acoustic and mixed genres. The second piece in this series artifact ii for solo guitar was awarded the SOCAN Young Composers Award in 2019. In 2020, Thomas will be continuing his residency with the McGill Percussion Ensemble, having recently performed artifact v for percussion quartet, saxophone and fixed media. His next projects include an acousmatic piece as well as a work for guitar and live electronics.

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**Robert Hasegawa, *Ajax is all about attack 1* (2003)  
for soprano saxophone and percussion**

*Ajax is all about attack* takes its title from a short story by Jim Shepard featuring the Amsterdam soccer team Ajax and their groundbreaking, cerebral strategy of "total football": "It was about making space, coming into space, and organizing space—like architecture on the football pitch." This composition seeks a similar fluidity of interaction between the two players, who constantly reshape the musical space of the piece through their actions and reactions.

Composer and music theorist **Robert Hasegawa** teaches at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University in Montreal, Canada. His compositions explore microtonal pitch systems, rhythmic indeterminacy, and spectral harmony. Recent projects include pieces for Frances-Marie Uitti, Stephen Drury and Yukiko Takagi, the Yesaroun' Duo, and the Callithumpian Consort. Hasegawa's theoretical research includes articles on just intonation, timbre and orchestration, and the music of Gérard Grisey, Iannis Xenakis, Georg Friedrich Haas, and Hans Zender. He is the Associate Project Director of the interdisciplinary research project ACTOR (Analysis, Creation, and Teaching of Orchestration). Since 2012, he has taught an annual summer course on contemporary music in Paris, France, in association with the Eastman School of Music and IRCAM.

**Philippe Leroux, AIRS  
for saxophone and marimba/vibraphone**

Composed in 1992 (in its original version for violin), this piece was a commission of the festival Aujourd'hui Musiques de Perpignan (France). One of the characteristics of the score is its spectacular aspect: the percussionist must essentially play the marimba and the vibraphone at the same time. The work is made up of easily distinguished small sections, which are linked to one another without an attempt at continuity. Starting from one identical and emphasized pitch, a D, the two instruments (here the marimba and vibraphone are considered two aspects of a single instrument) engage in a dialogue which opens like a fan, and which they continue until exhaustion. Like many works by Philippe Leroux, *AIRS* combines sonic actions, gestures, formulas, and sonic materials within an overall continuity—a sonic metaphor of the laws of nature, in which elements are destroyed while simultaneously engendering others in the process of disappearing.

**Philippe Leroux's** compositional output (more than eighty works to date) includes symphonic, vocal, electronic, acousmatic and chamber music.

His music is widely performed in contemporary music festivals across the world and by international orchestras. He has received many prizes and awards, including the Arthur Honegger Prize (Fondation de France). Since 2015, he is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

From 2001 to 2006 he was a teacher in composition at IRCAM through the Cursus d'Informatique Musicale. In 2005 and 2006 he taught at McGill University (a Fondation Langlois programme). From 2007 to 2009 he was composer-in-residence at the Metz Arsenal and with the Orchestre National de Lorraine, and from 2012 to 2018 with the MEITAR ensemble in Tel Aviv. From 2009 to 2011, he was invited professor at Université de Montréal and since September 2011 he has been Associate Professor in composition at the Schulich School of McGill University. His discography includes about forty CDs including eight monographs.

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**Edwin H. Ng, *Sounds of Bells Whistling at Night* (2019,  
premiere)**

**for alto saxophone and percussion**

This piece paints the image of a night walk by the forest, where distant bells are suddenly heard through the whistling breeze. Beginning in an atmospheric setting, the piece progresses as the rhythmic activity increases, along with the use of the bass drum. It is as if the sound of bells brings back old forgotten memories. As the piece ends, they are now only distant echoes, and the associated anguished dream slowly fades out.

A native of Montreal, **Edwin H. Ng** (b. 1994) is a Canadian composer, pianist, and mathematician. His musical research aims at integrating modernistic approaches into past traditional values in order to create an original expression true to the 21st century.

Having received a Master's degree in Mathematics/Statistics at Concordia University, Edwin H. Ng is currently pursuing yet another undergraduate degree in musical composition at McGill University where he is studying under the supervision of Dr. Sean Ferguson.

As a data scientist, Edwin hopes to orient himself toward using artificial intelligence to explore what this growing field has to offer in terms of compositional process, analysis and creativity, and to expand the use of computer-assisted techniques into refining his musical style.

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### ***Ajax is all about attack 2* for alto saxophone and percussion**

Commissioned by Doug O'Connor and composed for the Arête Duo (Doug O'Connor and Jacob Harpster), who premiered the work at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage in Washington, DC, August 25, 2019.

This composition, commissioned by and dedicated to the Arête Duo, is the second in a projected series of four duos for saxophone and percussion. The original *Ajax is all about attack*, played recently by the Arête Duo at the Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium and previously performed and recorded by several other duos, is written for soprano saxophone and a small setup of unpitched percussion. The sequel is composed for alto saxophone with a selection of metallic percussion focusing on the vibraphone and cymbals. *Ajax is all about attack 2* seeks to draw connections between the complex inharmonic timbres of resonant metal instruments and the rich sounds of saxophone multiphonics. The unusual acoustic characteristics of multiphonics (and particularly their close links to the electronic music technique of frequency modulation) are the basis of the piece's microtonal pitch language. The piece extends my theoretical exploration of a quartertone pitch language and spectral harmonies based on sum and difference tones, melding the saxophone, vibraphone, and cymbals into unique timbral composites.

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### **Melissa Hui, *Solo SPP*<sup>x</sup> (2000) for alto saxophone(s) with optional percussion and piano**

I composed *Solo SPP*<sup>x</sup> in November of 2000 while in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts. At the time, saxophonist Jeremy Brown was an invited guest while three other saxophonists were also there. Given this unusual gathering, I wanted to experiment with an 'expandable' structured improvisation that allowed saxophonists to play solo or play as soloists together – giving individual interpretations of the same score – and

with additional percussionist(s) and pianist(s), if desired. Thus, the title stands for **Saxophone, Percussion and Piano**, for **x** number of players on each instrument. The saxophone material comprises high jagged statements, lyrical fragments, multiphonic 'harmonies', tremolos and virtuosic runs. The unpitched percussion is given a few rhythmic motifs, but mostly instructions on timbral changes. The piano, if used, supports the pitch and rhythmic ideas presented by the saxophone and percussion.

**Melissa Hui** was born in Hong Kong and raised in North Vancouver, BC. Initially inspired by the haunting vocal music of the Ba-aka people of the Central African Republic, Javanese gamelan and Japanese gagaku court orchestra, she strives to create a personal music of ethereal beauty, intimate lyricism and raucous violence. Her work has been commissioned and performed throughout North America, Europe and Asia, including performances by the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, St. Lawrence String Quartet, Esprit Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Focus Festival in New York City, Oregon Symphony, International Gaudeamus Music Week in Amsterdam, ISCM Festivals in Croatia and Switzerland, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. The recipient of awards from the Guggenheim and Fromm Foundations, and a doctorate from Yale University, she was on the composition faculty at Stanford University for ten years before moving to Montreal. Melissa joined the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in 2010.

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**Arete Duo** made their debut performance at the 2018 Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium in a performance of Bob Hasegawa's *Ajax is all about attack*, and have commissioned and premiered his second iteration of the *Ajax* series. Doug O'Connor (sax) and Jake Harpster (percussion) met as members of the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own." They share a passion for the performance and development of new and evocative chamber music.

Praised for his "seamless technique" and "sumptuous lyricism" (The Philadelphia Inquirer), saxophonist **Doug O'Connor** has performed across Asia, Europe, and the U.S. He holds DMA and MM degrees from the Eastman School of Music, and a BM in Saxophone Performance from the University of Maryland. O'Connor recently served as Adjunct Assistant Professor of Saxophone at the Eastman School of Music, as Associate Lecturer of Saxophone at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire, as saxophonist with the United States Naval Academy Band, and is currently employed as ceremonial saxophonist with the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own."

Dr. O'Connor recently performed as a concerto soloist at the 2018 North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference, and has been featured with the National

Symphony Orchestra, Symphony in C, Musica Nova, the Eastman and University of Wisconsin Eau Claire Jazz Ensembles, as well as various college percussion ensembles. He was the 2nd Prize winner of the 2008 International Jean-Marie Londeix Saxophone Competition in Bangkok and has won top prizes in many other solo competitions. Finally, he was a winner of Astral Artists' 2003 National Auditions and was a finalist for the Concert Artists Guild competition in 2009. Today he continues to perform and teach at various universities, and to commission new works for the saxophone. With a passion for chamber music, Dr. O'Connor recently commissioned and premiered five new works for saxophone and mixed instrumentations at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He was a member of the Red Line Saxophone Quartet, which won top prizes at the Chesapeake, Coleman, NASA, Fischhoff, Plowman, and MTNA chamber music competitions, premiered five new works for sax quartet and electronics on MATA's Interval Series in NYC, and released a CD on iTunes, "Back Burner." He also plays soprano saxophone in the group Off on Four, a jazz saxophone quartet which gave their debut performance at the Kennedy Center in 2018. Dr. O'Connor is a co-founder of the Global Premiere Consortium Commissioning Project, an online platform for instigating the composition, dissemination, and performance of new music worldwide. To date, Global Premiere has been able to support commissions for five new pieces of music, supported by performers across the world and authored by a diversity of composers.

**Jacob Harpster** is a percussionist currently residing in Washington, D.C., where he is a member of The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own." As a performer, Harpster is known for his diverse background. In the Broadway idiom, Harpster has presented concerts across the globe. He was the featured marimba soloist and percussionist of the Tony and Emmy award winning Broadway production "Blast." With this show, he toured the United States, South Korea, and all 47 prefectures in Japan. As a soloist and chamber musician, Harpster has won many awards and competitions, and has presented concerts throughout the United States and Europe. Harpster enjoys an active career as an orchestral percussionist and timpanist. In addition to his freelance orchestral career, Harpster has attended prominent summer music festivals and has served as percussionist for Civic Orchestra of Chicago. An enthusiast of contemporary music, Harpster is commissioning and premiering many new works each year. Harpster collaborates with many notable contemporary music ensembles such as Chicago-based Fonema Consort, and InterSpheres Trio. In 2010, Harpster was named first-prize winner of the Yamaha Young Performing Artists Competition. Harpster received his Master of Music in percussion performance with related field studies in contemporary music performance from the University of North Texas. He received his Bachelor of Music in percussion performance from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Upon graduating from IU, Harpster was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate.