



Manuscripts Don't Burn

Inna Faliks, *piano*



Manuscripts Don't Burn

1-7	Master and Margarita Suite for Speaking Pianist * <i>Veronika Krausas (b.1963)</i> <i>(Commissioned by the Wende Museum for Inna Faliks, 2022).</i> <i>Words by Mikhail Bulgakov, translation by Inna Faliks</i>	
	1 I. Time to Go - a Sarabande	1:37
	2 II. 14th of the Month of Nisan	3:06
	3 III. Night Streets of Moscow - a Polonaise	2:00
	4 IV. Yellow Flower Waltz	2:40
	5 V. Fantasia, "Have you stopped loving me?"	2:30
	6 VI. Behemoth's Somersaults into Cognac - a Bagatelle	2:08
	7 VII. Listen to the Silence – Epilogue	2:33
8	Gretchen am Spinnrade (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel) S. 558/8 <i>Franz Schubert (b.1797-d.1828) – Franz Liszt (1811-1886)</i>	4:30
9	Manuscripts Don't Burn, for speaking pianist * <i>Maya Miro Johnson (b.2001)</i> <i>(Commissioned by the Wende Museum for Inna Faliks, 2022)</i> <i>Words by Mikhail Bulgakov, translation by Inna Faliks</i>	6:59
10	Notturmo in G minor, H337 <i>Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn (b.1805-d.1847)</i>	4:23
11	Erlkonig (Erlking) S.558/4 <i>Schubert-Liszt</i>	4:43
12	Am Meer (By the Sea) S. 560/4 <i>Schubert-Liszt</i>	4:37

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13	Black Earth <i>Fazil Say (b. 1970)</i>	7:06
14	"A Psalm for Odesa" * <i>Mike Garson, (b.1945)</i> <i>For Inna Faliks</i>	4:36
15-17	"Voices", Suite in Three Movements for piano and historical recordings * <i>Ljova Zhurbin, (b. 1978)</i>	
	15 i. Sirota	6:51
	<i>(Commissioned for Inna Faliks by the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 2011)</i>	
	16 ii. Alter(ed) Zhok,	5:16
	17 iii. Freydele	6:05
	<i>(Commissioned by the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience for Inna Faliks, 2020)</i>	
18-21	Godai, the Five Elements, for Speaking Pianist * <i>Clarice Assad (b. 1978)</i> <i>(Commissioned by Andreas Waldburg-Wolfegg, for Inna Faliks, 2013),</i> <i>Poetry by Steve Schroeder</i>	
	18 I. Dry Bones - Wind	2:30
	19 II. Absence - Fire and Water	3:07
	20 III. Earth	2:01
	21 IV. Ascension-Sky	2:19
22	Hero for piano solo (2013) * <i>Clarice Assad (b. 1978)</i>	2:22

Total Time: 84:10

* World Premiere Recording

Manuscripts Don't Burn is a famous line in Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* – the retelling of Faust, the 20th century cult novel of an artist surviving in a Totalitarian regime, the love story, the burlesque with giant, vodka drinking cats and vampiric theater administrators.

I first read the book as a kid, growing up in Soviet Odesa. I took it with me when my parents and I immigrated, as Jewish refugees running from antisemitism, through Austria and Italy, to the United States. Crossing the border, I worried that guards would discover my book, and I would be severely punished. Throughout the years, the book played a role in my life. My childhood best friend from Odesa reread the book in adulthood and decided to find me - we are now together for 20 years, with two kids. I read the book to my mother as she was dying from brain cancer.

Bulgakov's novel weaves through my own newly published memoir, *Weight in the Fingertips - A Musical Odyssey from Soviet Ukraine to the World Stage* (Backbeat Books, October 2023). I consider this very personal recording to be something of a mirror image to my memoir, as it intertwines the literal images from *Master and Margarita* with more autobiographical themes and layers.

The five premieres, written for me and recorded here, are vastly different in styles and esthetic. The understated, elegant *Master and Margarita Suite* by Veronika Krausas complements the wild, theatrical, brooding and extended techniques-filled “*Manuscripts Don't Burn*” by Maya Miro Johnson. Mike Garson's *Psalm to Odesa*, an improvisatory ballad, with bits of my own improvisation based a well known Odesan song, sets off “*Voices*” by Ljova, a piece for piano and historical recordings of Jewish cantorial and klezmer music. Both take me back to my home city, currently under vicious attack, like the rest of Ukraine. The poetry I recite, sing and hum while performing the four-movement *Godai - the Four Elements* - is rounded off by the propulsive *bravura*

whirlwind of Hero. Fasil Say's *Black Earth* takes the listener on a journey from Odesa across the Black Sea - a Turkish ballad and jazzy beats alternates with improvisatory melisma of a Turkish lute, played on muted strings of the piano. The rarely heard *Notturmo* of Fanny Mendelssohn connects a gifted female voice to the others on this disc, as well as, perhaps, to the dark, impassioned character of *Margarita*. In *Master and Margarita*, “*Manuscripts Don't Burn*” is spoken by Satan when he retrieves the manuscript of a novel presumed burnt – and in Clarice Assad's “*Godai*”, Steve Schroeder's poem depicts the loss of a manuscript in a fire.

The lieder of Schubert, transcribed for solo piano by Liszt, riffs on the mythical and the Faustian lore found also in *Master and Margarita*: *Gretchen* (*Margarita*) at the spinning wheel, a mystical love story by the sea, a monstrous Elf King and the death of a child, of innocence, of joy - one's worst fear.

This collection of music speaks to my love of dialogue between music and words. As in my *Music/Words* series, where I pair poets with musical programs in the form of a recital/reading, the connections between text and sound here are not just literal but emotional, based on memory, intuition, dreams and hopes.

- Inna Faliks

Inna Faliks, *piano*

“Adventurous and passionate” (*The New Yorker*) Ukrainian-born pianist Inna Faliks has established herself as one of the most communicative, and poetic artists of her generation. She has made a name for herself through commanding performances of standard piano repertoire, as well genre-bending, interdisciplinary projects, and inquisitive work with contemporary composers. Her new memoir, *Weight in the Fingertips, A Musical Odyssey from Soviet Ukraine to the World Stage*, was published by Backbeat Books in October 2023.

Ms. Faliks’s distinguished career has brought thousands of recitals and concerts throughout the US, Asia, and Europe. Recent seasons have included performances at the Ravinia Festival, National Gallery of Art, and the Wallis Annenberg Center, tours of China, with appearances in all of its major halls including the Beijing Center for Performing Arts, Shanghai Oriental Arts Theater and Tianjin Grand Theater; debuts at the Festival Internacional de Piano in Mexico, the Fazioli Series in Italy, Israel’s Tel Aviv Museum, Portland Piano Festival, Camerata Pacifica and a collaboration with the contemporary dance company, Bodytraffic at the Broad Stage. She has performed at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Concert Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Salle Cortot in Paris, Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall and at many important festivals such as Verbier, Mondo Musica Cremona, Gilmore, Newport, Music in the Mountains, Brevard, Taos, the International Keyboard Festival in New York, Bargemusic Here and Now, and Chautauqua. Since her acclaimed teenage debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Harvey Felder she has been regularly engaged as a concerto soloist: Rachmaninoff 2nd concerto with Dmitry Sitkovetsky and the Greensboro Symphony, Gershwin with Daniel Meyer and the Erie Symphony, Clara Schumann with Erin Freeman at the Wintergreen Festival, Beethoven 3rd with the Williamsburg Symphony, Prokofiev 1 and 3 with Victor Yampolsky and the Peninsula Festival Orchestra, Tchaikovsky 1 with Robert Moody and



the Memphis Symphony, and numerous concerti under the batons of such renowned conductors as Leonard Slatkin, Keith Lockhart, Edward Polochick, and Neal Stuhlberg, as well as important emerging conductors like Thomas Heuser and Yaniv Attar.

Inquisitive and versatile, Inna Faliks has had a strong commitment to contemporary music giving premieres of works composed for and dedicated her by Timo Andres, Billy Childs, Richard Danielpour, Paola Prestini, Ljova, Clarice Assad, Peter Golub. In “Reimagine Beethoven and Ravel” nine contemporary composers responded to Beethoven Bagatelles and Ravel’s Gaspard de la Nuit. “13 Ways of Looking at the Goldberg” included new variations by contemporary composers based on Bach’s Goldberg Variations. She performed and recorded unknown piano works of the Russian poet Boris Pasternak. She went on to create a one-woman show which led to “Polonaise-Fantasia, Story of a Pianist”, an autobiographical monologue for pianist and actress, recently presented as a solo show in New York’s Symphony Space, Shenandoah Conservatory, Music Worcester, and at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Italy. A committed chamber musician, she has had notable collaborations with Rachel Barton Pine, Gilbert Kalish, Ron Leonard, Fred Sherry, Ilya Kaler, Colin Carr, Wendy Warner, Clive Greensmith, and Antonio Lysy, among many others.

Inna Faliks has been featured on radio and television throughout the world. She co-starred with *Downton Abbey*’s Lesley Nicol in “Admission – One Shilling,” a play for pianist and actor based on the life of the great British pianist, Dame Myra Hess. Her most recent CD releases, Reimagine: Beethoven and Ravel on Navona Records and The Schumann Project Volume 1, on MSR Classics, received rave reviews, and were named to several “best of 2021” lists. With her all-Beethoven CD release on MSR, WTTW called Faliks “High priestess of the piano, concert pianist of the highest order, as dramatic and subtle as a great stage actor.” Sound of Verse, was released in 2009, featuring music of Boris

Pasternak, Rachmaninoff and Ravel. “Polonaise-Fantasia, Story of a Pianist” on Delos captures her autobiographical monologue-recital with short piano works from Bach to Carter.

Faliks is founder and curator of Music/Words, an award-winning poetry-music series: performances in collaboration with distinguished poets. Her long-standing relationship with Chicago’s WFMT radio has led to multiple broadcasts of Music/Words, which she produced alongside some of the nation’s most recognized poets in performances throughout the United States. A past winner of many prestigious competitions, Inna Faliks is currently Professor of Piano and Head of Piano at UCLA. She is in demand as Artist Teacher and is frequently invited to judge competitions and give masterclasses at major conservatories and universities. As a writer, she has been published by LA Times and Washington Post. During Covid, she started a weekly online recital series, Corona Fridays, featuring children’s concerts, new music, and poetry.

Master & Margarita Suite for Piano, Veronika Krausas, (2022)

The suite is a collection of seven dances focusing on characters and moments in Bulgakov's masterpiece *The Master and Margarita*. This novel has always been one of my favorites with the combination of a love story, a story of friendships, a story of a wonderfully crazy entourage and their shenanigans, a story of an extravagant and ghostly Devil's ball, and the story of constant striving for creation. The collection is loosely inspired by a Baroque dance suite. The suite can be played in any order. The prelude is the moment Margarita rescues the Master's burnt manuscript and starts reading about the day of Jesus' execution. There's a polonaise depicting the nights streets of Moscow when strains of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* can be heard. A slightly lopsided waltz portrays the yellow flowers Margarita is carrying when she meets the Master. In an improvisatory-like fantasia Margarita questions the love of the Master. An ominous and melancholy sarabande announces the Master and Margarita are getting ready to leave with the Devil. One of my favorite characters is the mischievous Behemoth, one of the Devil's entourage who appears as a large black cat. He dances a spirited bagatelle as he somersaults into cognac. The epilogue is still and sparse when Margarita talks of love, writing, silence, and peace. – Veronika Krausas

1. Time to go. The thunderstorm is already upon us, do you hear? It's getting dark. The horses are digging in the ground, the little garden shakes. Bid farewell to your cellar, Farewell.

2. The Fourteenth of the Month of Nisan.

Darkness, coming from the Mediterranean Sea, covered Jerusalem. The city vanished, as though it had never been. The mist devoured everything, frightening every living creature and its surroundings. The city was engulfed by a strange cloud which had crept over it from the sea towards the end of that day, the fourteenth of the month of Nisan."

3. Night Streets of Moscow – a Polonaise

The city was already living its nightlife. In the dust, trucks flew by, clanging chains, and on top of them, men lay about, their bellies spread out. All the windows were open. In each of them, burned the fire of orange lampshade, and from every window, every door, every cellar, from the roofs and attics and gateways and yards burst the hoarse roar of the polonaise from Evgeny Onegin.

4. Yellow Flower Waltz

She was carrying revolting yellow flowers .I swear to you that she saw only me, and glanced at me, not alarmed but pained. And I was shocked not so much by her beauty as by the unusual, unseen loneliness in her eyes. "Do you like my flowers?"...I quickly crossed the street to her, and coming to her, replied, "No."

5. Fantasia – Have you Stopped Loving me?

Have you stopped loving me? No, for some reason I don't believe it. So, that means you were arrested, exiled, and you died. Then, I beg of you, let me be, give me the freedom to live and breathe.

-You are free...Am I holding you?

-No, leave my memory, then I will be free.

6. Behemoth's Somersaults into Cognac – a Bagatelle
The laides, screaming, "Cognac!", dashed from the edge of the pool, behind the columns. In a few seconds, the pool was full, and the cat, triple-somersaulting in the air, collapsed into the trembling cognac. He climbed out, huffing, his tie gone sour, having lost both the gold from his whiskers and his binoculars.

7. Listen to the Silence – Epilogue

“Listen to the silence,” said Margarita to the Master, the sand rustling under her bare feet. “Listen to the silence and enjoy it. Here is the peace you never knew in your lifetime.”

Gretchen am Spinnrade, Schubert-Liszt (1838)

In 1814 the teenage Schubert set an early scene from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s Faust, where the young Gretchen (Marguerite) dreams of Faust while at the spinning wheel; as anxiety of this first love overtakes her, the spinning wheel and her thoughts lose control. This became one of Schubert’s most beloved works of lieder, with its subtle psychology, beguiling word-painting, the vivid spinning wheel of the piano part a perfect companion to the anguished voice. In his 1838 piano transcription, Liszt stays as close as possible to the original. I include this transcription because it shows a different Margarita character than the other works on the album. While Bulgakov’s Margarita is a witch, a confident risk-taker, this one is fragile, anxious, fearful. In the end, both sacrifice their lives for the sake of love – but with Bulgakov, the act is exhilarating and victorious, rather than tragic, as in Faust.

Maya Miro Johnson – Manuscripts Don’t Burn (2022)

I created Manuscripts Don’t Burn for Inna Faliks based on the Satan’s Ball scene in Mikhail Bulgakov’s The Master and Margarita. This piece explores the journey of Margarita and her ghoulish entourage to the alternate dimension which exists in the “evil apartment” in Moscow. In a way, it is a kind of time-lapse recording of motion itself; the realization of the rotation of the earth beneath one’s feet; the rapid-eye motion that occurs while trapped deep inside a dream. Distinctly episodic, the piece depicts Margarita’s vision of the world in a new, kaleidoscopic, and overwhelming light. There is dance hall music, bells I

transcribed from the tower of Florence’s Campanile, haze, and the sonification of a passage of Russian text from Margarita’s point of view in the masquerade chapter. In addition to hinting at what she discovers exposed under the light of this transgressive and potentially liberating space, the piece also describes the aftermath of her newfound sight and their implications for both her and the future of the country of Bulgakov’s beloved satire.

- Maya Miro Johnson

“Both the tailcoats and the women turned to dust. Decay filled the hall, in front of Margarita’s eyes, and a sepulchral smell flowed. The columns fell apart, lights went out, everything shriveled up, and there were no more fountains, tulips, camelias. There was what there was – the modest living room of the jeweler, and there was a slice of light through the barely opened door. And into that barely opened door, Margarita entered.”

Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov. Chapter 23 – The Great Ball at Satan’s.

Fanny Hensel - Mendelssohn, Notturmo in G minor, H337 (1838)Fanny Hensel, nee Mendelssohn, was the leading cultural figure in 1830s and 40s Berlin. She composed more than 400 works, conducted, performed as a pianist and organized concert events; yet, up until recently she had unfortunately been remembered mostly as the talented sister and best friend of Felix Mendelssohn.

This Notturmo, like the Gretchen am Spinnrade transcription, was composed in 1838, before she had taken her first trip to Venice. Its lilt brings and haunting ending might recall Gretchen’s restlessness, but its melodic sensibility and harmonic language is unique, decidedly Fanny.

Erlkonig, Schubert – Liszt (1838)

Another of Schubert's earliest and most famous songs (1815) sets Goethe's poem of four characters – the Narrator, the Father, the Son and the scary, otherworldly creature known as Erlking. As the father rides through the woods, holding his child, the Erlking attempts to convince the child to visit his supernatural realm, before forcefully taking him. At the harrowing end, the triplets finally stop as the narrator announces the boy's death. The dramatic power of the poem – and the song – is in the effortless, inevitable way the four characters coexist in one piece. Liszt's transcription is notoriously taxing but dramatically vivid, with its heartbeat-like repeated octaves of the horse's gallop/heart beat, its beguiling Erlking's tune in pianissimo, and the urgency of the child's pleading represented fully on solo piano. Surrealness, loss of innocence, the space between realm of the living to the realm of the dead, unanswered questions and mysteries explored in the other pieces on this disc also live here, as this manuscript of Goethe is given life.

Am Meer (By the Sea), Schubert – Liszt (1839-40)

Schubert set this mysterious poem of Heinrich Heine in the last year of his life; it was published in the Schwanengesang (Swan Song) cycle in 1828 after his death. Two lovers sit by the sea shore; what begins like a peaceful romance ends in a strange, dark way – the woman poisons the man with her tears. The transcendent calm of the sea is interrupted by wild tremolos and melodic tension of almost operatic proportions; the phrasing here asymmetrical and unpredictable, and the ending – full of passionate longing. Having grown up on the Black Sea, I am endlessly drawn to seascapes and their ever-changing natural drama. The piano writing of Liszt, once again, keeps faithful to the word painting of the song - the sheer breadth and calm of this sea, and the intimate conflict, ashore. This is enigmatic seascape story of a fisherman, and in this it connects to another work on this album – Mike Garson's Psalm to Odesa, with an improvised reference to a famous Odesa fisherman song.

Black Earth, Fazil Say (1997)

Black Earth was inspired by Kara Toprak, a popular Turkish ballad of loneliness and loss. The composer of the song, Asik Veysel, (1891-1973), was one of the last great Turkish balladeers and a cultural symbol of the Turkish republic. Veysel went blind during childhood and learned how to play the Saz, a Turkish lute. The composer imitates the sound of the Saz through the muted strings in the introduction and epilogue of the work, a meditation of themes of the Ballad. Romantic piano writing and jazz are weaved together in the central section; in the outer sections, folk music and jazz meet through improvisation. Because of improvised elements, no two performances can really be alike.

The smells and sounds of the Black Sea are the same in Turkey and Ukraine. The memory of them is a memory of home.

Psalm to Odesa, Mike Garson (2023)

Mike Garson's dramatic written-out improvisation leads into a tender, mournful song. With the composer pianist's permission, I have inserted my own improvisations, using the Odesa fisherman song, "Shalandi Polniye Kefali", about a charming Odesa fisherman. I wanted to speak to Odesa and remember the city of my childhood. As the destruction and war in Ukraine continues, I continue to dream to return to the city of my birth.

"The situation in Ukraine brings tears to my eyes and Inna's performance of my homage to Ukraine brings joy to my heart. I guess it's possible to experience both grief and joy simultaneously."

- Mike Garson

Ljova Zhurbin, Voices (2011, 2019-2020), Suite in three movements for piano and historical recordings

- i.. Sirota
- ii.. Alter(ed) Zhok
- iii. Fraydele

Sirota” was commissioned by Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies for Inna Faliks. “Alter(ed) Zhok” and “Fraydele” were commissioned by the Lowell Milken Fund for American Jewish Music at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dedicated to Inna Faliks & the memory of Fraydele Oysher and Gershon Sirota.

When Inna Faliks commissioned “Sirota”, my first thought was “I want to find a way to get Inna back to Ukraine, musically. That led me to recorded collections by celebrated Cantors of the Golden Age, and in turn to the voice of Gershon Sirota.

Sirota (the title means “Orphan” in Russian, which could be coincidental) is a composition for solo piano that incorporates a recording made by cantor Gershon Sirota and choir in Warsaw in 1908. Often referred to as “The Jewish Caruso”, Gershon Sirota was born in Ukraine and served as cantor in Odessa, Vilnius, and then Warsaw, where he perished in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

The first part of the composition acts as a prelude and features fragments of the recorded melody, accompanied by a relentless limping pattern comprised of a falling and rising D-minor arpeggio. After the climax, the pianist’s role becomes that of an accompanist at a synagogue, where Sirota is chanting prayers for Rosh Hashannah (the Jewish New Year). What began

as a search for inspiration in old recordings became a way of seeing these historical documents in a new light.

Alter(ed) Zhok (“Alter” means “old”, “Zhok” is a type of folk dance) takes its inspiration from a recording collected by Joel Engel in Skvira, Ukraine, in 1912. The piece functions as a dance-like entr’acte between the voices of Sirota and **Fraydele**. When I came across the recording of the celebrated Yiddish actress and singer Fraydele Oysher from 1953, I could not get it out of my mind. The text of the prayer, “Ov-Harachamim”, written around the 12th century, commemorates the destruction of the Ashkenazi communities around the Rhine River by Christian crusaders during the First Crusade. The text of this prayer could also be a fitting memorial for the unforgettable voices of Cantor Sirota, the anonymous clarinetist of Alter(ed) Zhok, and Fraydele Oysher.

- Ljova Zhurbin

Clarice Assad, Godai the Five Elements (2013)

Godai was commissioned for Inna Faliks’s Music/Words, her poetry-music performance series. Composers were asked to write works that use spoken word in any way they choose. Clarice Assad collaborated with poet Steven Schroeder to create Godai.

Godai are the five elements in the system of Japanese Buddhism – wind, fire, water, earth, sky. The programmatic piece is a series of five interconnected sketches with spoken sound effects and two poems. The first movement, Dry Bones (wind), serves as an introduction, with wind-like sound effects and a poem of a dry landscape, where leaves are carried by the wind. Says Assad, “It represents expansion, freedom, movement – hence the breath sounds. Some places are meant to feel as if there’s something about to take flight.”

In the poem of the second movement, “Absence, (fire and water),” an author laments a manuscript, lost in a fire. Two forces are at work here – ominous, fiery rhythms and register, and transparent light water-like runs.

The third, Gravity (earth), is reminiscent of sound effects from Noh theater – rattling trills, humming, taps, silences and lots of textural contrast. While the left hand octaves march in slow heavy steps, the quick conversational lines in the right hand and the intermittent trills seem to be fighting gravity, to lead into the fourth movement, Ascension – Sky. This sketch is a whirl of hypnotic repeating 16th note groups and contrasting dynamics,

“A good poem resists being set to music because it is music”, said Robert Frost, and Steve Schroeder’s poems work in parallel with the music here, one illustrating the other.

Dry Bones – Wind

*In time, all light settles, uncontained,
On the whole spectrum of an October maple
Leaf, brooding in the great wind,
Moving on the face of this deep dry,
Bone dry. Leaves dance in this valley
When wind moves ten thousand shades,
Red rising through yellow, in green, blue, indigo
Violet, brown.
Broken Stems.*

Absence – Fire and Water

*Absence smells like an ocean of grass on fire,
The accident of its origin a crossroad,
Souls sold, maps lie flat,
Flattening years, miles,
To lines of people, places I know
The signify where the wind blows.
All the news is of things lost, saved or not,
But it’s the stories I fear consumed,
No rain present in the way an absent god
Is present in sudden fire.
Nothing to slake endless thirst, and I can think of nothing but water.*

Hero (Assad) – for piano solo, (2013)

Hero was first written as part of Godai, but eventually gained its own life through transcriptions and performances by other ensembles and on other instruments. This is the first recording of the piano solo version, with its jazzy propulsive energy and virtuosic end.

Composer **Veronika Krausas** was born in Australia of Lithuanian heritage, raised in Canada, and currently lives in Los Angeles. Commissions and performances include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Concertgebouw, The Industry, New York City Opera, Calgary Opera, Tanglewood Contemporary Music Festival, Detroit Symphony, Ensemble musikFabrik at the Darmstadt Music Festival, Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity, Chicago Architecture Biennial (2016), Piano Spheres, The Vancouver Symphony, ERGO Projects, Esprit Orchestra, Fort Worth Opera, Jacaranda Music, Motion Music, San Francisco Choral Artists, and the Penderecki String Quartet. She is currently on faculty at the Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles.

Between American and European debuts with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble Intercontemporain in 2019 and 2022, respectively, **Maya Miro Johnson** (b. 2001)-- a composer, conductor, instrumentalist, and interdisciplinary artist who considers her work experimental philosophy not constrained to logic and reason -- has created works for violin/prerecorded Gaga class (Johnny Gandelman of Brooklyn Rider and the Silk Road Ensemble); ensemble/shoes/silent film/bartered objects (loadbang); soprano/ensemble/radios (Toby Thatcher's Zeitgeist, finalist in Beth Morrison Projects' 2021 Next Gen Competition and winner of both Schuman and Surinach Prizes in the 2020 BMI Student Composer Awards in a historical first); electroacoustic metainstrument (with Mekhi Gladden & Drew Schlegel); chamber group/game show host (Sarasota Festival); and more...

Her work has also been featured on numerous recent and upcoming albums, including HOCKET's *#What2020LooksLike*, Johnny Gandelman's acclaimed *This Is America*, Inna Faliks' *The Master and Margarita Project*, and the Minnesota Orchestra's *Mahler: Symphony No. 8* with Osmo Vänskä and BIS

With his extraordinary pianistic ability, **Fazil Say** has been touching audiences and critics alike for almost 30 years. Fazil Say received his first piano lessons from Mithat Fenmen, a pianist who had studied with Alfred Cortot in Paris. Fenmen – perhaps sensing how great the boy's talent was – asked his pupil to first improvise every day on everyday

themes before engaging in the necessary piano exercises and studies. It was in this engagement with free creative processes and forms that the origin was laid for the enormous improvisational talent and aesthetic outlook that forms the core of pianist and composer Fazil Say's self-image. As a composer, Fazil Say has been commissioned by Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the BBC, Salzburger Festspiele, WDR, Münchner Philharmoniker, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Wiener Konzerthaus, Dresdner Philharmonie, Fondation Louis Vuitton, among others. His Oeuvre includes five symphonies, two oratorios, various solo concertos and numerous piano and chamber music works.

Renowned for his improvisational brilliance and virtuoso piano skills, **Mike Garson** has been a pivotal figure in the music world. With a unique style coined "Now Music," he creates spontaneous compositions that resonate with emotional depth. His extensive career is highlighted by a significant partnership with David Bowie, contributing to over 20 albums and 600 live shows. As an educator, he has mentored thousands, infusing his students with a passion for creativity and improvisation. His recent composition, inspired by the events in Ukraine and recorded by Inna, showcases his ability to transform global emotions into powerful musical narratives.

Ljova (Lev Zhurbin) was born in 1978 in Moscow, Russia, and moved to New York with his parents, composer Alexander Zhurbin and writer Irena Ginzburg, in 1990. He divides his time between composing for the concert stage, contemporary dance & film, leading his own ensemble Ljova and the Kontraband, performing with and composing for Trio Fadolin, as well as a busy career as a violist, fadolinist & musical arranger. Among recent projects are commissions from the City of London Sinfonia, The Louisville Orchestra, a new work for Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, a string quartet for Brooklyn Rider, a clarinet quintet for Art of Élan, and works for The Knights, Sybarite5 and A Far Cry, as well arrangements for the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, tenor Javier Camarena, conductors Gustavo Dudamel

and Alondra de la Parra, songwriters Ricky Martin, Natalia Lafourcade and Carlos Vives, composer/guitarist Gustavo Santaolalla and Osvaldo Golijov. Ljova frequently collaborates with choreographers Azure Barton, Damian Woetzel, Christopher Wheeldon, Katarzyna Skarpetowska (with Parsons Dance). In 2018, he was a Visiting Lecturer at Princeton University's Atelier program, co-teaching a course on collaboration with puppeteer Basil Twist. Ljova is the author of more than 120 compositions for classical, jazz, and folk ensembles, as well as scores to numerous feature, documentary, and short subject films. He has released eleven albums on his label, Kapustnik Records, and his compositions have been recorded on Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, Bridge Records, Naxos and In A Circle labels. He is an alum of the Sundance Institute's Film Composers Lab. His music has been licensed by HBO, PBS, BBC, CNBC, and NHK networks, among many other independent projects.

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian-American **Clarice Assad** is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop, and jazz genres. The Grammy Award-nominated composer, celebrated pianist, inventive vocalist, and educator is acclaimed for her evocative colors, rich textures, and diverse stylistic range. Her 2022-2023 season includes commissions by the Camerata Pacifica, Music Accord, the League of American Orchestras, the Oregon Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, LA Phil, Chamber Music America, the Fry Street Quartet, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Educational residencies include an intense workshop and compositional program at the Austin Classical Guitar Foundation, Levine Music in Washington, DC, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The composer has more than 70 works to her credit, including numerous commissions for Carnegie Hall, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo, Chicago Sinfonietta, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, General Electric, Sybarite5, Metropolis ensemble, the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, and the La Jolla Music Festival.

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