

Eastman Musica Nova

Brad Lubman,
music director
Peiwen Zou,
assistant conductor

Phil Pierick,
saxophone

Friday, April 10, 2026
Kilbourn Hall
7:30 PM



Eastman School of Music

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman Musica Nova
Brad Lubman, *music director*
Peiwen Zou, *assistant conductor*

Figment (2022)

David Clay Mettens
(b.1990)
10'

Brad Lubman, *conductor*
Phil Pierick, *saxophone*

Faded Disintegration (2025)

Sicheng Huang
(b. 2002)
14'

Brad Lubman, *conductor*

~ INTERMISSION ~

Chamber Concerto (1969/70)

I. Corrente (Fließend)
II. Calmo, sostenuto
III. Movimento preciso e meccanico
IV. Presto

György Ligeti
(1923-2006)
20'

Peiwen Zou, *conductor*

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Figment

Figment is a mini-concerto for saxophone and eight instruments that dispenses with the heroic persona of a protagonist soloist, typical of many concerti, in favor of a more unified relationship between the solo instrument and ensemble. Embracing blend and instrumental imitations rather than dramatic contrasts or alternation between solo and tutti passages, the piece takes as its premise the idea that the solo saxophone may, at times, be more imagined than real. In an initial series of luminous, bright chords the soloist gradually emerges, dancing at the edge of perceptibility. The soloist then assumes various guises as undulating resonance from the vibraphone and harp or percussive drums, marimba, and pizzicato strings. These timbral chimeras blur the identity of the soloist, whose individuality remains precariously on the edge of collapse back into the supporting octet. From the piece's floating, weightless opening to propulsive, motoric passages, the saxophone solo embodies a kind of quiet virtuosity, inviting listeners to constantly seek out the soloist amidst illusory textures and nuanced interactions with the ensemble. *Figment* was written, in friendship and admiration, for Phil Pierick, whose artistry and expertise have been indispensable in sparking so many creative possibilities in my compositional practice.

- David Clay Mettens

Faded Disintegration

Disintegration is a term for the process of losing cohesion or strength, or of falling apart. In this piece, the term is meant to show how the musical material and character were shaped and deconstructed—from the heavy noise wave to free jazz—and the effect of reinterpretation by means of the placement of some of the idiosyncrasies of electronic noise music within the context of an acoustic instrumentation that reintegrates the elements into a teasing, fusion aesthetic. - Sicheng Huang

Chamber Concerto

Chamber Concerto represents a significant stage in Ligeti's development of the concept of micro-polyphony, a technique in which many individual parts combine to create complex textures. As Ligeti explained, "each single part, though imperceptible by itself, contributes to the character of the polyphonic network as a Whole. In other words, the individual parts and the musical configurations arising from these parts remain subliminal, but each part and each configuration is, in relation to the overall structure, transparent in the sense that all changes in detail lead to changes, however slight, in the total effect." This concept was explored in his work *Atmosphères* (1961), where barely independent individual parts form a refined network that transforms gradually in timbre and texture.

In *Chamber Concerto*, however, Ligeti started to lighten the density of the polyphonic network and bring out the individual modules: "The individual parts were still more or less subliminal, but now and again there emerged musical shapes at a level of the individually perceptible... resembling the transparency of a drawing rather than the opaqueness of a painting... One might say that the micro-polyphony of these pieces has become less 'micro', the musical texture being balanced on the threshold between imperceptible musical factors and others which are perceptible as shapes."

The Chicago Tribune has praised the music of **David "Clay" Mettens** (b.1990) as "a thing of remarkable beauty," displaying a "sensitive ear for instrumental color." His recent work seeks to distill the strange and sublime from the familiar. He reflects upon the experience of wonder in music that ranges from rich and sonorous to bright and crystalline, seeking expressive immediacy in lucid forms and dramatic shapes.

His work has been recognized with a 2020 Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, Ithaca College's 2018 Heckscher Foundation Composition Prize, first prize in the 2018 Salvatore Martirano Composition Competition, a 2016 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, and the 2015 SCI/ASCAP graduate student commission. He received a commission from the American Opera Initiative for a one-act opera, which was premiered in December 2015 by the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center. His orchestra piece "*Sleeping I am carried...*" was selected for the 24th Annual Underwood New Music Readings with the American Composers Orchestra and the 2015 [tactus] Young Composers Forum with the Brussels Philharmonic. Subsequently, the Brussels Philharmonic, led by Stéphane Denève, performed the piece in December 2016. The piece was also the winner of Eastman's 2014 Wayne Brewster Barlow Composition Prize, and received a premiere with the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra in October 2014. Other orchestral performances include Chicago Civic Orchestra, L'orchestre philharmonique de Radio France at ManiFeste 2018, and with the Austrian Tonkünstler Orchestra as part of the Grafenegg Festival's Ink Still Wet workshop in 2017 and 2018.

Additionally, his works have been performed by Grossman Ensemble, Spektral Quartet, Yarn/Wire, the New York Virtuoso Singers, soprano Tony Arnold and the soundSCAPE Festival Sinfonietta, on the Contempo Series at the University of Chicago, by Ensemble Dal Niente at the 2017 SCI National Conference, and the Civitas Ensemble on Chicago's inaugural Ear Taxi Festival. Saxophonists Chien-Kwan Lin, Timothy McAllister, and Otis Murphy performed his trio *Everything that rises* at the American Saxophone Academy Faculty Recital in July 2016. At Eastman, his works were featured on OSSIA, Composers' Forum, Graduate Composers' Sinfonietta, and Computer Music Center concerts.

His music appears on recordings by the Grossman Ensemble (*Fountain of Time*, 2020), Fuego Quartet (*Migration*, 2019), Lotus (*Rogue Lotus*, 2018), and the American Wild Ensemble (*Duos and Trios*, 2022; *Music in the American Wild*, 2018).

He was recently Interim Director of Composition at Roosevelt University (2022-2023) and a Humanities Teaching Fellow at the University of Chicago (2021-2023), where he also completed a PhD in music composition in 2021. As a PhD candidate, he studied composition with Anthony Cheung, Sam Pluta, and Augusta Read Thomas. He earned his masters degree at the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with David Liptak, Robert Morris, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and computer music with Allan Schindler. A native of Covington, KY, he attended the University of South Carolina, earning an undergraduate degree in music composition and a clarinet performance certificate. He was a recipient of the McNair Scholarship, the top award USC gives to out-of-state students, and the 2013 Arthur M. Fraser Award from the School of Music. There, his composition teachers were John Fitz Rogers and Fang Man.

He has presented his research on the music of Thomas Adès at the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition 30th Anniversary Conference hosted by the University of Louisville and the first annual THEMUS graduate-student music theory and musicology conference at Temple University. In 2012, he was awarded a USC Magellan Scholar Grant for a research project involving pipe organs, spectral music, and computer music under the guidance of faculty mentor Reginald Bain.

Clay currently works in non-profit administration and fundraising at the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, IL.

Phil Pierick is a saxophonist, composer, singer, improviser, and educator based in Chicago. Equally at home performing a range of music from Renaissance motets to 21st-century works, he has been described as “the Swiss Army knife of saxophonists.” As a soloist and member of the saxophone duo Ogni Suono, he has performed more than 140 recitals worldwide, including teaching engagements at many of America’s leading university music programs. Classically trained and experimentally minded, Phil is dedicated to championing the diverse body of vibrant works written for the saxophone in the past century. An emphatic advocate for music by living composers, Phil has commissioned more than twenty-five new works and presented over fifty premieres throughout Europe, North America, Taiwan, Japan, and Singapore. Recent recording projects include an album of previously unreleased chamber music for saxophone by Percy Grainger (Naxos), an entry in the Stockhausen Verlag’s complete discography of Karlheinz Stockhausen, and *SaxoVocè* (New Focus), an album of new music composed for Ogni Suono. *I CARE IF YOU LISTEN* describes SaxoVocè as “a tour de force of new possibilities for saxophone and voice, providing a blueprint for the creation of future saxophone duo repertoire.” *BBC Music Magazine* called his recording of Augusta Read Thomas’ *Laetitia’s Caprice* “exquisitely performed.” Phil regularly collaborates with pianist Kurt Eric Galván, presenting both classical repertoire and new commissions supported by New Music USA. An active concerto soloist, he has performed with the Eastman Wind Ensemble, University of Illinois’ Wind Symphony and Symphony Orchestra, the Slovenian Armed Forces Band, and Taiwan-based MIT. Phil is also a tenor at Chicago’s historic Fourth Presbyterian Church.

The only prizewinner at both the Jean-Marie Londeix International Saxophone Competition (2014) and the ISSAC International Saxophone Competition (2012), Phil is also a three-time prizewinner at the MTNA National Young Artist and Chamber Music Competitions (2009, 2011, 2012), and was named Vandoren Emerging Artist of 2011. He received Eastman School of Music’s 2014 Teaching Assistant Prize for chamber music instruction. Phil maintains a private studio in Chicago and aims to foster the internal curiosity and creativity of students, cultivating their individual musical interests and goals. He has taught at the Eastman School of Music, the University of Illinois, Butler University, and the College of Wooster. Guest teaching has taken him to the Allerton Chamber Music Symposium, Illinois Summer Youth Music, and nearly fifty universities and conferences around the world. His students have taken first prize in the MTNA National Chamber Music (2016, 2014) and 198th Army Band Small Ensemble (2015, 2013) competitions, and have been semi-finalists in the ISSAC International Saxophone Competition (2013).

He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music, where he served as teaching assistant to Chien-Kwan Lin and was awarded both the Performer’s Certificate and Arts Leadership Program Certificate. As a 2014-2015 Fulbright Scholar, he studied contemporary performance practice in Vienna with Lars Mlekusch, presenting contemporary music concerts in unexpected locations. He holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he studied with Debra Richtmeyer and held the position of saxophone teaching assistant. Phil also studied in Paris with Jean-Michel Goury as a recipient of the 2009 Frank Huntington Beebe Fund for Musicians.

Phil is a Vandoren Artist.

Sicheng Huang, composer and pianist. Born in 2002 in Hangzhou, China. Huang’s works are rooted in the interplay between cross-genre music material and electroacoustics. Drawing inspiration from metalcore, free jazz, glitch art, and popular electronic music, Huang combines and translates these elements into instrumental acoustics, ultimately integrating them into a fusion aesthetic.

Huang finished his bachelor’s degree, majoring in composition at the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Évis Sammoutis, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Robert Morris, and Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez. Started in September 2025, he is pursuing his Master’s degree in Composition at the Hochschule der Künste Bern, under the guidance of Simon SteenAndersen and Carrasco Teresa.

Simultaneously, Huang is active in numerous music festivals, including Outhear New Music Week, Mixtur Music Festival, Därmstadt Music Festival 2025, Contrasti Festival, Barcelona Modern International Course, VIPA Festival Academy, soundSCAPE Music Festival, New Music On the Point, The FEAT Exhibition, and many others. He also attended masterclasses and received guidance from Simon SteenAndersen, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, Hannes Siedl, Franck Bedrossian, Carola Bauckholt, Clemens Gadenstätter, Michael Jarrell, and others.

Besides music, Huang is also a barista, a father of a grey Devon Rex, and an avid internet surfer every day.

~ **PERSONNEL** ~
Eastman Musica Nova

Flute

Honor Hickman

Oboe

Cole Kubesch

Kayla Miller

Clarinet

Ethan Montgomery

Victor Ni

Saxophone

Benjamin Small

Horn

Amelia Caruk

Trumpet

Jacob Hunkins

Trombone

Talia Berenbaum

Percussion

John Dawson

Sammy DeAngelis

Kai Gray

Michael Smith

Keyboard

Irene Huang

Endong Li

Harp

Zuriel Patterson

Violin

Sascha Burhop

Zihua Ma

Meghna Thumri

Viola

Anna Denfeld

Sujin Kim

Violoncello

Aaron Lieberman

Double Bass

Zoë Gutierrez

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.



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