



WE REFRACT

ChamberQUEER 2023

June 9, 2023
Littlefield
Brooklyn

June 10, 2023
Red Eye NY
Manhattan

June 11, 2023
Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art at Snug Harbor
Staten Island

**NEWHOUSE CENTER
FOR CONTEMPORARY ART**
at Snug Harbor



SNUG HARBOR
CULTURAL CENTER & BOTANICAL GARDEN

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FIVE BOROUGHS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Michael Unterman, Artistic Director

Donna Breitzer, Executive Director

Jesse Blumberg, Founding Artistic Director


Lauded as “imaginative” by *The New York Times*, “enterprising” by *The New Yorker*, and “vital” by WQXR’s *Operavore* blog, Five Boroughs Music Festival has been recognized since our earliest days for presenting chamber music of the highest caliber in every borough of NYC, serving local audiences and inspiring music lovers to look beyond Manhattan for outstanding concerts. 5BMF productions feature some of the scene’s top musicians and are carried out in partnership with a wide variety of arts and culture organizations, in equal celebration of the music and musicians as the concert venues and their communities.


5BMF’s mission is to enrich communities and cultivate new audiences for chamber music by presenting world-class, affordable concerts in all corners of NYC. We collaborate with local cultural institutions to present up-and-coming artists alongside the genre’s most distinguished performers. We also challenge limiting definitions of ‘chamber music’ by featuring a broad range of musical styles, from early music to contemporary works, world and folk music, and other non-classical forms.


Now in our 16th season, 5BMF’s artist roster counts over 500 individual performers and ensembles, whom we have presented in more than 75 venues across the city. 5BMF has also commissioned more than 70 composers and presented world premieres in every NYC borough, most notably three citywide tours of Volumes I, II, and III of the *Five Borough Songbook*.

In 2020, 5BMF responded to pandemic shutdowns by presenting a full digital season of free feature-length concerts and by launching “Home Brew,” an informal series of mini-concerts and artist interviews. Despite the many hurdles posed by the pandemic, we successfully produced performances in every NYC borough throughout the shutdown, maintaining the traditional scope of our citywide reach. Our programs have been recognized and supported by private and institutional grantmakers, including the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New Music USA, and the Puffin Foundation, among others.

 5BMF.org

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5BMF and ChamberQUEER wish to extend special thanks to the staffs of Littlefield, Red Eye NY and the Newhouse Center for the Performing Arts for hosting our programs this weekend. Additional thanks to Baryshnikov Arts Center, Sandbox Percussion, and Felix Reyes.

CHAMBERQUEER: WE REFRACT

June 9, 2023 | Littlefield, BROOKLYN

June 10, 2023 | Red Eye NY, MANHATTAN

June 11, 2023 | Presented in partnership with the Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art at Snug Harbor, STATEN ISLAND

JULES BIBER › cello

AVIVA JAYE › folk harp, synth

ALEXIS C. LAMB › percussion

BRIAN MUMMERT › voice

RAJNA SWAMINATHAN › mridangam

DARIAN DONOVAN THOMAS › violin

YOSHI WEINBERG › flute

PROGRAM

Tuning Meditation

I See a Rainbow

Complect

Hindsight

Temperamental

Clacking Music

PAULINE OLIVEROS

YOSHI WEINBERG

AVIVA JAYE

ALEXIS C. LAMB

BRIAN MUMMERT

ALEXIS C. LAMB

Nacht und Träume

I Think I Need to Focus

fleet/hold

Eventual

Undercurrents

FRANZ SCHUBERT

DARIAN DONOVAN THOMAS

RAJNA SWAMINATHAN

RAJNA SWAMINATHAN

JULES BIBER

ChamberQUEER and 5BMF's operations occur on the occupied land of the Lenape people, Lenapehoking. We are grateful to live and create on this land. We acknowledge and confront the legacy of colonial violence on marginalized peoples who currently inhabit this land, including people of color and our trans siblings.

PROGRAM NOTES

Tuning Meditation

Pauline Oliveros

Pauline Oliveros' *Sonic Meditations* are intended for group work over a long period of time with regular meetings. No special skills are necessary. Any persons who are willing to commit themselves can participate... With continuous work some of the following becomes possible with Sonic Meditations: Heightened states of awareness or expanded consciousness, changes in physiology and psychology from known and unknown tensions to relaxations which gradually become permanent. These changes may represent a tuning of mind and body. The group may develop positive energy which can influence others who are less experienced. Members of the group may achieve greater awareness and sensitivity to each other. Music is a welcome by-product of this activity.

Instructions:

First, listen as long as you like.

then: choose a note you hear and try to sing it exactly the same as the person playing it or singing it.

then, listen again and sing a note you don't hear anyone else doing.

repeat the cycle.

everything is played and sung quietly and warmly.

Complect

Aviva Jaye

Complect is a braided piece weaving together 3 offerings:

- Recall + Revere (Honoring Queer Ancestry)
- Reflect + Release (Witness & Be Witnessed)
- Reclaim + Rejoice (Unshackled Joy Expression)

Thank you for joining us.

Hindsight

Alexis C. Lamb

Everyone in the LGBTQ+ community recognizes queerness on their own timeline, but not all memories of queerness are positive, especially in younger years. Hindsight offers space for each performer to explore a childhood memory that they now recognize as a sign of queerness and reframe it as queer joy.

Temperamental

Brian Mummert

“And I sa[id], ‘All of us guys’ – we didn’t call ourselves ‘gay’ yet, we didn’t call ourselves ‘homosexual’ yet, we called ourselves ‘temperamental’ – ‘all of us temperamental guys, we should organize.’”

– Harry Hay, one of the founders of the queer liberation movement. All text is excerpted from an eerily prescient 1998 interview with him.

fleet/hold

Rajna Swaminathan

This piece is dedicated to finding the ‘queer’ in our inherited expressions, where queerness manifests as fleeting and ephemeral possibility. Sounds are offered in dialogue with spontaneously conjured memories, inviting us to collectively transform our languages from within. Together, we move from the hold a form may have over us to holding ourselves and our desires with compassion. To those sharing this moment and process with us— feel free to close your eyes and move your body— I invite you to notice what these sounds and gestures spark in your imagination and memory. Here is a new moment, a fleeting togetherness— hold it, nurture it, and let it bring us to a state of convergence in remembering, sounding, and listening.

Undercurrents

Jules Biber

Undercurrents is a piece inspired by my late cousin Nancy Brous, who died of a glioblastoma in February 2022. Fiercely intelligent and creative, she was one of my favorite people and a true New Yorker: fast-talking, fast-walking, and not afraid to tell you what she really thought. Nancy could most often be found navigating the waters of the Hudson River in her kayak. I think Nancy found a calmness and peace on the water that in some ways balanced the often chaotic nature of her life in the city. Undercurrents explores seemingly opposing sides of a personality, taking the listener on a journey from chaos to calmness; from the bustle of the city to a gently lilted tide.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CHAMBERQUEER highlights LGBTQ+ voices in contemporary and historical music and reimagines the classical concert experience as a radically inclusive gathering space and musical community for the 21st century. We interrogate and experiment with, or “queer,” European art music’s presumed necessities and existing norms: by crafting new narratives from the canon, democratizing performance etiquette and dress, and shattering the performer-audience binary, we create a fresh and inviting environment for a new generation of music lovers. Founded in 2018 by a quartet of performers, conductors, and creators – Jules Biber (cello), Danielle Buonaiuto (soprano), Brian Mummert (baritone), and Andrew Yee (cello) – ChamberQUEER is anchored by its annual Pride festival, traditionally staged in Brooklyn. Each June, we highlight LGBTQ+ artists both past and present, and create spaces for building queer community. The festival has been commended by *The New Yorker* and listed by *The New York Times* as a 2022 “Best of Pride” event. During COVID lockdown in 2020, we hosted [ChamberQUEERantique](#), a free-to-access, sixteen-day online event that provided a platform for original work from over 50 queer musicians. ChamberQUEER regularly hosts concerts and community events, from reading parties to networking opportunities, throughout the year. During COVID, we focused on online and outdoor events, holding space for the community throughout the pandemic with Zoom happy hours, Instagram Live interviews with queer composers, educational webinars, and Zoom concerts in partnership with LGBTQ+ service organizations. Under the *ChamberQUEER Presents...* banner, we co-produce events that amplify the work of queer

artists. ChamberQUEER functions as a community promoter, helping to contract and support queer musicians nationwide, and as an advocacy group, engaging in residencies at educational institutions and building a free, online resource library for like-minded presenting institutions and performing ensembles. We have worked with Luna Lab, a composition program for young composers of marginalized genders; collaborated with the Canton Symphony Orchestra’s Orchestrating Change programs; and presented at the national conference of Chamber Music America. ChamberQUEER concerts have been presented by National Sawdust; WQXR at the Greene Space; Death of Classical at Greenwood Cemetery; Brooklyn Pride; Boulanger Initiative; and premiere New York brass quartet The Westerlies. Our founders and members have represented the organization as ambassadors at chamber music festivals, podcasts, public radio broadcasts, and residencies across the country.

JULES BIBER is a cellist, educator and musical curator based in Brooklyn, NY. An accomplished chamber musician and soloist, Jules’ versatility in early, standard and modern repertoire, as well as non-classical styles, makes her sought-after for a variety of high-profile concerts and recording projects, and her deep commitment to inclusive community has made her one of the city’s progressive curators of classical music spaces.

AVIVA JAYE (she/they) is a performing artist and composer primarily creating music, wielding voice, keys, harp, guitar and ukulele. She often combines acoustic and electronic

elements to unlock a portal for listeners to venture, exploring the dimensions of empathy, self-awareness, social justice and futurism. Her interdisciplinary work includes theatre, dance, paper arts and poetry. In addition to solo work, Aviva is a band member performing with Arthur Moon, Dessa, Echo Bloom and Raia Was. As a youth advocate, she has co-created with students as Program Associate with Brooklyn Youth Chorus and as a teaching artist with Marquis Studios and The Wooster Group in New York's city schools.

ALEXIS C. LAMB (b. 1993) is a composer, percussionist, and educator whose work seeks to highlight our natural, historical, and societal relationships. Much of her work incorporates storytelling, process over product, and listening and responding to our surroundings. Her recent commissions and collaborations include Third Coast Percussion, Albany (NY) Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, and Opera Omaha. She is a doctoral candidate in composition at the University of Michigan and has previously earned degrees from the Yale School of Music and Northern Illinois University. For more information about Alexis, please visit her website at www.alexislamb.com.

BRIAN MUMMERT sings, conducts, arranges, and composes music spanning eras and genres, all in the service of harnessing musical narrative as a mode for deepening mutual understanding. He is the founding artistic director of The New Consort, a nationally-acclaimed vocal ensemble dedicated to exploring the roles musical ritual and community play in our lives; and a co-founder The Red Ribbon Revue, a World AIDS Day concert featuring HIV+ performers celebrating the legacy of artists lost to AIDS.

RAJNA SWAMINATHAN is an acclaimed mridangam artist, vocalist, composer, and scholar. Described as “a vital new voice” (Pop Matters), her orientation as an improviser-composer blossomed through a search for resonance and fluidity among musical forms and aesthetic worlds. Since 2013, she has led the ensemble RAJAS, which has been a prominent medium for her expansive, boundary-breaking compositions. Rajna holds a PhD in Music (Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry) from Harvard University, and she is currently an Assistant Professor of Music (Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology) at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

DARIAN DONOVAN THOMAS is a Brooklyn-based composer, multi-instrumentalist, and interdisciplinary artist. He is interested in combining genres into a singular vocabulary that can express ideas about intersectionality (of medium and identity). Necessarily, he is interested in redacting all barriers to entry that have existed at the gates of any genre - this vocabulary of multiplicity will be intersectional, and therefore all-inclusive. He has received a Bachelors in Music Composition from The University of the Incarnate Word, and was a 2018 New Amsterdam Composer Lab Fellow, 2018 SoSI Composer Fellow, and 2019 Banglewood Composition Fellow. He is currently touring with Moses Sumney and Balùn.

YOSHI WEINBERG (they/them) is a New York City-based flutist, harpist, and composer. Lauded for their “sublime tone” and “creative interpretation and technical virtuosity” (*I Care If You Listen*), Yoshi is a dedicated performer of contemporary and experimental works, and

has performed as a soloist across North America and Europe including at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall. Roulette Intermedium (NYC) the Fitzgerald Theater (St. Paul, MN), the Ordway Center (St. Paul, MN), Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada), Mahaiwe Theater (Great Barrington, MA), Orchestra Hall (Minneapolis, MN), Gesellschaftshaus (Magdeburg, Germany), Fondation des États-Unis (Paris, France), among

many others. They currently are Artistic Director of InfraSound, and founding member and flutist for Apply Triangle. Yoshi is currently studying their DMA in Flute Performance at CUNY Graduate Center, studying with Robert Dick. They received their MM in Contemporary Performance from Manhattan School of Music, and their BM in Flute Performance from Saint Olaf College.

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www.chamberqueer.org



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