

## Acknowledgements

The autumn concert title *How To Fall Slowly* suggests falling foliage—and perhaps slowly descending phrases. Yet the music presented tonight is not limited to this concept...

Appreciation can be offered to the “usual culprits” who work behind the scenes to support these concerts, yet there is nothing “usual” about Tufts Composers events or the people who make them possible. Things happen at the last minute. Music suddenly appears, and what to do with it is often a question even when walking onstage. Thus, appreciation must be expressed unabashedly to Anna Griffis, who not only performs these new works, but as Coordinator of Public relations and Music Box Office, leads the preparation of publicity materials and programs. Jeffrey Rawitsch, Granoff Music Center Manager, lends his warm yet precise leadership and constant support for the work we do here through countless “saves.”

Tonight’s concert is arrayed with an extraordinary lineup of Guest and Faculty Artists: Amy Advocat, Emmanuel Feldman, Anna Griffis, Lilit Hartunian, Thomas Stumpf, and the stellar performers of the Into the Light Ensemble, led by Mark Bolan Konigsmark.

Our Guest Composers—Professors Emeriti TJ Anderson Jr and Mark DeVoto; and Ryan Vigil, an alumnus of graduate music program (among his many other credentials)—lend their singular musical voices to tonight’s proceedings.

With thanks to all!



*Department of Music Presents*



TUFTS MUSIC PRESENTS

## HOW TO FALL SLOWLY

**Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at 8:00 p.m.**  
**Distler Performance Hall**



*Perry & Marty Granoff Music Center  
20 Talbot Avenue, Tufts University  
Medford, Massachusetts*

Tufts University Department of Music Presents

## Tufts Composers: How to Fall Slowly

Featuring Guest and Faculty Artists Amy Advocat, clarinet; Emmanuel Feldman, cello;  
Anna Griffis, viola; Lilit Hartunian, violin; John McDonald, piano;  
Thomas Stumpf, piano; and the Into the Light Ensemble

And Highlighting Guest Composers TJ Anderson, Jr., Mark DeVoto and Ryan Vigil

**Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at 8:00 p.m.**

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*Granoff Music Center, Tufts University*

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### PROGRAM

#### Betty Gains Set

**growing up and made-up words** (2019)

Kyra Link

**Happy Birthday Betty Gains** (2018)

TJ Anderson, Jr. (b. 1928)

**What Sprang From TJ Anderson Jr's *Happy Birthday Betty Gains*** (2019)

John McDonald

**Happy Birthday Betty Gains** (2019)

Jeannette Chechile

*Kyra Link, soprano; John McDonald, piano*

One of my favorite parts of composing is writing expression markings. No matter how much I may struggle with finding a crunchy enough harmonic progression, or coming up with a title, or writing program notes, I'll always have more expression markings than I know what to do with. So, because I'm fond of them, here are all the expression markings in growing up & made-up words. If you get bored during the performance, you can play a game where you try to match the marking to the music -- sadly, there's no prize for winning.

mp sub., sparkling • catastrophe! • sentimental, but not cloyingly so • playfully • with tenderness • romantic and naive, a 50s couples skate • p sub., timidly • zhuzhed a little • spiraling out of control (KL)

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This group of four short pieces has its roots in TJ Anderson's vocal solo Happy Birthday Betty Gains, a dolcissimo greeting made for his friend Betty on her hundredth birthday. TJ sent it to me in December 2018—which also means he wrote this unique appreciation when he was already 90 himself.

Anderson's music inspired the three responses programmed here. Kyra Link's comprehensive participation as both vocal performer and composer (see program notes above) precedes What Sprang From TJ Anderson Jr's Happy Birthday Betty Gains, my pianistic reaction to the energy and sweetness of Anderson's a cappella "theme," and Jeannette Chechile's re-setting for which "a bass line and accompaniment" was devised to underscore an altered version of the vocal line [Chechile received her Tufts MA in Music under Anderson's tutelage].

This group of musical responses celebrates both Betty Gains and TJ's indefatigable creativity. Anderson, now 91, forwarded me the score for a newly composed piece for narrator, euphonium, and tuba just the other day! He continues to stir up the music. (JMcD)

**Dragon Fly** (2019)

Mark Bolan Konigsmark

*Members of the Into the Light Ensemble: Rose Hegele, soprano; Ana Luisa Diaz de Cossio, violin;*

*Bo Konigsmark, flute; Alya Izumchensky, piano; Kunal Gala, percussion*

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*Please silence all electronic devices during the performance.*

so heart-breaking that I was not up to writing a piece "for" this event in the traditional sense. Rather, I reacted musically to the haunting and striking visual effects of the fire. The harsher realities stay with me in other ways. [JH]

### Texts

#### ***Happy Birthday Betty Gains***

Text and Music by TJ Anderson, Jr.

Happy Birthday Betty Gains.

One hundred years of joy and still making friends.

Archives you have given, raised a family too.

Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday Betty Gains.

#### ***Dragon Fly***

Text and Music by Mark Bolan Konigsmark

Stop!

Stealing!

Thief! Crook! Cheater!

Leech! Liar

Moron! Monster

Can I find someone true?

Fly away

You know it's true, just confess

You're a liar, and have cheated me

For the last time

I am not afraid of you

I am strong

I think we knew it would go this way

Before long

You know I always wanted it to

Be another way, never stray

Stay, quietly, unseen

Go forth by day

In the light

#### ***The Moon***

Music by Mark Bolan Konigsmark; Text from Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Dream*

I dreamed that I was dead and crossed the heavens,--

Heavens after heavens with burning feet and swift,--

And cried: "O God, where art Thou?" I left one

On earth, whose burden I would pray Thee lift.

I was so dead I wondered at no thing,--

Not even that the angels slowly turned

Their faces, speechless, as I hurried by

(Beneath my feet the golden pavements burned)

My three short piano pieces were composed two years ago as a "Triptychon" for the 80th birthday of my friend Harro Stammerjohann and were performed at a party in Frankfurt-am-Main. (MDeV)

**Duetos para Viola y Violoncello** (2019) Joseph E. Rondeau  
1. Cantando  
2. Combinando  
3. Descendiendo  
*Anna Griffis, viola; Emmanuel Feldman, cello*

Duetos para Viola y Violoncello is meant to be heard as two soloists performing together, perhaps like a double concerto without the orchestra behind them. At times they sing in harmony, occasionally accompanying each other, and at times they finish each other's musical sentences, as it were. This work for the "lower half of a string quartet" started as a simple showcase and evolved into three varied movements presenting just some of the two instruments' varied capabilities.

Cantando, Combinando, and Descendiendo, though expressively disparate, share the goal of discovering different instrumental combinations and possibilities within similar ranges. (JR)

**Three Ideas for Piano** (2019) Stephanie Rifkin  
1. Notes  
2. More Notes  
3. Even More Notes  
*John McDonald, piano*

**Darkness** (2019) Yasaman Ghodsi  
*Anna Griffis, viola; Emmanuel Feldman, cello; Pascale Delache-Feldman, double bass*

**Two Piano Pieces** (2019) Samuel Graber-Hahn  
1. In Little Falls, NY  
2. In Herkimer, NY (Movement 1)  
*Thomas Stumpf, piano*

**Scars, black and green** (2019) Jacquelyn Hazle  
*Amy Advocat, clarinet; Lilit Hartunian, violin; John McDonald, piano*

I'm from the small Southern California beach city of Ventura. It has hills that sit along the coastline and further inland near the valleys and they show different faces. There's the bright and brilliant green after a good rainstorm comes down. There's the dull, muted brown during bad droughts. After the Thomas Fire scorched the land in December 2017, a bizarre black seemed to scar Ventura. This black was violent and haunting, yet calm, still, dead. The sheer violence of the fire now gone still practically screamed through the black. But there was also the stagnant tranquility of indifferent and indiscriminate death. A year passed and more rain came. The brilliant green that almost glows peered through to intrude on the black scar. The green and black intermingled, juxtaposing and coexisting.

Scars, black and green uses different musical textures, timbres, and registers inspired by Ventura's different faces: the green, vibrantly healthy face; the strangely serene, black-scarred, traumatized face; and the face of Ventura when it bore both its scars and its healing.

Two lives and over a thousand structures are now lost because of the Thomas Fire. The subsequent mudslide resulting from later rains and structurally weakened soil took at least twenty-one more lives. It was not a natural wildfire or an expected seasonal event. These realities are

Dragon Fly signifies change. It first explores a dreary and somewhat agitated world of pessimism but also stumbles into the light and forgets. It changes. The lyrics evolve into a clearer message, speaking to those who have been harassed, taken advantage of or emotionally abused in some way. Through honesty, courage can be found. Through music, truth can be procured. Be an instrument of change. Go forth by day and continue the fight against corruption, and live your life as an example of virtue and strength, every day. (MBK)

**The Moon** (2019) MB Konigsmark  
*Rose Hegele, soprano; Alya Izumchensky, piano; Kunal Gala, vibraphone*

**It All Turns To Nothing** (2018) Wen Gao  
*Amy Advocat, clarinet; Lilit Hartunian, violin; John McDonald, piano*

Memory can sometimes be like the echo of a deep valley, sometimes like a bright flame. It can heal, it can hurt—like an overburdened struggle, a helpless compromise. When the heart is at peace, the light of a new moon shines; when in inner frenzy, it devours the mind like a devil. Who smiles when time stops and all returns to nothing? (WG)

**[untitled]** (2019) Ryan Vigil  
*Lilit Hartunian, violin; John McDonald, piano*

This untitled work for violin and piano was written specifically for Lilit Hartunian and John McDonald. The piece travels through three distinct sound worlds, with no material overlap. The first is a sort of "string," in which duration, register, and the unpredictable application of clusters in the bass register of the piano interact to trace an abstract but not random outline. The violin and piano work together to produce one sound. The second is really a single idea; reiterated but never repeated literally, the idea is put down as effortlessly as it was picked up. The third is a sonorous schmeer where resonant piano chords and soaring (but probably not lyrical) violin harmonics coexist but do not interpenetrate. Nevertheless, in a very different manner from the first section, the violin and piano, together, produce one sound. Whereas many pieces consist of the accumulation of energies, leading to a type of climax, followed by a judicious "coming down," the architecture of this piece—where the final section lasts longer than the first two sections combined—is essentially non-narrative, inviting a more "plastic" kind of listening. (RV)

## INTERMISSION

**Myst** (2019) Emmanuel Feldman  
*John McDonald, piano*

This piece for piano solo explores the sonic pathways of a questioning five note figure that centers below middle C and starts off the piece. These five notes remain present and unaltered in pitch throughout the piece acting as melody, harmony and as chords and ostinato figuration while voices above and below accompany and echo their implied harmonic structure. (EF)

**Three Short Piano Pieces** (2018) Mark DeVoto  
Flucht  
Romanza sans paroles  
Menuettino  
*Thomas Stumpf, piano*