

Harvard Group
for New Music

**catinblack
ensemble**

Supported by the Fromm Foundation

SPM
April 24, 2025

John Knowles Paine Hall
Harvard University

catinblack ensemble

SOFIA VON ATZINGEN

viola

EMA GRČMAN

cello

JAVAD JAVADZADE

contrabass

DARCY COPELAND

eroding sky; a new and brighter star 2025

ISAAC ROTH BLUMFIELD

The Great Emptying 2025

IV. Desert of Magic Breath

V. First Disappearance: Fading Magic, Distant Cries

VI. Second Mirage: Witches' Fugue

VII. Thread of Light

VIII. Second Disappearance: Lacerations, Cries

IX. Third Mirage: Ghosts' Trio-Aria

INTERMISSION

WEILU GE, NITHYA SHIKARPUR, HUGO FLORES GARCIA

Cat in loop x Catinblack 2025

VICTOR ARUL

4 million cats, 1 goose, 05 armchairs 2025

MARISSE CATO

***ELASTIC*(mother)** 2025

Please join us following the concert for a reception in the Taft Lounge downstairs

A b o u t t h e m u s i c

DARCY COPELAND

eroding sky; a new and brighter star 2025

for low string trio and singing snare and bass drums

(my grief is a compass)

we searched ~~breathlessly~~ for a new world as the sky fell down around us.
even then, we admitted it was beautiful.

(i search for love in every world and i find it every time)

BIO Darcy Copeland is a composer raised in rural Michigan and now based in Boston, MA. She composes as a means of personal inquiry and to explore the strangeness and beauty of thinking, moving, feeling, and being in a ravaged world. Her work thinks of sound as a portal which alchemizes our present moment into a site of vibrant possibility.

Darcy is a PhD candidate at Harvard University, having joined the program in 2022. She holds a master of music in composition from the University of Washington in Seattle, WA and a bachelor of music in composition from Columbia College Chicago in Chicago, IL.

darcycopeland.com

ISAAC ROTH BLUMFIELD

The Great Emptying 2025

. "The Great Emptying" is a multi-movement work for catinblack ensemble, scored for viola, cello, and double bass. This performance will be of movements 4 through 9, entitled:

IV. Desert of Magic Breath

V. First Disappearance: Fading Magic, Distant Cries

VI. Second Mirage: Witches' Fugue

VII. Thread of Light

VIII. Second Disappearance: Lacerations, Cries

IX. Third Mirage: Ghosts' Trio-Aria

BIO Isaac Roth Blumfield is a composer from Saint Paul, Minnesota, whose music looks for uncanny places and expressions that embrace the beauty, pain, and strangeness of life. He studied composition and electronics in Boston, Basel, and Vienna with Stratis Minakakis, Timothy McCormack, Caspar Johannes Walter, Svetlana Maraš, and Clara Iannotta. He is currently pursuing a PhD at Harvard University, studying with Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku.

WEILU GE, NITHYA SHIKARPUR, HUGO FLORES GARCIA

Cat in loop x Catinblack 2025

Cat in loop x Catinblack is a new work for string trio and generative AI music system, exploring the collective imagination of cat musicality. Through an interactive and recursive process of listening, playing, and performing, we collaboratively brought an imaginative CAT to life—enacting a posthuman subject-in-progress: a relational, embedded, and embodied “we” that moves fluidly across environmental, cognitive, technological, visual, and sonic realities. ‘Vampnet’, developed by Hugo Flores Garcia, is a AI model trained to re-write parts of an audio input, i.e. “vamp” on it. Fine-tuned on cat-inspired audio data - mixing real, synthetic and imagined cat gesture sounds, this model allows us to creatively reinterpret sounds in a cat-like manner both in expected and unexpected ways. We procedurally adapted the system with creative inputs from the catinblack ensemble and engineers during a four-session HGNM residency at Harvard. Throughout the process, a palette of sonic and gestural vocabularies was co-developed with the ensemble as the piece gradually took shape.

Concept & Artistic Direction by Weilu Ge

AI system in collaboration with Nithya Shikarpur and Hugo Flores Garcia

BIO Weilu Ge is a composer and media artist based in Cambridge, MA. She works with various media forms, from concert music, installation, performance to video and innovative technology. Her works explore theatrical expressions of sonic, visual and spatial media, taking composition as critical means to examine relationships between power, system, body, and technology in a social-cultural context. Situated at the intersection of music, art, technology, media theory, STS, and speculative design,

her research-creation investigates creative and critical applications of listening in social-cultural and cross-disciplinary contexts. Weilu's works have been

presented at festivals and conferences internationally. Her recent spatial compositions have been performed in numerous planetariums and immersive spaces around the world including SAT Montreal (CA), Artechhouse NYC (US), Museum of Science Boston (US), MUTEX (MX) Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie (FR), Melbourne Planetarium (AU), C-LAB (TW), Berlin Zeiss Planetarium (GE), Fiske Planetarium (US), Planetarium 1 (RU) among others. Weilu holds an Inter-school MFA in Art and Technology & Composition & Experimental Sound Practice with a concentration in Integrated Media from California Institute of the Arts. She is a PhD Candidate in Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry at Harvard University.

Nithya Shikarpur is a first-year PhD student at MIT advised by Prof. Cheng-Zhi Anna Huang. She is interested in the modeling of human-AI interactive systems for music creation, especially for low-resource genres of music. Earlier she was at Université de Montréal and Mila for her M.Sc. where she worked with Prof. Cheng-Zhi Anna Huang, where she developed a generative model for Hindustani vocal music and studied human-AI interaction through a user study. She is also a practitioner and performer of Hindustani classical vocal music and draws on this knowledge to further her research projects.

Hugo Flores García (he/they) is a Honduran computer musician, improviser, programmer, and scientist. Hugo's creative practice spans improvised music for guitars, sound objects and electronics, sound installations, bespoke digital musical instruments, and interactive art. He is a PhD candidate at Northwestern University, doing research at the intersection of applied machine learning, music, and human-computer interaction. Hugo's research centers around designing new instruments for creative expression, focusing on artist-centered machine learning interfaces for the sound arts.

VICTOR ARUL

4 million cats, 1 goose, 0.5 armchairs 2025

This piece is about being after Weilu's piece and being before Marisse's piece.

BIO Victor Arul is a composer from Perth, Western Australia. He holds undergraduate degrees from the Universities of Melbourne and Western Australia. Prior to his studies at Harvard, Victor has had the privilege of receiving compositional guidance from James Ledger, Olivia Davies, Elliott Gyger, Christopher Tonkin, Tim Dargaville, Miriama Young, Stuart Greenbaum, Melody Eötvös, and Iain Grandage.

MARISSE CATO

ELASTIC(mother) 2025

ELASTIC(mother) opens a series of possibilities concerning practicing loving and being loved. It goes through phases of navigating the realms of language, to symbols, to physicality, and toward a dissolution of any articulatable knowledge that also rejects its own ineffability through practice. It falls back on language, semantics and acts in its uncompromising commitment to becoming.

BIO Marisse Cato is a London-born composer/scholar. After studying violin at Junior Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, she went on to complete an undergraduate in Music at Selwyn College, University of Cambridge, focusing on composition and Afro-diasporic sound knowledges. Marisse is continuing her research and practice in a PhD with the Music Department at Harvard University studying with Chaya Czernowin, Jessie Cox and Yvette Janine Jackson.

She uses sound as a way to explore processes of transmission, revision, and re-making with regard to Blackness and conceives sound as a spatialised as well as temporal form. She has received commissions for stand-alone compositions and performances from Holst Singers, Siglo de Oro, JAM, Devon Philharmonic Orchestra in partnership with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Cambridge New Music Group among others. She works with sound installation, fixed media and collaborates across artistic disciplines including fashion, film, visual art and dance. She is currently the 2025-27 Siglo de Oro Composer in Residence.

A b o u t t h e m u s i c i a n s

The **catinblack ensemble** is a low string trio (viola, cello and contrabass) with musicians from different parts of the world who have developed a common sound and a strong connection with each other in a short time. They performed at the NOW! Festival 2021 and were selected for a concert with WDR live recording in the “WDR 3 Campus Concerts” series in the same year. In 2022 and 2023 they were selected by the Music Fund for the NEUSTARTKULTUR program “FEB-II and FEB-III - Funding for Ensembles and Bands”. catinblack's repertoire focuses on the music of our time for viola, cello and contrabass in solo, duo and trio settings. In 2023 they premiered a one hour long piece “being-sent” for “singing low string trio”, which the composer Jonah Haven wrote for them. In the same year they collaborated with composer Chaya Czernowin on her new work “Poetica” and recorded it at the renown IRCAM Institute in Paris. A particular concern of the ensemble is to experiment with new concert formats and concepts and to seek collaboration with contemporary artists in order to develop new sound worlds.

Sofia von Atzingen studied viola at the UFMG in Belo Horizonte/Brazil and at the University of Music Karlsruhe. Her enthusiasm for contemporary music led her to complete a Master's degree in New Music with Barbara Maurer at the Folkwang University of the Arts and a doctorate on the solo sonata for viola by B.A. Zimmermann at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). From 2016 to 2018 she taught as professor for viola at the State University of Minas Gerais (UEMG) in Brazil and is currently a substitute teacher at the Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe in Germany. She is a founding member of the ensemble catinblack and has been a violist with Ensemble Recherche since 2022.

Emma Grčman is a versatile cellist based in Europe whose recent performances have focused on interdisciplinary collaborations with her chamber music ensembles Trio LYS, ensemble aurōrae and Quartensprung. She has studied with renowned cellists and pedagogues including Valter Dešpalj, Julian Arp, Torleif Thedeen and Thomas Demenga. Her festival appearances include the Stift Festival, Enescu Festival, Tartini Festival, Ljubljana Festival, Davos Festival and many others. One of her most memorable performances was her debut in Ljubljana, where she captivated audiences with Brahms' iconic Double Concerto with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra. Emma has also been an academy member of the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss Orchestra and the Bern Symphony Orchestra. She as well performs with orchestras such as the O/Modernt Chamber Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and as solo cellist with the Folkwang Kammerorchester. Since 2023 she is cellist of the ensemble catinblack.

Javad Javadzade graduated from the Uzeyir Hajibeyli Academy of Music in Baku with a Bachelor's degree and from the Folkwang University of the Arts with a Master's degree. Since 2022 he has been studying for his concert exam with Niek de Groot at the Folkwang UdK (Essen), and in 2020 he was selected to perform contemporary works for solo double bass as part of the WDR 3 Campus Concerts. He was the double bass of the Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra and was later appointed principal bass of the Georgian Philharmonic Orchestra. Javad is a laureate of the J.M. Sperger Competition/Germany and first prize winner of the 18th EUTERPE International Music Competition in Corato/Italy. Works by contemporary composers such as Jalal Abbasov, Rufat Ramazanov, Rahilia Hasanova, Dmitri N. Smirnov, Elena Firsova, Hana Ajiashvili and others have been dedicated to him and premiered by him. Javad is a regular guest of Klangforum Wien and Les Dissonances (France). He is a founding member of the catinblack ensemble, a string trio specialising in contemporary music.

A b o u t H G N M

Darcy Copeland

Director

**Victor Arul, Jelani Surpris, Sonja Mutić, Golnaz Shariatzadeh, Isaac Roth
Blumfield, Marisse Gato, Weilu Ge**

Members

Established in 1984, Harvard Group for New Music brings together the community of graduate student composers at Harvard University. The primary purpose of HGNM is to perform works by its membership, to develop musical and professional relationships beyond the group, and to provide fora for regular critical discussion with weekly presentations from current students as well as guest speakers.

hgnm.org



A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s

Chaya Czernowin

Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music

Hans Tutschku

Fanny P. Mason Professor of Music & Director of HUSEAC

Nancy Shafman

Director of Administration

Kalan Chang

Financial Manager

Beth Mullins

Director of Events

Seth Torres

HUSEAC Technical Director

Kai Crull

Brid Coogan

Eva Kim

Kelli Alvarez

Music Department Staff

Peter Charig

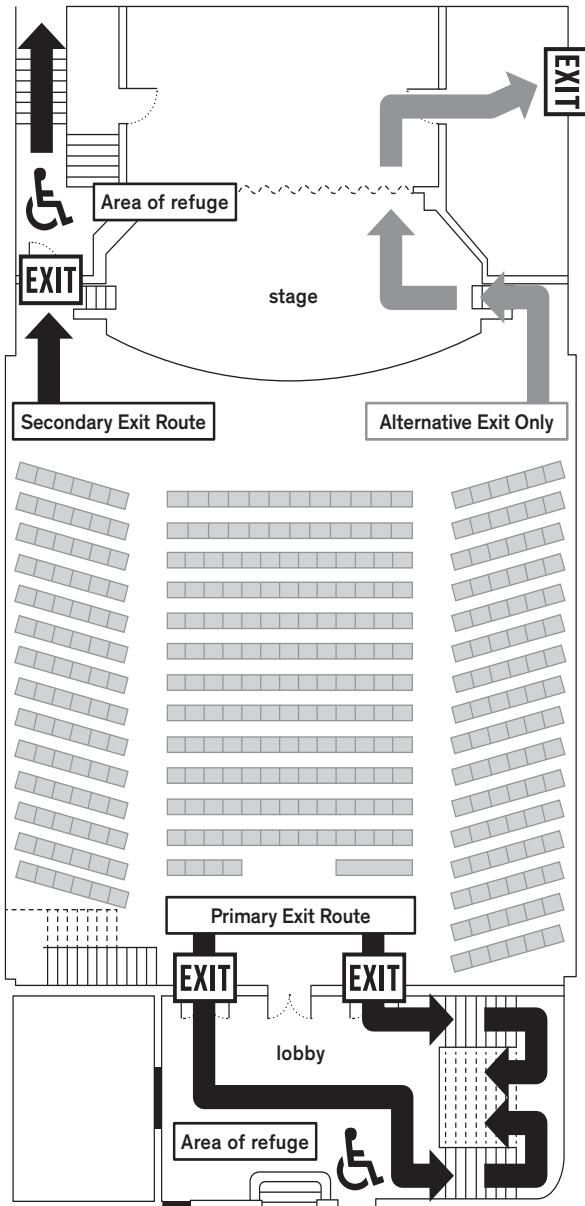
John Pax

Angela McNamara

*A very special thank you to the **Fromm Foundation** for their support of this residency.*

John Knowles Paine Hall

For your safety, please note the location of the nearest emergency exit:



2024-25 Concert Season

Saturday, 9 November 2024

The Riolo Concert

Duo XAMP

Friday, 28 February 2025

The Thelma E. Goldberg Concert

Yarn/Wire

Thursday, 24 April 2025

supported by the Fromm Foundation

▶ catinblack ensemble

All concerts are free and open to the public.

John Knowles Paine Hall, Harvard University Music Building.