

*Composer Portraits*

# Jean-Baptiste Barrière

—◆◆◆—  
Saturday, March 29, 8:00 p.m.  
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*Please note that photography and the use of recording devices are not permitted. Remember to turn off all cellular phones and pagers before tonight's performance begins. Miller Theatre is wheelchair accessible. Large print programs are available upon request. For more information or to arrange accommodations, please call 212-854-7799.*

*Composer Portraits*

# Jean-Baptiste Barrière

Saturday, March 29, 8:00 p.m.

Jean-Baptiste Barrière, *conception, composition, computer music, and image realization*

Aliisa Neige Barrière, *violin*

Aleksi Barrière, *dramaturgy, scenography*

Nathan Davis, *percussion*

Isabelle Barrière, *live cameras*

Camilla Hoitenga, *recorded flute*

Thomas Goepfer, *musical assistant*

Raphaële Kennedy, *soprano, recitant*

Margaret Lancaster, *flutes*



*Chréode* (1983)

Jean-Baptiste Barrière (b. 1958)

*Crossing the Blind Forest* (2011, rev. 2014) **world premiere, new version**

*Violance* (2003) **U.S. premiere, violin version**

*Time Dusts* (2001, rev. 2014) **world premiere, new version**

*Ekstasis* (2013) **world premiere, Miller Theatre commission**

This program runs approximately ninety minutes.  
Please note that there will be no gaps between pieces.



Major support for Composer Portraits is provided by  
the National Endowment for the Arts and  
the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts.

This program is made possible, in part, through the generosity of the French-American Fund for Contemporary Music, a program of FACE with major support from the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, SACEM, Institut Français, the Florence Gould Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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# About the Program

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*Electronic devices for sound and video capture are not simply recorders; they modify reality. Not only do they send back images to us – literally and metaphorically – but they allow us, even force us, to get some distance from them, and therefore also allow us the possibility of taking up a new position in relation to them....*

*To allow new art to develop is to allow it to change us. What would be the use of art, if it was not to change the world, even just for a moment?*

- Jean-Baptiste Barrière

## **Introduction** by Paul Griffiths

Born in Paris in 1958, Jean-Baptiste Barrière was just twenty-three when he joined the research team at IRCAM. His studies at the Sorbonne, in mathematical logic as well as music, had prepared him for a part in two of the institution's early programming endeavors: CHANT, whose goal was to synthesize sounds like those of the singing voice, and FORMES, which had to do with structure and composition. Out of this work came the nine-minute piece we hear first on tonight's program, *Chréode*. At the same time, Barrière acted as technical assistant to many of the composers who arrived to work at IRCAM, including Kaija Saariaho, who became his wife in 1984.

He and Saariaho worked together that year on *Collisions*, a multi-media show directed by Pierre Friloux and Françoise Gedanken for the Ars Eletronica festival in Linz. Collaborations with visual artists, on video projects and virtual-reality installations, followed from this. With Friloux again he worked on *Venus Hybrid*, a sculpture incorporating video screens and computer music that was on view inside one of the piers of Brooklyn Bridge in 1988. Since then he has worked with some of the foremost exponents of virtual art, including Catherine Ikam and Louis Fléri (*Le Messager*, 1995; *Alex*, 1996), and Maurice Benayoun (numerous works, beginning with *World Skin*, 1997).

In 1998 Barrière left IRCAM to concentrate on creative work, which by now included audio-visual presentations of his own – notably his *Reality Checks* series, to which

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*Violance* and *Time Dusts* belong. A new aspect of his work also opened up, purely visual: creating computer-generated video displays for concert performances of operas. He is currently composer-in-residence at the Columbia Computer Music Center.

Often collaborative, nearly always multiform, frequently depending on interactions between live participants (whether musicians, dancers, or spectators) and computer-stored material, Barrière's work does not lend itself easily to normal recording media – which makes this concert an especially rare and valuable event. *Chréode* appears in the Computer Music Currents series of CDs on Wergo, and his music for the Peter Greenaway show *100 Objects to Represent the World* (1997) is also available on CD. Some clips from later works are up on YouTube; further information may be found on his website.

### **Program Notes** by Jean-Baptiste Barrière

#### ***Chréode*** (1983)

“Chréode,” or in English “creode,” is a term borrowed from biology, where it designates the developmental path of a cell as it takes its place in a tissue or organ. It serves here as a metaphor for a cross-systematic investigation of sonic materials and organizations. Though the sonic materials were created with care, attention is more on organization. *Chréode* is the first step towards a grammar of processes I wanted to try to elaborate.

This research on musical processes, their fields of action and their limits, is a strategy of approaching the musical territory, as it has been renewed by the possibilities brought in by computers.

A very general purpose of this project, using the CHANT and FORMES programs developed at IRCAM, was to experiment with different types of organization, and at a higher level to structure them in time and formally.

The piece won the Prix de la Musique Numérique at the Concours International de Musique Electro-acoustique in Bourges in 1983. It is dedicated to the CHANT/FORMES project and to Kaija Saariaho.

#### ***Crossing the Blind Forest*** (2011, rev. 2014)

*Crossing the Blind Forest* is a piece for flutes (bass flute and piccolo), electronics, and images, composed especially for and dedicated to Camilla Hoitenga, who gave the première in New York in September 2011. This evening, she is the recorded flutist, with Margaret Lancaster playing live.

The piece is a kind of evocation of Maurice Maeterlinck's play *Les Aveugles* (The Blind), itself based loosely on the similarly titled painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, and is a revisiting and development of the flute materials I composed for the multimedia show *Deux Songes de Maeterlinck d'après Bruegel* (Two Dreams of Maeterlinck after Bruegel), first performed by Hoitenga at the Festival Les Musiques in Marseilles in May 2007.

In this new piece, the flutist is in a certain way playing the character of the blind people lost in the forest, the people of the Maeterlinck play. She is lost in an unknown world, and must heighten all her sensations and skills in order to try to survive the dangers all around her.

The virtuoso flute playing is challenged by sophisticated electronic transformations in an uncertain conflict, one whose outcome may be left open, undecided. Images, mixing cross-transformations of the live performance of the flutist with images of forests devastated by storm, are meant to represent and accompany this quest undertaken by means of the senses.

### ***Violance*** (2003)

*"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."*

- Matthew ii.16

*Violance* proceeds from the search for a new scenic and musical form, merging instrumental writing, images, texts, and sounds transformed by computer. The piece belongs to my *Reality Checks* cycle, which includes interactive installations, stage pieces, and concert works. All are investigations, by means of the senses, into questions of identity and representation in the digital age, as explored and renewed by bringing about dynamic interactions between artistic disciplines in computer-assisted creative work.

This cycle includes, among other works, a piece for cello and electronics, *Cellitude* (a compound of "cello" and "solitude"), based on an old Japanese poem on the difficulty of distinguishing between dream and reality. *Violance* is its continuation in spirit, this time concerned with the idea of violence.



The piece starts out from the Massacre of the Innocents as described in Matthew's gospel, painted again by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, and given a literary interpretation, after this painting by Maurice Maeterlinck, then a young poet. I have adapted Maeterlinck's text to develop its universal dimension, outside of any religious and nationalistic context, and unfold its span for all times and places.

Materials are staged, assembled, and processed, together with other sources from various origins, to propose an enigmatic re-reading, a *mise en abîme* altogether of the myth, the painting, and the poem, an attempt at an extra-temporal reflection on the representation of violence and war.

A timeless African lullaby, computer-analyzed, produced melodic interpolations for the violin part and harmonic textures for the electronic. The "child's voice" reciting the text is created in real time from that of Raphaële Kennedy, and the visual aspect combines prepared imagery with live capture.

The work was commissioned by the French government and performed for the first time at the Théâtre de La Criée, Marseilles, in May 2003.

***Time Dusts*** (2001, rev. 2014)

*Time Dusts* reworks and develops percussion materials composed for Peter Greenaway's show *100 Objects to Represent the World*. Unloosed from their scenic context and from some related referential elements, they recover their abstract and formal nature, proceeding from musical ideas that are important to me, of timbral and rhythmic interpolations. The percussion materials also allowed me to develop, in this version commissioned and first presented by the Groupe de Recherches Musicales in 2001, interactions between sonic and visual processes, which proceed from the same formal preoccupations. To conclude, they helped me in a quest for a form of abstract narrativity in music.

A relatively restricted set of instruments (bell plate, low cow bell, and tympani, Korean gong, Chinese cymbal, log drum, bongos, temple blocks, snare drum, crotales), was chosen to represent the different timbre families on a sort of conceptual map. Categories defined as such were then used to elaborate interpolations, formal developments that constitute paths through the sonic material represented. A similar approach was carried out for rhythm, starting from archetypes, rhythmic characters.

Music then proceeds from explorations of qualities of time, light, and color, and also of language games, these appearing progressively in the electronics.

Each of the percussion player's gestures is prolonged by the computer, triggering bits of language, processing of the sound of the instruments, synthesis of musical fragments, and also prepared sequences and processing of live images of the percussionist, as well as of different natural sources that were pre-recorded.

Like *Violance* and *Cellitude*, *Time Dusts* belongs to the *Reality Checks* series, which stages interactive situations under the form of installations, as well as concert pieces under the form of performances, both based on the confrontation, in one case of the spectator, in the other of the musician, to his or her own reflection and its electronic becomings.

Sounds and images, captured and transformed in real time, are mixed and interpolated with pre-recorded sources coming from percussion instruments and other origins, mainly natural.

Thus the electronic involvement prolongs the instrumental writing, reveals a hidden becoming of the instruments (cf. Gérard Grisey: "Music is the becoming of sounds"). In this case, vowels and consonants prolong percussive attacks and resonances, quasi-obsessional pulsations and polyrhythms, to become figures in a musical dramaturgy that takes place at the borders of music, language, and image.

### ***Ekstasis*** (2014)

Louise Michel and Simone Weil: two women committed to the great struggles of their respective times, women whose lives, together with their political, philosophical, and poetic writings, offer us extraordinary testimonies. Two women, seemingly separated by many circumstances, but as one – especially in making us understand the necessity, unfortunately always renewed, of the fight, without any possible concession, against the unacceptable, in society as well as in our minds.

*Ekstasis*, a piece for soprano, electronics, and video display, takes the form of a double portrait, or better, a cross-portrait, which oscillates between the background noise of the violence of the world and the internal silence of reflection, hesitates between engagement in armed struggle and withdrawal into the self in search of the absolute. Here are two experiences that proceed from the *ekstasis*, the "stepping aside," outside of



normality, or outside of the world, two feminine singularities asserting themselves during the era of the masses (cf. Elias Canetti: *Masses and Power*) to encounter the utopia of a reconciled community.

These women knew, in the one case, the noise and the fury of the Commune, in the other that of the Second World War. Witnesses of the social violence of their times, they held great hopes, smashed in great disappointments. They knew, too, the uprooting of forced exile: imprisonment for the one, resulting in the revealing discovery of another oppressed culture in New Caledonia, and for the other an emigration that led to ultimate disillusion, exhaustion, and death in England.

*Ekstasis* is built on two extremely strong and contrasted poems: “La Porte” (The Gate, 1941) by Simone Weil, and “Pensée dernière” (Last Thought, 1887) by Louise Michel. While Simone Weil evokes waiting at the threshold of the experience of the sacred, Louise Michel delivers the song of indignation and the exhortation to fight.

The two women are incarnated by a single soprano, varying between registers and colors, a voice with two faces, a character with two dimensions, closely intertwined. Meanwhile, other fragments of the two women’s writings, related to the chosen poems, are sung by a recorded “choir” of the same soprano multi-tracked, processed and spatialized around the audience by electronic means.

The electronics include a studio-recorded part, triggered during the performance, and a real-time part with transformations and de-multiplication of the voice, but also with voice synthesis, using especially the techniques developed at IRCAM and other musical research centers with which I have collaborated, such as the Computer Music Center at Columbia.

The visual part extends the vocal and electronic sound in an abstract way, transporting in real time the face of the singer into virtual sets evoking the characters’ emotional evolution.

*A complementary note about this concert can be found on Jean-Baptiste Barrière’s website at the following address: <http://www.barriere.org/Miller2014.html>*

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# Texts and Translations

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from Ekstasis

**“La Porte”** (The Gate) by Simone Weil

*Ouvrez-nous donc la porte et nous verrons  
les vergers. / Nous boirons leur eau froide  
où la lune a mis sa trace.*

*La longue route brûle ennemie aux  
étrangers. / Nous errons sans savoir et ne  
trouvons nulle place.*

*Nous voulons voir des fleurs. Ici la soif est  
sur nous. / Attendant et souffrant, nous  
voici devant la porte.*

*S'il le faut nous romprons cette porte avec  
nos coups. / Nous pressons et poussons,  
mais la barrière est trop forte.*

*Il faut languir, attendre et regarder  
vainement. / Nous regardons la porte ; elle  
est close, inébranlable.*

*Nous y fixons nos yeux ; nous pleurons sous  
le tourment ; / Nous la voyons toujours ; le  
poids du temps nous accable.*

*La porte est devant nous ; que nous sert-  
il de vouloir ? / Il vaut mieux s'en aller  
abandonnant l'espérance.*

*Nous n'entrerons jamais. Nous sommes  
las de la voir. / La porte en s'ouvrant laissa  
passer tant de silence*

*Que ni les vergers ne sont parus ni nulle  
fleur ; / Seul l'espace immense où sont le  
vide et la lumière*

*Fut soudain présent de part en part, combla  
le cœur, / Et lava les yeux presque aveugles  
sous la poussière.*

Open us the gate, and we will see the  
orchards, / We will drink their cold water  
where the moon left its trace,  
The long road burns enemy to strangers. /  
We wander without knowing, and cannot  
find a place.

We want to see flowers. Here, thirst is over  
us. / Waiting and suffering, here we are in  
front of the gate.

If we need it, we will break the gate with  
our kicks. / We press and push, but the  
barrier is too strong.

One has to languish, wait and look in vain.  
/ We look at the gate; it is closed, unwaver-  
ing.

We keep eyes fixed on it; we are crying  
tormented; / We see it always; the weight  
of time is overwhelming us.

The gate is in front of us; what does it help  
to want? / It is better to go away, abandon  
hope.

We will never enter. We are exhausted to  
see it... / The Gate opening let so much  
silence to go through

That neither the orchards did appear nor  
any flower; / Only the immense space  
where are the emptiness and the light  
Was suddenly present all over, fulfilled the  
heart, / And washed the eyes, nearly blind  
under the dust.

-translated by Jean-Baptiste Barrière

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**“Pensée dernière”** (Last Thought) by Louise Michel

*En plongeant dans le passé, on le voit  
se joindre à l'avenir comme les deux  
extrémités d'un arc de cercle, et ce cercle,  
pareil aux ondes sonores, en éveille d'autres  
à l'infini.*

Diving into the past, we can see it joining  
the future, like the two ends of the arc of  
a circle, and this circle, like sound waves,  
awakens others to infinity.

*Émietées de par le monde (de l'Inde  
antique jusqu'à nous), les sciences perdues  
vont-elles germer ou sont-elles mortes dans  
la fleur ?*

Crumbled all over the world (from ancient  
India to our time), will lost sciences ger-  
minate, or are they dead in flower?

*Faut-il attendre d'effluves nouvelles  
d'autres recommencements? Suffira-t-il de  
retourner le sol pour donner aux germes  
du renouveau les conditions propres à  
l'existence?*

Should we wait until we can sniff new  
beginnings? Will it be enough to turn the  
soil to give the seeds of renewal the right  
conditions for existence?

*Combien de civilisations ont sombré,  
combien d'hypothèses scientifiques se sont  
renversées devant d'autres hypothèses!*

How many civilizations have sunk, how  
many scientific hypotheses fallen to make  
room for new ones!

*Pourtant, allons, allons toujours! N'a-t-on  
pas de quoi éteindre la lutte pour la vie? de  
quoi remplacer l'anxiété des estomacs, la  
misère générale par le bien-être général?*

Yet, forward, always forward! Do we not  
have enough to eliminate the struggle  
for life? – enough to end hunger, replace  
global misery with global welfare?

*D'ailleurs, les cerveaux devenant plus  
que jamais avides, il faudra bien pour les  
satisfaire que brille l'Ère nouvelle.*

Besides, with brains becoming greedier  
than ever, we will have to satisfy them to  
make the New Era shine.

*Si l'amour de l'humanité est impuissant à  
faire sonner l'heure libératrice à l'Horloge  
fraternitaire – heure où le crime n'aura  
plus de place – l'indignation s'en chargera.*

If love of humanity is powerless to ring the  
liberating hour at the Clock of Brother-  
hood – the time when there will no longer  
be room for crime – outrage will take care  
of it.

*Là haine est pure comme l'acier, forte  
comme la hache; et si l'amour est stérile,  
vive la haine!*

Hate is pure as steel, strong as an axe; and  
if love is sterile, long live hate!

*-translated by Jean-Baptiste Barrière*

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# About the Artists

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**Aliisa Neige Barrière** (b. 1995) was born into a French-Finnish family in Paris, where her music studies have included violin, piano, chamber music, and choral as well as orchestral conducting. She studied violin with Renee Jolles at the Preparatory Division of Mannes College of Music (2011-12), and as a winner of the Concerto Competition she played the first movement of the Khachaturian concerto in March 2012 at Symphony Space, New York. She was a member of the Face The Music ensemble, directed by Jennifer Undercofler, dedicated to performing only music by living composers. In 2012, Barrière continued her studies in Paris, in the 'Cycle de Perfectionnement' for young performers, playing violin and piano. Her recent engagements have included solo appearances as well as conducting. Aliisa won the New School Competition in New York and was awarded a full scholarship for four years of studies at Mannes College of Music, where she has studied since September 2013 with Lewis Kaplan, Michael Adelson, and Todd Philips, and she is part of the Mannes Baroque Players. She plays a 1717 violin by Claude Pierray.

Inspired by natural processes and acoustic phenomena, composer and percussionist **Nathan Davis** makes music that

elucidates essential characters of instruments and the fragile athleticism of playing them. He has received commissions from the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the Calder String Quartet, the Ojai Festival (for eighth blackbird and an installation by sound-sculptor Trimpin), Meehan/Perkins Duo, TimeTable Percussion, Concert Artists Guild, and the Moving Theater Dance Company, and received awards from the Jerome Foundation, American Music Center, Meet the Composer Commissioning Music USA, Argosy Foundation, MATA, ASCAP, and the ISCM. Lincoln Center inaugurated the new Tully Scope Festival in 2011 with the premiere of his 30 minute site-specific work *Bells* performed by ICE and praised by Anthony Tommasini in the *New York Times* as “an alluring and pensive musical experience.”

Flutist **Camilla Hoitenga** travels extensively, performing solo repertoire of music ranging from pre- Bach to post-Stockhausen in venues as diverse as Carnegie Hall, the Kremlin in Moscow, or Tongyeong, Korea. She has performed concertos written for her by composers Kaija Saariaho, Pèter Kőszeghy, KenIchiro Kobayashi, and others with orchestras such as the London Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony,

and Royal Philharmonic of Stockholm, and with the radio orchestras of Helsinki, Paris, and Berlin. She also specialized in the work of Japanese composers. Her recordings, in particular with Saariaho, have won awards in France, Great Britain, and in North America. Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Camilla Hoitenga now lives in Cologne, Germany.

Passionate about Early Music, **Raphaële Kennedy** is an acknowledged singer who has worked with Jordi Savall, François Lazarevitch and les Musiciens de Saint-Julien, Jean Tubéry and La Fenice, A Sei Voci, European William Byrd ensemble, les Paladins, le Poème Harmonique, and les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr, with whom she has made about thirty records and has given performances in main festivals. While continuing her development within the sphere of early music, she has recently become a much-reference singer in contemporary music. She is sought after by composers such as Kaija Saariaho, Jean-Baptiste Barrière, Philippe Leroux, Mauro Lanza, Gianvincenzo Cresta, and Ben Foscett and by creative centers, appearing on the most renowned stages such as New York's Carnegie Hall and Miller Theater, the Lucerne Festival, Salzburger Festspiele, IRCAM Paris, and GMEM Marseille, among others. She is a member of Solistes XXI (conducted by Rachid Safir) and she is an invited artist of TM+ ensemble conducted by Laurent Cuniot. Raphaële collaborates

with various favorite partners for whom she has a great deal of respect, including Sylvie Moquet, Marianne Muller, Virginie Descharmes, Stéphanie Paulet, Yannick Varlet, Jean-Luc Ho, Marc Wolff, and the organist and composer Pierre-Adrien Charpy, with whom she manages Da Pacem, an ensemble which specializes in early music in contemporary creation and in dialogue of cultures. [www.raphaelekennedy.com](http://www.raphaelekennedy.com)

“New-music luminary” (*The New York Times*), **Margaret Lancaster** has built a large repertoire of new works composed for her that employ extended techniques, multi-media, and electronics that subtly and unabashedly fuse music, theater and movement. Performance highlights include Lincoln Center Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Santa Fe New Music, Whitney Museum, Edinburgh Festival and Festival D’Automne. She has recorded on New World Records, OO Discs, Innova, Naxos, and Tzadik, and was selected for Meet the Composer’s New Works for Soloist Champions project. Noted for her inter-disciplinary performances, Lancaster, who also works as an actor, choreographer, dancer, and amateur furniture designer, presents solo and chamber music concerts worldwide. Recent collaborations include playing Helene in the 7-year worldwide run of OBIE-winning *Mabou Mines Dollhouse*, BMP’s *Kocho*, and *Fables on Global Warming* with Karole Armitage’s ArmitageGone!Dance... [www.margaretlancaster.com](http://www.margaretlancaster.com).

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# About Miller Theatre

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**Miller Theatre at Columbia University** is the leading presenter of new music in New York City and one of the most vital forces nationwide for innovative programming. In partnership with Columbia University School of the Arts, Miller is dedicated to producing and presenting unique events, with a focus on contemporary and early music, jazz, opera, and multimedia performances. Founded in 1988, Miller has helped launch the careers of myriad composers and ensembles over the past 25 years, serving as an incubator for emerging artists and a champion of those not yet well known in the United States. A three-time recipient of the ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming, Miller Theatre continues to meet the high expectations set forth by its founders—to present innovative programs, support the development of new work, and connect creative artists with adventurous audiences.

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Richard H. Levy and Lorraine Gallard  
Peter C. Lincoln  
Helen Little  
Sarah Lowengard  
Anthony and Caroline Lukaszewski  
Lawrence Madison

Marc Maltz  
Gerald McGee  
Bannon and Barnabas McHenry  
Rolf Meyershon  
Susan Narucki  
Susan and Sheldon Nash  
Mary Pinkowitz  
Carol Robbins  
Lisa Rubin  
Mariam Said  
Eliisa Salmi-Saslaw  
Mary Salpukas  
James Schamus and Nancy Kricorian  
Elliot Schwartz  
Anita Shapolsky  
Leila Shakour and Michael Thorne  
Karlan and Gary Sick  
Paul Sperry  
Gilbert Spitzer and Janet Glaser Spitzer  
Rand Steiger and Rebecca Jo Plant  
Peter Strauss  
Jim Strawhorn

*as of March 1*



# Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, April 1, 6:00 p.m.**

POP-UP CONCERT

**Tony Arnold & Jacob Greenberg**

**Saturday, April 5, 8:00 p.m.**

*at The Church of St. Mary the Virgin (145 W. 46th Street)*

EARLY MUSIC

**40 Years of Renaissance Polyphony**

The Tallis Scholars

**Thursday, April 10, 8:00 p.m.**

COMPOSER PORTRAITS

**Liza Lim**

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Karina Canellakis, *conductor*

**Thursday, April 17, 8:00 p.m.**

BACH, REVISITED

**Tower + Bach**

Curtis 20/21

**Tuesday, May 6, 6:00 p.m.**

POP-UP CONCERTS

**Juilliard415**

**Thursday, May 15, 8:00 p.m.**

BACH, REVISITED

**Reich + Bach**

Ensemble Signal

Brad Lubman, *conductor*

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