



Extraordinary Measures

2020-2021 Season

Music by
**Emma O'Halloran &
Gregory T.S. Walker**

36th Season
14 November 2020, 7:30 pm
Virtual Concert

Network Ensemble Members

Violin
Julia Li
Hirono Oka

**Tenor Saxophone &
Electronics**
Matthew Levy

Extraordinary Measures • November 14, 2020 Music by Emma O'Halloran & Gregory T. S. Walker

PROGRAM



Introduction by Thomas Schuttenhelm, Artistic Director

Introduction by Emma O'Halloran

Sum of Its Parts Emma O'Halloran
Matthew Levy, tenor saxophone & electronics

Introduction by Gregory T.S. Walker

Selections from *Rock, Pop, and Hip-Hop Fantasies* Gregory T. S. Walker

Boom Badoo Boom (Hooked Bowing) -- *Heartbeat runnin' away*

Evanescence (The Syncopation) -- *Frozen Inside*

Your Grandad's Clothes (Octaves) -- *Search'in in that section*

Horse Dance (Chromatic Glissando) -- *Allegro con Bounce*

Julia Li, violin
Hirono Oka, violin

Emma O'Halloran is an Irish composer and vocalist. Freely intertwining acoustic and electronic music, O'Halloran has written for folk musicians, chamber ensembles, turntables, laptop orchestra, symphony orchestra, film, and theatre. For her efforts, she has been praised by *I Care If You Listen* editor-in-chief Amanda Cook for writing "some of the most unencumbered, authentic, and joyful music that I have heard in recent years," and has won numerous competitions, including National Sawdust's inaugural Hildegard competition and the Next Generation award from Beth Morrison Projects.



O'Halloran's music aims to capture the human experience, exploring complex emotions felt in specific moments in time. This approach has found a wide audience: her work has been featured at the international Classical NEXT conference in Rotterdam, the Prototype Festival in New York, Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, and MATA Festival. Additionally, her music has been performed by Crash Ensemble, Contemporaneous, Khemia Ensemble, ~Nois Saxophone Quartet, the Refugee Orchestra Project, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, amongst others.

O'Halloran was recently named a 2020 MacDowell Fellow, and an artist-in-residence at Ucross Foundation in Wyoming. She holds a PhD in Music Composition from Princeton University and is currently working as a freelance composer. Current and future projects include a percussion duo for New Works Project, a collaborative and interdisciplinary work with LA-based ensemble Wild UP, and an opera called *Trade* that will be developed, produced and toured by Beth Morrison Projects.

Sum of its Parts was written in 2018, and it was born out of a collaboration in the recording studio. Matthew Levy and I spent many hours discussing and recording different sounds and techniques that he had incorporated into his playing over his many years of performing both as a soloist and with PRISM saxophone quartet.

We catalogued a vast amount of multiphonics and growls, experimented with microtonal inflections and rhythmic grooves, along with a wide array of other coloristic elements that explore the full timbral range of the saxophone. I then took these recordings and used them as the source material to create the electronic component for the piece. What excites me most about working with electronics is that it allows me to build elaborate and dense sonic textures, and for this piece, I wanted to create a backdrop of sound that Matt could interact with. In many ways, the piece is a product of Matt's musical inclinations as a performer and my interests as a composer, and the synthesis of these two elements created something unexpected and beautiful.

General Notes about Emma's music

- I initially found my way into composition through experimenting with electronics, and the way I perceive sound has been heavily influenced by that – I tend to think of music in terms of textures and colors that can shift and transform seamlessly.
- I love exploring the full spectrum of sonic textures from sparse, still moments to huge dense layers of sound.
- I love freely intertwining acoustic and electronic music, and working to create moments where it's unclear where the acoustic sounds stop and the electronics begin.
- My music often aims to capture the human experience, exploring complex emotions felt in time. When writing *Sum of its Parts*, I was thinking about Matt playing and interacting with all these different versions of himself over the years as he developed his craft.

Gregory T.S. Walker is the son of music historian Helen Walker-Hill and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker. He studied with violinist Yuval Yaron and received a master's degree in computer music from the University of California at San Diego, and a doctorate in musical composition from the University of Colorado. Dr. Walker currently serves as a professor at the University of Colorado Denver. An accomplished composer and violinist, he performed his Concerto No. 1 for Orchestra and Synthesizer with the Oakland Sinfonietta and earned a second Masters in Composition from Mills College in 1987. In 1993, the Colorado Symphony commissioned Walker to compose what has been acknowledged as the first "rap symphony", *Dream N. the Hood*.



Walker has been featured in soloist engagements with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Oberlin Orchestra, the Encuentro Musical de los Americas in Havana, Cuba, the Detroit Symphony, the Colorado Symphony, Poland's Filharmonia Sudecka, and the Colorado Music Festival Orchestra, as well as at the Library of Congress, England's Lake District Music Festival, Centro Mexicano para la Musica y las Artes Sonoras, Peking University, and the Cork Orchestral Society Concert Series in Ireland.

Walker's work as a multimedia performance artist has been showcased at the Sonic Circuits International Festival and the New West Electronic Arts & Media Organization Festival (NWEAMO), and he is featured on the cover of the April 2007 *International Musician* magazine. He is currently the Artistic Director of the Colorado NeXt Music Festival.

Contemporary music doesn't get a lot of love from most professional violinists, let alone violin students. No big surprise considering the vast majority grow up with a steady diet of the classical masters, which not only influences young musicians' musical tastes, but their technical development. But so much of today's repertoire offers unique intellectual and interpretive challenges, rewards that just don't exist in the traditional canon, wonderful as it is. Not only that, modern music often demands certain things that may not be required for most standard repertoire, but that you do find at the highest levels of musical artistry. Things like inspired research. Technical problem-solving. Personal interpretation.

How can we bridge that divide between the traditional classics and the unfamiliar language of contemporary music?

The *Rock, Pop, and Hip-Hop Fantasies* are not transcriptions or arrangements of popular songs, though their pitches and rhythms have been inspired by specific tracks. The enigmatic expressive directions scattered throughout are actually clues, and they also do suggest ways of understanding the notes. The difficulty here ranges from ambitious Suzuki Book I level to Brink of Death insanity. Along the way, adventuresome players can work on specific technical challenges, get exposed to 21st Century extended techniques, and maybe find an encore showpiece or two.

Thanks to my family - George Walker, Helen Walker-Hill, Lori and Dashiel Walker - for being such a good influence. Much like the other rock stars who within these pages have unwittingly contributed their inspiration. The *Rock, Pop, and Hip-Hop Fantasies* are dedicated to crash test guinea pig violinist Grayson Wolf Walker.

Julia Li, Violin

Violinist Julia Li, praised by the Baltimore Sun as a performer of “confidence and brio,” joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in January 2014. She has appeared extensively in recitals and concerts and has performed as soloist with the Houston Symphony, Symphony in C (formerly the Haddonfield Symphony), and the Independence Sinfonia of Pennsylvania, among others. She has collaborated in chamber music performances with Roberto Díaz, Marcy Rosen, and Jonathan Biss; she has also performed with the Dolce Suono Ensemble and appeared as a guest artist with Astral Artists. During her time at the Curtis Institute of Music, Ms. Li was part of Curtis on Tour’s first tour to Asia, which included chamber music performances and master classes in Shanghai, Beijing, and Seoul. An avid orchestral player, she has been a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and Symphony in C. She has also played with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood.



Ms. Li has spent summers at Taos, Tanglewood, Encore, and Meadowmount. For the past three summers she has been part of the orchestra and chamber music series at the Artosphere Festival in Arkansas. She was a two-time scholarship recipient of the Dorothy Richard Starling Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She has also appeared on NPR’s From the Top and Houston Public Radio’s In the Front Row. Her performance of Prokofiev’s First Violin Concerto with the Houston Symphony was broadcast on KUHF, Houston Public Radio.

Ms. Li began her formal violin lessons at the age of seven in Beijing with Shengyin Huang at the Central Conservatory. After moving to Houston in 2000 she studied with Bingsun Yang and later with Kenneth Goldsmith. Ms. Li holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Curtis Institute, where she studied with Pamela Frank, Arnold Steinhardt, and Shmuel Ashkenasi. She is currently completing her Master of Music degree at the Juilliard School with Ronald Copes.

Hirono Oka, Violin

Hirono Oka joined the first violin section of The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1990. She made her first public appearance in her native Japan at the age of 11 with the Tokyo Symphony. After winning numerous competitions and awards in Japan, she came to the United States to continue her studies at the San Francisco Conservatory and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her teachers have included Ivan Galamian, Jaime Laredo, Arnold Steinhardt, Felix Galimir, and Stuart Canin.



Ms. Oka has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Chamber Ensemble, the Utica Symphony, and numerous orchestras in the Philadelphia area. As a chamber musician, she has appeared with the Marlboro Music Festival, Chamber Music West in San Francisco, the Theatre Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Network for New Music, the Delaware Chamber Music Festival, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. She has also toured throughout the United States with the Brandenburg Ensemble and Music from Marlboro.

Ms. Oka has performed and collaborated with such world renowned artists as Mr. Laredo, Alexander Schneider, Leon Fleischer, Yefim Bronfman, and Murray Perahia. In addition to teaching privately, Ms. Oka is a faculty member of Temple University and its Music Preparatory Division and of Rutgers University.

Matthew Levy, Tenor Saxophone & Electronics

Saxophonist, composer, curator, producer/engineer, and educator Matthew Levy has made an enduring contribution to contemporary music as co-founder and executive director of the world-renowned PRISM Quartet, and as a collaborator with other artists and ensembles for the past 35 years. Matt has been hailed by *The Saxophone Journal* as “a complete virtuoso of the tenor saxophone” and by *The New York Times* for his “energetic and enlivening” performances. He is the recipient of a 2016 Pew Fellowship in the Arts, as well as composition fellowships from the Independence Foundation and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. He has scored four motion pictures, including PBS’s *Diary of a City Priest*, featured at the Sundance Film Festival. Matt has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, ECM, Naxos, Grammavision, Innova, Koch, Albany, BMOP/Sound, Tdzaik, New Dynamic, New Focus, and XAS. His music is highlighted on four PRISM recordings, including *People’s Emergency Center* (Best Jazz of 2014, *PopMatters*). Matt has premiered solo works by Emma O’Halloran, Paola Prestini, Renee Favand, Jacob Walls, Erin Busch, and David Ludwig; collaborated with a host of choreographers and dance companies, among them Peter Sparling, Scrap Performance Group, and Group Motion Dance Theater; is a member of the Network for New Music Ensemble and appeared as a guest artist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Dolce Suono Ensemble, and counter)induction. His work with PRISM has included tours of China, Russia, and Latin America; concerto appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra; and recital performances presented by Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. He teaches saxophone at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania College House Program, and serves as a mentor for the Curtis Institute of Music’s Community Artist Program.



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In 2014, Network celebrated 30 years of commissioning, performing and promoting new music. To mark this milestone, a Network for New Music Commissioning Fund was established to underscore the essence of Network's mission and contribute to its sustainability. The name of the fund was changed in 2018, in honor of Co-Founder and Artistic Director Emerita, Linda Reichert.

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Network for New Music extends its sincerest thanks to the following individuals for their support.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Network for New Music would like to thank the many people and institutions who help make our work possible. Special thanks to Kris Rudzinski and Settlement Music School for assistance with this concert; George Blood, LP for his excellent work and generosity; and, as always, NNM's board of directors, staff and volunteers.

In addition, NNM would like to thank the following for their support: The Aaron Copland Fund, The Amphion Foundation, Alice M. Ditson Fund, The Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation, Independence Foundation, Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, The Presser Foundation, Robert Black Foundation Trust, and William Penn Foundation. Network for New Music also receives state arts funding through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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