

The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

presents

Sounds Modern

performing

The Anatomy of Sound

Saturday, December 6, 2025, 2:00 pm

Modern Art Museum auditorium

Program

Orbit (2013)

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

from *Thirteen Ways of Looking at the Goldberg*:

The Gilmore Variation (2007), Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

My Goldberg (Gymnopedie) (2003), David del Tredici (b. 1937)

Taoist Sacred Dance, movement III (2003)

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

Dissolve, O my Heart (2010/2020)

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980)

Weird Fishes/Arpeggi (2007, arr. 2025)

Radiohead, arranged by Stephen Lucas

Musicians

Sarah Ruth Alexander, voice

Daphne Gerling, viola

Stephen Lucas, synthesizer

Elizabeth McNutt (Director, Sounds Modern), flute

Kourtney Newton, cello

Patrick Overturf, percussion

Shannon Wettstein, piano

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth for their collaboration and inspiration in bringing our sounds to the Modern. We also thank the Amphion Foundation and our private donors for their support.

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Notes

In interviews, Jenny Saville discussed her eclectic musical tastes ranging from classical to alternative indie. She said, "If anybody were in my studio, they would just be going completely crazy because I can listen to one single piece of music for the whole duration of an artwork or even for a show." She mentioned her particular fondness for J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, Radiohead's *Weird Fishes*, and Philip Glass's *Facades*, inspiring today's program.

Orbit was premiered by Yo-Yo Ma at New York's Le Poisson Rouge. The work, a collaboration between Glass, Ma, and Memphis dancer, Charles "Lil Buck" Riley, was commissioned by ballet dancer, Damian Woetzel. In the years prior to the premiere, Lil Buck had popularized the street dance style known as "jookin," a style first developed in Memphis during the 1990s. Lil Buck's style juxtaposes quick angular movements with moments of watery, sometimes rubbery motion. Going *en pointe* is common of the style, though, like other dancers of the "jookin" style, Lil Buck abandons the pointe shoes for athletic sneakers. Though *Orbit* easily stands alone as a work purely for solo cello, any performer tackling the work may benefit from knowledge of the "jookin" style.

— Kourtney Newton

The Gilmore Variation, a "new variation of Bach's famous *Goldberg Variations*, was commissioned by the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. It is dedicated to the memory of my counterpoint teacher, Curtis colleague, and pianist, Edward Aldwell, who inspired his students with his classroom performances of Bach."

— Jennifer Higdon

"The *Gymnopedie* is a slow, solemn dance in three-quarter time, evocative of ancient Greece and naked youths (Gymn -naked; P(a)ed -youth). It is of course closely associated with Erik Satie, coiner of the word and composer of the first set of three. Thus, my set, written in 2003, is indebted to that enigmatic French composer. No. 1, *My Goldberg*, was inspired by the theme of Bach's monumental *Goldberg Variations* — not the lovely soprano melody, as one might expect, but rather the stepwise, descending bass line. Above the bass, I have composed a bittersweet melody that ranges freely. At the very end, Bach's soprano theme is briefly quoted." — David del Tredici

Taoist Sacred Dance is dedicated to Sat Hon and the Ancient Taoist Society, Inc. The flowing, elegiac opening section features Glass's trademark 3:2 polyrhythms and essentially Romantic-era harmonies; these are overtaken by shorter, more dramatic phrases exploring new registers, figurations, and roles for flute and piano, before giving way to a reconsideration of the opening materials. — Andrew May

"*Dissolve, O my Heart* has its roots in a late-night conversation over Chinese food and cupcakes with violinist Jennifer Koh. She told me about her *Bach & Beyond* project, a program that combines Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas* with newly commissioned works and asked if I would write a piece that referenced Bach's *Partita in d Minor*. This request was, to put it mildly, utterly terrifying; the last movement of the *Partita*, the Chaconne, is undoubtedly the most famous piece of solo violin literature in the world. It overwhelmed Brahms, has been subject to hundreds of transcriptions and arrangements over the past two centuries, and is dizzying in its contrapuntal complexity. But something about Jennifer's enthusiasm was infectious, and I agreed to the project before I realized what I was getting myself into. Jennifer seemed to approach Bach through the lens of contemporary music, and I realized that this was what this new piece should do as well. *Dissolve, O my Heart* begins with the first chord of Bach's Chaconne, a now-iconic d minor chord, and spins out from there into an off-kilter series of chords that doubles back on itself, collapses and ultimately dissolves in a torrent of fast passages. The only direct quote from the *Partita* is that first chord, which anchors the entire piece even as it threatens to spiral out of control. The title comes from an aria in the *St. John Passion* but has many potential interpretations. *Dissolve, O my Heart* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and was premiered in 2011 as part of their Green Umbrella Series in Disney Hall." — Missy Mazzoli

Weird Fishes/Arpeggi was initially conceived as an orchestral piece in 2005, written by Johnny Greenwood and Thom Yorke. The full band arrangement was first released in 2007 on their album *In Rainbows*. This afternoon's performance will be the premiere of Stephen Lucas's arrangement of the work for Sounds Modern.

Sounds Modern

Flutist Elizabeth McNutt conceived the Sounds Modern series as an invitation for modern art lovers to enjoy the best innovative modern music. Sounds Modern explores the sonic dimensions of the ideas represented in the galleries, bringing the artwork to life in the concert hall. In addition to directing Sounds Modern, McNutt is director of the Nova new music ensemble at the University of North Texas, where she teaches in the flute and composition areas.