



2022-23 Season

Ensemble 20/21 Explores Critical Political and Social Ideas with Opening Concert “Music of Change”

PHILADELPHIA, PA—October 4, 2022— **Ensemble 20/21**, the contemporary music ensemble of the **Curtis Institute of Music**, opens the 2022–23 season with “**Music of Change**” on Saturday, October 8, 2022, at 8:00 p.m., in Gould Rehearsal Hall. This thought-provoking concert explores political and social ideas, highlights a luminary civil rights activist and performer, promotes civic engagement and celebrates the artistry of influential composers **Valerie Coleman**, **Philip Maneval**, **Louis Andriessen**, and **Eleanor Alberga**. Featuring the talents of Curtis’s exceptionally gifted young musicians, this inspiring program presents cutting-edge contemporary classics alongside iconic twentieth-century masterpieces.

“I am very excited to be able to share this program with our audiences, and I hope they will find the music as inspiring as I do,” says **Nick DiBerardino** (’18), Ensemble 20/21 director, acclaimed composer, chair of composition studies, and senior associate dean of performance studies at Curtis.

“This concert celebrates the work of innovative, socially conscious musicians. Whether through brash insistence, as in Louis Andriessen’s *Workers Union*, or through joyful celebration, as in Valerie Coleman’s *Portraits of Josephine*, each of these composers invites us to reflect on society and aspire to better. ‘Music of Change’ sounds a call towards progress, inviting us to challenge our perspectives and come together as a community.”

The concert opens with *Portraits of Josephine*, flutist and composer **Valerie Coleman**’s daring, sultry, and playfully evocative musical memoir, which captures the irreverent spirit and *joie de vivre* of one of the 20th century’s most charismatic entertainers, Josephine Baker. Ensemble 20/21 presents this electrifying suite for wind quintet, featuring three significant moments throughout Baker’s life. From her humble beginnings in St. Louis to creating a multiracial utopia within the majestic walls of her 15th-century chateau, Les Milandes, and causing a splash on the 1920s Parisian club scene, this captivating portrait chronicles her triumphant rise to international stardom.

—continued—



The program continues with **Philip Maneval's** *How We Prevail*. Inspired by a Philadelphia Chamber Music Society recital with Philadelphia Orchestra trombonist and Curtis faculty member Nitzan Haroz, this four-movement brass quintet is a moving meditation on the political turmoil of our time. Trombones, horns, and tuba unite to produce a rich, sonorous sound reminiscent of a dark and resonant men's choir. Not only does the work reflect upon daily struggles, anxiety, and aspirations, but it reminds listeners of our common civility and the resilience of the human spirit, ever more appropriate as we find peace and purpose in the global pandemic.

The concert continues with *Workers Union*, **Louis Andriessen's** striking 1975 open-scored work for an unspecified—but loud—group of instruments. The piece gives performers specific rhythms to play without precise pitches, melodic lines, or discernable keys. Described by the iconoclastic Dutch composer as a contrast between "individual freedom and severe discipline," this innovative and raucous work sounds uniquely different within the hands of each new group performing it. Ensemble 20/21 tackles Andriessen's aggressive, unrelenting classic with its decidedly political subtext. As it progresses, each musician is essential to holding the piece together, and only as they unite as one do they make a successful impact, just like the work's title.

The evening concludes with highly regarded Jamaican-British composer and pianist **Eleanor Alberga's** *Sun Warrior*. Born out of a dream and commissioned in 1990 by the inaugural Chard Festival of Women in Music, Alberga imagined that instead of sitting at her piano writing notes upon her manuscript paper, she was painting brilliant colors across the staff. This remarkable orchestral work experiments with tonality and rhythm, evoking bright colors throughout three emotionally stirring movements: the bold and stirring "Red Dawn," the cinematic and meditative "Mirrors of Blue," and the joyous brass and string-saturated fanfare, "Golden Palace."

Flexible in size and scope, Ensemble 20/21 performs a wide range of music from the 20th and 21st centuries, including works by Curtis students and alumni. The ensemble has appeared at major U.S. venues such as the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Miller Theatre, as well as international venues. The ensemble has also presented concert portraits of iconic composers in residence Tania León, Alvin Singleton, Unsuk Chin, John Corigliano, George Crumb, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Chen Yi, among many others.

Ensemble 20/21 returns on Saturday, February 11, with "Music of the Earth," highlighting compositions inspired by the natural world. The final Ensemble 20/21 concert takes place on Saturday, March 25, with a "Portrait of Aaron Jay Kernis," featuring works by the Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award-winning composer. Both performances take place at 8 p.m. in Curtis's Gould Rehearsal Hall.

Visit [Curtis.edu/Calendar](https://www.curtis.edu/Calendar) to view Curtis's entire season of performances and events.

—continued—



Ticketing Information

Subscriptions are now on sale for Curtis’s 2022–23 season. The flexible Choose Your Own subscription option offers 25% off ticket prices when purchasing tickets to two or more performances. For the 2022–23 season, Curtis is also offering a new Season Pass, with access to all performances for \$149 per person. To order a subscription, visit [Curtis.edu/Subscribe](https://curtis.edu/Subscribe), call (215) 893-7902, or email tickets@curtis.edu.

Single tickets for Ensemble 20/21 performances and the 2022–23 season start at \$19:
[Curtis.edu/Ensemble2021](https://curtis.edu/Ensemble2021).

Generous support for Ensemble 20/21 is provided by the Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation.

About the Curtis Institute of Music

The **Curtis Institute of Music** educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. For nearly a century Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies and they enter the profession free from educational debt. In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings in Philadelphia and around the world. Learn more at Curtis.edu.

#