CONCERTS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

100 YEARS

MUSIC OF ANTHONY BRAXTON

Made Possible By
The McKim Fund
in the Library of Congress

Saturday, March 8, 2025 ~ 8:00 pm
The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium

The McKim Fund in the Library of Congress

The MCKIM FUND in the Library of Congress was created in 1970 through a bequest of Mrs. W. Duncan McKim, concert violinist, who won international prominence under her maiden name, Leonora Jackson; the fund supports the commissioning and performance of chamber music for violin and piano.

Presented in cooperation with the Tri-Centric Foundation

This program is made possible with the support of Galena-Yorktown Foundation and The Leonard and Elaine Silverstein Family Foundation.

Preconcert Conversation with the Artists
Moderator: Prof. Dr. Timo Hoyer, University of Education Karlsruhe, Germany
Participants: Erica Dicker, James Fei, Anne Rhodes, Carl Testa, & Katie Young
6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Please request ASL and ADA accommodations five days in advance of the concert at 202-707-6362 or ADA@loc.gov.
The use of recording devices is strictly prohibited.

A recording of this event and/or extras like conversations with the artists, educational videos or lectures may be available in time at:

1) The Library's YouTube channel

2) The Library's Event Video Collection

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MUSIC OF ANTHONY BRAXTON

Musicians

Jean Cook, violin

Erica Dicker, violin

James Fei, saxophone

Nick Hallett, voice

Chris Jonas, saxophone

Ingrid Laubrock, saxophone

Adam Matlock, accordion & voice

Dan Peck, tuba

Reut Regev, trombone

Tomeka Reid, cello

Anne Rhodes, voice

Steph Richards, trumpet

Aaron Siegel, percussion

Cory Smythe, piano

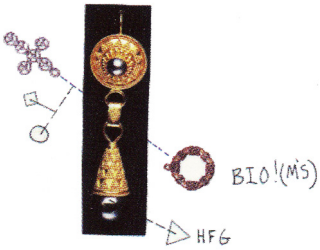
Carl Testa, double bass & electronics

Katherine Young, bassoon

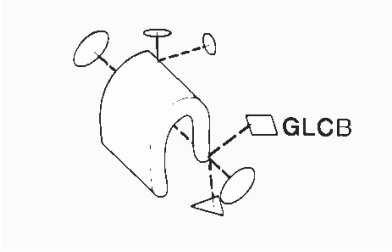
Program

Anthony Braxton (b. 1945)

Composition No. 222 (2020)

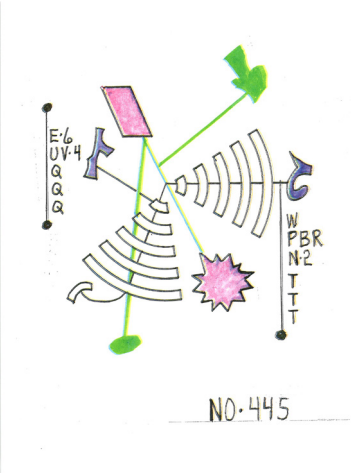


Composition No. 100 (2020)



Intermission

Composition No. 445 (2020)



About the Program

Music of Anthony Braxton

Notes by Timo Hoyer:
Anthony Braxton, who is celebrating his eightieth birthday this year, has been giving concerts for over half a century. In the first decades of his career, he was practically always on the road. Since the mid-1990s, he has somewhat reduced his stage appearances, and in recent years, his concerts have become a precious gem.

If all of the countless stage performances he has ever given were marked with pinpricks on a world map, the vast majority would undoubtedly be found in Europe. In the U.S., the number of dots would also be quite high, though not nearly as high as on the other side of the Atlantic. In which American regions do the points accumulate? If we only consider his very early years, then, and only then, Chicago stands out—his birthplace and home of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM)—where Braxton developed into the composer, multi-instrumentalist, and original thinker we honor today. Later, he found performance opportunities particularly in the U.S. Northeast, with New York City unsurprisingly showing the highest concentration of dots. And finally, the map of his concert activity would reveal a large cluster on the American West Coast. Especially during his five-year professorship at Mills College (1985–90), Braxton performed more frequently in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

The mere marking of the concerts says nothing about the nature of the performances. And here, there is something remarkable to encounter. Braxton has no objection to working with a consistent lineup for a certain period of time; his quartet with Marilyn Crispell, Mark Dresser, and Gerry Hemingway, the jazz standards group with Kevin O'Neil, Andy Eulau, and Kevin Norton, and some of his Ghost Trance Music ensembles are examples of this. Yet even when the lineups remain the same, different compositions are obligatorily featured from concert to concert. Variety, change, and diversity are key characteristics of his Creative Music. These central factors are further amplified by the multitude of different musical projects and concepts that Braxton is tirelessly willing to present to the public with frequently changing musicians. As a result, even cities and regions where he performs more often experience a different facet of his artistic personality each time.

This can be briefly illustrated by the concerts he has given in Washington, D.C. Over the years, Braxton has performed here several times, with

increasing gaps between his appearances since the 1990s. In October 9, 1979, for instance, he gave a glimpse of his groundbreaking art as a solo alto saxophonist at the Deli Club. In a duo, he could be heard with his mentor Muhal Richard Abrams in 1977 at the Hirshhorn Museum; the following year, he delivered four stunning sets with trombonist Ray Anderson at DC Space, and in 1988, his duet partner was his former mentee George Lewis.

Abrams and Lewis were also part of a short-lived Braxton Quintet (plus Dave Holland and Steve McCall) that performed in 1976 at the renowned spot The Childe Harold; in addition to Braxton's own compositions, Thelonious Monk's *Blue Monk* was featured on the setlist. How deeply connected the notorious avant-gardist is to the jazz tradition could be experienced in the capital in October 1980, when Braxton participated in a two-day musical memorial in honor of the recently deceased Bill Evans. Exactly 10 years later, Braxton performed at the Museum of Natural History, this time alongside the Rova Saxophone Quartet; their brief, yet highly fruitful collaboration came, as far as I know, to an end with this performance.

No official recordings exist of any of the mentioned concerts. But of the following! On May 1, 1998, Braxton was a guest at the Library of Congress. Soon after, he released the concert under the title Four Compositions (Washington, D.C.) 1998 on his own label, Braxton House. Besides two rarely performed compositions from the 1970s—No. 46 for ten instruments and a septet version of No. 70 for quintet—he presented two works from his then still young *Ghost Trance Music* series—a versatile concept that would eventually encompass 138 compositions. One of these pieces, No. 222, is exceptionally conceived for a specific instrumentation: violin and piano. In this duet, *Ghost Trance Music* reveals its most intimate and fragile nature. We will encounter this beautiful work, commissioned by the Library of Congress with the Leonora Jackson and William Duncan McKim Fund, anew in today's program.

Ghost Trance Music marks the beginning of a systematically interconnected series of musical concepts that Braxton has been developing for over thirty years. He has only been able to present one further of these concepts in Washington. In December 2012, Jason Moran invited him to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Braxton arrived at the Terrace Theater with a fabulous quartet featuring Taylor Ho Bynum, Ingrid Laubrock, and Mary Halvorson. Jason Moran joined them as a special guest. The program featured the electro-acoustic Diamond Curtain Wall Music, which essentially refers to interactive, computer-generated sonic textures. Anyone in the audience who glanced at the music stands would have seen few sheets of traditional notation and many colorful, abstract

drawings. Braxton has also given these images a resonant name: *Falling River Music*. These fascinating scores, along with hundreds of others from his unique oeuvre, are now archived in the Library of Congress.

As a composer and performer, as a theorist and teacher, Braxton has never allowed himself to be swayed from his path, his convictions, his visions. There have certainly been enough obstacles and hostility, from all sides, but there has also been much recognition, support, and appreciation. And it seems that the acceptance of his work is growing. The reason for today's event is further evidence of this. That Braxton's scores and papers are now part of the esteemed collection of the Library of Congress feels somewhat like his physical legacy has been incorporated into the collective memory of the United States and beyond. This is good news, especially because it concerns an artist for whom the documentation and preservation of his work has always been as important as its conceptualization and creative realization.

Which brings us to today's concert. Three very different pieces are on the program, yet all bear the unmistakable signature of the composer. What they have in common, in Braxton's vocabulary, is the combination of stable and mutable logics—that is, roughly speaking, notated and improvised components. The aforementioned *Ghost Trance Music Duo No. 222* (written in 1998), spanning thirty-four pages of score, has the charm of a chamber music miniature. Things get more turbulent in No. 100, an orchestral work from 1981. In his *Composition Notes*, Braxton describes it as a "multiple event construction context that establishes an endless series of forming and re-forming occurrences (for creative discovery and enjoyment)." Several things happen simultaneously at any given moment.

The highlight of the evening will likely be the U.S. premiere of a new musical concept that has been performed only once, in 2023 at the Darmstadt Summer Course in Germany. The composer calls it *Thunder Music*; without spoiling too much: every listener will quickly understand why. With this model, designed for instruments, voices, and electronics, the composer and performer is setting a course for the future. And soon, the Library's Braxton Collection will be enriched by another magnificent score.

~ Timo Hoyer, Author, *Anthony Braxton—Creative Music* (2021)

About the Artists

From **Anthony Braxton's** early work as a pioneering solo performer in the late 1960s through to his eclectic experiments on Arista Records in the 1970s, his landmark quartet of the 1980s, and more recent endeavors, such as his cycle of *Trillium* operas and the day-long *Sonic Genome,* his vast body of work is unparalleled. His small ensembles of the 1970s through to the present day are considered among the most innovative groups of their respective eras, while his *Creative Orchestra Music* has brought together the varying streams of American jazz orchestras, marching bands, and experimental practices with the traditions of European concert music in a wholly individual compositional voice. His continuing and evolving current systems of the past fifteen years, including *Ghost Trance Music, Diamond Curtain Wall Music, Falling River Music, Echo Echo Mirror House Music,* and *ZIM Music,* have served as the artistic incubators for some of the most exciting artists of the current generation. Braxton's many awards include a 1981 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 1994 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2013 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a 2014 NEA Jazz Master Award, and honorary doctorates from Université de Liège (Belgium), New England Conservatory (U.S.) and the 2020 United States Artists Fellowship.

Jean Cook is a Korean-American composer, violinist, and sound artist based in New York City, best known for her work as violinist with Anthony Braxton and the U.K. band Pulp. She has worked closely for many years with Jon Langford, Ida, His Name is Alive, and Tara Jane O'Neil. Other collaborations include with Art Ensemble of Chicago, William Parker, Taylor Ho Bynum, Michael Hurley, Beauty Pill, and Helado Negro. She serves as treasurer of Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Foundation.

A proponent of new music, **Erica Dicker** is committed to creative collaboration with living composers and innovation in both the classical concert hall and nontraditional contexts. Erica serves as concertmaster of Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Foundation Orchestra and has also performed with Braxton's Falling River Quartet, Diamond Curtain Wall Quartet and the 12 + 1-tet.

James Fei, born in Taipei, Taiwan, is a composer, saxophonist, electronic musician, and Luther Bruise Marchant Professor and Director of

the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College at Northeastern University. Fei is president of the Tri-Centric Foundation.

Nick Hallett is a voice-based composer and musical impresario whose practice traverses visual art, dance, and new media. He has earned two New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Awards and a Creative Capital grant. He teaches at The New School and School of Visual Arts.

Chris Jonas is a Santa Fe-based composer, saxophone player, and video artist. Jonas is a United States Artists Fellow and is Co-Founder of Little Globe, the New Mexico arts and social justice non-profit. Jonas is Vice President of Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Foundation, has been a member of Braxton's projects since 1990, and was conductor for Braxton's 6-hour, 63-person orchestra project, Sonic Genome, at the 2019 Berlin Jazz Festival.

Ingrid Laubrock is an experimental saxophonist and composer, interested in exploring the borders between musical realms and creating multi-layered, dense and evocative sound worlds. A prolific composer and performer, Laubrock was named a "true visionary" by pianist and The Kennedy Center's artistic director Jason Moran, and a "fully committed saxophonist and visionary" by the New Yorker. Ingrid Laubrock worked with: Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richards Abrams, Jason Moran, Tom Rainey, Mary Halvorson, Kris Davis, Tyshawn Sorey, Myra Melford, and many others.

Adam Matlock is an accordionist, composer, and vocalist living and working in New Haven, CT. Under his own name and an almost uncountable number of aliases, Matlock has written original songs, instrumental and vocal/narrative compositions, as well as working within existing genres like Dungeon Synth, Black Metal, electronica, hip-hop, and others. He has performed, recorded, or improvised with artists including Anthony Braxton, Mario Pavone, Ingrid Laubrock, Ceschi, Sigh, and Avi C. Engel, and works as a music teacher in the New Haven area.

Dan Peck is principal tubist of the New York City Ballet Orchestra. Equally at home in experimental music and improvisation, Dan performs in his groups Thee Gate and Earth Tongues, Blood of the Stars in addition to recordings and tours with Anthony Braxton, Ingrid Laubrock, the International Contemporary Ensemble and Signal Ensemble. Peck releases his own music and the music of other friends on his label, Tubapede Records.

Israeli born and raised trombonist and composer **Reut Regev** has been out in the New York scene creating and exploring music that blends styles and cultures, and traditional sounds as well. Reut's main project as a bandleader and composer, for the last decade, is the band that she co-leads with her husband, drummer Igal Foni: "Reut Regev's R*time," featuring mostly original compositions by Reut and Igal, and encourages soulful musical explorations by the band members.

Cellist and composer **Tomeka Reid** has emerged as one of the most original, versatile, and curious musicians in Chicago's bustling jazz and improvised music community. A 2022 MacArthur and Herb Alpert awardee, 2021 USA Fellow, 2019 Foundation of the Arts and 2016 3Arts recipient, Reid received her doctorate in music from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 2017. From 2019-2021 Tomeka Reid received a teaching appointment at Mills College as the Darius Milhaud Chair in Composition.

Anne Rhodes is a vocalist and archivist based in New Haven, Connecticut. She holds a B.Mus. in Voice Performance from Boston University and an M.M. in Experimental Music Performance from Wesleyan University. Rhodes is currently best known for her solo noise project Red Rainbow, and for her embroidered graphic compositions. She is also an archivist in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University.

"A rising force in avant-garde jazz" (*Jazz Times*), **Steph Richards** is an experimentalist known for her innovative approach to the trumpet and interdisciplinary expression as a composer. She has collaborated with

visionaries ranging from Henry Threadgill, Anthony Braxton, and John Zorn to art pop luminaries Yoko Ono, David Byrne, and Laurie Anderson. Richards champions interdisciplinary performance as new faculty at the University of Washington and is a Yamaha artist.

Aaron Siegel has worked as a musician, composer, organizer and educator for twenty-five years in New York City. Celebrated as a composer of works for percussion, Siegel has a long history as an improvising percussionist and bandleader. Since 2011, Siegel has co-led the radical opera collective Experiments in Opera, helping to bring to the stage countless works by composers and writers and expanding the boundaries of musical storytelling.

Pianist **Cory Smythe's** recent albums on the Pyroclastic label have been described as "perplexingly perfect" (*The Wire*). He has won a Grammy Award for his work with violinist Hilary Hahn and a 2022 Herb Alpert Award in music. His work has been commissioned by Present Music, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra, the Wiener Festwochen, and the International Contemporary Ensemble, of which he is a longtime member.

Carl Testa is a multi-instrumentalist and composer at the intersection of improvised music, jazz, electronics, experimental music, and new media. As a performer/improviser, he is equally comfortable on string bass, electronics, lighting, and combinations thereof. In addition to his work as a leader/collaborator, he has performed with composers Anthony Braxton, Mario Pavone, and Tyshawn Sorey. He serves as the Archives Manager for Braxton's Tri-Centric Foundation where he manages all facets of the production of digital and print scores for the organization.

Katherine Young's electroacoustic music and sonic art has been recognized by awards and fellowships including the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Music Composition and a Fromm Foundation at Harvard University Commission. As a bassoonist and improviser, Katherine amplifies her instrument and employs a flexible electronics setup. Young lives in Atlanta, where she teaches composition, improvisation, and electronic music at Emory University.

Upcoming Events at the Library of Congress

Visit loc.gov/concerts for more information

Tickets for 2025 events from January-April available now.
Tickets for May-June events available on March 12, 2025 at 10am ET

Don't have a ticket? Please come anyway!
A limited number of RUSH passes will be available for unregistered guests, and while seating is not guaranteed, in most cases we will be able to seat a large number of walk-up guests due to returns and no-shows.

Friday, March 14, 2025 at 5:00 pm
***The Heat's On*, NR, 1h 19min (1943)**
Film Screening
Library of Congress, James Madison Building
Pickford Theater

Friday, March 14, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Brandee Younger
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
There will be no preconcert talk.

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 5:00 pm
Happy Little Seahorses:
Brahms' Unwritten "Melusine" Opera
American Musicological Society Lecture: Laurie McManus
Library of Congress, James Madison Building
Mumford Room

Saturday, March 29, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Fröst-Tamestit-Wosner Trio
Music by Dvořák, Brahms, Bizet, and folk dances
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Friday, April 4, 2025 at 8:00 pm
The String Queens
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Anne-Sophie Mutter
Music by Mozart, Schubert, Aftab Darvishi, Kreisler, and Respighi
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Friday, April 11, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Jennifer Koh and the Del Sol String Quartet
Music by Ravel, Tania Léon, Angélica Negrón, Reena Esmail, and Ben Johnston
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Friday, April 25, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Hélène Grimaud, piano
Music by Beethoven, Brahms, and Bach/Busoni
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Lecture, David Plylar, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Horszowski Trio
Music by Rebecca Clarke, Charles Wuorinen, and Schubert
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Live! At the Library: Somi
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
There will be no preconcert talk.

Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Live! At the Library: Jlin
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
There will be no preconcert talk.

Friday, May 30, 2025 at 8:00 pm
loadbang with Christopher Otto, violin & Ning Yu, piano
Music by Sebastian Currier, Hilda Paredes, Christopher Otto, Michael Finnissy & Laura Cetilia
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Saturday, May 31, 2025 at 8:00 pm
Piece Offerings: Muntendorf's Trilogy
with Christopher Otto, violin & Ning Yu, piano
Music by Brigitta Muntendorf & Muhal Richard Abrams
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
This concert will include a conversation onstage with the composer and performers.

Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 8:00 pm
The (Effortless) Now: Dances of Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski
Featuring the Daedalus Quartet, Agnese Toniutti, & Members of the Erick Hawkins Dance Company
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
Preconcert Conversation with the Artists, 6:30 pm, Whittall Pavilion

Wednesday, June 4, 2025 at 7:00 pm
An Evening with Judy Collins
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Coolidge Auditorium
There will be no preconcert talk, but a booksigning will follow the event.

Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 6:00 pm
"Marvin Gaye: Melancholy and Genius in Black Culture and Media"
Lecture by Dr. I. Augustus Durham, University of Toronto
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building
Whittall Pavilion

Concerts from the Library of Congress

The Coolidge Auditorium, constructed in 1925 through a generous gift from Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, has been the venue for countless world-class performers and performances. Gertrude Clarke Whittall presented to the Library a gift of five Stradivari instruments which were first heard here during a concert on January 10, 1936. These parallel but separate donations serve as the pillars that now support a full season of concerts made possible by gift trusts and foundations that followed those established by Mrs. Coolidge and Mrs. Whittall.

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