



**Saturday Evening, April 14, 2018 at 8:00**  
Michigan Theater  
Ann Arbor

# SORROW

Colin Stetson / *Alto and Bass Saxophones; Contrabass Clarinet*  
Megan Stetson / *Mezzo-Soprano*  
Amanda Lo / *Violin*  
Caleb Burhans / *Violin*  
Rebecca Foon / *Cello*  
Dan Bennett / *Tenor and Baritone Saxophones, Clarinet*  
Andrew Bishop / *Tenor Saxophone, Clarinet*  
Grey McMurray / *Guitars*  
Ryan Ferreira / *Guitars*  
Justin Walter / *Keyboards, EVI*  
Shahzad Ismaily / *Synthesizers*  
Greg Fox / *Drums*

## RENEGHUE

85th Performance of the 139th Annual Season

This evening's performance is funded in part by the Building Audiences for Sustainability initiative of The Wallace Foundation.

Media partnership provided by *Metro Times* and WEMU 89.1 FM.

Special thanks to Paul Feeny, Michael Gould, Jonathan Kuuskoski, Ingrid Racine, Caitlin Taylor, U-M EXCEL, and the U-M Center for World Performance Studies for their participation in events surrounding this evening's performance.

*Sorrow* appears by arrangement with The Billions Corporation.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

## PROGRAM

### **Sorrow — A Reimagining of Górecki's Third Symphony**

*Henryk Górecki*

#### **Symphony No. 3, "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs"**

Lento — Sostenuto tranquillo ma cantabile  
Lento e Largo — Tranquillissimo  
Lento — Cantabile-semplice

*This evening's concert is performed without intermission.*

## THE SPACE WHERE YOU USED TO BE

by Doyle Armbrust

I don't want to write these words. Or, conversely, when I knew I'd be covering Colin Stetson this season, I was over the moon. Forgive the caveat, but as a music journalist, my mailbox is jammed with dozens of albums every week...but Colin's records remain at or near the top of the pile, ever since I laid hands on a copy of his *New History of Warfare, Vol. 1* (2008).

So I finally get the opportunity to cover an artist whose creativity cuts glass — that continues to startle and inspire me.

And then Stoneman Douglas sends us all reeling.

At this point in our country's history, UMS could have thrown a dart at the calendar when considering a piece about the loss of children and it would have coincided with a mass shooting. That's not what prompted this concert, or this re-imagining of Górecki's iconic Third Symphony, but I'll bet that I'm not the only one reckoning with this excruciating reality as we encounter this exquisite piece.

Why, in 1992, did the Nonesuch Records release of this symphony miraculously sell a million copies? Maybe because pain is the one existential element we are all assured of sharing in this lifetime. Maybe because one thing we can all agree upon is that there is no analogue for the loss of a child. Those that have experienced it cannot possibly translate its depth, and yet those that have not have no trouble empathizing with it. Górecki just found the vein,

and he opened it up.

Columbine was the defining school tragedy of my childhood. Ever since then, the voices of the victim's parents have always haunted me well beyond the moment the story escapes the news cycle. Though the brave speeches and interviews with surviving students at Stoneman Douglas offer a glimmer of hope that maybe this time it will be different, and that change is peeking out from its dark cell, it's the parents — those most acutely left behind — that level me. Tributes and policy change are vital...but there remain those that will live out the rest of their years with a blank space that a child was meant to fill.

### **Movement 1: "Lento — Sostenuto tranquillo ma cantabile"**

*"To be honest, it seems to be getting harder. I keep looking for him. I reach out for him. I keep thinking he's here and can't understand why he's not."*

—mother of six-year-old Sandy Hook Elementary School victim

Even if your religious beliefs trend elsewhere, or not at all, there is something universal uncovered in the story of the mother, Mary, and her fated son, Jesus, which provides the launch point for Górecki's lament. The moment of intimacy between them, as he staggers under the burden of his crucifix, is so movingly captured in Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ*, but here we enter more tenebrous emotional territory. Colin's sooty

reeds moan into view, ushering in low strings and woodwinds to this dirge. There is a solemnity evident here, and yet the steady progression of the assembling voices reveals that this is not the first time this song has been sung. The pain is singular — the tears unlike any that have ever flowed — but the tune is unfortunately a familiar one.

One detail of Colin's records that draws me in is that his human-ness is left intact. His breath is a feature, rather than something to be deleted by an engineer, which brings the listener closer to live performance than albums typically allow. The vulnerability of this Third Symphony — what makes it so captivating — is honored by his ensemble's interpretation, even enhanced with the dramatics of splashing cymbals and sublimated blast beats in the drums. Though illuminated through these interpretive filters, Górecki's reverential economy of means is undisturbed. This writing, and this reinvention, move beyond the liturgical to something altogether more beautifully crude. More raw, and more riveting, and Colin's coda is pure scorched earth.

**Movement 2: "Lento e largo —  
Tranquillissimo"**

*for Gérard Lemaître*

*"I am broken as I write this trying to figure out how my family gets through this... hold your children tight."*

—father of 14-year-old Marjory Stoneman Douglas victim

The rising 'E' – 'G-sharp' descending to 'F-sharp'...to my mind, this is the most memorable figure from

Górecki's Third, and perhaps the most heartbreaking. There is something so hopeful about an ascending major third, and something equally resigned about its settling back a step lower. Hope seems so dangerous in this realm, but also so necessary if we are to carry on. When they emerge, Colin's sax and the synths embody an almost Angelo Badalamenti-esque aesthetic, magnifying the potency of this dire supplication to Mary. Rich vibrations in the guitar and strings provide the foil for the incremental rises and falls in the doleful vocal line before the music, and our thoughts return to the expectant 'E' – 'G-sharp' – 'F-sharp,' and with it, a propulsive beat from the percussion. Perhaps there is catharsis to be found amidst all this despair.

**Movement 3: "Lento —  
Cantabile-semplice"**

*"One of the hardest things to accept, for me, is that this horrible way of feeling is the new normal."*

—mother of 31-year-old Pulse nightclub victim

It was understandably assumed that Górecki's Third Symphony was instigated by the horrors of the Second World War. According to the composer it wasn't, but neither was this project born out of our too-frequent mass slayings of students. It just fits, because loss of this magnitude is a possibility, or current reality, for us all.

This third movement is in some ways the most transformed of the three, in Colin's interpretation. The drums again shift forward in

the orchestration, building to a frenetic intensity before the arrival of the revelatory key of A Major that concludes the piece. "And you, God's little flowers / May you blossom all around / So that my son / May sleep happily," implores the soprano. This is real life. This is a winsome spring morning seen trickling through the sieve of rapacious grief. It is beauty, attenuated, but beauty nonetheless. It is the best we can hope for.

*Doyle Armbrust is a Chicago-based violist and member of the Spektral Quartet. He is a contributing writer for WQXR's Q2 Music, Crain's Chicago Business, Chicago Magazine, Chicago Tribune, and formerly, Time Out Chicago.*

## ARTISTS

**Colin Stetson** (*alto and bass saxophones; contrabass clarinet*) was born and raised in Ann Arbor, spent a decade in San Francisco and Brooklyn honing his formidable talents as a horn player, and eventually settled in Montreal in 2007. Over the years he has worked extensively live and in-studio with a wide range of bands and musicians including Tom Waits, Arcade Fire, Bon Iver, TV On The Radio, Feist, Laurie Anderson, Lou Reed, Bill Laswell, Evan Parker, The Chemical Brothers, Animal Collective, Hamid Drake, LCD Soundsystem, The National, Angélique Kidjo, Fink, and David Gilmore. Meanwhile, he has developed an utterly unique voice as a soloist, principally on saxophones and clarinets, his intense technical prowess matched by his exhilarating and emotionally gripping skills as a songwriter. Mr. Stetson's astounding physical engagement with his instruments (chiefly bass and alto saxophones) produces emotionally rich and polyphonic compositions that transcend expectations of what solo horn playing can sound like. Mr. Stetson is equally at home in the avant jazz tradition of players who have pushed the boundaries of the instrument through circular breathing, embouchure, etc. (i.e. Evan Parker, Mats Gustafsson) and at the nexus of noise/drone/minimalist music that encompasses genres like dark metal, post-rock, and contemporary electronics (i.e. Tim Hecker, Ben Frost — both of whom have mixed or remixed Mr. Stetson's recordings).

In 2008 Aagoo Records released Mr. Stetson's debut, the first in his *New History Warfare* album cycle. *New History Warfare Vol. 2: Judges* arrived via Constellation in spring 2011. The album met with universal acclaim from critics across a spectrum of

jazz and indie rock/pop cultural spheres: "pure revelation" according to *All About Jazz*, the album was shortlisted for the Polaris Music Prize, and landed on year-end lists at *Pitchfork*, *Tiny Mix Tapes*, *SPIN*, and the *Village Voice*. His frequent appearances on stages at SXSW, All Tomorrow's Parties, and countless stops on the international jazz festival circuit cemented his reputation as a versatile and virtuosic player while bringing his solo work to a broad international audience. April 2013 saw the release of *New History Warfare Vol. 3: To See More Light* via Constellation, completing the conceptual and narrative arc of the series and constituting a definitive realization of his unparalleled musicianship and stunning skill as a composer. It has been received with exemplary recognition and was shortlisted for the Polaris Music Prize. April 2015 saw the release of the first recording of his duo project with long-time collaborator Sarah Neufeld. *Never Were the Way She Was* charts an expansive sonic trajectory with a multiplicity of structures and voicings that belies the fundamental economy of two acoustic instruments combining in real time. The resulting musical chronicle powerfully establishes its own spatial and temporal horizon; Mr. Stetson and Ms. Neufeld offer up an impressively immersive integration of composition, performance, timbre, and texture. *Never Were the Way She Was* is a sum quite definitively and thrillingly greater than its parts.

Currently residing in the San Francisco Bay Area, **Megan Stetson** (*mezzo-soprano*) is an active performer nationally and internationally in the classical realm, as well as in musical theater and dance.

She has performed over 25 lead and supporting operatic and musical roles, including the title role of Bizet's *Carmen* and the role of Princess Betsy in the US West Coast premiere of *Anna Karenina* by David Carlson.

**Amanda Lo** (*violin*) is a multi-genre acoustic and electric violinist currently based between New York and Los Angeles. She moved to New York in 2007 to attend New York University and study with Stephanie Chase, earning her bachelor's degree in violin performance in 2011. She has collaborated with artists including Andrew Bird, Bill Whelan, Björk, The Dillinger Escape Plan, Efterklang, Guards, Goldfrapp, Harry Connick Jr., JJ Lin (林俊傑), Judith Hill, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Mono, Natalia Lafourcade, Paul Simon, Pink, Pink Martini, Ra Ra Riot, Rihanna, and Sufjan Stevens. She has also appeared on *America's Got Talent*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, *Saturday Night Live*, and *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

Called "New York's mohawked Mozart" by *Time Out New York*, **Caleb Burhans** (*violin*) is a composer and performer. His commissions include Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Library of Congress, and the Kronos Quartet. In 2009 he became an Annenberg Fellow recipient. Mr. Burhans is a founding member of Alarm Will Sound, itsnotyouitsme, Ensemble Signal, Wordless Music Orchestra, and is also a member of ACME and Newspeak. In 2013 his debut album *Evensong* was one of NPR's "Top 10 Classical Albums of the Year." As a conductor, he has worked with the London Sinfonietta and the Wordless Music Orchestra.

**Rebecca Foon** (*cello*) is a Montreal-based cellist, best known as co-founder of contemporary chamber group Esmerine and member of Thee Silver Mt. Zion, Set Fire To Flames, and most recently Saltland. Ms. Foon has also collaborated with the likes of Vic Chesnutt, Islands, British Sea Power, Carla Bozulich, Land Of Kush, and Little Scream, and played concerts alongside Patti Smith, Warren Ellis, and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. She is also a co-founder along with Jesse Paris Smith of Pathway to Paris, a series of concerts highlighting the importance of establishing a legally binding agreement on climate in the lead-up to the United Nations climate talk in Paris in December 2015.

**Dan Bennett** (*tenor and baritone saxophones, clarinet*) is a saxophonist currently residing in Ann Arbor. He has toured extensively in the US and Europe with the band Nomo and is an active member of the Ann Arbor/Detroit music community. Currently, he performs and records regularly in Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Chicago with various artists as well as leading his own ensembles.

**Andrew Bishop** (*clarinet and tenor saxophone*) is a versatile multi-instrumentalist, composer, improviser, educator, and scholar comfortable in many musical idioms. He maintains an international career and serves as an associate professor and chair of jazz and contemporary improvisation at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Mr. Bishop's three recordings as a leader have received widespread acclaim from national and international journals. As a composer and arranger, he has received over 30 commissions, numerous residencies and awards, and recognition



from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and a nomination from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He earned five degrees in music including a DMA in music composition from the University of Michigan. Mr. Bishop is a Conn-Selmer and Vandoren artist.

**Grey McMurray** (*guitars*) has performed and recorded with the likes of Meshell Ndegeocello, Tyondai Braxton, John Cale, Gil Scott Heron, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the American Contemporary Music Ensemble. He co-leads itsnotyouitsme with Caleb Burhans, and Tongues In Trees with Samita Sinha and Sunny Jain. He is also a frequent collaborator of Sō Percussion. His ambition is to provoke joyful tears in strangers' eyes everyday.

**Ryan Ferreira** (*guitars*) has played with Ralph Alessi, Sam Amidon, Bill Frisell, Alarm Will Sound, Aaron Parks, Dave King, Loren Stillman, and Ted Poor. He has been a regular part of Tim Berne's bands for the last few years and is also a regular part of Chris Dingman's band. He has played on over 40 recordings and recently recorded with David Torn. He released his first solo record in 2011 and now lives in Seattle.

**Justin Walter** (*keyboards, EWI*) was born and raised in Ann Arbor. His most recent musical explorations are centered around the Electronic Valve Instrument, a rare wind-controlled analog synthesizer. He performs regularly as a jazz trumpeter, and records and releases music that encompasses his love of acoustic and electronic sounds, most recently the album *Lullabies and Nightmares*, on the Kranky label.

Although known primarily as a bass player, **Shahzad Ismaily** (*synthesizers*) plays a variety of instruments, including electronic and double bass, guitar, banjo, accordion, flute, percussion, and electronic instruments such as Moog synthesizers. He is a member of the band Ceramic Dog by Marc Ribot, and Secret Chiefs 3, and has collaborated with Laurie Anderson, Lou Reed, John Zorn, Jolie Holland, Laura Veirs, Bonnie Prince Billy, Faun Fables, Elysian Fields, Shelley Hirsch, Will Oldham, Nels Cline, Bill Frisell, Guillermo E. Brown, Graham Haynes, David Krakauer, and Billy Martin. He recently opened the beautiful Figure 8 Studios in Brooklyn, where *Sorrow* was recorded.

**Greg Fox's** (*drums*) prolificacy is only eclipsed by his adaptability; from the American black metal torchbearer, Liturgy, to the minimalist soundscapes of Ben Frost's *AURORA*, Mr. Fox's malleable style always comes across confident and on-point. Mr. Fox's drumming adds raw, concussive energy, reminiscent of John Bonham or Keith Moon in their heyday, while his avant-garde instinct adds complexity and fluidity throughout any recording. His eclectic discography is probably due to the duality of his nature. His demeanor is both relaxed and intense. His playing is calculated, yet free-form. In short, Mr. Fox is an enigma — a force of percussive nature.

## UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's performance marks U-M alumnus and Ann Arbor native **Colin Stetson**'s third UMS appearance, following his UMS debut in January 2014 in the Arthur Miller Theatre. **Justin Walter** makes his fourth UMS appearance this evening and **Dan Bennett** makes his second UMS appearance this evening, following their UMS debuts in April 2010 in the Michigan Theater with Nomo, as the opening band for Baaba Maal. Mr. Walter most recently appeared under UMS auspices in January 2014 with Colin Stetson. **Andrew Bishop** makes his second UMS appearance this evening, following his UMS debut in November 2010 as part of the ONCE Festival in Rackham Auditorium. UMS welcomes the rest of this evening's artists as they make their UMS debuts tonight.



TONIGHT'S VICTOR FOR UMS:



## The Wallace Foundation

*Supporter of this evening's performance of Sorrow.*

### MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 4/15          Apollo's Fire: Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*  
4/19–21      *Cold Blood*  
4/22          Emanuel Ax

*Tickets available at [www.ums.org](http://www.ums.org).*

### ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 4/19          UMS 101, Dance/Theater: *Cold Blood*  
(Power Center Green Room, 5:30 pm)  
*Paid registration required; please visit [bit.ly/UMSClasses](http://bit.ly/UMSClasses) to register.*
- 4/19          Post-Performance Q&A: *Cold Blood*  
(Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street)  
*Must have a ticket to that evening's performance to attend.*

*Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.*