Johnstone Fund Announces 2025/26 Season

Free Short North Concert Series Returns for 13th Season, Inviting Public to Experience Bold, Genre-Defying New Music in Intimate Setting

COLUMBUS (August XX, 2025) — The Johnstone Fund for New Music is delighted to present its 2025/26 season of forward-thinking and emotionally rich music. All performances of this free "New Music at Short North Stage" concert series take place at Short North Stage at 7:00 p.m. and run for one hour. Zach Hannah, the Johnstone Fund's Poet in Residence, will recite poetry revealing his interpretation of each program at every performance.

Pendulum Duo: "Origins-Reimagined" [3 World Premieres]
Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Comprised of Columbus-based percussionists Joseph Krygier and Susan Powell, Pendulum Duo was born from a powerful artistic connection forged at the Eastman School of Music (New York). Krygier and Powell bonded over a mutual passion for musical traditions far beyond the Western Classical canon. Drawn to the rich textures of jazz, contemporary, and global music, they dove into the world of free improvisation—laying the foundation for what would become Pendulum Duo.

Pendulum Duo has been driven by fearless curiosity and a commitment to exploring evocative sonic landscapes. Pendulum's recent work showcases original compositions written by the duo. They have performed across the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, and Europe, as well as in Japan with The Ohio State University Wind Symphony and in Costa Rica as part of the IX International Percussion Ensemble Festival. Versatile as both performers and educators, Krygier and Powell helped create the Sympatico Percussion Group, a dynamic quintet that often features them as soloists and composers.

"Origins-Reimagined" blends spontaneity and improvisation with thoughtfully crafted music for percussion, while highlighting the ensemble's evolving artistic voice. It includes three world premieres, including a piece written for Pendulum and the Tower Duo (Erin Torres [flute] and Michael Rene Torres [saxophone]) commissioned by local composer Michael Rene Torres.

Pathos Trio: "Polarity"
Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Brooklyn's Pathos Trio is a two-percussion-and-piano trio featuring percussionists Marcelina Suchocka and Felix Reyes and pianist/composer Will Healy. The trio is known for combining aesthetics of contemporary classical music with dark and heavy sounds from alternative rock, progressive/black metal, cathedral music, minimalist music, and electronic synth-wave. Pathos brings adventurous music to audiences through collaborations with young, living new music composers.

Pathos was a New Music USA's 2023 New Music Inc grantee; a semifinalist for Concert Artist Guild's Victor Elmaleh Virtual Competition in 2022; an Ensemble Forward grantee from Chamber Music America in 2021 and 2022; and a recipient of project support from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, the Johnstone Fund for New Music, the Amphion Foundation, the Alice Ditson Fund, and the New York State Council for the Arts.

The trio is currently on tour performing new commissions from their sophomore album "Polarity." For this program, Pathos will present new works for two percussionists and piano written by composers Andrew Rodriguez, Ian Chang (from Oscar-winning ensemble Son Lux), Clara Warnaar, and Phong Tran, as well as new commissioned works by Will Healy and Finola Merivale.

Unheard-of//Ensemble: "Ohio Premieres" [2 World Premieres]
Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Unheard-of//Ensemble is a contemporary chamber ensemble dedicated to connecting new music to communities in New York and across the United States through the development and performance of adventurous programs using technology and interactive multimedia. The Brooklyn ensemble returns to the New Music at Short North Stage series to premiere two new Johnstone Fund commissions by Ohio-based composers Jesse Jones and Susanna Hancock, with video art by Xuan.

Jesse Jones is a Rome Prize and Guggenheim-winning composer who serves on the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory. His music imbues combines a modern voice with an exploration of bluegrass and folk genres. Susanna Hancock served on the faculty of Miami University (Ohio) and has premiered works with the United States Army Band, wildUp, ~Nois Saxophone Quartet, members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the St. Louis Symphony. Together, Hancock and Xuan will create a new work for Unheard-of//Ensemble, weaving together Hancock's post-minimal soundscapes with Xuan's striking projections and experimental animation.

Since its founding in 2014, Unheard-of//Ensemble has premiered 200 works and has received support from Chamber Music America, NYSCA, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, the Brooklyn Arts Council, New Music USA, and the Johnstone Fund for New Music.

Chamber Brews: "Inter/cepted"
Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Chamber Brews is a dynamic Columbus new music ensemble known for their multi-genre collaborations and uniquely interactive programming. The ensemble celebrates diverse musical voices by commissioning works, seeking distinct performance venues, and collaborating with highly artistic partners. Chamber Brews' mission is to share classical music in a relaxed atmosphere in order to encourage meaningful conversation between performers and audience members. By breaking down the Fourth Wall, Chamber Brews invites music lovers of all levels and tastes to experience personal connections with their music, thereby interweaving stories of performance, historical context, and musical analysis.

LIGAMENT: "A Roaring Flame"
Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Described as "perverse and nihilistic" by someone on Twitter, Anika Kildegaard (voice) and Will Yager (double bass) are LIGAMENT, an Iowa/Philadelphia-based ensemble dedicated to commissioning new music and creating work for their unique instrumentation. The surprising combination of double bass and voice unlocks an exciting world of sound in the pressing and political pieces they perform. LIGAMENT's performance highlights include the Feed Me Weird Things concert series, University of Iowa Center for New Music, Kansas City Contemporary Music Festival, Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project's Re:Sound, residencies at the University of Idaho and the University of Iowa, and collaborations with the composition department at the Peabody Conservatory. They have premiered many new works, and have an upcoming album of pieces written for the duo.

LIGAMENT will present a program of new works for voice and double bass that explore the vast sonic worlds made possible by the duo's unique instrumentation. Highlights include Zac Fick-Cambria's "Machina," in which Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun dissents in a capital punishment case; Ruby Fulton's "and if not, why not," which reveals the isolating effects of interstate migration on new mothers in early 20th century America; and James Dillon's "A Roaring Flame," a glossolalic summoning and primordially macabre incantation. The program also include works by Amy Beth Kirsten and Katherine Balch.

Missing Piece: "Unsettling"
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

South-Side-Chicago-based new music duo Missing Piece consists of violinist Dan Galat and cellist Kelly Quesada. Missing Piece endeavors to commission new musical works and works from other artistic disciplines on themes that inspire others to connect with their community, to care for our environment, to listen deeply to ourselves and others, and to speak out against injustice.

The pieces presented in "Unsettling" span multiple styles and utilize standard music notation, graphic and text scores, as well as pure improvisation. For the conclusion of the program, Missing Piece will be joined by creative woodwind and sound artist Hunter

Diamond in a presentation of his powerful new work “Unsettling,” exploring the act of holding contradiction while reflecting on Israel from the perspective of an American Jew.

Missing Piece has commissioned more than 30 new works from Chicago and beyond, including standard notation, text and graphic scores, poetry, film, movement, and improvisation. The duo has presented their work in Illinois, Louisiana, Alaska, Ohio, and Florida.

eco|tonal: “Mythologies”
Tuesday, April 14, 2026

As eco|tonal, Iva Casián-Lakoš (cello, voice) and David Crowell (saxophones, electronics, guitar) create hypnotic original works for voice, cello, and saxophone exploring myth, time, and the cycles of life. An ecotone is a transitionary area between two biological communities—an apt metaphor for this Brooklyn-based musical collaboration. By combining its members’ diverse musical backgrounds, eco|tonal straddles the intersection of ambient, contemporary classical, and experimental indie pop worlds. Eco|tonal’s music is spacious yet densely layered and texturally adventurous.

Eco|tonal has performed at the New Directions Cello Festival at Bombyx Center; Scena Amadeo in Zagreb, Croatia; Symphony Space; Vassar College; and the Rites of Spring Festival at Custer Observatory. Ohio native Casian-Lakoš has toured with Bang on a Can All-Stars, American Modern Opera Company (AMOC), and Unheard-of//Ensemble. Crowell is a composer and instrumentalist whose record “Point / Cloud” was named a 2024 Top Ten Contemporary Album of the Year by The Guardian.

Deux Saisons: “interCONNECT”
Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Deux Saisons, French for “two seasons,” presents concerts with diverse collections of old and new classical repertoire to a wide community through integration into such diverse venues as farms, libraries, breweries, and the main stage. Known for incorporating audience participation and for applying music as a tool for education and restoration, the Michigan-based duo features soprano Keri Lee Pierson and classical guitarist Christopher Schoelen. This voice-and-guitar duo performs works that extend from the Renaissance through the present day.

InterCONNECT explores the themes of interconnectivity between people and themselves, people and each other, and people and the Earth. Its highlight will be new works commissioned for the voice and guitar by composers Pablo Gómez-Estévez, Ahshaya Avril Tucker, and multi-GRAMMY-nominated Christopher Cerrone. Other works in the program explore the sonorities of voice and guitar and the history of modern composers working with these versatile instruments.

CODE: “Reflections” [1 world premiere]
Tuesday, June 9, 2026

CODE returns for their 13th performance in the Johnstone Fund’s series, presenting music by Ohio and Ohio-trained composers. “Reflections” features the world premiere of Jamie Leigh Sampson’s “Devil’s Workshop” as well as the dramatic and collaborative work "At the Detention Center for Immigrant Children" by local composer Jennifer Bernard Merkowitz and local poet Louise Robertson.

The Columbus Ohio Discovery Ensemble is Central Ohio’s new music ensemble dedicated to the promotion, performance, and perception of contemporary concert music in our community. Founded by Artistic Director Michael Rene Torres, CODE focuses on collaborating with Ohio composers, performing artists, and arts organizations. Since CODE’s first performance in May of 2015, the ensemble has premiered several new works by living composers, performed throughout the greater Columbus area, collaborated with several arts organizations across multiple disciplines including poetry and dance, and strived to work towards equity in the diverse compositional voices represented. CODE presents a variety of musical styles and aesthetics while searching for innovative ways to meaningfully engage Ohio audiences with substantive new music.

Short North Stage is located at 1187 North High Street. Seating is available on a first-come first-served basis. Performances are recommended for ages 9 and older. Parking assistance is available through the ParkColumbus app.

About Zach Hannah
A poet, an instigator of poetry, and one half of the Sandwich Arts duo, Zach Hannah is a Columbus-based Appalachian expat who produces public poetry events, including the annual megaphone reading SHHH, They’ll Hear You and 6-1-FORT, A Poetic Excuse.

About The Johnstone Fund for New Music
The Johnstone Fund for New Music was founded by Columbus community leaders Jack and Zoe Johnstone in 2008. It supports the continuing growth and vitality of contemporary classical music by funding the creation and performance of new works for a growing audience in Central Ohio.

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