Johnstone Fund Unveils 2026-27 Season

Free “New Music at Short North Stage” Series Marks 14th Year, Bringing Adventurous Contemporary Composers to an Intimate Columbus Venue

COLUMBUS (August 3, 2026) — The Johnstone Fund for New Music opens its 14th season this fall with nine performances that push past the boundaries of traditional classical programming. Held in Short North Stage's newly reimagined Moonlight Studio (formerly the Green Room), each concert runs 7:00-8:00 p.m. and remains free and open to the public. Poet in Residence Su Flatt will offer a live poetic response to each program, adding a second artistic voice to every evening.

High-resolution images of the 2026-27 season’s performing artists are available for download here.

Transient Canvas: “Finding Balance”
Wednesday, September 2, 2026
Contemporary duo Transient Canvas presents *Finding Balance*, a new program featuring world premieres by Marti Epstein and LJ White alongside music by Jennifer Bellor, Natalia Camargo Duarte, and Tyson Davis. The repertoire is drastically varied in language and tone, but each piece represents a different way of carving out a life amid the chaos. Big feelings are on display, including rage, empathy, introspection, and calls to action.

For 15 years, Boston-based Transient Canvas has thrilled audiences with performances of new music for bass clarinet and marimba. Bass clarinetist Amy Advocat (she/her) and marimbist Matt Sharrock (they/she) relish the creative potential of working with living composers, having built a commissioned repertoire of more than 90 works. Since 2017, they have hosted an annual Composer Fellowship Program, open to composers of all ages. They maintain an active touring schedule, with recent performances at the Alba Music Festival, Festival of New American Music, Music on the Edge, New Music Miami, and Red Note New Music Festival, among others. Recent educational residencies include the University of Southern California, Brown University, New York University, and Longy's Divergent Studio.

Beyond This Point: “Reclaimed Timber”
Tuesday, October 6, 2026
Reclaimed Timber is an hour-long immersive multimedia performance that reimagines Michael Gordon’s *Timber*, built entirely from wood sourced from abandoned and vacant buildings in the Columbus area, so whatever materials the city has to offer shape the sound of the performance. Six percussionists drum on slats of this amplified reclaimed wood, and the hypnotic rhythms and undulating sounds it produces activate a reactive lighting installation made of more than 5,000 LEDs and 200 paper lanterns, transforming the performance space with waves of light.

Beyond This Point is a Chicago-based collaborative music ensemble dedicated to advancing experimental and contemporary culture. This multifaceted collective of musicians, performers, and arts practitioners builds experimental projects that engage written music, sound art, lighting, installation, improvisation, and live electronics. From the intimate to the monumental, BTP is

known for producing unique performances that offer captivating and exhilarating experiences. BTP has presented its original programs at venues throughout North America, with recent performances at the Time:Spans Festival in New York, the CURRENTS New Media Festival in Santa Fe, and New Music Concerts in Toronto.

Hypercube: "The Voices of Today"
Tuesday, November 24, 2026
Known for high-energy performances with impressive execution, Hypercube showcases an evening program of propulsive rhythms, striking sonorities, and fearless creativity. This spirited program pushes musical boundaries while forging meaningful connections between performers, composers, and audiences.

The quartet, comprising Erin Rogers (saxophones), Jay Sorce (classical and electric guitar), Andrea Lodge (piano and accordion), and Chris Graham (percussion), has appeared as guest artist at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh), the Garrick Theatre (Newfoundland), Roulette Intermedium, the Nief-Norf Summer Festival (Knoxville), LPR Presents (NYC), Le Vivier (Montréal), and the 40th International Festival of New Music "Manuel Enríquez" (Mexico City). Since 2020, the ensemble has hosted an annual composition lab; Cubelab workshops engage dozens of emerging composers in the creation of adventurous new works for mixed quartet, alongside educational and professional development sessions.

Chamber Brews: "Then / Now"
Tuesday, December 15, 2026
For Columbus-based ensemble Chamber Brews, new music is a launching point for community. The group has spent a decade blurring genre lines and inviting audiences into uniquely interactive programming, commissioning new works, partnering with fellow creatives, and championing diverse musical voices along the way. Its string-based programs are lush and imaginative, pulling back the curtain on the minds of the composers and musicians behind them. Among its favorite collaborators: Mark Lomax's Urban Arts Ensemble, Helen Sung, Columbus Jazz, and The Ohio State University Opera Theatre.

This year, Chamber Brews marks its 10th anniversary with a program that looks back before it looks forward. *Then / Now* revisits some of the ensemble's favorite pieces and commissions from the past decade alongside striking new music, a fitting tribute to where the group has been and a launching point for where it's headed next.

Exceptet: "VINE(TZ)"
Tuesday, January 19, 2027
Exceptet returns to the series with *VINE(TZ)*, featuring two new commissions that pair introspective minimalism with bombastic maximalism. The program includes the second performance of Max Vinetz's Koussevitzky Prize-winning *Game of Squares*, inspired by Exceptet's Stravinskian instrumentation, and the premiere of a Johnstone Fund-commissioned work by Anthony Vine exploring Anglican plainchant, the composer's time in Rome, and his electric guitar performance.

New York Citys Exceptet is a seven-piece ensemble dedicated to commissioning and performing works by emerging composers. The ensemble has performed with the Ecstatic Music Festival as part of the MATA Interval Series (New York) and at Roulette Intermedium (Brooklyn), and has been showcased on WQXR. Founded by Bang on a Can Summer Festival alumni, Exceptet's members have performed on Broadway and at Radio City Music Hall, Lincoln

Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Hollywood Bowl. Exceptet's second album, *Episodic Memory*, will be released in October 2026.

Hinge Quartet: "HEAVY"
Tuesday, February 16, 2027
Hinge Quartet presents *HEAVY*, a program that explores different aspects of the group's instrumentation, from the electric guitar's connection to heavy metal to the quartet's ability to play at impressively loud dynamics. But the program also asks: what about the heaviness of silence, or the weight of repeated ritual? The evening includes music by Per Bloland, Ed Martin, LJ White, and Sarah Hennies, along with Dan VanHassel's reimagining of Meshuggah's *Clockworks*.

Lying somewhere between a chamber ensemble and an avant-garde rock band, Hinge Quartet combines cutting-edge contemporary classical and experimental music with seamless multimedia integration and inventive reimaginings of rock and pop songs. The quartet is Philipp Stäudlin (saxophones), Dan VanHassel (electric guitar), Matt Sharrock (percussion), and Keith Kirchoff (piano). Dedicated to expanding and diversifying its repertoire, Hinge Quartet has commissioned new works from composers including Bahar Royaee, Per Bloland, Kirsten Volness, LJ White, Ed Martin, Chen-Hui Jen, Kirsten Carey, Marti Epstein, Yoon-Ji Lee, Curtis Hughes, and Nicole Murphy, with recent seasons also featuring works by Julius Eastman, Sam Pluta, Jessie Cox, Philippe Hurel, Meshuggah, Katherine Young, Louis Andriessen, Chaya Czernowin, Klaus Lang, and Björk. Since 2025, Hinge Quartet has been the Contemporary Ensemble in Residence at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, working with its composition and Contemporary Classical Music Performance departments, with additional residencies at the University of Cincinnati, Brandeis University, the University of Georgia, the University of California at Berkeley, and the Alba Music Festival.

Drum SCORE
Tuesday, March 9, 2027
The Johnstone Fund launched the SCORE series in 2017 to spark creativity and community between Ohio composers and performers. *Drum SCORE* features a collaboration between local percussionists Mark Lomax and Cameron Leach.

Dr. Mark Lomax, II is a critically acclaimed composer, recording artist, drummer, activist, educator, and author. In January 2019, he released *400: An Afrikan Epic*, a magnum opus consisting of a 12-album cycle, a curriculum, and a documentary that ambitiously tells the story of the Afrikan diaspora. His music has been performed across the globe. Learn more here.

Cameron Leach is recognized for his expressive virtuosity, musical athleticism, and daring interpretations. As a soloist and chamber musician, Leach has concertized throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. As Principal Percussionist with the Columbus Symphony, Leach is the winner of both the Percussive Arts Society International Solo Artist Competition and the Yamaha Young Performing Artist Competition. Learn more here.

Anzû Quartet: "Tree of Life"
Tuesday, April 13, 2027
The Anzû Quartet returns to the series with a genre-bending performance of new works for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. The program highlights a substantial new work by GRAMMY Award-winning pianist and composer Kris Davis, commissioned by the Johnstone Fund for New Music.

Formed in 2020, the Anzû Quartet is dedicated to the music of today and the recent canon. A collaboration between internationally renowned performers of contemporary music, Olivia De Prato (violin), Ashley Bathgate (cello), Ken Thomson (clarinet), and Karl Larson (piano), the quartet pays homage to Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* by actively commissioning and performing new works for this iconic instrumentation. The ensemble has performed for audiences around the world, including performances in New York, Detroit, Berlin, Croatia, the Netherlands, and Latvia, along with a digital premiere at UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance. The name Anzû refers to a massive, fire- and water-breathing bird found in Babylonian and Sumerian mythology. In these ancient texts, Anzû is linked to death and destruction as well as birth and creation, reflecting the juxtaposing themes of calamity and salvation often expressed through birdsong in Messiaen's quartet.

Popebama: "Supernatural"
Tuesday, May 11, 2027
Basket Case (2021) by Erin Rogers kicks off Popebama's live set with a fresh take on the Green Day classic from *Dookie* (1994), featuring 0-Coast semi-mod desktop synth, freeze and ring modulation pedals, a directional sax mic, processed vocals, and an avalanche of multiphonics. The duo then hard-pivots to *Praxis* by Dennis Sullivan, an impossibly soft soundscape featuring built-in electronics, before moving into the co-written work *For Dave Mustaine* and newly conceived works for players and otherworldly elements, including feedback, EVPs, and head-related transfer functions, by Josh Mastel, Kittie Cooper, and Levi Lu.

Popebama is a New York-based experimental duo focused on high-level performances of unconventional works. Erin Rogers (saxophone) and Dennis Sullivan (percussion) are composer-performers who apply text, electronics, and high-energy instrumental writing to freshly squeezed sounds. Specializing in works conceived by Rogers and Sullivan, Popebama has championed composers such as Paul Pinto, Matthew Shlomowitz, Jenna Lyle, Rick Burkhardt, Kittie Cooper, Daniel Silliman, and Alex Christie. The duo has collaborated with yarn/wire (NYC), Tøyen Fil Og Klafferi (Oslo), Brandon Lopez (Brooklyn), Anne La Berge (Amsterdam), Merche Blasco (NYC), Jessica Pavone (Queens), Ogni Suono (Cleveland), Rage Thormbones (LA), and DECODER (Hamburg). Popebama has been featured at the Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), NYmusikk Bergen (Norway), the Shed (NYC), Edmonton Fringe Festival (Canada), Splendor (Amsterdam), Diabolical Records (Salt Lake City), VU Symposium (Park City), Bodies-As-Technology (Brooklyn), ReSound Festival (Cleveland), the Stone (NYC), SPLICE Festival (Kalamazoo), Hochschule für Musik (Freiburg), New Music on the Point (Vermont), Arts, Letters and Numbers (NY), and the Walden School (New Hampshire).

CODE: "Reflections"
Tuesday, June 1, 2027
CODE marks its 12th appearance in the series with a program spotlighting Ohio and Ohio-trained composers, headlined by the world premiere of a new work by local composer Zachery Meier. The Central Ohio Discovery Ensemble is Columbus' hometown champion of contemporary concert music, dedicated to promoting and performing the work of living composers throughout the community. Founded by Artistic Director Michael Rene Torres, CODE has built its identity around Ohio creativity, teaming up with local composers, performing artists, and arts organizations to bring new work to life. Since its first performance in May 2015, the ensemble has premiered dozens of new works, toured the greater Columbus area, and joined forces with arts organizations across disciplines from poetry to dance, all while pushing for greater equity among the compositional voices represented. Genre-hopping and endlessly curious, CODE keeps finding new ways to bring Ohio audiences face-to-face with the music of right now.

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 Poet in Residence Su Flatt
Su Flatt has been teaching, poeting, making, performing, learning, parenting, gardening, and growing in Columbus for 25 years. Originally from Florida, she grew up just a short, sweaty bike ride from the Gulf of Mexico and attended St. Petersburg College, the University of Florida, and the University of Miami. The sun, sea, and sand will always live in her work, while the Midwest has also settled into her poetry. Flatt is half of the Sandwich Arts team alongside Zach Hannah, with whom she co-authored the book I Love You, Punk, published by Fading Neon Press. Together they have held such poetry events as 61-Fort, Weirding Shakespeare, Shhh! They'll Hear You, and the annual Make Space Retreat.

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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