

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

School of Music

*presents*

**36<sup>th</sup> Contemporary Music Festival**

**Guest Artists**

**Augusta Read Thomas, *composer***

**Argus Quartet**

**Triplepoint Trio**

**Concert II**

*featuring*

**JMU Symphony Orchestra**

**Madison Singers**

**JMU Brass Band**

**Wednesday, February 15, 2017**

**8 pm**

**Concert Hall**



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

## Program

Prayer and Celebration (2006)

Augusta Read Thomas  
(b. 1964)

JMU Symphony Orchestra  
Ben Bergey, *conductor*

Mansueto Tribute, "double helix" (2011)

Augusta Read Thomas

Wanchi Huang, *violin*  
Diane Phoenix-Neal, *viola*

Cheetah Pet (2015)

Sam Suggs  
(b. 1990)

bad math (2015)

Brendon Randall-Myers  
(b. 1987)

haze (2016)

Michael Laurello  
(b. 1981)

Malarone (2016)

Doug Perry  
(b. 1986)

Triplepoint  
Jonny Allen and Doug Perry, *percussion*  
Sam Suggs, *bass*

15-Minute Intermission

The Rewaking (2005)

Augusta Read Thomas

Psalm 91, Verse 11 (1996)

Augusta Read Thomas

Psalm 67 (1894)

Charles Ives  
(1874-1954)

**Madison Singers**

Jo-Anne Van der Vat-Chromy, *director*

Matsuri (2017)

Eric Guinivan

I. The Fireworks at Ryogoku Bridge

(b.1984)

II. Bells on New Year's Eve

III. The Burning of Mount Wakakusa

**JMU Brass Band**

Kevin Stees, *director*

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personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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## Program Notes

**Prayer and Celebration** for chamber orchestra, commissioned by Saint Paul's High School on the occasion of their Sesquicentennial, was funded by the Roger S. Firestone Foundation. The work lasts four minutes and is an intimate and resonant "song" which celebrates lyric, prayerful lines allied to warm harmonies. It is a kind of homage to Mahler, a composer whose music I deeply adore and revere. This work is in the tradition of works such as the Samuel Barber's *Adagio For Strings* and can be played by orchestras of all levels, from student to amateur to professional.

—Augusta Read Thomas

**Mansueto Tribute:** For the dedication ceremony for which it was composed, the metaphor of a double helix seemed apt on numerous levels. For instance, envisage a double helix of human being & library — library & human being, each functioning in intimate relation with the other, each conditioning both its own future and the future of the other. Virtuosity, capricious and heartfelt, this music combines and transforms motivic materials that are simultaneously majestic and ornamental. Baroque-like with arabesques and trills, the Tribute swirls through auras including lyrical, ardent, fluid, impassioned and ablaze with energy. Akin to a double helix, both parts are equally virtuosic; likewise, each violinist serves as protagonist as well as a fulcrum point on and around which the other player's musical force-fields rotate, bloom and proliferate. The world premiere of MANSUETO TRIBUTE, "double helix" for two violins, composed for and premiered at the dedication ceremony of the Joe and Rika Mansueto Library at the University of Chicago took place on October 11, 2011, Janet Sung and Yuan-Qing Yu, violins.

—Augusta Read Thomas

**The Rewaking:** text by William Carlos Williams

Sooner or later  
we must come to the end  
of striving

to re-establish  
the image the image of  
the rose

but not yet  
you say extending the  
time indefinitely

by  
your love until a whole  
spring

rekindle  
the violet to the very  
lady's-slipper

## Program Notes (cont'd)

and so by  
your love the very sun  
itself is revived

**Psalm 91, Verse 11:** Composed for the occasion of the fortieth wedding anniversary of Dr. and Mrs. R.W. Paul Mellish. Commissioned by Mr. Martin Mellish for his parent's fortieth wedding anniversary. Dedicated to Dr. and Mrs. R.W. Paul Mellish. The world premiere took place on September 29, 1996, in Wells Cathedral, performed by the Wells Cathedral Men's and Boy's Chorus, Malcolm Archer, conductor. Psalm 91: verse 11: Text to be printed in the program note or in the church-service booklet:

*For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.*

— Augusta Read Thomas

**Matsuri (Festivals)** is a musical celebration inspired by scenes from three traditional Japanese festivals. The first movement, "Fireworks at Ryogoku Bridge," is inspired by the many Edo-period paintings of autumn evening fireworks festivals over the Sumida River in Tokyo. The movement flows with a sense of unbridled energy, joy, and enthusiasm as sparks flare and bright flashes of light sparkle against the night sky.

The second movement, "Bells on New Year's Eve," is inspired by the ceremonial ringing of temple bells at midnight on New Year's Eve. In this ceremony, the temple bell is rung 108 times with the final ring of the bell just after midnight. Each tolling of the bell represents one of the 108 worldly desires of Buddhist teachings, and the ceremony signifies the cleansing of these desires to begin the year spiritually renewed. While not a literal musical narration of this event, this movement of Matsuri features two contrasting prayer-like laments that make up the thematic tapestry of the movement: one hopeful and optimistic "prayer of reconciliation," and a second sorrowful "prayer of anguish." Several passages showcase lyrical and expressive solos, and a gesture representing the tolling of bells does in fact occur exactly 108 times in various forms over the course of the movement.

The final movement, "The Burning of Mount Wakakusa," is inspired by the annual festival Wakakusa Yamayaki (literally "Wakakusa Mountain Roast") during which the grass hillside of Nara's Mount Wakakusa is set on fire. The tradition supposedly originated from a boundary dispute between two neighboring temples in 1760 that resulted in the entire mountain being set aflame after mediations over the territory failed. Today, the festival begins with the ceremonial igniting of the mountainside by members of both temples followed by an elaborate fireworks display over the burning foliage. This movement reawakes the fiery excitement of the first movement's pyrotechnics, pitting huge shouts and explosions of color against a current of danger and the threat of the festivities growing out of control.

## Guest Composer Biography

The music of **Augusta Read Thomas** (b. 1964 in New York) is nuanced, majestic, elegant, capricious, lyrical, and colorful – *“it is boldly considered music that celebrates the sound of the instruments and reaffirms the vitality of orchestral music.”* (Philadelphia Inquirer) In February 2015, music critic Edward Reichel wrote, *“Augusta Read Thomas has secured for herself a permanent place in the pantheon of American composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. She is without question one of the best and most important composers that this country has today. Her music has substance and depth and a sense of purpose. She has a lot to say and she knows how to say it — and say it in a way that is intelligent yet appealing and sophisticated.”*

The New York Times article of March 6, 2015 states that Thomas had the distinction of having her work performed more frequently in 2013–2014 than any other living ASCAP composer, according to statistics from performing rights organization. Former Chairperson of the American Music Center, she serves on many boards, is a generous citizen in the profession at large, and, according to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, *“has become one of the most recognizable and widely loved figures in American Music.”*

A Grammy winner, her impressive body of works embodies unbridled passion and fierce poetry. The New Yorker Magazine called her *“a true virtuoso composer.”* Championed by such luminaries as Barenboim, Rostropovich, Boulez, Eschenbach, Salonen, Maazel, Ozawa, and Knussen, she rose early to the top of her profession. As an influential teacher at Eastman, Northwestern, Tanglewood, Aspen Music Festival, now she is the 16th ever University Professor (one of only 7 current University Professors) at the University of Chicago. Augusta said, *“Teaching is a natural extension of my creative process and of my enthusiasm for the music of others.”*

Thomas was the longest-serving Mead Composer-in-Residence for Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez with the Chicago Symphony from 1997 through 2006, a residency that culminated in the premiere of *Astral Canticle* – one of two finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Music. During her residency, Thomas not only premiered nine commissioned orchestral works, but also was central toward establishing the thriving MusicNOW series on which she commissioned and programmed the work of many living composers. Recent and upcoming commissions include those from the Boston Symphony, the Utah Symphony, Wigmore Hall in London, JACK quartet, Third Coast Percussion, Tanglewood, the Danish Chamber Players, Notre Dame University, and the Fromm Foundation. She won the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize among many other coveted awards. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Ms. Thomas studied composition with Oliver Knussen at Tanglewood (1986, 1987, 1989), Jacob Druckman at Yale University (1988), with Alan Stout and Bill Karlins at Northwestern University (1983–1987), and at the Royal Academy of Music in London (1989). She was a Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows at Harvard University (1991–94) and a Bunting Fellow at Radcliffe College (1990–91).

Donald Rosenberg of Gramophone wrote, *“Heart and soul in the breathtaking music of a thoughtful contemporary composer. Thomas’s brainy brand of modernism reveals a lively, probing mind allied to a beating heart.”*

## Guest Ensemble Biography

*Formed* on the sharp edge of contemporary classical and jazz fusion, **Triplepoint** connects these disparate musical worlds through crystalline composition and spontaneous virtuosity. Championing the musical appetite of today's eclectic and curious audiences, percussionists Jonny Allen, Doug Perry and bassist Sam Suggs bring an obsessive attention to craft and detail to their sets; laying side-by-side original compositions, jazz standards, new works commissioned by leading voices of their generation, and profane arrangements ranging from Mahler to Super Nintendo. The group came together at the Yale School of Music in 2012, has been produced by Elm City Records, and have toured as far afield as Northern Europe and West Africa. As artists-in-residence at the Avaloch Farm New Music Institute, Triplepoint was featured in New Music USA's NewMusicBox, which stated, "In each case, the [commissioned] composers created bounded material, but the performances were improvisational, spontaneous, and joyful."

## About the Festival

### Special Thanks

#### *Contemporary Music Festival Committee*

Casey Cangelosi, Gabriel Dobner, Eric Guinivan, Jason Haney, Dorothy Maddison, John Peterson, Sam Suggs

School of Music Faculty, Staff and Students

Jeff Bush, *Director of the School of Music*

George Sparks, *Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts*

Regan Byrne, *Executive Director of the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts*

Shawn Tucker, Bradley Monahan, Tom Carr, *Forbes Center Production and Technical Staff*

JMU Visiting Scholars Program

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The first JMU Contemporary Music Festival was held in 1981, initiated by then-director of the School of Music Joe Estock and faculty composer John Hilliard. In the years since, the festival has hosted many of the most prominent composers and performers of new music in the world today.

Next academic year, the festival moves to the fall, October 23-25, 2017, with a program celebrating the sesquicentennial of Canada, featuring music by Canadian composers. Check the JMU School of Music website for updates as the festival approaches!

## Upcoming Events

### February 2017

- Contemp. Music Festival*, Concert III      Thurs., Feb. 16 @ 8 PM, Concert Hall\*
- JMU Brass Band      Sat., Feb. 18 @ 8 PM, Concert Hall\*
- JMU Chorale and Symphony Orchestra      Sun., Feb. 19 @ 4 PM, Washington, D.C.
- School of Music Auditions      Mon., Feb. 20, All Day, Forbes Center
- Guys and Dolls*      Feb. 21-26, Tues. – Sat. 8 pm | Sat. 3 pm | Sun. 2 pm  
Mainstage Theatre\*
- Univ. Choruses & Treble Chamber Choir      Tues., Feb. 21 @ 8 pm, Concert Hall\*

\*These concerts provide student credit for MUS 195.

For tickets and further information, visit [www.jmuforbescenter.com](http://www.jmuforbescenter.com) or call the Forbes Center Box Office at (540) 568-7000. For more on the School of Music, go to [www.jmu.edu/music](http://www.jmu.edu/music) or call (540) 568-6714.

## Music and You

### How you can make a difference!

Thank you for supporting music and the arts at JMU through your attendance at the Forbes Center. We strive to provide musical experiences of the highest caliber for our students and community. The passion and commitment we see from our students, particularly as they have opportunities to perform in the magnificent Forbes Center, is a pleasure to share with you.

Scholarship contributions help young musicians blossom into mature musical artists. With your support, we will be able to offer our talented students more financial help in pursuing their goals. If you appreciate the desire and dedication of our students, please consider making a contribution to the music scholarship fund at James Madison University.

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