

# PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW  
NOTES

Jasper Quartet  
Amy Yang, *piano*  
Sunday, November 22 – 3:00 PM

## PROGRAM (Selection of program notes)

### *Ethos*

Tania León

*Born:* May 14, 1943, Havana, Cuba

*Composed:* 2014

*Duration:* 12 minutes

Tania León says: *Ethos* is a work with a range of stylistic devices, influences, and references from Western music, evoking traditional roots of a diverse mixture of ideas and traditions. I gratefully acknowledge the generosity of Susannah Sheffer for offering her poems, which inspired the titles of the movements; and of Ethel Sheffer for lending me CDs that were dear to Isaiah. One CD in particular, sung by Moishe Osher, resonated with the intention of the piece. Two selections from the CD were sources of inspiration for the first two movements of the work: "Greene Bletter" (a Yiddish folk song) in the first movement; and "Hayom" (a cantorial song performed during Rosh Hashanah) in the second.

### *Escape-Landscape*

Tonia Ko

*Born:* 1988, Hong Kong

*Composed:* 2014

*Duration:* 9 minutes

Tonia Ko's *Escape-Landscape* takes its inspiration from drawing the "the intricate layers of earth and ice" characteristic of the landscape in Ithaca. Through changing the distance of observation, however, both landscape and drawing transform into bold geometric shapes. The perception of distance is explored through juxtaposed musical textures.

### *Helix Spirals*

Augusta Read Thomas

*Born:* April 24, 1964, Glen Cove, NY

*Composed:* 2015

*Duration:* 24 minutes

Augusta Read Thomas says: *Helix Spirals* for string quartet celebrates the Meselson-Stahl DNA replication experiment. The three movements encompass a vast array of contrasting colors, motives, textures, rhythmic syntaxes, harmonies, and counterpoints, such that each movement contributes to a larger, 24-minute gestalt.

### *Dumbarton (w/ Yang)*

Joan Tower

*Born:* September 6, 1938, New Rochelle, NY

*Composed:* 2008

*Duration:* 14 minutes

Joan Tower says: The *Dumbarton Quintet* is a piano quintet dedicated to Susan Feder, my longtime publisher at G. Schirmer and Associated Music Publishers. (She is now with the Mellon Foundation.) It was commissioned by the Dumbarton Oaks Estate. It is a 14-minute work in one movement that travels through several themes with different emotional contents. The first is a flowing line that is cast in a narrow space of smaller intervals first soft, then loud but with a restrained kind of intensity that finally "bursts out" into a more "forward" and visceral type of intensity. This shifting between intensities, in fact, is part of the "DNA" of the work and as the piece progresses; each side tends to take on more and more extremes of expression. At particular points, the "softer" material becomes almost romantic, consonant and singing in its expression whereas the "louder" passages become the opposite—manic and aggressively dissonant.