



# Bard College Conservatory of Music

*20 Years of Music, Vision, and Excellence*

*Third Year Recital*

## **“Melancholy and Groove”**

Nóra Regina Graf, *percussion*

Friday, October 3, 2025 at 2:00 pm  
László Z. Bitó '60 Conservatory Building, Performance Space

---

Cello Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008

III. Courante

IV. Sarabande

VII. Gigue

J.S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

Hommage au Télescope Hubble (*Tribute to the Hubble Telescope*) (2009) Romain Perda  
(b. 1981)

Violet's Etude (2010)

Elena Kats-Chernin  
(b. 1957)

Hexyl (2015)

Chad Floyd  
(b. 1977)

Khamsin (2018)

Emmanuel Séjourné  
(b. 1961)

Tony Kirk, *percussion*

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Nora Regina Graf '28**, double majoring in percussion and psychology, has been playing music since the age of five. She first played the piano, then she picked up percussion and studied both instruments simultaneously at Aelia Sabina Elementary Music School (Budapest, Hungary). Before coming to Bard Conservatory, she completed a three-year vocational training program in percussion performance, studying at King St Stephen Conservatory (Budapest, Hungary). During these years, because of her keen interest in all sides of music-making, she learned to play the flute, she took part in her first conducting classes and competitions, and she also took private vocal lessons. At Bard, she studies percussion with Eric Cha-Beach, Jason Treuting, and Jason Haaheim, she takes piano lessons from Blair McMillen and conducting lessons from James Bagwell. In previous semesters, she participated in Chamber Singers, and this semester, she plays timpani and percussion in the Bard College Community Orchestra. She aspires to become a professional conductor one day, and, as she continues her studies at Bard Conservatory, she is eager to learn more advanced percussion and piano repertoire, and to further develop her conducting skills.

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

J. S. Bach (1685-1750) – Cello Suite in D Minor BWV 1008 – Courante, Sarabande, Gigue

Old repertoire has a special place in my heart since I grew up playing the piano, learning classical pieces. Because modern percussion instruments are so new (not even a hundred years old), the only way to play classical repertoire on them is by transcribing pieces that were meant to be played on other instruments. The Bach Cello Suites became part of the standard repertoire for marimba, and people often play violin and flute pieces on the vibraphone as well. Although I find the marimba's sound quite suitable for cello repertoire, it is still challenging to differentiate articulations and note lengths, and I envy the cello's capability to shape the sustain of the notes – on the marimba, I can shape the attack, but I have no control over the sustain. However, because my instrument makes me focus on the attack, this gives me the opportunity to showcase these movements from a rhythmic perspective, embracing their dance-like quality while also showing their lyrical side.

Romain Perda (b. 1981) – Hommage au Télescope Hubble (“Tribute to the Hubble Telescope”) (2009)

When I first heard this piece, it made me imagine the stars of the night sky. When the sun sets, a few shiny spots appear, and as it becomes darker, one can see constellations, and even the Milky Way on a clear day. The Hubble Telescope has pictures that capture millions of stars, condensing them into a small rectangle, showing an overwhelming blur of tiny light sources. Perda's *Hommage au Télescope Hubble* has three sections (slow, moderate, and fast) that create these images of stars, from the first one that appears in the night sky to entire galaxies. It showcases many of the vibraphone's special effects, including different pedaling instructions and motor settings for each section, as well as overtone playing, all of which contribute to the stars' shiny and blurry colors.

Elena Kats-Chernin (b. 1957) – Violet's Etude (2010)

In my current standing, hovering somewhere between intermediate and advanced level playing, I find myself hunting for repertoire that gives me the right technical challenges, as well as the kind of musical substance that I resonate with. Violet's Etude, written in a fast-paced 5/4, gives me both melancholy and groove. Its only character instruction, “with youthful driving energy” elicits a storm of notes that wash through the entire piece. In its modern and simplistic harmonic language, it conveys sadness and pain – at least, this is what I hear between its lines. I recommend this etude to any player who looks for a solid intermediate-advanced four mallet lateral exercise that also has a profound musical message.

Chad Floyd (b. 1977) – Hexyl (2015)

Hexyl is the only piece on this program that has no trace of melancholy in it. It is a fun drum set solo that features a four-measure theme and its variations, each variation becoming increasingly complex as the piece progresses, climaxing in a continuous groove. Although my background in percussion is rooted mainly in playing keyboard instruments, I enjoy a good challenge in four-limb coordination and multi set-up playing. My musical taste is quite varied and open (my friends are probably well aware of all the crazy pieces I listen to in my free time), so I cherish my opportunity here at Bard to learn a piece like this, which is traditionally composed, and yet it brings me one step closer to playing pop, rock, or Latin grooves on the drum set.

Emmanuel Séjourné (b. 1961) – Khamsin (2018)

This marimba duet is the most technically challenging piece on this program. As it depicts a hot, sand-filled windstorm in the deserts of Egypt, it features inverted playing, octaves, big jumps, one handed rolls, and fast, interlocking passages that require the two players to be on exactly the same wavelength. Preparing it with Tony has been a lot of fun, and I hope that it will provide a lasting impression as my chosen finale piece.