

2022 KIRK CONCERT

# the merian ensemble

## Listen: works by women 2022 Journeys Home

THURSDAY, FEB 17 @ 7PM  
MACLEAN AUDITORIUM  
PRESSER HALL

AGNES  
SCOTT  
COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT  
OF MUSIC



### The Merian Ensemble

Emily Brebach, oboe/English horn  
Marci Gurnow, clarinet/bass clarinet  
Jessica Oudin, viola  
Elisabeth Remy Johnson, harp  
Christina Smith, flute

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### Listen: Works by Women 2022 - Journeys Home

#### Program

Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale	Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)
Scènes de la forêt	Mel Bonis (1858-1937)
Atalanta (world premiere)	Nicole Chamberlain (b. 1977)
Homeland	Allison Loggins-Hull (b. 1982)
Peace	Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)
Chapter III from "The Book of Spells" III. Health & Well Being, <i>A Spell For Global Healing</i>	Clarice Assad (b. 1978)

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The Merian Ensemble is comprised of five musicians from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra: Emily Brebach, Marci Gurnow, Jessica Oudin, Elisabeth Remy Johnson, and Christina Smith. The ensemble's "Listen: Works by Women" initiative aims to support and spotlight chamber music composed by women by presenting an annual concert series each March and commissioning a new chamber music work each year. Performances from their 2019 and 2020 seasons have been heard multiple times on NPR's Performance Today.

The Merian Ensemble's 2020 series, rescheduled for 2021, was entitled "Listen: Works by Women 2020 - American Music for Today and Tomorrow", and featured music composed by first-generation and recently immigrated American women. It also included the ensemble's first commission: "The Book of Spells" by Clarice Assad. The Assad world premiere was featured on an Atlanta Symphony Orchestra virtual concert in March 2021, and was repeated on The Merian Ensemble's annual concert, streamed in May 2021. This concert included the world premiere of their second commission, Kimberly Osberg's "Just

Another Climb,” as well as works by Reena Esmail, Polina Nazaykinskaya, and Mary Kouyoumdjian.

The Merian Ensemble’s 2022 program is entitled “Listen: Works by Women 2022 – Voyages Home”, and includes works by historic and contemporary composers, as well as two new commissions by Nicole Chamberlain and Lynne Plowman. The Chamberlain commission is funded by Agnes Scott College. The collaboration with Lynne Plowman is funded by Wales Arts International and the PRS Foundation, with additional funding by the American Harp Society.

The Merian Ensemble was invited to perform at the 2020 Rio Harp Festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This engagement, though canceled due to COVID-19, was supported by a grant from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation through *USArtists International* in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Future plans include additional tours and a recording compilation of The Merian Ensemble’s commissions and arrangements.

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## About Our Name

With our name, The Merian Ensemble honors the genius of Maria Sybilla Merian (1647-1717), a brilliant scientist and artist who created intricately beautiful drawings in order to examine and illuminate the tiniest details of metamorphosis. Her work, which preceded that of Linnaeus and Darwin, exhibits the same qualities of intellectual rigor and discovery, but enjoyed a fraction of the contemporary acclaim or celebrated legacy. Her story fuels our passion for bringing obscured compositions to light, and our determination to celebrate the women composing today.

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## Tonight’s World Premiere

The origin of the city of Atlanta’s namesake is a circuitous one, but it keeps returning to Atalanta. Atalanta was a Greek mythology character who grew up in the wilderness and famous for her skills as a hunter and speed as a runner. Another prominent figure in Atlanta history was former Governor Wilson Lumpkin whose daughter’s full name was Martha Atalanta Lumpkin. In Atlanta folklore, it seems that Martha was up and running at an early age which conformed her nickname “Atlanta”. Governor Lumpkin eventually got his way, and the city was officially named Atlanta.

The city of Atlanta does share some qualities with the mythological character Atalanta. Atlanta is often called the city in the forest. There are numerous parks and conservation wilderness areas within the city limits. Many Atlantans take advantage of the beautiful parks for a good run. The most popular race is the 10K Peachtree Road Race which occurs every Fourth of July which draws 60,000 runners from all over the world. Atlanta is a city teeming with trees and runners.

Atalanta for flute, oboe, clarinet, viola, and harp reflects the energy and whimsy of a vibrant city in the forest. Fun, intense, and fast paced music that exploits the athletic and virtuosic abilities of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra musicians that make up Merian Ensemble. The piece incorporates a running pace that fluctuates with Atlanta’s rolling hills. A city backdrop that morphs into the wilderness as the runner enters a nature dense

park, and then back again as the runner returns to her urban abode. A musical adventure to facilitate a runner’s high without the sweat....well maybe not as much for the listener. **Atalanta** was composed by composer and flutist Nicole Chamberlain (b. 1977). Chamberlain has a varied career in the arts, acquiring simultaneous bachelor degrees in Music Composition and Digital Media at the University of Georgia. Her original compositions are influenced by storytelling and visual imagery from her former day job as a web animator and designer. You can typically catch Chamberlain on any of the many social media platforms where she spends an abhorrent amount of time. For more information visit her website at [www.nikkinotes.com](http://www.nikkinotes.com).

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## The Kirk Event Series at Agnes Scott College

This event is made possible by the James T. & Ella Rather Kirk Fund which was established by alumna, artist, writer and trustee Mary Wallace Kirk in honor of her parents. This endowed fund enriches the programs of art, history, literature, music, and philosophy at Agnes Scott College. We gratefully acknowledge the spirit and memory of Ms. Kirk as her legacy continues to live on in this lasting gift to the college.

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## Upcoming Events & Covid Safety Measures

Agnes Scott has a robust calendar of events with strict covid safety measures in place to protect our on and off-campus guests. **Currently, all off-campus guests at events must present proof of vaccination and booster upon arrival to events. Masks are mandatory at all times indoors.** KN95 or N95 masks are strongly recommended. Below are some highlighted events!

### **Kirk History Lecture: The Business of the Renaissance**

Tuesday, February 22 at 6:30PM in Luchsingers Lounge, Alston Campus Center

### **&Yet Again: Young Emerging Talent Art Exhibition Reception**

Friday, March 4 at 6PM in Dalton Gallery, Dana Fine Arts Building

### **Spring Equinox Concert & Planetarium Show**

Friday, March 25 at 8PM in Bradley Observatory

### **Kirk Ethics Lecture: First Black Woman Philosopher, Joyce Mitchell Cook**

Monday, March 28 at 7PM, online

### **Kirk Concert: 6Wire**

Thursday, March 31 at 7PM in Maclean Auditorium, Presser Hall

### **Spring Forward Dance Performance**

Friday and Saturday, April 1 & 2 at 8PM, Gaines Auditorium, Presser Hall

***For a full calendar of events and descriptions, visit [calendar.agnesscott.edu](http://calendar.agnesscott.edu)***