

# vent

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saxophone

I-Chen Yeh  
piano

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Jonathan O valle  
marimba

Matthew Younglove  
alto saxophone



- Dash** – 04:41 Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)  
Jeffrey Heisler, soprano saxophone  
Matthew Younglove, alto saxophone  
I-Chen Yeh, piano
- Graceful Ghost Rag** 05:31 William Bolcom (b. 1938)  
Jeffrey Heisler, soprano saxophone  
I-Chen Yeh, piano
- Vent** 08:06 David Lang (b. 1957)  
Jeffrey Heisler, soprano saxophone  
I-Chen Yeh, piano
- Episodes** Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (b. 1939)
  - I. Arioso 04:41
  - II. Vivace 04:12Jeffrey Heisler, soprano saxophone  
I-Chen Yeh, piano
- Simple Lines** 06:18 Bill Ryan (b. 1968)  
Jeffrey Heisler, baritone saxophone
- Tight Sweater** Marc Mellits (b. 1966)
  - I. Exposed Zipper 02:46
  - II. Trans Fatty Acid's Rein 02:28
  - III. Mara's Lullaby 04:53
  - IV. Pickle Trousers 02:00
  - V. Evil Yellow Penguin 02:30
  - VI. Mechanically Separated Chicken Parts 04:08Jeffrey Heisler, baritone saxophone  
Jonathan O valle, marimba  
I-Chen Yeh, piano

Higdon | Bolcom | Lang | Zwilich | Ryan | Mellits



# vent

## Origin

late Middle English: partly from French *vent* meaning 'wind', from Latin *ventus*, reinforced by French *évent*, from *éventer* 'expose to air', based on Latin *ventus* 'wind'.

In the early twentieth century composers and performers began to experiment with manipulating air flow on wind instruments, rejecting the dominance of a consistently beautiful singing tone to produce new timbres through extended techniques. Subsequently, an emphasis on velocity and the virtuosity of repetition emerged as the style of minimalism gained traction in the late twentieth century. This collection of pieces—Heisler's adaptations of works not originally composed for saxophone—exhibits the virtuoso saxophonist's timbral expanse, as well as speed and agility.

The performance directive on David Lang's "Vent" reads "with trauma and force;" at the outset of the piece extremely wide leaps extend upward to urgent sustained high notes. While rather viscerally intense for a piece that otherwise heeds minimalistic properties, Lang creates an unusual antithesis between the saxophone and piano parts as the saxophonist thrills listeners with continuous leaps up to steep precipices, while the pianist plays repeated notes in an attempt to combat the instrument's inherent decay. Imaginative approaches to the virtuosity of repetition are even more pronounced in Jennifer Higdon's "Dash" and Marc Mellits's "Tight Sweater", which feature breakneck speeds, the interplay of stratified textures, and the gradual modification of recurring patterns to maintain listeners' interest. In "Episodes", Ellen Taaffe Zwilich juxtaposes two movements (Arioso and Vivace) to contrast expressive phrasing with articulative energy. In this reworking of a piece originally composed for Itzhak Perlman, the composer has translated idiomatic and extended violin techniques, like pizzicato and string harmonics, to the soprano saxophone, showcasing the saxophonist's breath control and execution of sonic nuances. The saxophone's lyrical guise shines in the introspective works on the album, William Bolcom's "Graceful Ghost Rag" and Bill Ryan's "Simple Lines", both laments composed in response to the death of each composer's father.

—Jessica Payette, Associate Professor of Music, Oakland University

## noun

1. an opening that allows air, gas, or liquid to pass out of or into a confined space.  
*"remove any debris blocking the vents"*

2. the expression or release of a strong emotion, energy, etc.  
*"people give vent to their anger in various ways"*

## verb

1. give free expression to (a strong emotion).  
*"he had come to vent his rage and despair"*

2. discharge or expel (air, gas, or liquid) through an outlet.  
*"the plant was isolated and the gas vented"*

## Dash – Jennifer Higdon

Jennifer Higdon is one of the most acclaimed and frequently performed composers working today. She has received the Pulitzer Prize, three Grammy awards for best contemporary classical composition, Guggenheim and Pew fellowships, a commission from the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University, and the Eddie Medora King Award from the University of Texas at Austin. She was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 2019. "Dash" comes at the beginning of the 21st Century, where speed often seems to be our goal. This image fits well the instruments in this ensemble, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, and piano, because these are some of the fastest moving instruments in terms of their technical prowess. Each individual plays an equal part in the ensemble, contributing to the intensity and forward momentum, as the music dashes from beginning to end.

<http://jenniferhigdon.com>

## Graceful Ghost Rag – William Bolcom

National Medal of Arts, Pulitzer Prize, and Grammy Award-winner William Bolcom (born May 26, 1938) is an American composer and Professor Emeritus of Composition at the University of Michigan. This work is among a set of 24 ragtime pieces Bolcom wrote for solo piano. "Graceful Ghost Rag" is dedicated to his father, written shortly after his passing. This setting for Soprano Saxophone and Piano was realized by Jeffrey Heisler.

<https://www.williambolcom.com>

## Vent – David Lang

Composer David Lang was born in Los Angeles and lives in New York. Lang is the co-founder and director of the New York-based collective Bang on a Can and holds degrees from Stanford University, the University of Iowa, and Yale University, where he joined the composition faculty in 2008. He is the recipient of many prestigious awards, including the Rome Prize, Musical America's Composer of the Year, and he was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in music for his work "The Little Match Girl Passion". The recording of Little Match Girl won a Grammy Award in 2010 for Best Small Ensemble Performance. Lang's music has been released by BMG, Cantaloupe Music, CRI, Naxos, Argo/Decca, and the Sony Classical Labels, among others, and his scores are published by Red Poppy Music and available through G. Schirmer. Lang's music shows the influence of both minimalist music and rock, and is often labeled as "post-minimalist." "Vent" (a French word meaning "wind") is from 1990 and scored for solo flute and piano and was commissioned by Andrew Sterman. Like a few other pieces that Lang composed around this time "Orpheus Over and Under" (1989), "Face So Pale" (1992), "Venü" makes effective colorful use of rapidly repeating notes in the piano; in "Vent", these repeating notes flow underneath the flute's long, jagged lines, creating some challenging coordination issues for the players. The adaptation for saxophone was prepared by Jeffrey Heisler with the consent of the composer in 2017.

<https://davidlangmusic.com>



### Episodes – Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich is the recipient of numerous prizes and honors, including the 1983 Pulitzer Prize in Music (the first woman ever to receive this coveted award) and holds the Francis Eppes Distinguished Professorship at Florida State University.

"Episodes" was originally written for violin and piano and premiered by Itzhak Perlman on February 21, 2004. In 2007, "Episodes" was transcribed for soprano saxophone and piano and reworked by the composer to fit the characteristics of the saxophone. The work is a two-movement song and dance that accentuates the singing quality and natural agility of the saxophone. This work is dedicated to Jeffrey Heisler (who gave the world premiere of the saxophone version) and is currently published by the Theodore Presser Company.

<https://www.zwilich.com>

### Simple Lines – Bill Ryan

For the past twenty-five years Bill Ryan has been a tireless advocate of contemporary music. Through his work as a composer, conductor, producer and educator, he has engaged audiences throughout the country with the music of our time. He has won the American Composers Forum Champion of New Music Award, the Michigan Governor's Award in Arts Education, the Distinguished Contribution to a Discipline Award at Grand Valley State University, and was a finalist for the Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year award. "Simple Lines" (2006) was originally written for bass clarinetist Michael Lowenstern for soloist and electronics. This arrangement was done specifically for baritone saxophone and pre-recorded saxophones for Jeffrey Heisler. I wrote the work in response to my father's death in 2005 from cancer.

<http://www.billryanmusic.com>

### Tight Sweater – Marc Mellits

Marc Mellits studied at the Eastman School of Music, Yale School of Music and Cornell University. His composition teachers include Joseph Schwantner, Samuel Adler, Martin Bresnick, Bernard Rands, Christopher Rouse, Roberto Sierra, Jacob Druckman, and Steven Stacky.

Mellits' music is influenced by minimalist and rock music, and has been identified with the post-minimalist stylistic trend. "Tight Sweater" was written in 2005 and was commissioned by 'Real Quiet' and the Muzik 3 Foundation. It is music that is tightly composed, with rapidly shifting patterns of notes and rhythms. Each one of the six movements explores relationships between the instruments, combining them in unique ways that each create vivid sound worlds. The instruments themselves are treated as only one small part of a larger combined instrument. Linear melodic lines are formed from vertical sounding harmonies; funky bass lines can dictate harmonic textures while chordal sounds can inspire melodic writing occurring between the instruments. In 2010, saxophonist Jeffrey Heisler transcribed this work performing the original cello part on baritone saxophone.

<https://www.marc mellits.com>

### About the Artists:

#### Jeffrey Heisler, saxophone

Award-winning concert saxophonist, pedagogue, and soprano chair of the acclaimed Assembly Quartet, Jeffrey Heisler serves on the faculty of Oakland University as Associate Professor of Saxophone. Dr. Heisler holds degrees in Saxophone Performance and Music Education from Bowling Green State University (DMA, MM) and Central Michigan University (BME). Prior to his appointment at Oakland University, Heisler served on the faculties of Kent State University and Wayne State University.

Among Heisler's significant accomplishments are a Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition Gold Medal, prizewinner in the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Chamber Music and Young Artist Competitions, and honors as "Outstanding Classical Soloist" in *Downbeat Magazine*. Heisler has concertized throughout North America, Asia, and Europe performing with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, Benny Goodman Orchestra, John Philip Sousa Band, Toledo Symphony Orchestra, and Stuttgart Ballet Orchestra. In demand as a guest soloist and recitalist, he has appeared at the BGSU New Music Festival, Michigan Music Conference, CBDNA Conferences, North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) Conferences, World Saxophone Congresses and many more.

An advocate of contemporary music, Heisler promotes the creation of new repertoire for the saxophone by commissioning and premiering works by composers such as David R. Gillingham, Jennifer Higdon, David Lang, John Mackey, Marc Mellits, Steve Reich, Marilyn Shrupe, and Chen Yi. In addition, he has worked with the Pulitzer-Prize winning composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich on a transcription of her violin work "Episodes" for soprano saxophone and piano, as well as collaborated with electronic music pioneer Morton Subotnick in creating a new version of his "In Two Worlds" for alto saxophone and interactive computer (MAX/MSP). Heisler has also performed the American premieres of "Recit" (Chemins VII) by Luciano Berio, "RASCH II" by Franco Donatoni, and "Entführung (Abduction)" by Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Heisler's acclaimed debut solo album *Gradient* and the Assembly Quartet's *in search of stillness* are released on the AMP Recordings label. Additionally, Heisler can also be heard on Centaur Records, White Pine Music, and Navona Records. Heisler's research interests include arranging existing works from prominent composers for the saxophone. His adaptations for the saxophone are published by the Theodore Presser Co., Schirmer Music Co., SMP Press, and Edizioni Berben.

Heisler is a Selmer Paris and Légère Reeds Performing Artist-Clinician.

<https://jeffheisler.weebly.com>



OAKLAND  
UNIVERSITY.





### **Chen Yeh, piano**

A native of Kaohsiung, Taiwan, award-winning pianist I-Chen Yeh enjoys an international career as a solo and collaborative performer. Among her significant accomplishments include competition prizes throughout Taiwan, Japan, and the United States. A performer devoted to contemporary music, Yeh's solo and collaborative performances strive to highlight a new and exciting repertory. Her passion for new music has led to collaborations with notable composers such as Pulitzer Prize winners Steven Stucky and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. In addition she has commissioned and premiered works for solo piano and other chamber music by David Rakowski, Marc Mellits, Greg Sandow, Andres Carrizo, Timothy Stulman, David Gillingham, Andrea Reinkemeyer, Anthony Donofrio, and Jeff Weston.

Yeh has appeared at many world renowned music festivals, including the Aspen Music Festival, the Bowdoin Music Festival, Bowling Green State University's New Music and Art Festivals, Eastern Music Festival, the Internationale Wiener Musik Seminar, Threshold Electroacoustic Festival, and the Ball State University New Music Festival. Recent concert appearances include performances at (le) poisson rouge (NYC), the Interlochen Center for the Arts, the Yamaha Performing Artist Center (Taipei, Taiwan), the Taiwan National Concert Hall, and many Universities and Conservatories throughout the United States.

Yeh holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (BM), the Eastman School of Music (MM), and Bowling Green State University (DMA). Her primary teachers include Laura Melton, Angela Cheng, and Thomas Schumacher. She has also performed in master-classes led by internationally renowned pianists such as Stephen Hough, Nelita True, Robert Levin, John Perry, and James Giles. Yeh is an active member of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), where she served as coordinator of the Ohio junior and senior division piano competitions. In addition, she is a member of several professional chamber music ensembles, including the Heisler/Yeh Duo with saxophonist, Jeffrey Heisler, the Primary Colors Trio (saxophone, piano, and percussion), and an exciting new piano duo with pianist Jiung Yoon. Currently, Dr. Yeh serves on the faculty of Oakland University (MI) as Instructor of Applied Piano and Coordinator of Instrumental Collaborative Piano.

### **Jonathan Ovalle, marimba**

Jonathan Ovalle (b.1976) is a Mexican-American drummer/percussionist who finds joy in many different modes of music-making, crossing genres as a performer, composer, and improviser. He has performed and presented masterclasses in Europe, Asia, Canada, and in 20 states across the U.S. Creatively inspired by architecture, design, and visual art, additional musical interests include: electronic music production, songwriting, and music for film.

He is a proud artist/endorser with Pearl/Adams, Zildjian, Remo, Tapspace, and Innovative Percussion.

[www.jonathanovalle.com](http://www.jonathanovalle.com)

### **Matthew Younglove, alto saxophone**

Award-winning saxophonist and pedagogue Matthew Younglove has performed concerts and recitals across the United States, France, Croatia, and the UK. He currently serves on the faculty of Tennessee Technological University as Assistant Professor of Saxophone, as tenor saxophonist of the Assembly Quartet, and as Membership Director for the North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA). Additionally, he has served on the faculties of Wayne State University and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Previous posts include the Chamber Music Competitions Coordinator for the Michigan Chapter (MMTA) of MTNA and founding director of the Carolina Saxophone Camp (now the Assembly Quartet Saxophone Workshop).

Younglove is a Presser Scholar and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of South Carolina where he earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Saxophone Performance studying with the Charles J. Mungo Award-winning Distinguished Professor Clifford Leaman. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree specializing in contemporary music from Bowling Green State University where he was the saxophone teaching assistant for Distinguished Research/Artist Professor John Sampen, and a Masters of Music degree in saxophone performance from Northwestern University, where he studied with Frederick Hemke, the Louis and Elsie Snyder Professor of Saxophone. He studied jazz improvisation with Bert Ligon and Kevin Jones.

As an expert interpreter of contemporary music, Younglove has commissioned and/or premiered works by over 40 composers. He frequently performs as a concerto soloist with orchestras and wind ensembles as well as solo recitals and chamber music concerts. Dr. Younglove has been invited as guest artist and clinician at many of the nation's best colleges and universities. Matthew Younglove is a Conn-Selmer Artist Clinician, playing Selmer (Paris) saxophones exclusively, and a Vandoren Artist-Clinician, performing on Vandoren Paris reeds, mouthpieces, and ligatures. He can be heard on the AMP label.