

# AMY NAM

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## List of Works and Performances

### **Desire Lines (2023)**

For two saxophones and pedal harp. The term “desire lines” refers to the natural footpaths that emerge in parks or on campuses when many people take the same shortcut through the grass day after day. The emotional narrative of the work’s three movements traces my personal journey from being someone who anxiously takes the most efficient route to someone who can relax and enjoy a slower pace. Commissioned by *keystring*, *Desire Lines* was made possible through generous funding from the American Harp Society Grants Program.

Performed: January 10th, 2023 at Nazareth College, Rochester NY

Performers: Will Pyle and Anne Kunkle, saxophones and Elizabeth W. Mayo, harp

### **The Harp at the End of the Universe (2023)**

For pedal harp solo. Co-composed with Sean William Calhoun (electronics) with video produced by Marc Webster. This series of four miniatures ask the question, “What is the ultimate fate of our universe?” Inspired by *The End of Everything (Astrophysically Speaking)* by Dr. Katie Mack, a book that seeks to answer the “how will it all end?” question with thrilling descriptions of the cosmological models for the end of the cosmos, each movement translates one of the cosmological models describing the end of the universe (“Big Crunch,” “Quantum Bubble of Doom,” “Heat Death,” and “Big Rip”) into sound.

Released digitally.

### **An Exploration in Line and Color (2023)**

For solo lever or pedal harp. ‘An Exploration in Line and Color’ presents the harpist with an invitation to wade into the rich world of voicing, shaping, and color. This piece was featured in Harp Column’s “Tear-Out Tunes” series and was published in the March/April 2023 issue of Harp Column Magazine.

### **Mimi’s Song (2022)**

For orchestra. Mimi’s Song pays tribute to Mimi (my grandmother), a great lady and retired first-grade teacher. When I was an infant, Mimi made up a song to sing to me as she rocked me in my baby swing, and this simple melody serves as the piece’s foundation. Alternately distant and ecstatic, the music’s changing affect reflects the way my memories with Mimi continue to morph, becoming ever more dreamlike and distant, and yet ever more sublime and precious. 6’45”

Performed: June 2, 2023, at New School Tishman Auditorium

Performers: American Composer’s Orchestra conducted by Tito Muñoz

### **...of breath and fire (2021)**

For mixed ensemble. Commissioned by fivebyfive modern chamber music, with funding provided by Chamber Music America’s Classical Commissioning Program. Inspired by the artistic process of glass artist Madeline Rile Smith, *...of breath and fire* features sonic timbres

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kaleidoscopically merging and detaching, blurring and evolving in the manner of hot glass which expands, pops, and morphs in the presence of flame. 10'

Performed: October 23rd, 2022 at the Crane School of Music

October 26th, 2022 at the Eastman School of Music

February 23th, 2023 at the SUNY Fredonia School of Music

Performers: fivebyfive (Laura Lentz, flute; Marcy Bacon, clarinet; Sungmin Shin, electric guitar; Eric J. Polenik, bass; Haeyeun Jeun, piano) and Amy Nam, electric harp

## **Halogen Sunset (2021)**

For string quartet. Written for the Unison Quartet, *Halogen Sunset* conveys the extroversion of an evening cityscape through the use of a variety of arresting playing techniques designed to maximize the color, volume, and activity of the string quartet. 7'

## **Like Two Hummingbirds (2021)**

For violin and violoncello. Written for Nathan Lowry. During the time that I was writing this piece, I mounted bird feeders on the window just beside my piano where I compose. A connection began emerging between the airy, fluttery motion of the birds and aspects of the music. Small, fluttery sounds, such as the many harmonics tremolos, briefly appear suspended in the music, momentarily defying gravity before darting away. I even began to think of the two instruments themselves as being like two hummingbirds: precious, quivering bodies of life. 15'

## **Diffusion for Solo Horn and Electronics(2021)**

For horn and electronics. Written for the Echo Ensemble's 2021 Secret Sequenza project, "Diffusion" is my musical response to Laura Lajber's watercolor, "a conversation in the snow." In performance, the musician plays as another (pre-recorded) track also plays, so that an interchange arises between the embodied and disembodied sounds. Through the use of reverb, long musical lines, and gentle stereo panning, the music imitates swirling air currents and conveys the painting's sense of vastness and simplicity. 2'

Performed: March 31, 2021, on the Echo Ensemble's Secret Sequenza virtual series

Performers: Lynn Henderson, horn

## **Diffusion for Four Horns (2021)**

For four horns. "Diffusion" is my musical response to Laura Lajber's painting, "A conversation in the snow." By having three performers play hidden from view, the musical performance echoes the drama of the painting's single human figure standing amongst the swirling air currents. Long musical lines, emanating from all players, convey the painting's sense of vastness and simplicity. 2'

## **Well Again (2018, rev. 2021)**

For harp solo. I composed this vulnerable meditation as a reflection on my experiences of feeling isolation, disconnection, and fatigue before eventually finding community and rest. 6'30"

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Performed: January 12th, 2018, at the Future Blend Project Hidden Gem Concert, UK  
Performers: Rosanna Moore, harp

Performed: August 20th, 2021, at the Zephyr Theater in Stillwater, MN  
November 6th, 2021, at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Duluth, MN  
Performers: Amy Nam, harp

## **Germinate (2021)**

For flute. Written for Laura Lentz. In April of 2020, I planted seeds! The tenacity of germinating seedlings inspired me with optimism even as the sprouts' fragility awakened my maternal instincts (causing me to take great pains covering my little babies on chilly nights)! *Germinate* captures the beautiful duality of tenderness and perseverance I observe in my plants as well as the joy they brought me during the early weeks of the pandemic and throughout the long summer of 2020. 2'30"

## **-Teur/-Trice (2020)**

For bassoon and harp. Commissioned by the Hats+Heels Duo for their July 2020 concert commemorating the anniversary of the 19th amendment, the title *-Teur/-Trice* references the two gendered forms of the word "composer" in French: "*compositeur*" and "*compositrice*." 8'30"

Performed: July 19th, 2020, at the Eastman Community Music School (virtual)  
July 26th, 2021, at the Virtual International Double Reed Society Symposium  
March 2022 at the University of Oregon  
Performers: Hats+Heels Duo (Dr. Blaire Koerner, bassoon; Dr. Rosanna Moore, harp)

## **Unfamiliar Spaces (2020)**

For orchestra. The harmonic material for *Unfamiliar Spaces* derives entirely from three pitch class sets with Forte numbers 6-10, 6-11, and 6-14. These numbers correspond to meaningful dates in my life on which I entered unfamiliar spaces, either geographically or relationally, and the piece explores the mystery, anxiety, and joy I've experienced in navigating these unfamiliar spaces. 8'

## **Closer than Careless (2020)**

For flute. Written for Laura Lentz, flutist. The phrase "closer than careless" implies intentionality, a relevant idea during this time of social distancing when we don't have the luxury of being careless with our communication—too many of us are desperately in need of intentional connection. I wrote this piece as an expression of the hope I feel in the midst of this dark situation, hope that stems from observing a new collective intentionality bringing us closer than before. 2'

Performed: June 3rd, 2020 on WXXI "HomeStage"  
Performers: Laura Lentz, flutist

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## **Hidden Surfaces (2020)**

For solo percussion (marimba and four almglocken). Commissioned by percussionist Oliver Xu through a grant from the Eastman Institute for Music Leadership. The sound of the almglocken “hides” inside the sound of the marimba in various ways. Sometimes the marimba encases the almglocken timbre within a sustained roll; sometimes these rolls bloom open to expose the almglocken’s resonance that had been hidden inside. 8’

Performed: December 20th, 2020, at the Juilliard School

Performers: Oliver Xu, percussion

## **Abating Shadows (2020)**

For clarinet, vibraphone, and harp. Commissioned by the Lyra Society’s Costello Competition for Composition. *Abating Shadows* begins reluctantly, with hesitant lines stretching out like long shadows at dawn. After brighter sounds temporarily drive these shadows away, the opening reemerges transformed, now majestic and forward-looking. 9’

Performed: December 11th, 2020 at the Curtis Institute of Music

April 24th, 2021 on WRTI 90.1 Saturday Morning Classical Coffeehouse

Performers: Julien Bélanger, percussion; Sara Han, clarinet; Claire Thai, harp

## **Accession (2019)**

For solo violin. Commissioned by violinist Mary Grace Johnson commissioned for her second master’s degree recital at the Juilliard School. “Accession” means to come into power, and the narrative of the piece’s three movements, “Without Worry,” “Partial Paralysis,” and “Becoming Bold,” describes my own accession to a mature, inner assurance in my work as a composer. 10’

Performed: May 6th, 2019, at the Juilliard School

Performers: Mary Grace Johnson, violin

## **Pseudosphere (2019)**

For two pianos and two percussionists. A pseudosphere is a hyperbolic surface that has constant negative Gaussian curvature. Inspired by the 1974 science fiction novel *Inverted World* by Christopher Priest, *Pseudosphere* translates into sound the surface’s geometric aspects—symmetry, distortion, and curvature—as well as the aspects of eeriness, mystery, and beauty that this surface suggests. 10’

Performed: April 29th, 2019, at the University of Toronto

Performers: Geoffrey Conquer, Myriam Blardone, pianos; Louis Pino, Bryn Lutek, percussion

Performed: April 6th, 2019, at the Eastman School of Music

Performers: Kitty Xiao, Georgia Mills, pianos; Oliver Xu, Victor LaBozzetta, percussion

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## Fields of Focus (2019)

For percussion solo. *Fields of Focus* was written for percussionist Lindsey Eastham as part of the un/pitched: New Music Network's Metamorphosis project. The single movement is built from one musical idea, which gradually fades in and out of aural focus. 6'

Performed: April 6th, 2019 at the Eastman School of Music  
Performers: Oliver Xu, percussion

Performed: March 24th, 2019, Ithaca College; March 27th, 2019, Oklahoma City University; March 30th, 2019, University of Southern Utah; April 5, 2019, California State University at Northridge; April 12, 2019, University of Redlands  
Performers: Lindsay Eastham, percussion

## Selected Stories (2019)

For harp and flute. Commissioned by flutist Ramakrishnan Kumaran. Throughout the 7 movements of *Selected Stories*, the relationship between the two instruments, which blends timbres and obfuscates separateness, emulates the relationship between elements in particular M.C. Escher prints, in which distinct geometric entities metamorphose into (or, perhaps, out of) one another. 18'

Performed: March 17, 2019 at the Blair School of Music  
April 6th, 2019 at the Eastman School of Music  
Performers: Rama Kumaran, flute; Amy Nam, harp

## Six-Fold Symmetry (2019)

For guitar solo. The title "Six-Fold Symmetry" refers to three aspects of the work: the six strings of the guitar (retuned such that the open strings sound the all-combinatorial hexachord 6-20), the symmetries of the piece's construction, and the six-fold symmetry of snowflakes. 7'

Performed: October 22, 2019, at the Eastman School of Music  
Performers: Andrew Gomez-Ramirez, classical guitar

## Hypnos (2019)

For harp and vibraphone. Gentle interplay between the two instruments characterizes this hypnotic and mysterious music, named after the Greek god of sleep. 3'

Performed: July 27th, 2019 at the Eastman School of Music  
Performers: Sticks & Strings duo (Dr. Rosanna Moore, harp; Trevor Bartlett, percussion)

## Somewhere to Elsewhere (2018)

For harp and ensemble. Instigated by my desire to translate certain speech sounds into music, this six movement work recursively maps the shape of the harp sound's decay onto large- and small-scale musical and structural parameters. Winner of the 2018 BMI Student Composer Awards. 21'

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Performed: March 19th, 2018 at the Schulich School of Music.

Performers: Amy Nam, harp, with members of the McGill Symphony Orchestra; Keehun Nam, conductor

Performed: November 8th, 2018 at the Eastman School of Music.

Performers: Rosanna Moore, harp, with the Eastman School of Music Graduate Composer's Sinfonietta; Edo Frenkel, conductor

## **Patterns (2018)**

For brass quintet. Composed through the Schulich School of Music Composer-in-Residence program. Each of the four movements uniquely attempts to capture the essence of the pattern recognition problems posed by Russian computer scientist Mikhail Bongard while also employing a particular Temporal Semiotic Unit. 8'

Performed: October 9th, 2018, Schulich School of Music

Performers: M5 Mexican Brass (Alexander Freund and Oscar Villegas, trumpets; Juan Carlos Quiterio, French horn; Roberto Carlos Cruz, trombone; José Lopez, tuba)

## **Diagonality (2016)**

For chamber orchestra. When a friend and I walked up to a street intersection, needing to get to the point diagonally across from where we were, we almost simultaneously pressed the pedestrian crossing button to go to the left and the button to go straight. The resultant sound (a sustained pitch followed by a staccato descending perfect fourth) inspired me to write this piece, and the motive indeed proved to be a germ for developing ideas. 6'30"

Performed: April 11th and 13th, 2016, at the W.O. Smith Music School

Performers: W.O. Smith Faculty Orchestra; Chrysa Kovach, conductor

## **Hourglass (2015)**

For orchestra. The tense stillness at the beginning of this single movement work quickly balloons into an urgent race against time. 8'

Performed June 12th, 2015 at the Tennessee Valley Music Festival final concert.

Performers: TVMF festival orchestra, conducted by Dr. David Ragsdale

## **On the Island (2015)**

For medium voice and piano. This two-movement setting of poetry by Pablo Neruda translated by Donald D. Walsh ("Wind on the Island" and "Night on the Island") tells the story of seeking and finding shelter in the presence of one's beloved. 10'

Performed October 25th, 2015 at the Blair School of Music.

Performers: Elizabeth Bartlett, soprano; Amy Nam and Gabrielle Lewis, piano

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## **Acropolis (2015)**

For string trio. In classical antiquity, the acropolis was a defensive fortress built on a hill in the city's center. I felt the word captured the aspects of height and structure suggested by the form and rhetoric of this one movement work. 7'

Performed October 25th, 2015 at the Blair School of Music.

Performers: Mary Grace Johnson, violin; Daniel Moore, viola; Matthew Liversedge, cello

## **Icy Objects (2015)**

For harp and fixed media. To create the fixed media component, I applied various types of electronic processing to one- to two-second-long sections of a recording of my piece *Winter's Return* and then layered these files to construct the work's 3 movements. The relationship of the live and fixed components is not a solo-accompaniment relationship; rather, the harp floats on the surface of the sound, bringing previously heard notes and motives to the sonic forefront. 10'

Performed October 25th, 2015 at the Blair School of Music

Performers: Amy Nam, harp

## **Winter's Return (2014)**

For string trio, harp, flute, and crotales. The title of this single movement work reflects two meanings. Return can mean "coming again," suggesting the change in seasons, or it can mean "something obtained," as in, "winter's dividends"—relevant since I feel this piece is the product of the previous winter's studies. 5'

Performed November 2014 at the Blair School of Music.

Performers: Ann Mozina, flute; Alyze Rabideau, crotales; Amy Nam, harp; Allie Stewart, violin; Libby Doubrava, viola; Laura Cooke, violoncello; Keehun Nam, conductor

## **Cheshire's Grin (2014)**

For wind quintet. The playful opening contrapuntal lines give way to a homophonic texture evocative of sweet nostalgia. The original material returns, somewhat older and wiser, like Alice after her journey in Wonderland. 5'

Performed April 8th, 2015 at the Blair School of Music

Performers: Ramakrishnan Kumaran, flute; Andrew Glenn, oboe; Collin Lewis, clarinet; Andrew Sledge, bassoon; Garrett Law, horn