



CLEVELAND CHAMBER SYMPHONY  
MUSIC  
THAT DARES TO  
EXPLORE

**Cleveland Chamber Symphony**  
**Music of Margaret Brouwer**  
**With Ohio Contemporary Ballet**  
Steven Smith, Music Director  
Sunday April 19, 2026, 4:30pm  
The Cultural Center at Disciples Church

[www.clevelandchambersymphony.org](http://www.clevelandchambersymphony.org)



**Cleveland Chamber Symphony  
Music of Margaret Brouwer  
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Sunday April 19, 2026, 4:30pm  
The Cultural Center at Disciples Church, Cleveland Heights  
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**Donald Erb, *Harold's Trip to the Sky***

**Margaret Brouwer, *Inner Voices***

I. *Lost*

II. *Deserted Delphi Veiled in Mist*

**Margaret Brouwer, *CITY LIFE***

I. IMAGES

II. IN THE STREETS

\*\*\*World Premiere

**Margaret Brouwer, *Mandala***

I. *Journey*

II. *Sand Mandala*

with special guests the [Ohio Contemporary Ballet](#)  
Choreography by Zachary Tuazon

**\*please silence your cell phones  
\*no digital recording during the performance**

**Steven Smith** has been the Music Director of the Grammy Award-winning Cleveland Chamber Symphony since 2005. In 2019 he completed a very successful decade-long tenure as Music Director of the Richmond Symphony, expanding the orchestra's repertoire, developing new concert series and enhancing the orchestra's connection to the community. He also served as Music Director of

Santa Fe Symphony & Chorus from 1999 to 2013, and as Assistant Conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1997 to 2003. An active composer, his works have been performed by many soloists, ensembles and orchestras, including CCS.

## **Biographies and Program Notes**

**Donald Erb** was a fixture in the musical life of Northeast Ohio, in addition to the wider world of contemporary classical music. He developed a personal compositional language that combined traditional instrumental techniques with the imaginative inclusion of new and unusual sounds. He utilized “extended” techniques of instruments, such as playing brass and woodwind mouthpieces alone, unusual use of harmonics, pizzicato and glissandos on string instruments, percussive techniques inside the piano, and an expansive use of percussion. He also included unusual instruments, such as harmonicas, slide whistles, glass bottles and others, to create unique sonic landscapes, leading the listener to wonder “exactly what is creating that sound?”

In the Grove Music Online article on Erb, John G. Seuss wrote: “His conception of form was fundamentally organic: he frequently used a specific intervallic configuration or cell, melodic or rhythmic motives, and/or sonic gestures as the basis for a whole movement or work. His works are analogous to traditional forms and exhibit clear musical structures. His interest in incorporating improvisatory and aleatory elements in his music reflects his great interest and background in jazz.”

***Harold's Trip to the Sky*** was composed in July, 1974. Composed for a trio of viola, piano and percussion, it includes many different sonic effects that expand the possibilities of a trio. The score is inscribed “To my friend George Grossman.” Grossman was a violist very active in the contemporary music scene of the 1960s and 70s.

**Margaret Brouwer** is celebrated as a leading figure in contemporary American composition, praised for her richly lyrical and emotionally resonant music. “Brouwer’s gift for melody, and her ability to weave together contemporary idioms with lines that allow the instruments to sing, make her a composer for whom chamber musicians (and listeners) should be grateful.”  
(EarRelevant)

Brouwer's dedication to musical innovation has garnered her numerous awards and accolades, including the Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Meet The Composer Commissioning/USA award, Guggenheim Fellowship, Ohio Council for the Arts Individual Fellowship, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Ford Foundation and John S. Knight Foundation. Reviewing Brouwer’s 2014 Naxos CD called “Shattered”, Jordan Borg from NewMusicBox wrote, "From the relentless, primal energy of 'Shattered Glass' to the naked beauty of 'Whom do you call angel now,'" Brouwer’s music represents just how uniquely diverse the output and voice of a single composer can be."

The Music Division of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center established a Margaret Brouwer Collection, which houses invaluable resources for scholars and performers. Throughout her career, she has held esteemed positions, including Head of the Composition Department at the Cleveland Institute of Music and residencies at the MacDowell Colony where she has been a Norton Stevens Fellow and at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center.

Brouwer's compositions have been performed worldwide, including by the symphonies of Detroit, Dallas, Seattle, Liverpool, Rochester, Anchorage, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Birmingham UK, Halle UK, Cabrillo, Canton, Columbus, American Composers Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and at such venues as Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Symphony Space, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Tanglewood Festival of

Contemporary Music, Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Kennedy Center, the Corcoran Gallery, Philips Gallery, as well as venues throughout Asia and Europe.

Recordings of Brouwer's music can be found on the Naxos, New World, CRI, Crystal, Centaur, and Opus One labels. In 2024, Marin Alsop and the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra recorded an album featuring five of Brouwer's orchestral works for release by Naxos.

### ***Inner Voices*** (2014)

Scored for flute, soprano, violin, cello, trombone and piano, *Inner Voices* is a personal piece exploring inner emotions through musical expression. *Inner Voices* also explores sounds and colors in which the voice is used as an instrument in the ensemble instead of as a solo part. Each instrument, including the voice, has solo moments and melodies. But at times, the voice blends with the other instruments to become part of a supporting sonority. Sometimes special attention is given to the colors of the female voice mixed with the trombone, and sometimes to interesting ways that trombone or voice can relate to flute, strings and piano. Through this medium, the first movement portrays inner feelings of anger, desperation and sadness. The second movement reflects deep memories of the ancient Greek city of Delphi shrouded in thick layers of mist.

### ***CITY LIFE*** for Chamber Orchestra

Though planned with musical motifs in mind, I became aware that the motives might have been influenced by my thoughts and preoccupation with the struggles going on at that time in Minneapolis. The first movement, *Images* seems to begin with musical images of dawn in a city - the quiet calmness of dimly lit streets - occasionally a person walking along. But there is an underlying tension, possibly the feeling that things might be happening that day.

The second movement, *In the streets* was planned using certain musical motives and rhythms. But the underlying feeling in the music seems to me to portray people on the move in the streets. It could be a festive parade, or it could be a march, or perhaps a gathering of a mass of determined people.

***Mandala* was commissioned by the Cleveland Chamber Symphony in 2001.** It was written during a residency at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. While I was there, Tibetan monks spent ten days in the adjoining town of Peterborough creating an intricate sand painting of a mandala. After about a week, they destroyed the mandala in a ceremony of explanation, chanting and horn blowing. At some point, I realized that the experience of the mandala was interwoven into the fabric of this piece. The music is very much constructed in circles that spiral inward. In addition, because some musicians are positioned in the auditorium, the music travels in circles around the performance space.

Along with the mandala experience, I was furthering my study of musical works that come from my own Dutch heritage. There is a Dutch song book of the Psalms in part-book format, *Het Boek nevens de Gezangen bij de Hervormde Kerk van Nederland*, from 1773, which has been handed down in my family. I was struck by the melody of the 91st Psalm tune. My grandfather, who was a Dutch Reformed minister, always read the 91st psalm before a journey, calling it the traveler's psalm. This work is a journey of sorts, traveling into the circles of a mandala, and into a mixing of cultures.

The trombone states the 91st psalm tune in its entirety at the beginning of the first movement, *Journey*. Throughout the remainder of the movement the tune is always present in some form, sometimes in entire phrases, sometimes in fragments that float in a circle of colors and ornaments. The movement ends with a sudden rhapsodic flourish in the flute answered quietly by the vibraphone and trumpet. The second movement, *Sand*

*Mandala*, begins without pause and continues the mandala-like circling. The psalm tune is frequently present, although often in a fleeting and usually contemporary context. The music circles forward through whispering, moments of agitation, long tones in the brass (overlaid with the stability of insistent rhythms and repetitions), and a section of hazy, clouded remembrances of the psalm tune (overlaid with a tolling that passes around the circle of the brass).

In this movement, the musicians whisper various texts. Most of the words will intentionally not be heard well enough to be understood by the audience. However, it is hoped that the musicians interpret the quality and meaning of the words in the manner that they play the music, and that the whispers contribute in a mysterious way to the mandala. The whispers are quotes from various newspapers, books and magazines and are about the pollution of the earth, the stresses of 21st century life, mystical visions of God, and the amazing wonder and capabilities of the human animal. The quotes symbolize circling through (as the Random House Dictionary describes mandala) the effort to reunify the self.

Choreographer **Zachary Tuazon** is a Chicagoland native who danced in Minneapolis for nine years with Minnesota Dance Theatre. While in Minnesota some of the favorite works he performed were by Lise Houlton, Loyce Houlton, Antony Tudor, Sir Frederick Ashton, Elayna Waxse, Alexander Hille, and Adam Barruch. He graduated from Butler University with a BA in Dance Pedagogy and a minor in music with a focus in piano. Prior to graduating from college, he studied dance at national summer intensives including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Next Generation Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet and the Gelsey Kirkland Academy of Classical Ballet. In addition to dancing, he was a singer and choreographer with the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus. This will be Zachary's second season with the company!

## **About Ohio Contemporary Ballet**

Ohio Contemporary Ballet (formerly Verb Ballets) has proudly served Northeast Ohio for nearly four decades, with 2027 marking our 40th anniversary. Based in Cleveland, Ohio, the company brings bold, inspiring performances to the stage while fostering community both locally and globally through the transformative power of dance. Under the leadership of Dr. Margaret Carlson, former principal dancer for the original Cleveland Ballet, and Richard Dickinson, MFA, former Ohio Ballet dancer, OCBallet has earned recognition as a premier dance company in the region.

## **About the Cleveland Chamber Symphony**

Since its founding by Dr. Edwin London in 1980, the **Cleveland Chamber Symphony** has served a leading role in the art of contemporary American music through its mission to commission, perform, record and promote musical works by composers of our time. Its history of over 170 world premiere performances and wide range of recordings has been critically acclaimed, and has been recognized by many awards, including a **2007 Grammy Award**, numerous ASCAP awards and repeated recognition by the American Music Center. Its recent collaborations with Verb Ballets, the Cleveland School of the Arts and the launching of the annual NEOSonicFest demonstrate CCS's ongoing commitment to contemporary performance and education in Northeast Ohio.

**CLEVELAND CHAMBER SYMPHONY**  
**NEOSonicSpring**

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on the forefront of new music presentation***

**Cleveland Chamber Symphony**  
**April 19, 2026 Musicians**

\*\*concertmaster      \*principal

Soprano: \*Lara Troyer

Flute: \*Sean Gabriel

Piccolo, Flute, Alto: Mary Kay Robinson

Oboe: \*Martin Neubert

English Horn: \*Johanna Cox Pennington

Clarinet: \*Lou Gangale

Bassoon: \* Mark DeMio

Horn: \*Ken Wadenpfohl, Alan DeMattia

Trumpet: \*Jack Brndiar

Trombone: \*Paul Ferguson

Percussion: \*Andrew Pongracz, Mell Csicsila

Piano: \*Joanna Huang

Violin 1: \*\*Leah Goor Burtnett, Sam Petry, Susan Britton,  
Callista Koh, Andrea Belding, Ann Yu

Violin 2: \*Amber Dimoff, Diana Pepelea, Erin Reidhead,  
Nancy Patterson, Anita Chiu

Viola: \*Laura Shuster, Amber Rogers,  
Brian Slawta, Anna Gerber

Cello: \*Julie Myers King, Linda Atherton,  
Derek Snyder, Nora Willauer

Bass: \*Ann Gilbert, Nicole Castelberry

**Audio Engineering:** David Yost

**Steven Smith, Music Director and Conductor**

With special thanks to the staff at the Cultural Center at Disciples Church

**CLEVELAND CHAMBER SYMPHONY**  
**NEOSonicSpring**

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Cleveland Chamber Symphony  
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11125 Magnolia Drive  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

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