

Mills Music Now 2021–2022

Mills Performing Arts and The House Foundation for the Arts,
with the Mills College Music Department and the Center for Contemporary Music,
present

Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble
Indra's Net

Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Concert Hall
Friday, November 12, 2021 7pm
Saturday, November 13, 2021 5pm

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with the Mills College Music Department and the Center for Contemporary Music,
present

Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble

Indra's Net (world-premiere of concert version)

Conceived, Directed and Composed by **Meredith Monk**

Running time: approximately 1 hour & 20 minutes, no intermission

Performed by **Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

Paul An, Theo Bleckmann, Gideon Crevoshay, Allison Easter, Ellen Fisher, Katie Geissinger, Meredith Monk, Allison Sniffin *voices* **John Hollenbeck** *percussion*

with **Jennifer R. Ellis** *harp* **Tony Gennaro** *percussion* **Keefe Ismael** *trombone*

John Ivers *clarinet* **Nayoung Jung** *piano* **Kyle Ko** *horn* **Genevieve Kromm** *trumpet/flugelhorn*

Rhein Matlack *oboe/English horn* **Yuki Nagase** *double bass* **Erika Oba** *flute/piccolo* **Shaina Pan** *violin*

Nasr Ali Sheikh *viola* **Jamael Smith** *bassoon* **Julian Sommer** *cello* **Michiko Theurer** *violin*

Developed in collaboration with Tariq Al-Sabir, Paul An, Theo Bleckmann, Gideon Crevoshay, Allison Easter, Ellen Fisher, Katie Geissinger, Paul Langeland, and Allison Sniffin.

Music **Meredith Monk**

Costume and Scenic Design **Yoshio Yabara**

Lighting Design **Joe Levasseur**

Sound Design **Daniel Neumann**

Music Direction / Score Preparation **Allison Sniffin**

Orchestration **Allison Sniffin / Meredith Monk**

Production Stage Manager / Costume Associate **Meredith Belis**

Costume Support **Jamielyn Duggan**

All compositions by Meredith Monk © 2021 Meredith Monk Music (ASCAP)

"Rotation," an installation / audio-visual component of *Indra's Net*, will screen at Lisser Hall prior to each performance, beginning at 12:00 PM daily.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, and creator of new opera, music-theater works, films and installations. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, she is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique” and “interdisciplinary performance”. Her groundbreaking exploration of the voice as an instrument, as an eloquent language in and of itself, expands the boundaries of musical composition, creating landscapes of sound that unearth feelings, energies, and memories for which there are no words. Over the last six decades, Ms. Monk has been hailed as one of NPR’s 50 Great Voices and “one of America’s coolest composers”. She is the recipient of numerous honors including a MacArthur Fellowship and an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Republic of France. Celebrated internationally, her work has been presented at major venues throughout the world. Monk has made more than a dozen recordings, most of which are on the ECM New Series label, including the 2008 GRAMMY® nominated *impermanence*. Selected scores are available through Boosey & Hawkes. Monk is also the subject of two books of interviews, *Conversations with Meredith Monk* (now in a new expanded edition), by arts critic and *Performing Arts Journal* editor Bonnie Marranca, and *Une voix mystique*, by French author Jean-Louis Tallon, slated for a new edition in early 2022. In conjunction with her 50th Season of creating and performing, Monk was appointed the 2014-15 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair at Carnegie Hall. Recently she received three of the highest honors bestowed on a living artist in the United States: induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2019), the 2017 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize and a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama. *Indra’s Net* is the third part of a trilogy of music-theater works exploring our interdependent relationship with nature, following the highly acclaimed *On Behalf of Nature* (2013) and *Cellular Songs* (2018).

Paul An is a prolific performer with over 70 roles to his credit. Highlights from recent and upcoming seasons include performances with Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony, Nashville Opera, PROTOTYPE Festival, San Diego Opera, HERE Arts Center, and LA Opera in such works as Meredith Monk’s *ATLAS: an opera in three parts*, Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*, *La Boheme*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, and Haydn’s *The Creation*. In demand as an interpreter and creator of new works, he regularly collaborates with composers and theater creators such as Julian Wachner, Beth Morrison, Yuval Sharon, Meredith Monk, Kamala Sankaram and Ellen Reid in mediums such as opera, chamber music, film, and genre-bending theater pieces.

Theo Bleckmann is a GRAMMY® nominated vocalist, composer and ECM recording artist who has recorded over 17 albums and collaborated with artists such as Ambrose Akinmusire, Sheila Jordan, Kneebody, Ben Monder, John Hollenbeck, Phil Kline, David Lang, Bang on a Can All-Stars, and, most prominently, with Meredith Monk since 1994. Bleckmann has been interviewed by Terry Gross on NPR’s *Fresh Air* and appeared on *The David Letterman Show* with Laurie Anderson. He has consistently appeared in top spots in DownBeat polls, and is a recipient of the prestigious JAZZ ECHO award from the Deutsche Phono-Akademie in his native Germany.

Gideon Crevoshay is a singer and composer from the hills of the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. He uses the human voice to explore the countless dimensions of sound, language, and improvisation. Gideon has studied traditional and ancient forms of singing from around the world, finding inspiration from the wisdom contained within these traditions and how they can inform present ideas of music-making and community. He has toured and performed extensively with many projects including Tenores de Aterúe, Bread and Puppet

Theater, Trident Ensemble, Resonanda, Cynthia Hopkins, OKAPIS, Starry Mountain Singers, Mosaic, and Briars of North America. He has also worked with the State Department-sponsored music fellowship, OneBeat, since its inception in 2012, having co-led projects in the Balkans, Turkey, and Russia. Gideon first worked with Meredith Monk in 2009 as part of her *Ascension Variations* at the Guggenheim Museum.

Allison Easter is a dancer, singer, teacher, director and producer. She has worked with Meredith Monk since 1985's revival of *Quarry*, appearing in *The Travelogue Series*, *Book of Days*, *The Ringing Place*, *ATLAS*, *Three Heavens and Hells*, *Vessel*, and *The Politics of Quiet*, for which she received an ensemble New York Dance and Performance Award. She can be heard in recordings of *ATLAS* and *Volcano Songs* and she has staged Meredith Monk's *Folk Dance* in Ukraine, the Philippines and many American colleges and universities. She was also a performer and rehearsal director for *STOMP*, the Off-Broadway percussion show. Allison has directed and produced at The Ensemble Studio Theater and The NY Fringe Festival, taught at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, choreographed *Trojan Women* at Pace University where she was faculty, and currently teaches at Barnard College. She is slated to perform with Jane Comfort next year.

Ellen Fisher is a movement-based performance artist whose work integrates gestural actions with visual elements such as film and shadow play. Fisher's performance work is informed by her ethnographic research in the rituals and trance dances of South Asia, particularly Sri Lanka, for which she has received ACCNY grants and a Fulbright. She has also been granted funding for her solo work from the NEA, NYFA, and Jerome Foundation, among others. Fisher began performing with Meredith Monk/The House in the 1970s, and continues today. She also teaches and lectures regularly on dance both domestically and internationally.

Katie Geissinger has performed with Meredith Monk worldwide, in concert and in theater pieces such as *ATLAS*, the Grammy-nominated *impermanence*, *Songs of Ascension* (all on ECM), and *The Politics of Quiet*, for which she received an ensemble Bessie award. Other credits include *Einstein on the Beach*, Bang on a Can's Obie-winning *The Carbon Copy Building*, and Baz Luhrmann's *La Boheme* on Broadway. She recently sang in Julia Wolfe and Anne Bogart's *Steel Hammer* and Aaron Siegel and Mallory Catlett's *Rainbird*. Upcoming engagements include Vivaldi's *Gloria* at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and Monk's *MEMORY GAME* with the Bang on a Can All-Stars at Big Ears, in London and the Hague.

Genre-crossing composer/percussionist **John Hollenbeck**, renowned in both the jazz and new-music worlds, has gained widespread recognition as the driving force behind the unclassifiable Claudia Quintet and the ambitious John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, groups with roots in jazz, world music, and contemporary composition. He integrates his deep interest in contemporary composition and spiritual practice into a musical language that is as accessible and expressive as it is advanced. He has earned six GRAMMY nominations and has worked with many of the world's leading musicians in jazz including Bob Brookmeyer, Fred Hersch, Tony Malaby, and is well known in new-music circles for his longtime collaboration with Meredith Monk and for his work with Ensemble Cairn of France.

Allison Sniffin has been a member of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble since 1996. She prepared many of Monk's works for publication (*Possible Sky*, *WEAVE*, *Realm Variations*, *Stringsongs*, *Backlight*, *Night*, *Piano Albums I and II*) and was the arranger of *Tokyo ChaCha* for Bang on a Can All-Stars (*MEMORY GAME*, Cantaloupe Music). Recent compositions include *Eko* (2019) for SSAA and strings and *Paddywhack South* (2021) for marimba, piano and wind quintet.

Jennifer R. Ellis (harp) Committed to shifting the boundaries of harp performance, Jennifer R. Ellis (D.M.A. University of Michigan, M.M. Cleveland Institute of Music, B.M. Oberlin) thoroughly enjoys using the harp in unexpected ways. She embraces firsts; she premiered over 100 works and was the first harpist to be a U.S. State Department One Beat Fellow and the first harpist to attend Bang on a Can, Fresh Inc., and Splice summer festivals. She currently teaches at Mills College and San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she serves as the department chair of Professional Development. www.harpellis.com

Tony Gennaro (percussion) is a percussionist, composer, improviser, and music educator who embraces collaboration, exploration, and experimentation in pursuit of new musical frontiers. Gennaro has been an active contributor to the music communities of Los Angeles and the Bay Area. He performs regularly with the William Winant Percussion Group and the new music ensemble Dirt and Copper. He was recently featured in projects alongside Meredith Monk, Ninth Planet, Larry Polanksy, Roscoe Mitchell, Steed Cowart, Wendy Reid, Herman Kolgen, and David Behrman. His debut album of chamber music, *through line*, was released in 2021 and is available on streaming platforms and BandCamp.

Keefe Ismael (trombone) is a trombonist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is currently pursuing his Bachelor's of Music in Trombone Performance at San Jose State University studying under Tom Hornig. Other previous teachers include Alex Bedner and Esther Armendariz. Keefe has experience in a variety of ensembles including orchestras, wind ensembles, big bands, contemporary music ensembles, and chamber groups. He also currently serves as a brass coach at Itliong-Vera Cruz Middle School and Piedmont Hills High School. In his free time, he likes to go to the gym, play video games, and take care of his dog, Wilfred.

John Ivers (clarinet) is a Bay Area composer and clarinetist exploring hybrid creative practices. Ivers traverses improvisational voices and dynamic musical structures to expand composer/performer relationships. As a composer, he's worked ensembles such as Quartetto Indaco, Amaranth Quartet, Aperture Duo, Del Sol String Quartet, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Ivers is a founding member of Dirt and Copper, a collective dedicated to the performance of radical new music, where he's collaborated with artists such as María Elena González, Rebeca Bollinger, Dana Hemenway, Laura Steenberge, Julie Herndon, and Rodolfo Córdova to create immersive audiovisual performances.

Nayoung Jung (piano) The composer, pianist, improviser and conductor Nayoung Jung (b. Busan, South Korea) grew up with classical music, starting piano at a very early age. With her strong classical training as a groundwork, she works as a composer and performer in and out of various music genres. Nayoung started improvising on the piano when she met her composition teacher Fred Frith, as well as Zeena Parkins, at Mills College where she completed her MA in composition (2017) and MFA in piano performance and improvisation (2019). Currently, she teaches students, performs, and conducts EMC choir and the SF Croma harp ensemble in the Bay Area.

Kyle Ko (horn) is an active Bay Area horn player, appearing with local groups such as the Fremont Symphony, Symphony Silicon Valley, and the Merced Symphony. He received his Bachelor's degree in music from UC Berkeley, studying with Alicia Telford and Mark Almond, and has played in various festival orchestras including the Eastern Music Festival orchestra and the National Repertory Orchestra. When not playing the horn, Kyle can often be found eating too many sweets and drinking too much coffee.

Genevieve Kromm (trumpet/flugelhorn) is a Bay Area musician, researcher, and music educator. After studying History and Music at Santa Clara University, Kromm became a Fulbright research fellow at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. In 2020, she completed her MA at UC Santa Cruz and won the annual concerto competition with the mentorship of her teacher, Dr. Richard Roper. She is the trumpet soloist on Larry Polansky's 2020 album from New World Records, *We are the Generations*, and has recorded with the San Jose Symphonic Choir and UCSC ensembles. Kromm currently teaches music full-time at Belmont-Redwood Shores School District and leads a private trumpet studio.

Rhein Matlack (oboe/English horn) is a musician based in Santa Cruz. Born and raised in Southern California, Rhein moved up north to pursue a Bachelor of Music degree at UC Santa Cruz. During her time at UCSC, she played oboe in the Wind Ensemble and Orchestra, and sang in Concert Choir. As the winner of the university's Concerto Competition in 2019, she performed Vaughan-Williams' *Oboe Concerto* with the University Orchestra. Her favorite past performances include playing first oboe in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* and English horn in Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.

Yuki Nagase (double bass) graduated in May 2021 from University of the Pacific, where she was president of the Conservatory Student Senate and principal bass of the symphony orchestra, in addition to being one of three annual recipients of an undergraduate research grant which she used to study feminist musicology. Raised in Berkeley CA, Yuki has performed with the Sacramento Philharmonic, Santa Cruz Symphony, and a variety of ensembles in venues across the Bay Area. In her spare time, Yuki likes to make terrariums, scrapbook, and practice yoga.

Erika Oba (flute/piccolo) is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, and educator based in the SF Bay Area. As a composer she has written works for jazz ensembles, chamber groups, dance and theater. She is active as a performer on both piano and flute, and is a member of the Montclair Women's Big Band, Ends Meat' Catastrophe Jazz Ensemble, Rice Kings, and The Sl(e)ight Ensemble. In addition to her own private teaching studio, she is a private jazz piano instructor for UC Berkeley's Music Department. As an artist, she is interested in exploring ritual, diasporic identities, and community through performance.

Shaina Pan (violin) performs and teaches throughout the Bay Area. Shaina holds degrees in Violin Performance and English from Indiana University, and recently completed graduate studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. An advocate for music by living composers, Shaina has premiered dozens of new works across the US, working with artists such as Kate Soper, Augusta Read Thomas, Ken Ueno, Terry Riley, and the Kronos Quartet, among others. She has performed with the IU New Music Ensemble, Atlantic Music Festival Contemporary Ensemble, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, The Orchestra Now, and Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra.

Nasr Ali Sheikh (viola) is an active solo and chamber violist in the Bay Area. He graduated from Texas Tech University studying with Kimberly Sparr and San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Jonathan Vinocour in viola performance. Aside from playing in the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, he also has played in many orchestras in the US, including the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra, Abilene Philharmonic, Midland Symphony, and Merced Symphony.

Jamael Smith (bassoon) is a performer and educator based in San Francisco. He has played with various ensembles including the San Francisco Symphony, West Bay Opera as well as SF Contemporary Players. Jamael also works as a teaching artist for San Francisco Symphony in their *Adventures in Music* program serving public elementary schools in San Francisco. He has attended summer festivals such as the Kent Blossom Summer Festival, Bay View Chamber Music Festival, and the Pierre Monteux Festival. He completed graduate studies with Stephen Paulson at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Other important teachers include Seth Krinsky, and Bill Buchman.

Julian Sommer (cello) is a 24 year-old cellist from Davis, California. He attained his undergraduate degree in 2019 at UC Santa Cruz where he studied with Vanessa Ruotolo and Roy Malan. While at UCSC Julian performed in the Resident String Quartet, served as principal cellist in the university orchestra, and won the university's concerto competition leading to a performance of the Saint-Saëns *Cello Concerto*. These accolades, along with his academic achievements in composition and research, culminated in him graduating with highest honors in the music major. Julian now studies with Andrew Luchansky and is pursuing a Performer's Certificate from CSU Sacramento.

Michiko Theurer (violin) is an intermedia artist, performer, and compos[t]er dedicated to fostering community through intersections of artistic interaction and collective imagination. Recent collaborations include a co-commission with composer Danny Clay for the CoMA festival (UK), an EP with Treebird (Julie Herndon and Marie Finch), and performances with Claire Chase and the Harvard New Music Ensemble. She holds a doctorate in violin performance from the University of Colorado at Boulder and is a PhD candidate in musicology at Stanford, where she is producing an interdisciplinary project based in the intersections of artistic practice and collaborative insight.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Yoshio Yabara (costume and scenic design) received a B.A. in Linguistics in his native Japan, and studied stage design at the German state art universities in Stuttgart and West Berlin. He began his professional career as a costume designer for the Oscar-winning film *The Tin Drum*, directed by Volker Schlöndorff. His first work for stage was in the 1970s and early '80s at the Schaubühne, West Berlin, where he first met Ms. Monk and collaborated on her opera *Vessel*. Their subsequent collaborations include *ATLAS: an opera in three parts*, the feature film *Book of Days, impermanence, Songs of Ascension, On Behalf of Nature, Bloodline Shrine, and Cellular Songs*. Mr. Yabara has also worked as a costume designer, stage designer or art director for many theatrical production in Europe, USA and Asia, including Robert Wilson's *the CIVIL warS, King Lear, Oedipus Rex, Madame de Sade* by Tadashi Suzuki, *Don Giovanni, Le Nozze di Figaro* produced and conducted by Daniel Barenboim at the Staatsoper Unter Den Linden Berlin, *Bin ich Schoen?, Nackt and Bliss* by Doris Doerrie, among others. www.yoshioyabara.com

Joe Levasseur (lighting design) has collaborated with many dance and performance artists including: Pavel Zuštiak/Palissimo, John Jasperse, Sarah Michelson, Jodi Melnick, Jennifer Monson, Neil Greenberg, and Beth Gill. He lit both Wendy Whelan's 2013 breakout, *Restless Creature*, and her subsequent collaboration with Brian Brooks, *Some of a Thousand Words* (2016). He has received two 'Bessie' awards (including one with Big Dance Theater) and a Knight of Illumination Award for his work on Meredith Monk's *Cellular Songs*. When not designing, Levasseur also engages in a visual art practice. Instagram: [@sirjoelevasseur](https://www.instagram.com/sirjoelevasseur/) / www.joelevasseur.com

Daniel Neumann (sound design) is a sound artist, organizer and audio engineer living in NYC. He holds a masters degree in media art from the Academy of Visual Art Leipzig and also studied electronic music composition. His artwork has been presented internationally and is represented by Fridman Gallery. As an audio engineer, he has 20+ years of professional experience and his focus is on multi-channel sound, installations and contemporary music. He is a member of Alarm Will Sound. danielneumann.org / ctswam.org

Meredith Belis (production stage manager/costume associate) has freelanced as a Production Stage Manager for the past ten years in NYC. She has worked with artists including Meredith Monk, Wendy Whelan, Neil Greenberg, Dean Moss, James Whiteside, and Maria Kotchetokova. She is very passionate about her work with musicians and dancers and is thrilled to be working with Meredith Monk on this project. She is a graduate of Bennington College and has worked as a Production Manager and Stage Manager for Sarah Lawrence College and the New School.

Ben Stechschulte (camera/editor for "Rotation") is a portrait, editorial and documentary photographer and filmmaker based in the Adirondacks and New York City. His work is seen in publications including *The New York Times Magazine*, *TIME*, and *New York Magazine*. This is his second project with Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble. www.benstechschulte.com

Kirstin Kapustik (executive director) has worked for more than ten years as a producer, curator, administrator and educator in New York City. She earned an M.F.A in Dance from Florida State University in 2009, specializing in choreography and performance and is currently completing an Executive Masters of Business from Pennsylvania State University. Kirstin joined Meredith Monk/The House Foundation for the Arts as Executive Director in 2017.

Meredith Monk/The House Foundation

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Kristin Kapustik, *Executive Director*

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Peter Sciscioli, *Communications/
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Amanda Baker, *Administrative Assistant*

Incorporated in 1971, The House Foundation for the Arts is a nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate cultural engagement through live music concerts, interdisciplinary performances, exhibitions and educational initiatives. The House Foundation develops, disseminates, promotes and preserves the work of iconic American artist Meredith Monk and members of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble.

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ABOUT MILLS COLLEGE

Mills College was founded in 1852 in Benicia, California, as a Young Ladies Seminary. Cyrus and Susan Mills purchased the site of the present 127-acre campus and built Mills Hall in 1871. Mills became a chartered college for women in 1885. Mills offers a bachelor's degree in music with emphasis on Performance, Composition, Electronic Media, or History/Theory as well as master's degrees in Composition, Electronic Music and Recording Media, and Performance and Literature. The Music Department includes the world-renowned Center for Contemporary Music. At Mills students can study traditional and contemporary music in a creative environment that fosters experimentalism. The Department's faculty includes composers Tomeka Reid, James Fei, Zeena Parkins, Laetitia Sonami, Steed Cowart; scholars David Bernstein and Nalini Ghuman; and performers including William Winant, Jennifer Ellis, Kate Campbell, Molly Holm, Robert Schwartz, Hrafnhildur Atladottir, Hank Dutt, Kala Ramnath, and Gianna Abondolo. For information on studying music at Mills, phone (510) 430-2135 (Undergraduate Admission) or (510) 430-3309 (Graduate Studies), or contact the Music Department Administrative Assistant, Kristian Dahlbom, at (510) 430-2171. Brendan Glasson (510) 430-2336 is Technical Director of the Center for Contemporary Music. The Concert Coordinator is Steed Cowart, (510) 430-2334.

Mills Performing Arts

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Situated on the Mills College campus in Oakland, California, Mills Performing Arts is a multi-venue performing arts center committed to promoting action and exchange in the performing arts, and supporting artists and scholars who reflect, explore, and celebrate the abundant cultural, racial, gender, and economic diversity of our society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Indra's Net was workshopped at Mills College in Fall 2018 and in 2019 with Bay Area musicians Emily Cardwell, Nava Dunkelman, Petur Eggurtson, Jennifer R. Ellis, Antonio Gennaro, Sarah Grace Graves, Lee Hodel, Robert Hurley, John Ivers, Feona Lee Jones, Nayoung Jung, Briana Lizarraga, Rhein Matlack, Richard Mix, Sarah Plovnick, Hallie Smith, Shanna Sordahl, Mitch Stahlmann, Michiko Theurer, Cory Tripathy, Trevor Van de Velde and Anthony White, and at ArtLab at Harvard University in Spring 2020 and Queenslab in 2021.

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Upcoming Concerts

Mendi and Keith Obadike

(David Tudor Composers-in-Residence)

Installation — *The Bell Rang*

Thursday to Sunday, November 18 to 21, 2021

X Sound

Saturday, December 11, 2021

Nicole Mitchell

(Jean Macduff Vaux Composer-in-Residence)

Saturday, February 5, 2022

Paul Flight and Ensemble — Music By Barbara Strozzi

Sunday, February 23, 2022

Signal Flow Festival

Friday & Saturday, March 11 & 12, 2022

Samantha Ege

(Dewing Piano Recital)

Sunday, April 3, 2022

To receive email music events notices, please contact concerts@mills.edu.

Find information about Mills music events online at: <https://performingarts.mills.edu/>

To purchase tickets online, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/>

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