UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

THE HARTT SCHOOL

Dale A. Merrill, Dean
Gábor Virágh, Director of Music Studies Division

present

Celebrating the Life of Glen Adsit

Foot in the Door

Friday, April 26, 2024
7:30 p.m.
Lincoln Theater

The Hartt Wind Ensemble and Symphony Band

Saturday, April 27, 2024
7:00 p.m.
Lincoln Theater

Glen Adsit
(1964-2024)

Glen Alan Adsit, aged 59, of West Hartford, CT, died on January 16, 2024 surrounded by his family at Yale New Haven Hospital. The cause of death was small vessel vasculitis leading to intestinal ischemia and necrosis.

Glen was diagnosed with polycythemia vera, a rare blood disorder, in 1998. He lived normally with medication until 2015 when it progressed into post-polycythemia vera myelofibrosis and acute myeloid leukemia. In 2016 he underwent a successful stem cell transplant and the cancer never returned.

Glen was born on May 31, 1964 in Saginaw, Michigan. He was the Director of Bands at The Hartt School of Music, Dance, and Theatre at the University of Hartford from 2000 to 2024. Prior to that, he served as the Associate Director of Bands at the University of New Mexico and as Director of Bands at Plymouth Centennial Educational Park High School and Pioneer Middle School. He was a proud alum of the University of Michigan, where he earned a bachelor's degree in trombone performance and music education, and a master's degree in wind conducting.

Glen was a dedicated individual who found joy in his work, believing, as Kahlil Gibran wrote, that "Work is love made visible." He was committed to teaching, mentoring, and elevating his profession through the creation of art by collaborating with living composers. He was devoted to serving his profession through the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) and was currently serving as the organization's president. He also served the campus community extensively as the Division Director for Instrumental Studies, Chair of Large Ensembles, and on an endless number of committees and services for the school and the university. Throughout, he kept the student experience at the center of his philosophy.

Part of Glen's brilliance was his commitment to connecting his students to his accomplished professional network. His acclaimed six Naxos CDs were produced in collaboration with student recording engineers; the commissions that he brokered through the two programs that he founded (National Wind Ensemble Consortium Group and Advancement of Secondary and Primary Instrumental Recording Excellence) were prepared and premiered by his student ensembles with the composers present; his performances with Hartt student ensembles at regional and national conferences brought distinction to the University of Hartford and the state of Connecticut; his artistry and pioneering energies were acknowledged by excellent critical reviews, university and professional awards, and election to the highest position in his national professional organization.

In his free time, Glen enjoyed cooking, practicing Tai Chi Chih, and running. He achieved his goal of completing the Hartford Marathon as well as several half marathons. When convinced by his family, he would also enjoy skiing, both on snow and water. When Noa was small, playing trains in the basement was a daily endeavor as well.

He is survived by his daughter, Noa Koffman-Adsit; ex-wife of 2 ½ months/separated spouse of 2 years/wife of 31 years, Carrie Koffman; mother, Audrey Adsit; sister, Julie Morcom and her husband Michael Morcom; and current partner, Shuying Li. Glen was preceded in death by his father, LaVergne Adsit, Sr., and brother, Vern Adsit, Jr. He is also survived by almost four decades of students, as well as his stem cell donor, Manuel Gollwitzer, of Weiden, Germany, to whom he owed the last seven years of his life.

If you are between the ages of 18 and 40 and are in good health, please consider adding yourself to the National Marrow Donor Program registry. Registering requires mailing in a simple cheek swab. There is a high need for all donors, but especially mixed-race donors who are in short supply. Learn more at bethematch.org

Friday, April 26, 2024
Foot in the Door

Overboard (Prologue) — Susan Botti
from *Cosmosis* — (b. 1962)

John R. "Rusty" Koenig, conductor

Waft for solo piano — Ken Steen
(b. 1958)

Shuying Li, piano

Eight Immortals and the Sea — Shuying Li
(b. 1989)

Matthew Aubin, conductor

Lilac Tears — Jennifer Jolley
(b. 1981)

Carrie Koffman, saxophone
Elizabeth Tomczyk, piano

Orphée-Sérénade — William Bolcom
V. Elégie — (b. 1938)

John R. "Rusty" Koenig, conductor

excerpts from *Thirteen* — Robert Carl
(b. 1954)

Robert Carl, piano

Serenade No. 10 in B-flat Major, K. 361 "Gran Partita" — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
III. Adagio — (1756-1791)

Ziwei Ma, conductor

Tracing Ligeti — David Macbride (1951-2018), arr. Edward Cumming

Edward Cumming, conductor

Every Thing Must Go — Martin Bresnick (b. 1946)

III. Pensoso, con sobrio espressione

Quercus Albus Saxophone Quartet
Robert Brown, Hunter Hellard, Benjamin Levesque, Jessica McCready

la flor mas linda — Gilda Lyons (b. 1975)

Thomas Duffy, conductor

Postlude: Forever Young — John Corigliano (b. 1938)

from *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*

Gilda Lyons, soprano

Edward Cumming, conductor

Foot in the Door

Violin

Elijah Bui

Cecilia Cooper

Selah Kwak*

Viola

Jian Xiong

Cello

Sanga Yoon

Bass

José Gilberto Ramón Celis

Flute

Grace Boniello

Julius Lagoa-Iacono

Oboe

Matthew Ehle

Victoria Radcliffe

Pedro Rivera

Elisabeth Young

Clarinet

Samuel Beckwith

Alexander Kollias*

Jonathan Maginnis

Linus Poon

Clara Ruiz Medina

Bassoon

Miah Miglore

Morgan Pope

Abigail Veilleux

Saxophone

Robert Brown

Benjamin Levesque

Hunter Hellard

Hannah Hickman

Horn

Cassandra Cardarelli

Olivia Depatie

Elijah Zelaya

Trumpet

Hannah Batsford

Margaret Mangold

Trombone

Aidan Bradley

Euphonium

Katherin Garcia

Yi-Fan Su

Tuba

Brent Nichols

Percussion

Lucas Conant

Honoka Masuyama

Hannah Moore

Zachery Wood

Harp

Amanda Evans Carabase

Piano

Arisa Sato

Voice

Britney Alcine

Christi Corey*

Margaret Mangold

Daniel Powers

Lauren Rockwell

Clara Ruiz Medina

Giovanna Spiotti

Abigail Veilleux

Quian Ye

*Hartt School Alumni

Notes on the Program

Susan Botti, *Overboard* (Prologue) from *Cosmosis*

Susan Botti was one of Glen's most cherished musical friends and collaborating partners. Their relationship extends back to Botti's first residency at The Hartt School in December of 2006. *Cosmosis* was the piece that brought them together and began this collaboration. After hearing the premiere of the work in Carnegie Hall during the 2005 College Band Director's National Association Conference, Glen knew that he needed to have Botti at Hartt to share her music and her musicianship with the students and faculty. Their continued collaboration resulted in Botti's *Terra Cruda* and *sull'ala* concerto for saxophone and wind ensemble, which was written for Glen, Carrie Koffman, and the Hartt Wind Ensemble. Botti's most recent residency in the fall of 2023 was part of Glen's last composer residency project and involved the East-Coast premiere of her newest work for wind ensemble and choir, *Vespers*. Tonight's concert features the prologue from a new version of *Cosmosis* for chamber ensemble which will have its full premiere in Italy this summer. In many ways, this performance brings Glen and Susan's collaborative relationship full circle to where it began.

In *Cosmosis,* Botti sets two poems by May Swenson: "The Cross Spider," which was inspired by a scientific experiment to see if a spider named Arabella could spin a web in space, and "Overboard," which provides the text for the prologue. In the prologue, Botti plays with the musical equivalents of the gravitational forces in music to portray Arabella's gradual unmooring from the gravity of earth. Botti then sets "The Cross Spider," portraying Arabella's journey over the course of the work's remaining movements. Freed from her earthly moorings, Arabella heroically succeeds in spinning a web on the first night of the experiment. She succeeds again on the second night but is sacrificed in the process. However, the results of the experiment memorialize Arabella's inspirational determination. Her resolve to create a home and safety net in the face of being removed from the earthly tethering of gravity reminds us of the power all beings hold to do the same under similar circumstances. This resolve is a trait that Glen embodied. And, like Arabella's energies at the end of *Cosmosis*, the resonant energies of Glen's life still echo among and us, continuing to inspire us all.

-John R. "Rusty" Koenig

Ken Steen, *Waft* for piano

An offering of sonic space for contemplation and resonance of final conversations had with Glen through reflection on the words of David George Haskel, one of Glen's meditations, and the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, respectively:

"The world is speaking, but our bodies are unable to hear much of what surrounds us."

“In this breath I create space to send and receive understanding, compassion, love and happiness from the universe.”

“The disintegration of this body does not touch me, just as when the petals of the plum tree blossom fall it does not mean the end of the plum tree. I am able to see my presence outside this body, and in the present moment.”

-Ken Steen

Shuying Li, *Eight Immortals and the Sea*

Shuying Li was Glen’s beloved musical collaborator and life partner. Their relationship began with his championing of her music and continues through the many performances her pieces receive because of his ardent support for them. *Eight Immortals and the Sea* is inspired by the eponymous ancient Chinese immortals who, according to legend, used their individual powers to help each other cross the great sea. This is an apt reminder of Glen’s unwavering belief in the power of bringing individuals together and providing them the space to use their unique talents to make the world a better, more musical place.

-John R. “Rusty” Koenig

Jennifer Jolley, *Lilac Tears*

Jenn Jolley was one of the first composers Glen commissioned for his ASPIRE project (Institute for the Advancement of Secondary and Primary Repertoire Excellence). The only time that Noa had the experience of playing in an ensemble with Glen as the conductor was for a middle school district honor band. Noa played in the saxophone section, and they performed Jenn’s commissioned work *Think About It*. Noa also studied composition with Jenn when she was a student at the Interlochen Arts Camp in the summer of 2021. They have stayed in touch and Noa took a lesson with Jenn just last month to help prepare *Spin It!* which will be performed on the Saturday concert.

Lilac Tears was written for Carrie and Glen’s friend, Tim McAllister. It was inspired by Prince’s performance of George Harrison’s “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” when Harrison was inducted posthumously into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Harrison wrote the song as a lament for how a universal love for humankind is latent in all individuals yet remains unrealized. Jolley writes that she believes Prince’s solo in the final third of the performance remedies that doubt expressed in the earlier verses.

-Carrie Koffman

William Bolcom, Orphée-Sérénade, V. Elégie

Glen had a special relationship with composer William Bolcom. He performed many of Bolcom's pieces and included him in the ASPIRE commissioning project. Bolcom and Glen also shared a connection to and deep love for the University of Michigan. At Foot in the Door's first appearance at a CBDNA National Conference (Seattle, 2011), Glen conducted a legendary performance of Bolcom's *Orphée-Sérénade.* In October 2023, Glen conducted this work on his final performance with Foot in the Door.

Bolcom penned the *Orphée-Sérénade* for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in 1984. The piece is filled with quirky quotations, clever references, and more than a few tricks. For example, the title of each movement (Ouverture, Romance, Pas de Bacchantes, Hurluberlu, Elégie, Energique) forms an acrostic which spells the name of the piece (O-R-P-H-E-E). Even the instrumentation is a bit of a joke. When the Orpheus players received the score, they frantically called Bolcom, exclaiming, "You've written for piano! We don't have a pianist!" Bolcom simply replied, "Huh…Guess I'll just have to play it, then." Glen, who always retained a bit of his childhood precociousness, particularly loved the playful aspects that underpin the work. Bolcom also alludes to the great Classical serenades, particularly Mozart's Serenade No. 10 in B-Flat "Gran Partita." With its beautiful upper-tessitura scoring, motoric rhythm, and unabashedly simple yet profoundly beautiful melody, Bolcolm's Elégie pays homage to the adagio of the Gran Partita, one of Glen's favorite pieces.

-John R. "Rusty" Koenig

Robert Carl, excerpts from *Thirteen*

Robert Carl taught composition at Hartt from 1984 to 2022. He was chair of the composition department from 1992 on. He had a richly productive collaboration and friendship with Glen Adsit over decades. Glen premiered 8 works of his, ranging from chamber quintet to chamber orchestra to wind ensemble.

Thirteen is a set of piano bagatelles, each a response to a stanza of the Wallace Stevens poem *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird.* The pianist recites each stanza before its respective piece. The piece is deeply connected to our neighborhood, as Stevens lived just down the road, and he is commemorated in a "poetry walk" that lays out the poem in 13 engraved stones from The Hartford, his employer, to his home on Waverly Place.
Carrie Koffman requested I perform this work, and she suggested the excerpted movements. I am so happy to fulfill her wish. She mentioned to me that it was snowing when Glen died, and the conclusion of *Thirteen* ties directly to that moment.

-Robert Carl

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Serenade No. 10 in B-flat Major, K 361 "Gran Partita"

Mozart's "Gran Partita" is one of the oldest serious works of concert music for winds and is universally adored by musicians of all disciplines, including Glen. He always had his facsimile edition of the score for the serenade open on the study stand in his living room and was always preparing to undertake a performance of this work. However, his reverence for it prevented him from doing so. His solution, which he hoped to achieve in the spring of 2025, was to offer a semester-long seminar course during which he and his students would come to deeply understand and ultimately perform the work. Tonight's performance is a solemn reminder of dreams Glen had that he now leaves to us to achieve.

-John R. "Rusty" Koenig

David Macbride, arr. Cumming, *Tracing Ligeti*

There are composers who write what they must write, who pen works that begin in their head and eventually end up on paper. David Macbride was a composer who wrote for *people*. More often than not, his music began not so much with a musical idea, but rather with a particular student (or group of students) in mind; only then would an idea emerge for him. And when it did, there was often a dramatic component to it as well, which is why he wrote so much music for Ben Toth's percussion studio. He knew Ben's students were game to do anything, and everything. There was something else about David that few will understand, save for Stephen Gryc, myself, and a few others who have haunted the hallways at Hartt – he was a quintessential Bay Area guy. Guys like us are rarely Type A individuals (though we can burn on the inside), because Bay Area guys are easy going, with a ready smile, and who always have the time of day to share, no matter how stressful their lives may be at that time. David was decidedly *chill*, no one more so than he. And when I think of him, to this day, that is the quality about him I miss the most. We also played basketball together, and he had this incredibly wild-looking hook shot that bounced high off the backboard and through the net; those of us who played with him always marveled at it. ("How did that go in?")

Of course, we all know that Glen embodied similar traits as David. Glen's work was constantly driven by and defined not only by the music he produced but by the people he made it with and for. He loved nothing more than collaborating with and being inspired by students who were game to do anything and everything. Glen also shared the Bay Area mentality regardless of his Michigan roots. Although perhaps more Type A organized than the typical Bay Area personality, he exhibited the sense of chill, down-to-earth realness that David and I shared. Contrary to so many "conductor types," Glen led a decidedly simple life. He was a card-carrying member of Southwest Airlines, doled out Costco soup when he had lunch guests, and served frozen pizza at every storied after-concert get together he hosted.

Glen, like so many Bay Area folks, embodied the sentiment best expressed by Fred Rogers: “It’s not the fancy outsides of life that ultimately nourish our souls. It’s the knowing that we can be trusted, that we never have to fear the truth, that the bedrock of our being is good stuff.”

In 2018, David wrote *Tracings* for string orchestra with percussion, piccolo and four female voices for the Hartt Orchestra. A few years later, I asked David if I could arrange the first movement, "After Ligeti" for wind ensemble. This movement is a tribute to David’s teacher, György Ligeti, who is also the dedicatee of the second movement of Martin Bresnick’s saxophone quartet *Every Thing Must Go*. After receiving David’s permission, I completed the transcription which was premiered by the United States Coast Guard Band. What you will hear tonight is yet another transcription of Macbride’s work, this time for the Foot in the Door ensemble.

-Edward Cumming

Martin Bresnick, *Everything Must Go* III. Pensoso, con sobrio espressione

Martin Bresnick was educated at the University of Hartford and is now on the composition faculty at Yale. Glen hosted Martin at Hartt as a guest composer and performed his music multiple times. The saxophone sections in all of Glen’s ensembles have always been students of Carrie Koffman. This was the case in Michigan, in New Mexico, and in Connecticut and included middle school bands, high school bands, marching bands, and collegiate bands. The offering by this saxophone quartet represents three and a half decades of this collaboration between Glen and Carrie. While Bresnick favors letting listeners have their own imaginative response to his music, he did pen the following short poem to accompany this saxophone quartet:

Every Thing Must Go
And does –
As in these three movements,
Now going, now gone.
– MB

-Carrie Koffman

Gilda Lyons, *la flor mas linda*

One of Glen's closest friends and collaborators on The Hartt School faculty was Gilda Lyons. A constant supporter and promoter of friends and colleagues, Glen commissioned Lyons to compose *la flor mas linda* to be featured on the second Foot in the Door performance at a College Band Directors' National Association National Conference on February 22, 2019 in Tempe, Arizona. The 2019 performance built upon the standard set by Foot in the Door at their 2011 National Conference appearance and introduced Gilda's name and compositional voice to the band world. Glen subsequently recorded the work for the most recent Foot in the Door album, *Equinox*, which was released on the Naxos label in 2023.

Lyons composed *la flor mas linda* out of a longing to musically reach across distance to her family living in a politically violent Nicaragua. The piece is a kaleidoscopic mesh of sounds that Lyons associates with Nicaragua: basilica bells, the pito and chischiles of the dance of the Toro Huaco, celebratory firecrackers, the wind blowing through her mother's hometown, and fragments from "Los Amores de Abraham," a tune her grandfather and his brothers played in their ensemble Marimba Diriangén. These celebratory sounds become increasingly sinister over the course of the work as it melts and morphs into a lament. Out of this lament for past, happier, times, a single gesture borrowed from Carlos Mejía Odoy's "Nicaragua, Nicaragüita" emerges from the ensemble. This tune has become a symbol of the Nicaraguan resistance to dictatorial rule and represents solidarity, support, and an unbreakable hope for more joyful times to come.

-John R. "Rusty" Koenig

John Corigliano, Postlude: Forever Young
from *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*

Glen loved performing the music of John Corigliano and hosted him in residency at The Hartt School for a performance of his monumental *Circus Maximus:* Symphony No. 3. Tonight, we honor Glen's love of Corigliano's music through this performance in tribute to Glen, who was famously forever young in both outward and inward appearance. The text invites us to contemplate the many lessons Glen taught us and the many wishes he had for us. It also clearly expresses Glen's most important lesson and the behavior he most often embodied: may you always do for others and let others do for you.

-John R. "Rusty" Koenig

May God bless and keep you always
May your wishes all come true
May you always do for others
And let others do for you
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung
May you stay forever young
May you stay forever young

May you grow up to be righteous
May you grow up to be true
May you always know the truth
And see the light surrounding you
May you always be courageous
Stand upright and be strong
May you stay forever young
May you stay forever young

May your hands always be busy
May your feet always be swift
May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift
May your heart always be joyful
May your song always be sung
And may you stay forever young
May you stay forever young

- Bob Dylan

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Kent McCray Theater

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The Bushnell
The Maxwell M. and Ruth R. Belding Theater

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Millard Auditorium

A Midsummer Night's Dream
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Sunday, May 5 | 3:00 p.m.
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