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130 word bio

Winner of The American Prize in 2021 for Chamber Music Performance, E4TT focuses on 20th and 21st century music that is relevant, engaging, original and compelling—music that resonates with today and speaks to tomorrow, that harnesses the power of artistic beauty, intelligence, wit, lyricism, and irony to create a deep understanding of our times and the human condition. Founded in 2007, the group produces a weekly podcast, "For Good Measure," and has recorded five critically acclaimed albums, all of which have medaled in the Global Music Awards. E4TT made its international debut in Berlin, was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Budapest for a four-city tour in Hungary, and has performed at the Krakow Culture Festival, the Conservatorio Teresa Berganza in Madrid, and throughout California.

200 word bio

Winner of The American Prize in 2021 for Chamber Music Performance, Ensemble for These Times (E4TT) consists of award-winning soprano/Artistic Executive Director Nanette McGuinness, cellist Megan Chartier, pianist Margaret Halbig, and Senior Artistic Advisor/composer David Garner. The group focuses on 20th and 21st century music that is relevant, engaging, original and compelling—music that resonates with today and speaks to tomorrow, that harnesses the power of artistic beauty, intelligence, wit, lyricism, and irony to create a deep understanding of our times and the human condition. E4TT performed at the 2016 Krakow Culture Festival, at the *Conservatorio Teresa Berganza* in Madrid in 2017, was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Budapest in 2014 for a four-city tour in Hungary, and made its international debut in Berlin. E4TT has performed locally at the German Consulate General, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Old First Concerts, JCC Peninsula, Trinity Chamber Concerts, and Noontime Concerts, among other venues. E4TT has recorded five albums, all of which have medaled in the Global Music Awards: "Surviving: Women's Words," "The Hungarians: From Rozsa to Justus," "Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan," "The Guernica Project," and "Emigrés & Exiles in Hollywood," and produces a weekly podcast, "For Good Measure."

Recordings

E4TT has released five critically acclaimed recordings, most recently "Emigrés & Exiles in Hollywood," on Centaur in 2024, recording music by some of the talented composers who fled the Holocaust in war-torn Europe and were instrumental in founding today's "Hollywood sound," and "The Guernica Project" in 2022, also on Centaur, honoring of the 85th anniversary of the Picasso painting of the same name, which itself commemorated the bombing of the Spanish town of the same name. The group released "Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan" in 2020 in honor of the centennial of this seminal 20th century poet, whose writing speaks to his experiences of loss, disempowerment, and survival under a brutal regime and was reviewed in *Textura* as "An imaginatively conceived and curated set." In *The Whole Note* Raul da Gama wrote, "The Ensemble's performance is both poised and haunting, and is raised to a rarefied realm by lustrous and soaring, songful recitatives executed by the inimitable Nanette McGuinness." The CD won a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards, as did the group's debut CD, "Surviving: Women's Words," released on the Centaur label in 2016. Lesley Mitchell-Clarke in *The Whole Note* wrote "Now more than ever, as the U.S. experiences a déjà vu of hatred and is poised on the brink of societal unravelling, the potent and timeless messages of survival, love, tolerance and forgiveness contained on this brilliant presentation need to resonate throughout the world." Erin Heisel, at *American Record Guide*, called the CD, "fascinating," and

“compelling,” with music that is “varied and harmonically interesting.” Grego Applegate Edwards (Gapplegate.com) wrote, “The heartrending words put both darkness and hope in a poetic light. Garner’s music brings out the moods and is extremely well done. Recommended.” E4TT’s second CD, “The Hungarians: From Rózsa to Justus” was released digitally on in 2018 on Centaur Records features a cello duo by Hollywood movie maven and Hungarian emigré Miklós Rózsa, along with works by three of his compatriots who perished in the Holocaust. The

Full-length bio

Entering our 18th season, Ensemble for These Times (E4TT) is a contemporary music chamber group consisting of award-winning soprano, Artistic Executive Director and co-founder Nanette McGuinness, cellist Abigail Monroe, pianist Margaret Halbig, and 2015 The American Prize winner, composer, Senior Artistic Advisor and co-founder David Garner, plus regular guest artists that include Lylia Guion, violin, Laura Reynolds, English horn, Chelsea Hollow, coloratura soprano, Haruka Fujii, percussion, and other fine guest artists each season. E4TT won The American Prize for Chamber Music Performance in 2021 and has released five albums, all of which have medaled in the Global Music Awards.

Mission

Ensemble for These Times focuses on 20th and 21st century music that is relevant, engaging, original, and compelling, music that resonates today and will speak to tomorrow. E4TT strongly believes in the power of artistic beauty, intelligence, wit, lyricism, and irony to create a deep understanding of our times and the human condition.

History

The ensemble was formed in 2007/2008 when soprano Nanette McGuinness and David Garner met during recording sessions at Skywalker Ranch; it quickly grew to include pianist Dale Tsang and then cellist Anne Lerner, with pianist Margaret Halbig and cellist Megan Chartier joining the group in the post-pandemic years. E4TT made its international debut in Berlin in 2012; was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Budapest for a four-city tour of Hungary in 2014; and performed at the Krakow Culture Festival in 2016 and 2022, and at the Conservatorio Teresa Berganza in Madrid in 2017. In California, E4TT has performed at the Paderewski Festival, the LAMOTH, UCLA, and in the Bay Area at the German Consulate General, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Old First Concerts, JCC Peninsula, Trinity Chamber Concerts, and Noontime Concerts, among other venues. From its inception, E4TT has had a strong, ongoing commitment to new music by women creatives, as well as by emerging, less-known, and exiled composers.

Formerly the **Jewish Music & Poetry Project (JMPP)**, the ensemble rebranded in Fall 2015, with the JMPP continuing as a project of the group. The ensemble’s new name was inspired by one of E4TT’s first songs, “In dieser Zeit” (translation, “In These Times”), to a text by German/Polish poet Mascha Kaléko (1901-1976). Part of Garner’s first major work for the group, “In dieser Zeit” is on the ensemble’s 2016 CD, *Surviving: Women’s Words*, four major song cycles to texts by Jewish women poets, reflecting on their wartime experiences. “Since its first major commission using texts about the Holocaust by Polish-German/ Jewish poet Mascha Kaléko, the JMPP has focused on bringing new, nearly new, forbidden, and forgotten music to light, with a dual emphasis: 1) new music to texts by Jewish women poets or by women composers; 2) music by composers who were banned, exiled, or destroyed in the Holocaust.

Call for Scores

In E4TT's first Call for Scores in December 2015-January 2016, the group received 275 scores by 200 composers, choosing 56 by 54 composers for a multi-year performance series entitled 56x54 that ran from 2016-2019. The group also commissioned a number of those composers to write for the group since 2016. The group has since held five more Calls for Scores: two for solo piano, in 2021 and 2023, performed by emerita pianist Dale Tsang, two collaborations with Luna Composition Lab in 2023 and 2025, and a new collaboration in 2025 with the Ross McKee Foundation, focusing on piano four hands.

Recordings

E4TT has released five recordings from 2014-2024, all of which have medaled in the Global Music Awards; the group's sixth album, "El Tiempo Latine"—music by modern Latine composers—is scheduled for release in spring 2026.

E4TT's debut CD, "Surviving: Women's Words," was released on the Centaur label in 2016 and won a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards. The album consists of four song cycles by E4TT composer David Garner to texts by women Holocaust survivors. Writing at Examiner.com, Stephen Smoliar called Mr. Garner's settings of poetry by Jewish women Holocaust survivors "fascinating," "passionate," and "highly compelling;" Erin Heisel of American Record Guide also called it "fascinating," and "compelling," and Grego Applegate Edwards reviewed it (at Gapplegate Classical-Modern Review) as, "...extremely well done. Recommended." Finally, Lesley Mitchell-Clarke wrote (The Whole Note) "Now more than ever, as the U.S. experiences a déjà vu of hatred and is poised on the brink of societal unravelling, the potent and timeless messages of survival, love, tolerance and forgiveness contained on this brilliant presentation need to resonate throughout the world."

E4TT's second recording, "The Hungarians: From Rozsa to Justus" was released on Centaur Records on April 6, 2018 as a digital EP and won a Gold Medal in the 2018 Global Music Awards. The CD consists of music by three Hungarian and one Hungarian-American composers who were exiled or killed in the Holocaust: multiple-Oscar-recipient Miklós Rózsa (1907-1995), Sándor Vándor (1901-1945), Lajos Delej (1923-1945), and György Justus (1898-1945). Featuring duos for cello and piano by Rozsa and Vándor--plus a Scherzo from a missing cello sonata attributed to Delej—songs by Vándor and Justus for soprano and piano, and the premiere recording of a recently rediscovered set of piano miniatures by Delej, the CD is the result of the group's successful four-city concert tour in Hungary in 2014, which was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Budapest.

E4TT's third recording, "Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan," won a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards. It was released on June 30, 2020, in honor of the centennial of the birth of one of the most important post-WWII poets, who greatly influenced 20th Century European literature. Born to a German-speaking Romanian Jewish family, Celan (1920-1970) was profoundly affected by the rise of Nazism. His parents perished in a concentration camp and he barely survived a forced labor camp, only to commit suicide in 1970. His poems—written in German, his mother tongue—speak to his experience of loss, imprisonment, and survival under a brutal regime and the themes in his work—the rise of fascism, "strong men" leaders, and nations marching to the drumbeat of nationalism—deeply resonate today with the global right-wing resurgence. The recording won a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards and was reviewed in *Textura* as "An imaginatively conceived and curated set." In *The Whole Note* Raul da Gama wrote, "The Ensemble's performance is both poised and haunting, and is raised to a rarefied realm by lustrous and soaring, songful recitatives executed by the inimitable Nanette McGuinness." The CD was chosen for the Center for New Music's Album of the Week. "Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan," consists of three E4TT commissions, plus a fourth relevant work: "Die eichne Tür" (The Oaken Door), by E4TT composer and co-founder David Garner to poems by Paul Celan, including "Espanbaum" (Aspen tree), the poet's heartrending reflection on his survival and his mother's death; "Nachtlang" (Nightlong) by Jared Redmond (b. 1986), setting Celan's "Notturmo" (Night) and "Einmal" (Once); "A Song on the End of the World" by Stephen Eddins (b. 1954), setting a poem by Celan's Nobel Prize-winning contemporary, Czeslaw Milosz (1911-2004) and including a reading of the poem by the translator and poet's son Anthony Milosz; "4 ½" for solo piano, by world-renowned composer Libby Larsen (b. 1950). A suite for solo piano, "4 ½" includes "In Memoriam," "an elegy for departed, beloved ones." "Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan" honors the centennial of the birth of one of the most important post-WWII poets. These themes are the force behind "Once/Memory/Night."

E4TT's fourth album, "The Guernica Project," was released on June 17, 2022. It commemorates the 85th anniversary of Picasso's iconic painting of the same name and its motivation, the horrific carpet-bombing of civilians in the Basque town of Gernika with new music by modern Spanish composers Mercedes Zavala and Mario Carro and California composers David Garner and Jeffrey Hoover (1959-2021), with poetry

by Antonio Machado (1875-1939) and Ernestina de Champourcin (1905-1999). Transcentury Communications wrote, "Every work on this CD is well-crafted, sincere, and performed with sensitivity."

The group's most recent album, "Émigrés & Exiles in Hollywood," was released on Centaur on July 12, 2024 and features music by eight émigré composers who fled persecution during WWII for Los Angeles, going on to be instrumental in founding today's renowned "Hollywood" sound, shaping the music of generations of American composers: Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), Bronisław Kaper (1902-1983), Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957), Miklós Rózsa (1907-1955), Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), Alexandre Tansman (1897-1986), Henryk Vars (1902-1977) and Eric Zeisl (1905-1959). The album won a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards. Its many accolades include, "The ensemble expresses an emotive power well suited to the band book being addressed. Historically adroit and culturally sensitive, the music in *Émigrés & Exiles in Hollywood* is as compelling now in its vindication as it was revolutionary in its infancy" (*WildMercuryRhythm*) and "The works, exploring both classical and popular genres, reflect the craftsmanship of composers who excelled both in concert and cinematic fare. The artists of E4TT perform the music with the utmost commitment, and a captivating unity of ensemble. The artists' passion for this music, and their cause in sharing it with a greater public, is evident. As someone who lives in Los Angeles, and is proud of this aspect of the city's history, I am grateful to E4TT for its mission, and for this fine CD. Recommended....Four stars: A rewarding and moving recital of music by composers who escaped the Nazis and relocated to Southern California" (*Fanfare Magazine*).

Commissions

The ensemble has commissioned 61 new works and two arrangements for premiere in the U.S. and Europe. Major commissioning projects include "Women Crossing/ Liminality," a two-year initiative exploring the effects of immigration and transitions on women's identity, "Fractured Light" and "Dark Universe/ Mysterious Spaces," "The Cassandra Project," (new music inspired by the Greek myth of this famous woman, cursed to foretell the truth but never be believed), "Mothers & Daughters," the "Film Noir Project" (E4TT's homage to all things musical and film noir), The "Guernica" Project (commemorating the 80th anniversary of Picasso's iconic painting "Guernica," which itself commemorated the horrific bombing of the eponymous Spanish town); "Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan" (new music focusing on the world and works of seminal 20th century poet Paul Celan); Surviving: Women's Words" (four new song cycles by David Garner to texts by women Holocaust survivors, which became the group's first CD); and "Women's Love and Loss" (three new works by women composers focusing on lost love in women's lives, to poetry by Lucille Clifton, Robert Frost, and Robinson Jeffers).

REVIEWS:

"A Memorable Event: Attending the Ensemble for These Times' (E4TT) "Émigrés & Exiles in Hollywood" recital on Saturday, June 15 was both enjoyable and memorable. The performance highlighted the cultural contributions of émigré and exile composers in Hollywood, providing a fascinating glimpse into their musical legacies. The program featured works by composers who fled Europe during the early 20th century and settled in Hollywood. E4TT's selection of pieces was both thoughtful and engaging, offering the audience a mix of well-known and lesser-known compositions...performed with sensitivity and attention to detail..." ([Joseph Cillo at ForAllEvents.com](#))

"Following the interleaving of Second Viennese School and contemporary programming, the evening concluded with the world premiere of the second piano trio composed by David Garner, a co-founder of E4TT. This was performed by three artists appearing as guests for E4TT, violinist Lylia Guion, Amy Brodo on cello, and pianist Dale Tsang (E4TT emerita). There was just the right blend of commitment and technical capabilities to bring this music to life..." ([Stephen Smoliar at The Rehearsal Studio](#))

"... [B]oth my wife and I were struck by how many of those composers had an impressive capacity for wit. Tamara MacLeod even went as far as to title the first movement of her Spent suite "Farcically." The titles of the following two movements were "Languishingly" and "Desolately;" and, taken as a whole, her "adverbial journey" was a total romp. A bit more explicit, but just as engaging, was the final work, "Forget Your Scarf in My Life" by

Madeline Clara Cheng. Indeed, this came across as the final “punch line” after the imaginative (and often witty) rhetorical stances of the three predecessors in the second half of the program, “Fulgurance” (Jessica Mao), the second movement of Ringlorn (Isabelle Tseng), and “grace fall” (Sage Shurman). I must confess that I tend to be cautious about attending programs that might leave me feeling besieged by new content. In this case, however, almost every composer left me with the impression of knowing when enough was enough. Perhaps the future of music is in better hands than my proclivity for skepticism would have me believe!" ([Stephen Smoliar at The Rehearsal Studio](#))

"The compositions ...[in the Film Noir Project] felt appropriate in style, often highlighting the vast range of the cello. There were deep and mysterious rumblings from the low register, performed with appropriately harsh staccato attacks or jazzy pizzicato. This contrasted nicely with harmonics and eerie themes in the upper register, and the melancholy mid-range of a soprano voice, in German dialect evocative of the dark songspiel of Weill or Berg....To close the program, Lerner-Wright and Tsang presented a cello and piano duo titled Waltz Noir, by the young Russian composer Polina Nazaykinskaya. This accompanied Emma Kazaryan's varying and overlapping film footage...[and] was well chosen as the closing number." ([Alex Rosenfeld, SFCV.org, April 9, 2019](#))

"E4TT's soprano Nanette McGuinness effectively channeled this nervous energy [in Derek Jenkins' "Fruehlingsglaube" from "Nach Raum und Zeit"], and guest pianist Taylor Chan beautifully shaped the late-Romantic harmonies... Dan Senn's song "The Never Close"... [and "Paper Money" by Scott Etan Feiner], among several others on the program, were performed with conviction by Chan and guest soprano Chelsea Hollow... In his Missed Connections, Sam Krahn sets texts from Craigslist's Casual Encounters section (R.I.P.). You can't make this stuff up, and Krahn's music, full of tongue-in-cheek references, would be perfect for a cabaret. I'd go to that show." ([Rebecca Wishnia, SFCV.org, January 29, 2019](#))

"Lerner-Wright and Tsang knew how to tap into the rhetorical side of Rószá's Opus 8 duo, making it clear that there was more to the music than the composer's skill in reflecting Hungarian idioms." ([Stephen Smoliar at The Rehearsal Studio](#))

"With the release of this deeply moving and well-conceived project, the San Francisco-based Ensemble for These Times (E4TT) has put forth a superb and relevant spoken word and musical recording...Now more than ever, as the U.S. experiences a déjà vu of hatred and is poised on the brink of societal unravelling, the potent and timeless messages of survival, love, tolerance and forgiveness contained on this brilliant presentation need to resonate throughout the world." ([Lesley Mitchell-Clarke at The Whole Note](#))

"...four passionate meditations on the Holocaust experience delivered through a unique and highly compelling pair of voices, those of both composer and singer." ([Stephen Smoliar at Examiner.com](#))

"fascinating...Garner's music is difficult but compelling, varied and harmonically interesting... [McGuinness] manages the vocal and musical challenges well." ([Erin Heisel at American Record Guide](#))

"The heartrending words put both darkness and hope in a poetic light. Garner's music brings out the moods and is extremely well done. Recommended." ([Grego Applegate Edwards at Classical-Modern Music Review](#))

"Garner's settings are effective, particularly in the longest work here, Chanson für Morgen (2012) to words by Mascha Kaléko (1907-1975)... The pieces' effectiveness lies in the way they speak of the destruction of Judaism and Jewish culture in Eastern Europe while making the loss of history and of a sense of belonging into a wider experience, not one unique to Jews or to a specific time period." ([Mark Estren, TransCentury Communications review](#))

"The San Francisco composer David Garner has set four female Jewish poets, of whom the most gripping is

the exotic Berliner Elsa Lasker-Schüler, represented here by her Blue Piano cycle." ([Norman Lebrecht at Lebrecht Weekly](#))

"The compositions ...[in the Film Noir Project] felt appropriate in style, often highlighting the vast range of the cello. There were deep and mysterious rumblings from the low register, performed with appropriately harsh staccato attacks or jazzy pizzicato. This contrasted nicely with harmonics and eerie themes in the upper register, and the melancholy mid-range of a soprano voice, in German dialect evocative of the dark songspiel of Weill or Berg....To close the program, Lerner-Wright and Tsang presented a cello and piano duo titled Waltz Noir, by the young Russian composer Polina Nazaykinskaya. This accompanied Emma Kazaryan's varying and overlapping film footage...[and] was well chosen as the closing number." ([Alex Rosenfeld, SFCV.org, April 9, 2019](#))

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"Lerner-Wright is definitely an impressive cellist. She was clearly up to the full scope of challenges of all of the works on the program; and she could "play well with others" as effectively as she could present her solo work. She even knew how to maintain audience attention with informative comments while retuning her instrument." ([Stephen Smoliar, The Rehearsal Studio, June 30, 2018](#))

"Soprano Nanette McGuinness (accompanied by Dale Tsang on piano and Laura Gaynon on cello) deftly negotiated Garner's convolutions." ([Stephen Smoliar, Examiner.com, April 5, 2016](#))

"The high point of the program was definitely the Mendelssohn. Both Macadam-Somer and Tsang-Hall went at it with all the spirited energy it demands." ([Stephen Smoliar, Examiner.com, Sept. 10, 2013](#))

"All four poems in the set [of Phoenix] have a decidedly dark quality. Garner served this quality well...and McGuinness captured that effectively in her delivery of the texts." ([Stephen Smoliar, Examiner.com, April 23, 2013](#))

"Tsang-Hall flawlessly delivered the catchy, syncopated rhythms of Labyrinth (1991), the darting little figures and wonderful bursts of high treble light in Traveling Light (1991), and the surfeit of energy in the delicious Dodecahedron (1993, 2012).... Also on the program were Gabriela Lena Frank's lovely Barcarola latinoamericana (2007), whose repeated notes, redolent of the mandolin, Tsang-Hall captured beautifully. The pungent chromaticism of Laura Schwendinger's Pedal Point (1996) and engaging forward momentum of Elena Ruehr's Prelude III (2002) flowed easily through her hands." ([Jason Victor Serinus, SFCV.com, April 2, 2013](#))