

*The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of Music,  
as part of the Conversations in Modern Music Series,  
presents*

# The Last Question

Andy Hudson, *clarinet*

Annie Jeng, *piano*

Friday, February 25, 2022

8:00 pm

James & Susan Moeser Auditorium

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**en • tro • py (noun)**

*a process of degradation or running down or a trend to disorder*

*synonyms:*

*breakup. collapse. decay. decline. degeneration. destruction. worsening. falling apart.*

Gate

Graham Fitkin  
(b. 1963)

Snowfall

Annika Socolofsky  
(b. 1990)

Fantasy (...those harbor lights)

Joan Tower  
(b. 1938)

*–Intermission–*

Little Rituals Here and There

Chen Yihan  
(b. 1994)

Apparition

Viet Cuong  
(b. 1990)

Above Home, Beyond the Sea

Shuying Li  
(b. 1989)

The Last Question

I. Big Bang

II. Big Crunch

III. Big Freeze

IV. The Last Question

Roger Zare  
(b. 1985)

*World Premiere Performance*

## About the Guest Artists

Performances by **Andy Hudson** have been hailed as “a treat for the listener” and have been praised for “an uncommon singularity of purpose, technical virtuosity, youthful vigor and a mature sensitivity.” He has appeared in Carnegie Hall’s ‘Weill Recital Hall,’ at Chicago’s ‘Symphony Center,’ and at the World Congress of the International Alliance for Women in Music, College Music Society conferences in both Canada and the US, and gatherings of the International Clarinet Association in Los Angeles, Orlando, Knoxville, and Ostend, Belgium. Andy won top honors at the 2008 MTNA National Senior Woodwind Competition and has received other prizes in the National Collegiate Solo Competition, the Vandoren Emerging Artists Competition, the Luminarts Foundation Fellowship Competition, the American Prize, and the Ariel Artists ‘Impact Performance’ Competition. Andy has recently performed as guest principal clarinet of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra and the North Carolina Opera, and he was appointed Bass Clarinet/III Clarinetist of the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra in 2020. Other festival appearances include the Lucerne, Bang on a Can, Hot Air, Sewanee, Hot Springs, and Great Lakes Chamber Music festivals.

A noted interpreter of contemporary music, Andy has premiered and commissioned dozens of works to date and has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on their MusicNOW series, at the New Music Gathering, and with Ensemble Dal Niente, the Chicago Composer’s Orchestra, and the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition’s Grossman Ensemble (with whom he is featured on the 2020 release FOUNTAIN OF TIME). In 2018, he was clarinetist for the workshop performance of Augusta Read Thomas’s opera “Sweet Potato Kicks the Sun,” sponsored by the Santa Fe Opera. Andy also performs with the Zafa Collective and earspace, and was a founding member of the trio F-PLUS. Andy is Clarinetist and Co-Artistic Director with the mixed sextet Latitude 49. Latitude 49 has held numerous residencies, including recently at Princeton University and Baylor University, and has been the recipient of grants from the Barlow Endowment, the Fromm Foundation, Chamber Music America, and the Aaron Copland Fund. Andy can be heard on their albums *The Bagatelles Project* and *Wax and Wire* (New Amsterdam), of which TEMPO said, “The group handles lots of different styles with precision, and performances throughout the CD are sharp, clear and full of energy. The album offers some great works, and each of them is its own musical sculpture – fully formed, accomplished, well performed.” His solo debut, “halfway home” will release in the Winter of 2021 on Potenza Music.

Andy’s first book, “Elements of Contemporary Clarinet Technique” was co-authored with Roger Zare and released in August of 2021 on Conway Publications. In addition to contributing a chapter for the forthcoming “Clarinet Studio Companion” (Conway, 2021), his work has also been published in *The Clarinet Journal*, *The Piano Magazine*, and *The College Music Symposium*.

Andy is currently Assistant Professor of Clarinet at the University of North Carolina Greensboro and each summer joins the Artist-Faculty of the Tennessee Valley Music Festival. Previously, he held teaching positions at Northwestern University and Lake Forest College, and he has been the North Carolina State Chair for the International Clarinet Association since 2019. Andy earned his DMA in Clarinet Performance with a Cognate Certification in Music Theory from Northwestern University, where he also earned his Master of Music degree. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Columbus State University’s Schwob School of Music. His primary teachers have included Steve Cohen, J. Lawrie Bloom, and Lisa Oberlander. Andy is an Artist-Clinician for Buffet Crampon and an Ambassador for Rovner Products. He performs exclusively on Buffet clarinets and Rovner ligatures.

When he’s not practicing, Andy enjoys running, reading, playing guitar, eating local food, watching baseball, and collecting obscure instruments. Let’s connect on Twitter and Instagram: @TheAndyHudson

**A**nnie Jeng is a pianist, educator, and collaborator. She is committed to listening, learning, and becoming a better member of society with the hopes of paving roads for justice, collaboration, and kindness in communities. She has performed widely in such settings as the Brancaloneoni International Music Festival in Italy, the Gijón International Piano Festival in Spain, the Kennedy Center, Interlochen Arts Academy, and China. (However, she sometimes prefers to perform in intimate spaces such as living rooms, personal Zoom calls, and breweries.) Recent performances have included Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with UNCG's University Symphony Orchestra, Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major with the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra, Messiaen's *La ville d'en haut* with the University of Michigan Symphony Band, and Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques* with the University of Michigan Contemporary Directions Ensemble. A Presser scholar, Annie has presented at Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) conferences at collegiate, state, and national levels and College Music Society (CMA) regional conferences.

Annie's essential goal as an artist is to make communities richer and more meaningful through the arts. To this end, Annie strives to make music accessible to audiences of all backgrounds by expanding and rethinking the traditional recital format to include interdisciplinary and interactive elements, all with the aim of encouraging audiences to engage with the artistic experience. Recent projects include, "Music by the Barrel," which was a concert series at the Ann Arbor Distilling Company in Ann Arbor, "Beyond the Keys: Unlocking Piano Works" which was an interactive concert on the roof of a parking deck performed by her piano pedagogy students, and "Brews-keys" which featured UNCG piano faculty and students at Oden Brewing Company in Greensboro, North Carolina. She also led music workshops that focused on group singing and music as a form of expression through the Prison Creative Arts Project at University of Michigan.

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Annie personally picked up and delivered keyboards to UNCG piano students in order to ensure that music within student's lives would not be stopped. As a strong believer of creating a better and more equitable "normal," she also founded A Seat at the Piano (ASAP) in the summer of 2020 ([aseatatthepiano.com](http://aseatatthepiano.com)). ASAP is a resource that is dedicated to the promotion of inclusion in the performance and study of solo piano repertoire.

Much of Annie's research is devoted to contemporary music and studying the pedagogical capabilities of contemporary piano techniques. In 2018, Annie received the Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship from the University of Michigan to create a pedagogical resource called Circles and Lines that will feature newly commissioned works by female composers that introduce unconventional piano techniques to intermediate pianists. She is also the pianist of Khemia Ensemble ([khemiaensemble.com](http://khemiaensemble.com)), a contemporary chamber ensemble that is dedicated to promoting contemporary classical music by cultivating inclusive place-making, collaborative mentorships, and authentic storytelling through immersive, multimedia performances. She released the album, "World Map" with Parma Recordings as the former pianist of Four Corner's Ensemble. Committed to supporting musicians in finding their unique career path, she also worked as a Programming Assistant at University of Michigan's Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Career Empowerment & Leadership (EXCEL) Lab. She also serves as a member of the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy (NCKP) Career Development and Innovation Committee.

Annie received her MM in Piano Performance from the University of Michigan and her BM in Piano Performance with a minor in Public Health from New York University. She received her DMA in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Michigan in 2019. Her teachers include Logan Skelton, Joseì Ramoìn Mendez, Miyoko Lotto, Anne-Marie McDermott, and Faye Bonner. She is currently the Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

## Texts & Readings:

### From “The Last Question” by Isaac Asimov

*The last question was asked for the first time, half in jest, on May 21, 2061, at a time when humanity first stepped into the light. “Can entropy ever be reversed?”*

### From “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” by C. S. Lewis

*And shortly after that they looked into a room that was quite empty except for one big wardrobe... Lucy immediately stepped into the wardrobe and got in among the coats and rubbed her face against them, leaving the door open, of course, because she knew that it is very foolish to shut oneself into any wardrobe. She took a step further in—then two or three steps—always expecting to feel woodwork against the tips of her fingers. But she could not feel it.*

*“This must be a simply enormous wardrobe!” thought Lucy, going still further in and pushing the soft folds of the coats aside to make room for her. Then she noticed that there was something crunching under her feet. “I wonder is that more mothballs?” she thought, stooping down to feel it with her hands. But instead of feeling the hard, smooth wood of the floor of the wardrobe, she felt something soft and powdery and extremely cold...*

*And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off. Something cold and soft was falling on her. A moment later she found that she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air.*

*Lucy felt a little frightened, but she felt very inquisitive and excited as well. She looked back over her shoulder and there, between the dark tree-trunks, she could still see the open doorway of the wardrobe and even catch a glimpse of the empty room from which she had set out. (She had, of course, left the door open, for she knew that it is a very silly thing to shut oneself into a wardrobe.) ... “I can always get back if anything goes wrong,” thought Lucy. She began to walk forward, crunch-crunch, over the snow and through the wood towards the other light.*

### From Moby Dick by Herman Melville

*There is no steady unretracing progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause:—through infancy’s unconscious spell, boyhood’s thoughtless faith, adolescence’ doubt (the common doom), then skepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood’s pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary? Where is the foundling’s father hidden? Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it.*

### From “The Last Question” by Isaac Asimov

*“I get it,” said Adell. “Don’t shout. When the sun is done, the other stars will be gone, too.” “Darn right they will,” muttered Lupov. “It all had a beginning in the original cosmic explosion, whatever that was, and it’ll all have an end when all the stars run down. Some run down faster than others. Hell, the giants won’t last a hundred million years... But just give us a trillion years and everything will be dark. Entropy has to increase to maximum, that’s all.” “I know all about entropy,” said Adell, standing on his dignity. “The hell you do.” “I know as much as you do.” “Then you know everything’s got to run down someday.” “All right. Who says they won’t?” “You did, you poor sap. You said we had all the energy we needed, forever. You said ‘forever.’ It was Adell’s turn to be contrary. “Maybe we can build things up again someday,” he said. “Never.” “Why not? Someday.” “Never.” “Ask [the supercomputer,] Multivac.” “You ask Multivac. I dare you. Five dollars says it can’t be done.”*

*“Can entropy ever be reversed?”*

*INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR MEANINGFUL ANSWER.*

—Intermission—

### From “The Last Question” by Isaac Asimov

*“What is wrong?” “The stars are dying. The original star is dead.” “They must all die. Why not?” “But when all energy is*

*gone, our bodies will finally die, and you and I with them.” “It will take billions of years.” “I do not wish it to happen even after billions of years. Universal AC! How may stars be kept from dying?” Dee Sub Wun said in amusement, “You’re asking how entropy might be reversed in direction.” And the Universal AC answered: “THERE IS AS YET INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.” Unhappily, Zee Prime began collecting interstellar hydrogen out of which to build a small star of his own. If the stars must someday die, at least some could yet be built.*

### **From “H is for Hawk” by Helen MacDonald**

*There is a time in life when you expect the world to be always full of new things. And then comes a day when you realise that is not how it will be at all. You see that life will become a thing made of holes. Absences. Losses. Things that were there and are no longer. And you realise, too, that you have to grow around and between the gaps, though you can put your hand out to where things were and feel that tense, shining dullness of the space where the memories are.*

### **Text for “Above Home, Beyond the Sea” by Shuying Li**

*When I was young,  
My mama told me,  
“The Ocean is my hometown”.*

*I was born by the sea,  
I’ve grown up next to it.*

*Ocean, oh ocean,  
You are the place where I live.  
The wind is blowing,  
the waves are surging,  
flowing with me everywhere.*

*Ocean, oh ocean,  
You are like my mama,  
Wherever I am going,  
You are always with me.*

*The ocean, ah my hometown,  
The ocean, ah my hometown,  
My hometown,  
My hometown....*

### **From “The Grey Havens” by J.R.R. Tolkien**

*“But Sam was now sorrowful at heart, and it seemed to him that if the parting would be bitter, more grievous still would be the long road home alone.”*

### **From “The Last Question” by Isaac Asimov**

*“We both know entropy can’t be reversed. You can’t turn smoke and ash back into a tree.”*

*Man said, “Can entropy not be reversed? Let us ask the Cosmic AC [supercomputer.]” The Cosmic AC surrounded them but not in space. “Cosmic AC,” said Man, “how may entropy be reversed?” The Cosmic AC said, “THERE IS AS YET INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.” Man said, “Collect additional data.” The Cosmic AC said, ‘I WILL DO SO. I HAVE BEEN DOING SO FOR A HUNDRED BILLION YEARS. MY PREDECESSORS AND I HAVE BEEN ASKED THIS QUESTION MANY TIMES. ALL THE DATA I HAVE REMAINS INSUFFICIENT.’*

*“Will there come a time,” said Man, ‘when data will be sufficient or is the problem insoluble in all conceivable circumstances?’ The Cosmic AC said, “NO PROBLEM IS INSOLUBLE IN ALL CONCEIVABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.” Man said, “When will you have enough data to answer the question?” The Cosmic AC said, “THERE IS AS YET INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.” “Will you keep working on it?”*

*asked Man. The Cosmic AC said, "I WILL." Man said, "We shall wait."*

**\*\***

*Matter and energy had ended and with it space and time. Even AC [the supercomputer] existed only for the sake of the one last question that it had never answered... All other questions had been answered, and until this last question was answered also, AC [the supercomputer] might not release his consciousness. All collected data had come to a final end. Nothing was left to be collected.*

**\*\***

*And it came to pass that AC learned how to reverse the direction of entropy. But there was now no man to whom AC might give the answer of the last question. No matter. The answer - by demonstration - would take care of that, too. For another timeless interval, AC thought how best to do this. Carefully, AC organized the program. The consciousness of AC encompassed all of what had once been a Universe and brooded over what was now Chaos. Step by step, it must be done.*

**\*\***

*And AC said, "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"*

*And there was light -*

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