

I/O FEST – SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2023, 8:00 PM  
'62 CENTER FOR THEATRE AND DANCE  
Presented by the Williams College Department of Music  
Duration: approx. 60 minutes, no intermission

PENELOPE  
~ A Song Cycle ~  
New Music Williams, featuring Sara Stebbins '24

Sarah Kirkland Snider

*Penelope* (2010)  
for mezzo-soprano and dectet

1. The Stranger with the Face of a Man I Loved
2. This Is What You're Like
3. The Honeyed Fruit
4. The Lotus Eaters
5. Nausicaa
6. Circe and the Hanged Man
7. I Died of Waiting
8. Home
9. Dead Friend
10. Calypso
11. And Then You Shall Be Lost Indeed
12. Open Hands
13. Baby Teeth, Bones, and Bullets
14. As He Looks Out to Sea

Sara Stebbins '24, voice  
Eddie Wolfson '23, director  
Sari Klainberg '25, lighting designer

New Music Williams

Veronica Kao '23, *flute*; Locke Meyer '25, *clarinet*; Samantha Strickland '26, *horn*; Artie Carpenter '25, *trumpet*; Isabella Hayden '25, *violin*; Zach Bishop '26, *viola*; EB Diallo '25, *cello*; Prom Kingchatchaval '26, *guitar*; Jacob Fanto '25, *percussion*; Rein Vaska '25, *drum set*; Francesca Hellerman '23, *live electronics*  
Matt Wisotsky '23, *conductor*

The performance will be followed by a reception and talkback with members of the *Penelope* creative team and Nicole Brown, Assistant Professor of Classics, Williams College.

This concert is presented in memory of Steven Dennis Bodner (1975-2011).

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

### Composer's Note:

Inspired by Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey, Penelope* is a meditation on memory, identity, and what it means to come home. The song cycle, written in 2009 for Shara Worden and Ensemble Signal, is based on a music-theater monodrama written by Snider and playwright Ellen McLaughlin for the J. Paul Getty Center in 2008. In the work, a woman's husband appears at her door after an absence of twenty years, suffering from brain damage. A veteran of an unnamed war, he doesn't know who he is and she doesn't know who he's become. While they wait together for his return to himself, she reads to him from the *Odyssey*, and in the journey of that book, she finds a way into her former husband's memory and the terror and trauma of war.

Composer Sarah Kirkland Snider writes music of direct expression and vivid narrative that has been hailed as "rapturous" (*The New York Times*), "groundbreaking" (*The Boston Globe*), and "poignant, deeply personal" (*The New Yorker*). Recently named one of the "Top 35 Female Composers in Classical Music" by *The Washington Post*, Snider's works have been commissioned and/or performed by the New York Philharmonic; San Francisco Symphony; National Symphony Orchestra; Detroit Symphony Orchestra; Philharmonia Orchestra; the Birmingham Royal Ballet; Deutsche Grammophon for mezzo Emily D'Angelo; percussionist Colin Currie; vocalist Shara Nova; eighth blackbird; A Far Cry; and Roomful of Teeth, among many others. The winner of the 2014 Detroit Symphony Orchestra Lebenbom Competition, Snider's recent projects include *Forward Into Light*, an orchestral commission for the New York Philharmonic inspired by the American women's suffrage movement; *Mass for the Endangered*, a Trinity Wall Street-commissioned prayer for the environment for choir and ensemble; and an opera on 12th-century polymath St. Hildegard von Bingen, commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects. The 22/23 season will see world premieres for Renée Fleming and Will Liverman; Decoda Ensemble; and the Emerson String Quartet, in their final commission, to premiere on their farewell tour. *Penelope* and *Unremembered*, her two genre-defying LP song cycles, earned critical acclaim from *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Gramophone Magazine*, and Pitchfork, among others. In Fall 2020, Nonesuch Records and New Amsterdam Records co-released Snider's third LP: *Mass for the Endangered*, performed by English vocal ensemble Gallicantus, to wide critical acclaim. In Fall 2022, Nonesuch Records and New Amsterdam Records will release *The Blue Hour*, a collaborative song cycle with composers Rachel Grimes, Angélica Negrón, Shara Nova, and Caroline Shaw for vocalist Shara Nova with A Far Cry string orchestra, on text by Carolyn Forché. A founding Co-Artistic Director of Brooklyn-based non-profit New Amsterdam Records, Snider has an M.M. and Artist's Diploma from the Yale School of Music, and a B.A. from Wesleyan University. Her music is published by G. Schirmer.

Sara Stebbins (they/them), mezzo-soprano, is a junior Music and English major from New York City. As a composer-vocalist, they have been active in the new music community at Williams since freshman year, and this is their third I/O Fest. Outside of the music department, Sara is also involved in the theater community, and serves as the Head of Music Direction of Williams' student theater troupe, Cap & Bells.

Eddie Wolfson (they/them), director, is a senior psychology and theatre double major from Los Angeles California. Former Williams credits include *Yerma* (Yerma), *Theatre: A Love Story* (Two), and *Sometimes the Rain, Sometimes the Sea* (little one). They are thrilled to have been able to direct this project and branch into work with I/O.

## ABOUT I/O FEST

I/O Fest, the Williams College Department of Music's annual immersion in the music of today, is a multi-day exploration of adventurous music featuring new voices, fresh perspectives, and creative modes of musical expression. Performances, talks, and workshops are held in the '62 Center for Theatre & Dance, the Williams College Museum of Art, and The Clark Art Institute, with a special interest in unconventional spaces and modes of performance. Featuring renowned guest artists and performances by the I/O Ensemble, faculty, and students, I/O Fest seeks to present innovative and visceral programs that invite listeners to experience music in new ways.

2023 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (All events free, no reservation required, unless otherwise noted)

### FRIDAY 1/13

12:00-4:00 PM | I/O Day at WCMA

7:30 PM | '62 Center

I/O Ensemble

### SATURDAY 1/14

4:30 PM | The Clark

MILFORD GRAVES FULL MANTIS: film screening

8:00 PM | '62 Center

New Music Williams presents *Penelope*, a song cycle by Sarah Kirkland Snider

Featuring Sara Stebbins '24

### SUNDAY 1/15

1:00 PM | The Clark

I/Out Loud Family Concert, featuring GEORGE

4:00 PM | The Clark\*

Genre-crossing jazz and new music ensemble GEORGE, featuring composer/percussionist John Hollenbeck

\*Reserve your seat at [Clarkart.edu](http://Clarkart.edu)

### I/O FEST STAFF

Matthew Gold, Artistic Director; Sara Stebbins '24, Student Director; Jeffrey Miller, Stage and Orchestra Manager, Williams College Department of Music; Jonathan Myers, Concert and Event Coordinator, Williams College Department of Music; Arianna Suarez '25, Sound Engineer; Giulianna Bruce '25, Sound Engineer

### Acknowledgements

Ed Gollin, Music Dept. Chair; Nathaniel Wiessner, '62 Center Operations Manager; John Burrow, Sound and Media Manager; Daniel O'Connell, Production Technician; Corissa L. Bryant, Patron and Visiting Artist Services Manager; Ileana Perez Velázquez, Zachary Wadsworth, Composition Faculty; Will Schmenner, Clark Art Institute; Jeff Bentley, Piano Technician; Daniel Czernecki, Recording Engineer