MARIA SCHNEIDER ORCHESTRA

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WELCOME TO THE HOP
A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

THEATER ETIQUETTE
When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas.

Be aware and use quiet voices. Remember that live theater differs greatly from watching television or movies or attending a sporting event. Live performers can hear and see you and are easily distracted by any talking or moving around in the audience. Even the smallest sounds can be heard throughout the theater, so it’s best to be quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance.

Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation!

Important things to remember: Backpacks, food, drink and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking any photos is strictly prohibited. Hats off! It is respectful to remove hats during your time in the theater.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Be prepared and arrive early. You should arrive at the theater 30 to 45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time, parking, and trips to the restroom. You should be in your seat at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

Have a head count. On the day of the performance be sure to have an accurate head count of students, chaperones, and teachers.

Staying for lunch? Please call 603.646.2010 no later than one week in advance of the show to make sure we have space available. The day of the show, bring lunches in marked boxes and give them to a Hop staff member. Lunches will be ready for you after the show in Alumni Hall.

Photo Policy. The Hopkins Center may take photographs during the performance for use on our website or on promotional materials. If you or your students do not wish to be photographed, please see a Hop staff member.

The Show Must Go On! We do not cancel events due to inclement weather. Performances will only be canceled if the artist is unable to reach the theater. Schools will be notified by phone if the performance has been cancelled. We do not issue refunds for weather-related cancellations; please feel free to fill empty seats with other school or community members.

This study guide was created for you by the Outreach & Arts Education team. Special thanks to Emma Howeiler and Kathryn Waychoff, students at Dartmouth College. To download copies of this study guide, see additional resources for this event, or view past study guides, please visit: www.hop.dartmouth.edu/outreach.

ENJOY THE SHOW!

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The Hopkins Center Outreach & Arts Education department embodies the Hop’s mission to “ignite and sustain a passion for the arts.” It provides Dartmouth, the community and beyond rare personal contact with artists and a broad context for the performing arts. Unveiling the creative process of extraordinarily diverse artists, Outreach programs touch more than 14,000 lives each year.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.
- Spaulding Auditorium houses one of the largest pipe organs in New Hampshire. Can you find it?
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maria Schneider’s music awes listeners with its color, lyricism and versatility. It has been hailed by critics as “evocative, majestic, magical, heart-stoppingly gorgeous and beyond categorization.” She and her orchestra became widely known in 1994 when they released their first recording, Evanescence. With that recording, Schneider began to develop her unique way of writing for her 17-member collective, with her compositions distinctly highlighting the talents and creativity of the group. The Maria Schneider Orchestra has performed at festivals and concert halls worldwide. Maria has received numerous commissions and guest-conducting invites from over 85 groups in 30 countries. The Hopkins Center first presented the Maria Schneider Orchestra in 2007 when it helped commission The Pretty Road, a work that was later included in Schneider’s Grammy-winning album Sky Blue. Schneider returned several years later for a residency and performance with the Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble, and, in a wonderful surprise, came back in 2012 to attend the presentation of the Australian Chamber Orchestra performing her (again, Grammy-winning!) work for soprano Dawn Upshaw, Winter Morning Walks, set to poems by Ted Kooser.

Maria Schneider has been awarded Grammys in both the jazz and classical categories. The orchestra’s most recent album, The Thompson Fields, was awarded a 2016 Grammy for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album, and Maria also won in 2016 for Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals, for Sue: Or in a Season of Crime, recorded by her orchestra with David Bowie.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The Maria Schneider Orchestra plays a unique combination of jazz big band and classical music, all composed by Maria Schneider for her collective. The instruments in the orchestra include flute, trombone, trumpet, saxophone, clarinet, guitar, flugelhorn, piano and percussion. Unlike many big band leaders, Maria does not play onstage with her orchestra. Instead she focuses on conducting the musicians, making sure they keep the tempo and bring the entire piece fully to life. At their performance at the Hop, the Maria Schneider Orchestra will play pieces from their new album The Thompson Fields—for which she just won 2 Grammys—as well as songs from their older releases.

Reflections on Schneider’s style by Dartmouth student and Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble trumpet player Kathryn Waychoff ’16:

“Within the world of jazz, Schneider is a woman who has agency. Schneider doesn’t go back to the melodies from the big band era, but is somehow able to keep her music modern and moving forward while still using the big band format. I think that’s exciting. There’s a special energy you get by having a big band that you don’t get in a combo environment. In a big band orchestra, music is more worked out, there are complex overlapping layers of melodies, rhythms, harmonies and countermelodies.”

A Flugelhorn
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

WHAT IS JAZZ?

Maria Schneider is heavily influenced by the world of jazz music. Jazz developed in African-American communities in the United States in the early 20th century. It emerged from a variety of musical styles including ragtime, marches and blues. After the first recordings of jazz were made in 1917, the music spread widely across the United States. A key component of jazz music is created by putting triplets behind the basic beat. A jazz player will quote a melody from another song—including classical pieces—in their solos then use triplets to “swing” the melody. Another musical element important to jazz is rhythm, specifically syncopation. Syncopation is an accent or emphasis in the music where you least expect it. It can happen on a part of a beat or a part of a measure. Tempo is also key to jazz music. Tempo is another name for the speed of a piece of music. In jazz, more often than not, the tempo remains steady from the beginning of the piece to the end.

IMPROVISATION

Several of Maria's band members perform solos as part of a song. These soloists are improvising. Improvisation in jazz is the instantaneous creation of new patterns and melodies that fit within the existing structure of a song. A common misconception about jazz improvisation is that it is invented out of thin air. On the contrary, the musicians must have a solid working knowledge of the structure and form of music and, after many hours spent practicing, be intricately familiar with their instrument. Only then are they able to spontaneously create variations on the themes and chords in a piece of music. The structure is flexible so the musician may venture in various directions depending on the inspiration of the moment, creating something new every time he or she plays music.

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Though Maria Schneider is female, her band is made up of mostly male musicians. Most images of women in jazz are those of vocalists like Ella Fitzgerald who sang in front of jazz orchestras and big bands. Female instrumentalists and composers are much harder to name. Historically, piano skills were considered appropriate for women, though playing music professionally was not. During World War II, many women stepped in to fill the roles of
the male musicians who were now fighting overseas—creating a new, if temporary, acceptance of women's presence in male-dominated bands. Due to racial segregation, white people were not allowed to play in African-American bands, and vice versa. The celebrated International Sweethearts of Rhythm, along with several other African-American all-female bands, sometimes covertly broke the color line by hiring white women. Post-war, female players continued to fill vacancies in men's bands: trumpet players Billie Rogers and Jean Starr; vibist Marjorie Hyams, trombonist Melba Liston and saxophonist Elsie Smith. Though their names are not remembered, these women were all distinguished jazz artists. There were and are far fewer females composing for jazz than males. One female composer who made a name for herself was Mary Lou Williams. She played piano professionally from an early age and her composing style encompassed a wide range of jazz sub-genres, from stride to progressive. She worked with jazz greats Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk and Dizzy Gillespie.

WHO WRITES THE SONGS?
Musical composition is the process of making or forming a new piece of music by combining various elements of music. Composers are generally not creating something out of nothing when they write. Instead, they are creating work that combines their past experiences with their understanding of music theory, what they have studied and listened to and what they would like to hear themselves. As a composer, Maria Schneider creates work that blurs the lines between big band, jazz and classical music. “I got tired of the big band being these three primary colors: the trumpets, the trombones, the saxes,” Schneider said in an interview with The New York Times in 2013. “My pieces, many of them, at least the newer things, are through-composed like classical music.” Although she has her own sound, Schneider draws inspiration from her many musical heroes, including Brazilian musicians Egberto Gismonti and Antonio Carlos Jobim, classical composers such as Aaron Copland and composers/performers from popular music like Paul Simon. In addition to creating work based on her personal experience (The Thompson Fields was inspired by her hometown of Windom, Minnesota), Schneider often composes on commission. Schneider’s long list of commissioners is quite varied and includes the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Kronos Quartet.

Reflections on women in jazz from Dartmouth student and Barbary Coast Ensemble pianist Emma Howeiler, ’18:

“Jazz is one of the most male-dominated genres in all the artistic forms. I grew up playing jazz and lived in a city that fosters jazz education, and it’s still so rare to see girls. I was the only girl in my high school jazz band. We went to New York City to play with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, alongside ten other bands from across the country, and there were still so few girls. And Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra has none! I think that is going to be the next wave—for [female musicians] to be seen as equal. It’s actually a hard line for me to walk in jazz. Some people say that I only got where I was (musically) because I am a woman. But actually, I think women have to work so much harder and be so much better to even be noticed! There are a lot of women in music schools…but about 95% of employed jazz musicians are men. And that includes others in the industry, from band leaders to club owners to record executives.”
CROWD SOURCING

Reaching out to fans for funding is not a new idea, but the funding of full-length orchestral projects has become a hallmark for Schneider through her use of the trend-setting company, ArtistShare (a precursor to Kickstarter and Indiegogo). Her album Concert in the Garden (2004) blazed the crowdfunding trail as ArtistShare’s first release, also becoming the first recording to win a Grammy with internet-only sales. Many artists now use ArtistShare to distribute their recordings exclusively on the Internet. Fundraising begins when the label announces a new project. Fans who contributed get a finished CD with their name listed in the liner notes as a producer. Funders are also invited to watch the project evolve through videos and blog postings; high-level donors often get to meet the artist. Crowd funding has worked well for Schneider, paying for three albums so far. That said, producing an album costs thousands of dollars. Her last two albums, Winter Morning Walks and The Thompson Fields, each cost about $200,000 to make. Though thousands of dollars have been raised and paid, she is still raising money to finish paying for both of the albums.

ADVOCACY FOR ARTISTS

Because it is so expensive to produce a high-quality recording, Schneider has become a strong voice for music advocacy in the digital age. As a creator of original work, she is frustrated that she has lost intellectual control over much of her property thanks to online piracy and lax laws and/or enforcement. In 2014, she testified before the United States Congressional Subcommittee on Intellectual Property about digital rights. “Taking my music down from these sites is a frustrating and depressing process. [...] As fast as I take my music down, it reappears again on the same site,” Schneider said. Schneider made three recommendations to the committee: creators should have the ability to block uploads of their content before infringement occurs; host sites should require users to go through further verification before uploading content; and the notice and takedown process should become a “notice and stay down” process. In response to Google Senior Copyright Policy Counsel Katherine Oyama asserting that some creators earn six figures from monetizing online content, Schneider responded, “That’s like going into a poor neighborhood and finding one person who won the lottery.” Maria continued, saying “[Creators] are hemorrhaging red ink on our intellectual property. There has to be something that brings these two sides together and makes it sustainable. I want it to benefit me, not just the big players.”
PRE PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is jazz a male-dominated field? Are there other musical genres that lean strongly to one gender or another? Other general occupations? What fields—in music or elsewhere—seem to have no barriers to either gender?
- Discuss the pros and cons of writing and performing one’s own composition versus performing work composed by someone else. How might the experience of conducting your own work differ from conducting the work of another composer?
- Listen to clips of the Maria Schneider Orchestra at www.mariaschneider.org. What words would you use to describe the music? How does it compare to the music you generally listen to? Do any images come to mind as you listen?

POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Compare and contrast Maria Schneider’s compositions with those of other jazz musicians you have heard (e.g. Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, Fats Waller). How are they similar? Different? What about classical compositions?
- Was there a particular instrument in the orchestra that stood out or that you enjoyed? Why or why not?
- Describe the way Maria Schneider conducted the orchestra. What kinds of movements did she use? Could you make a direct correlation between her movement and a particular reaction in the musicians or change in the music?

VOCABULARY

Agency: the capacity, condition or state of exerting power
Collective: shared or done by a group of people; involving all members of a group
Commission: to officially ask somebody to write, make or create something or to do a task for you, in exchange for compensation
Flugelhorn: a valved brass musical instrument like a cornet but with a mellower tone
Label: a brand or trademark associated with marketing of music recordings
Progressive: a term which refers to a type of experimental and somewhat dissonant big-band jazz music of the 1950s
Segregation: the practice or policy of keeping people of different races, religions, etc., separate from each other
Stride: a style of jazz piano playing in which the right hand plays the melody while the left hand alternates between a single note and a chord played an octave or more higher
Subgenre: lesser or subordinate genre
Through-composed: not based on repeated sections or verses; having different music for each verse
Triplets: rhythm in which three evenly-spaced notes are played in the space of two notes of the same rhythmic value
Vibist: person who plays the vibraphone, a musical instrument which has metal bars hit with small wooden hammers and has a motor that makes the notes vibrate
LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

POETRY AND COMPOSITION (GRADES 5-10)

Explore the intersection of jazz and poetry. Rhythm is a shared trait between poetry and jazz music and both also seek to tell a very short story. For her album Winter Morning Walks, Maria Schneider’s compositions were directly inspired by a book of poems written by Ted Kooser. Begin by reading a poem together as a class; try Yusef Komunyakaa’s poem “Slam, Dunk, & Hook” (http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/180588), “Dream Boogie” by Langston Hughes (http://cai.ucdavis.edu/uccp/hughesdreamboogie.html), or “Redwing Blackbird” by Allison Adele Hedge Coke (http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/240126). Discuss the imagery and musicality found in the language of the poem. Create a collaborative poem by starting with a sentence written by the teacher or a classmate. Pass the sentence to a student, who will use it as inspiration to write the next line and so on around the room (or group if working in groups) until everyone has contributed a line. Share finished poem with class and discuss the movement, rhythm and theme(s) in the poem.

Next, go to http://www.mariaschneider.com/ and click “Launch Player” at the top right (or visit the “Discography” page and select an album). Select a track and listen. What instruments do you hear? How would you describe the song? What theme(s) are you able to extrapolate from a close listening? Listen again, this time freewriting as the music plays. What does the music make you think about or feel? Can you find words (real or made up) that represent the sounds of different instruments, or express the ideas in the music? After listening and writing, read your writing through and then edit it into a poem. In groups of two or three, share each poem. Discuss what elements in the music are mirrored in the poem—rhythm, pace, repetition, sounds, alliteration, etc.—as well as each person’s interpretation of the song into poetry. How are each different? Are there any similarities?

PIRACY OR ACCESS? (GRADES 8-12)

In an interview, Maria Schneider said, “I work as hard as anybody on the planet does. Most musicians do. Why is that so deeply disrespected in terms of our laws and copyright and the Internet? Why do we value Google above the rights of creatives?” In contrast, singer-songwriter Norah Jones has said about piracy, “If people hear it, I'm happy. I'm not going to say go steal my album, but I think it’s great that young people who don’t have a lot of money can listen to music and be exposed to new things.” Imagine you are an artist like Schneider and create a budget that details all of the items needed to make a full-length orchestra album recording using 15-17 different musicians. Make a list of all anticipated expenses and then do research online or using other resources to get estimates of what these items might cost. Some expenses may be easy to price (paying musicians, renting recording studio, sound engineers, promoting the finished product) but others may be more abstract, though still valuable (the time and talent that goes into composing and arranging the music). After estimating expenses, estimate your income. How many recordings do you need to sell and at what price point to recoup expenses? Once you have a document with all your expenses and income laid out, discuss the implications of someone who posts the album online for free without permission. What is the benefit to the public of having free access to the music? How do you predict it will impact your budget? In what ways will it impact your image? What other ways can you strategize to make money if the album is available at no charge? Are you able to draw a conclusion about the impact of free access to music on the public and the creator? What is the perception of creators who block free access to their work? Is this a First Amendment issue? Why or why not?
Hear an interview with Maria Schneider on NPR’s *Here and Now*:
http://hereandnow.wbur.org/2015/07/08/maria-schneider-thompson-fields

Visit Maria’s website for more information on her and her orchestra:
http://www.mariaschneider.com/

Hear and read about Toshiko Akiyoshi, a jazz musician and composer who influenced Maria:
http://www.npr.org/2016/02/16/466930497/toshiko-akiyoshis-jazz-orchestra-brought-the-club-to-concert-halls

For more activities around this topic, visit:
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-9-12/Rhythm_and_Improvisation_Jazz_Poetry
http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/ambassadors/Lesson1.html

More info about Maria, jazz and music piracy:
http://www.stereophile.com/content/recording-september-2015-thompson-fields#KwdQ3G0V3AH7FqwD.97

http://www.therartsdesk.com/new-music/10-questions-musician-maria-schneider
http://www.juilliard.edu/journal/arresting-and-original-maria-schneider
http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/life_and_entertainment/2015/04/30/1-grammy-winning-composer-huge-in-big-band-jazz-circles.html
http://www.pbs.org/jazz/time/time_women.htm
http://www.allmusic.com/subgenre/progressive-jazz
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/06/lady-gaga-jack-white-norah-jones-musicians-piracy_n_1258319.html
http://riverwalkjazz.stanford.edu/program/my-heart-story-lil-hardin-armstrong
http://www.npr.org/programs/jazzprofiles/archive/women_1.html