

ARS  
LYRICA  
HOUSTON



# AUTUMN HUNT

**Sunday, September 13 at 6pm**

Zilkha Hall

*Hobby Center for the Performing Arts*

MATTHEW DIRST

*Artistic Director*

With *Autumn Hunt* Ars Lyrica begins its 2015/16 *Seasonal Rituals*, a year-long engagement with musical rituals of various kinds, from beloved masterworks to musical “proving grounds” of one sort or another. For this evening’s program we’re delighted to welcome back to the Zilkha Hall stage two outstanding soloists—mezzo soprano Jamie Barton and violinist Adam LaMotte—for hunt-themed music by Handel, Vivaldi, Gluck, and Haydn. So saddle up, pick your quarry, and tally-ho!

Our season continues on November 20 with *Homage to the Sun King*, Louis XIV of France, whose long and ritual-filled reign ended exactly 300 years ago. This special program features Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s scintillating chamber opera *Les arts florissants* plus a return appearance by the New York Baroque Dance Company.

If you like what you hear, consider an Ars Lyrica season subscription; it’s a great way to enrich your life and experience some amazing music. Subscribe for three, four, or five more programs in the current season and enjoy various perks as well, from special receptions with the artists to house concerts.

With warm thanks for your patronage and support. Enjoy the program!



MATTHEW DIRST  
Artistic Director

## PROGRAM

Excerpts from *Serse* George Frideric Handel  
(1685–1759)  
*Overture: [Grave]–Allegro–Gigue*  
*Accompagnato: “Frondi tenere”*  
*Aria: “Ombra mai fu”*

Excerpts from *Semele* Handel  
*Accompagnato: “Awake Saturnia”*  
*Aria: “Iris, hence away”*

Concerto in F Major, Op. 8/3 Antonio Vivaldi  
(1678–1741)  
 (“Autumn” from *The Four Seasons*)  
*Allegro*  
*Adagio molto*  
*Allegro*

Excerpts from *Orfeo ed Euridice* Christoph Willibald Gluck  
(1714–1787)  
*Accompagnato: “Ecco un nuovo tormento”*  
*Aria: “Che farò senza Euridice?”*

“Ho il cor già lacero” from *Griselda* Vivaldi

## INTERMISSION

Concerto in E Minor, Op. 6/3: Allegro Handel  
 “Where Shall I Fly?” from *Hercules* Handel

*Arianna a Naxos* Franz Joseph Haydn  
(1732–1809)

## PROGRAM NOTES

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A successful hunt requires both hunter and hunted. So, too, with a musical program devoted to this particular activity, whose particulars may change from age to age just as artistic tastes shift from one generation to another. *Autumn Hunt* thus begins with a hunter: Serse, King of Persia (Xerxes in English), whose ode to a beloved plane tree at the beginning of Handel's eponymous 1738 opera is really a song about unrequited love. The hunter, in this case, can only pine after his prey. In *Semele* (1743), on the other hand, the goddess Juno is enraged to learn at the beginning of Act II that Semele has taken up with Jupiter instead of Athamas, whose marriage to Semele Juno had already blessed. Vowing to destroy Jupiter, Juno sends the messenger Iris away brusquely ("Iris, hence away") so that she can plot revenge on the happy couple, which involves enlisting Somnus, the god of sleep, in the hunt for the doomed Semele.

From operatic hunts we turn to instrumental depictions, which tend toward the more genial side of this universal sport. The four concertos that comprise Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* are some of the most accessible programmatic music of all time. Their fetching melodies and easily grasped allusions—note the hunting horn motives in the third movement of "Autumn" especially—long ago established Vivaldi's posthumous reputation as a virtuoso colorist. Their 1725 publication, as part of his Opus 8 collection *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione* ("The Contest of Harmony and Invention"), reaffirmed Vivaldi's place on the cutting edge of a musical world full of gifted composers: his devotees included no less than Bach and Handel.

"Autumn" begins with a thumping rustic dance that evokes villagers celebrating the harvest. Since Italian celebrations inevitably involve wine, Vivaldi gives the solo violinist a specific role to play: the obligatory stumbling drunkard, whose musical line careens wildly from top to bottom of the instrument's register. Inebriation eventually brings sleep, which first alternates with the villager's cheerful melody before dominating the ensuing Adagio, whose bizarre harmonic progressions show that Vivaldi took his collection's title

quite seriously. A jolly hunt brings this concerto to a close with string writing that imitates the call of hunting horns and a solo line whose dramatic swoops give life (and death) to the unfortunate beast of prey.

At its 1762 première in Vienna, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* turned the opera world on its ear. In contrast to the oftentimes convoluted plots and elaborate music of *opera seria*, Gluck's first effort at "reform" opera is a streamlined setting of the Orpheus and Euridice tale set to nobly tuneful music. The opera begins after Euridice's untimely death and is focused squarely on Orpheus' efforts—relying on his supreme musical powers—to rescue her from the underworld. His pursuit climaxes at the beginning of Act III, with Euridice's final disappearance after a fateful mistake: Orpheus has not followed the rules of this particular hunt and is punished for doubting Euridice's presence behind him. "Che farò senza Euridice," the opera's most famous aria, hits home for everyone, since we all wonder from time to time how we'll manage without our nearest and dearest.

Vivaldi's many operas, though often quite masterful, fell into oblivion quickly thanks to an operatic world fueled mostly by endless novelty. Fierce competition in Venice and elsewhere—for the best singers, most fashionable poets, richest patrons, etc—meant that only the most energetic of composers left a lasting mark in the genre. Never one to miss a golden opportunity, Vivaldi invited (in 1735) the gifted young dramatist Carlo Goldoni to update a much-used libretto by Apostolo Zeno that recounts the tale of an exiled queen (Griselda) from Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Griselda's low birth provides the essential dramatic problem, on account of which her husband Gualtiero, King of Thessaly, formally renounces her. Doleful tones thus mingle with fiery coloratura in some thirty musical settings of this tale. All the Griselda operas eventually give virtue the palm, however: she is eventually rehabilitated and restored to her rightful place at Gualtiero's side. "Ho il cor già lacero" occurs at the end of Vivaldi's Act I, at Griselda's lowest point. She has just lost both husband and son as she leaves the palace for (she thinks) the last time.

In Vivaldi's hands Griselda gives herself over to hysteria, a common condition of 18th-century operatic heroines. "Mad scenes," as they're usually called, have in fact been around since the ancient Greeks, who used them for moments of eerie introspection or crazed virtuosity in their tragedies. One reason why mad scenes became so popular was the fact that such moments, in which a character becomes irrational

and imagines all manner of things, heighten the drama's separation from reality and the audience's awareness of that separation. Baroque opera and cantata, with their larger-than-life characters whose identities, lovers, and even sexualities are extraordinarily fluid, provided the perfect vehicle for such over-the-top emotional display. Handel also wrote mad scenes for a number of operas and at least one oratorio. *Hercules* (1744) centers on this hero's triumphal return from battle and his wife Dejanira's suspicion of his infidelity. After causing his death, she literally comes apart in the last act, exclaiming in desperation: "Where shall I fly / where hide this guilty head?"

Our evening's hunt concludes with an equally tragic mythical figure: Ariadne, wife of Theseus (hunter of the Minotaur), whose famous abandonment inspired composers for centuries, especially during the Baroque era. Functionally these larger-than-life characters were a means bringing the passions to life while simultaneously keeping the strongest emotions at arm's length: better to weep over Ariadne's fate, after all, than over one's own. Haydn's *Arianna a Naxos* (Hob. XXVlb:2) begins with the heroine slowly awakening from sleep, to the sad discovery that Theseus has left her. Ariadne goes to look for him only to see his ship slowly receding in the distance. Her reaction veers from disbelief into madness, as she struggles to find rest for her "trembling soul." Haydn left two versions of this singular work, one for voice and harpsichord or fortepiano and a later arrangement for voice and strings. Tonight we present the latter version of the work, in which the operatic ambitions of this dramatic cantata are a bit more palpable.

© MATTHEW DIRST *Artistic Director*

*Special thanks to the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, for the use of its Florentine-style harpsichord (John Phillips, 2006), and to St Philip Presbyterian Church for providing rehearsal facilities for this program.*

## ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

Jamie Barton	<i>mezzo-soprano</i>	James Dunham & Erika Lawson	<i>viola</i>
Adam LaMotte	<i>violin soloist &amp; concertmaster</i>	Barrett Sills & Erika Johnson	<i>violoncello</i>
Oleg Sulyga, Maria Lin, & Alana Youssefian	<i>violin I</i>	Deborah Dunham	<i>violone</i>
Alan Austin, Hae-a Lee, & Andrés González	<i>violin II</i>	Richard Savino	<i>theorbo</i>
		Matthew Dirst	<i>harpsichord &amp; conductor</i>

## ARS LYRICA STAFF

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## INSTRUMENT SPOTLIGHT

The theorbo is essentially a long-necked lute, of which there were many varieties during its heyday from the late 16th through the early 18th centuries. The standard lute, though widely popular during the Renaissance, proved insufficient for early opera especially. To accompany long stretches of recitative and the new concerted music of the 17th century, low bass notes were essential. These notes were easily achieved by extending the neck of a standard lute. The lowest strings on a theorbo are tuned to individual notes, like those of a keyboard instrument. The theorbo's fretted finger board serves the upper strings, on which the player realizes strummed chords or broken (arpeggiated) figuration. Versatile and highly portable, the instrument remained popular through the 18th century, and was a standard member of the continuo team for Baroque opera, oratorio, and cantata.



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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Winner of the 2015 Richard Tucker Award, both the Main and the Song Prizes at the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and a recent Grammy nominee, American mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton has been described by *The Guardian* as “a great artist, no question, with an imperturbable steadiness of tone, and a nobility of utterance that invites comparison not so much with her contemporaries

as with mid-20th century greats such as Kirsten Flagstad.” Her 2015/16 season opens with a house debut at Seattle Opera as Fenena in *Nabucco*, a role that will also serve as her Royal Opera House Covent Garden debut. This fall, she returns to the Metropolitan Opera in New York, bringing her celebrated Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena* to the Met stage. Other major house debuts include LA Opera as Adalgisa in *Norma* and Washington National Opera as Waltraute and 2nd Norn in *Götterdämmerung*. She will make role debuts as Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* at Oper Frankfurt and as Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* at Glimmerglass Opera. Ms. Barton just made her BBC Proms debut with Marin Alsop and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at Royal Albert Hall, before appearing as the 2015 Richard Tucker Award Winner at the Richard Tucker Music Foundation Gala at Lincoln Center. Current season concert engagements include a debut with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra and returns to the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Ars Lyrica Houston. In recital Ms. Barton will appear with San Francisco Performances, Ann Arbor’s University Musical Society, Vocal Arts DC, Baylor Distinguished Artist Series, Seattle Opera’s Wagner and More, and the Tucson Desert Song Festival. Future projects include a debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, as well as returns to Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Metropolitan Opera.



**Adam LaMotte** is becoming well known to audiences throughout the country as a leader of both period and modern ensembles. He has appeared as soloist, concertmaster, and conductor of numerous orchestras, including the Northwest Sinfonietta in Seattle, String Orchestra of the Rockies, Astoria Festival Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and the Maggini String Orchestra in Houston. As violinist and violist, LaMotte has been hailed by critics as “especially compelling”

... a “superb violinist” whose performances are “energetic and exquisite.” As Artistic Director of the Montana Baroque Festival, he brings first-class period instrument performances to the rural Montana community. He has co-founded two critically acclaimed ensembles, in Portland and in Houston, and continues to produce many chamber music and chamber orchestra performances.



Ars Lyrica Founder & Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst** is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition (1990) and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993). Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, the *Dallas Morning News* recently praised his “clear and evocative conducting” of Handel’s *Alexander’s Feast*, which

“yielded a performance as irresistibly lively as it was stylish.” Dirst’s recordings with Ars Lyrica have earned a Grammy nomination and widespread critical acclaim. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. His book *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2012. He is also the editor of *Bach and the Organ*, which appears in the Bach Perspectives series from the University of Illinois Press in early 2016.

## ABOUT ARS LYRICA

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Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, Ars Lyrica Houston presents a diverse array of music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, “sets the agenda” for early music in Houston and it also appears regularly at major festivals and conferences, including the 2014 Berkeley Early Music Festival & Exhibition. Ars Lyrica’s distinctive programming favors Baroque dramatic and chamber works, and its pioneering efforts have won international acclaim: the ensemble’s world première recording of Johann Adolf Hasse’s *Marc’Antonio e Cleopatra*, hailed by Early Music America as “a thrilling performance that glows in its quieter moments and sparkles with vitality,” was nominated for a Grammy Award® for Best Opera 2011. Both the Hasse recording and Ars Lyrica’s recording of Domenico Scarlatti’s comic intermezzo *La Dirindina* feature 2013 Cardiff Singer of the World Jamie Barton, who returns for a program with the ensemble during the 2015/16 season.

## TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

### from Handel's *Serse* (libretto adapted from Silvio Stampiglia's *Serse*)

Frondi tenere e belle  
del mio platano amato  
per voi risplenda il fato.  
Tuoni, lampi, e procelle  
non v'oltraggino mai la cara pace,  
né giunga a profanarvi austro  
rapace.

Tender and beautiful fronds  
of my beloved plane tree,  
let Fate smile upon you.  
May thunder, lightning, and storms  
never disturb your sweet peace,  
nor may you be profaned by  
blowing winds.

*Ombra mai fu  
di vegetabile,  
cara ed amabile,  
soave più.*

*Never was the shade  
of any plant  
dearer and more lovely,  
or more sweet.*

### from Handel's *Semele* (libretto by William Congreve)

Awake, Saturnia, from thy lethargy!  
Seize, destroy the cursed Semele!  
Scale proud Cithaeron's top,  
snatch her, tear her in thy fury,  
and down to the flood of Acheron  
let her fall, rolling down the depths of night,  
never more to behold the light.  
If I th'imperial scepter sway, I swear by hell!  
(Tremble, thou universe, this oath to hear!)  
Not one of curs'd Agenor's race to spare.

*Hence, Iris, hence away,  
far from the realms of day!  
O'er Scythian hills to the Maeotian lake  
a speedy flight we'll take!  
There Somnus I'll compel  
his downy bed to leave, and silent cell;  
with noise and light I will his peace molest,  
nor shall he sink again to pleasing rest,  
till to my vow'd revenge he grants supplies,  
and seals with sleep the wakeful dragons' eyes.*

### from Gluck's *Orfeo* (libretto by Ranieri de'Calzabigi)

Ahimè! Dove trascorsi,  
ove mi spinse un delirio d'amor?  
Sposa! Euridice! Consorte!  
Ah più non vive, la chiamo in van!

Alas! Where have I wandered?  
Where has love's frenzy driven me?  
My beloved Eurydice!  
Ah! She lives no longer, I call her  
in vain.  
Woe is me! I have lost her forever!

Misero me! La perdo, e la perdo  
per sempre!  
O legge, o morte! O ricordo crudel!  
Non hò soccorso, non m'avanza  
consiglio!

Cruel decree! Oh bitter reminder!  
I have no comfort, for all my  
courage fails me.  
Only now do I see—ah, fatal sight!—  
the mournful nature of my  
horrid state.  
Cruel Fate, be satisfied; I despair!

Io veggo solo—Ah fiera vista!—  
il luttuoso aspetto dell'orrido  
mio stato!  
Saziati, sorte rea! Son disperato!

*Che farò senza Euridice?  
Dove andrò senza il mio ben?  
Euridice! Oh Dio! Rispondi!  
lo son pure il tuo fedel!  
Euridice! Ah non m'avanza  
più soccorso, più speranza,  
nè dal mondo, nè dal ciel!*

*What shall I do without Euridice?  
Where shall I go without my beloved?  
Euridice! Oh God! Answer me!  
I am ever faithful to you!  
Euridice! Ah, no help comes,  
no help, no hope  
neither on earth nor in heaven!*

### from Vivaldi's *Griselda* (libretto by Apostolo Zeno, adapted by Carlo Goldoni)

Infelice Griselda!  
Che più temer poss'io?  
Ah, che non veggio la ragion  
di sperar.  
Tutte a'miei danni congiurano  
le stelle.  
Abbandonata, tradita, vilipesa;  
ho perduto la pace e'l mio riposo.  
Ahi, destino crudel!  
Ahi, figlio! Ahi, sposo.

Unhappy Griselda!  
What more can I fear?  
Ah, I have lost all hope.  
The stars connive against me.  
Abandoned, betrayed, and scorned!  
I have lost my peace and tranquility.  
Alas, cruel destiny!  
Ah, my son! Ah, my husband!

*Ho il cor già lacero da mille affanni,  
gl'empi congiurano tutti a'miei danni,*  
*My heart is wracked by a thousand  
torments,  
the wicked conspire against me.*

*vorrei nascondermi, fuggir vorrei,  
del cielo i fulmini mi fan tremar.  
Divengo stupida nel colpo atroce,*

*I want to hide, I want to flee;  
heaven's thunderbolts make me shudder.  
I am dumbfounded by this dreadful  
blow:  
I have no more tears, no voice left,  
I can neither weep nor speak.*

**from Handel's *Hercules* (libretto by Thomas Broughton)**

Where shall I fly? Where hide this guilty head?  
O fatal error of misguided love!  
O cruel Nessus, how art thou reveng'd!  
Wretched I am! By me Alcides dies!  
These impious hands have sent my injur'd lord  
untimely to the shades! Let me be mad!  
Chain me, ye Furies, to your iron beds,  
and lash my guilty ghost with whips of scorpions!  
See, see, they come! Alecto with her snakes,  
Megaera fell, and black Tisiphone!  
See the dreadful sisters rise,  
their baneful presence taints the skies!  
See the snaky whips they bear!  
What yellings rend my tortur'd ear!  
Hide me from their hated sight,  
friendly shades of blackest night!  
Alas, no rest the guilty find  
from the pursuing furies of the mind!

***Arianna a Naxos*—Haydn**

Teseo mio ben, dove sei? Dove sei tu?	Theseus, my beloved, where are you?
Vicino d'averti mi pareo, ma un lusinghiero sogno fallace m'ingannò.	I thought I had you beside me, but a sweet and false dream fooled me.
Già sorge in ciel la rosea Aurora, e l'erbe e i fior colora Febo	Rose-colored Dawn rises in the sky, Phœbus colors the grasses and the flowers
uscendo dal mar col crine aurato.	as he rises from the sea with his golden tresses.
Sposo, sposo adorato, dove guidasti il piè?	Dear beloved husband, where have you gone?

Forse le fere ad inseguir  
ti chiama il tuo nobile ardor.  
Ah vieni, ah vieni, o caro,  
ed offrirò più grata preda ai  
tuoi lacci.  
Il cor d'Arianna amante, che  
t'adora costante,  
stringi, stringi con nodo più tenace,  
e più bella la face splenda del  
nostro amor.  
Soffrir non posso d'esser da te  
divisa un sol istante.  
Ah di vederti, o caro, già mi  
strugge il desio,  
ti sospira il mio cor, vieni, vieni  
idol mio.

*Dove sei, mio bel tesoro,  
chi t'invola a questo cor?  
Se non vieni, io già mi moro,  
né resisto al mio dolor.  
Se pietade avete, oh Dei,  
secondate i voti miei,  
a me torni il caro ben.  
Dove sei? Teseo!*

Ma, a chi parlo? Gli accenti Eco  
ripete sol.  
Teseo non m'ode, Teseo non mi  
risponde,  
e portano le voci e l'aure e l'onde.  
Poco da me lontano esser egli dovria.  
Salgasi quello che più d'ogni altro  
s'alza alpestre scoglio; ivi lo  
scoprirò.  
Che miro? Oh stelle, misera me,  
quest'è l'argivo legno!  
Greci son quelli!  
Teseo! Ei sulla prora!

Perhaps your noble spirit has led you  
to give chase to wild game.  
Come, oh come, my love,  
and in me you will find for your  
traps more grateful prey.  
Hold Ariadne's loving and  
constantly adoring heart,  
with the tightest knot,  
and let the torch of our love shine  
ever brighter.  
I cannot suffer to be away from  
you for even a minute.  
The desire to see you again has  
overcome me,  
my heart is sighing for you, come  
my beloved.

*Where are you my beautiful treasure?  
Who stole you from this heart?  
If you do not come, I shall kill myself,  
I cannot bear such suffering.  
If you have mercy, oh Gods,  
answer my prayers  
and return my dear beloved to me.  
Where are you? Theseus!*

Who am I talking to? Echo alone  
repeats my words.  
Theseus neither hears me nor  
responds,  
and the breezes and the waves  
carry my words away.  
He cannot be far from me.  
I'll climb the highest of all those  
mountainous rocks, and I'll find  
him there.  
What do I see? Oh heavens!  
What misery!  
That is the ship of Argos!  
Those are Greeks!  
Theseus! He's at the prow!

Ah m'ingannassi almen ...  
no, no, non m'inganno.  
Ei fuggè, ei qui mi lascia in  
abbandono.  
Più speranza non v'è, tradita  
io sono.

Teseo, Teseo, m'ascolta, Teseo!  
Ma oimè! vaneggio!  
I flutti e il vento lo involano per  
sempre agli occhi miei.  
Ah siete ingiusti, o Dei,  
se l'empio non punite! Ingrato!

Perchè ti trassi dalla morte  
dunque tu dovevi tradirmi!  
E le promesse, e i giuramenti tuoi?  
Spergiuro, infido! hai cor di  
lasciarmi.  
A chi mi volgo, da chi pietà sperar?

Già più non reggo,  
il piè vacilla, e in così amaro  
istante  
sento mancarmi in sen l'alma  
tremante.

*A che morir vorrei  
in sì fatal momento,  
ma al mio crudel tormento  
mi serba ingiusto il ciel.*

*Misera abbandonata  
non ho chi mi consola.  
Chi tanto amai s'invola  
barbaro ed infedel.*

—poet unknown

Oh, if only I were wrong ...  
no, no, I am not fooling myself.  
He flees, and he abandons me here.

There is no more hope; I am  
betrayed.

Theseus, Theseus, listen to me!  
But my goodness, I am raving.  
The waves and the wind steal him  
forever from my eyes.  
Ah you are unjust, oh Gods,  
if you do not punish this wicked one!  
This ingrate!

Why did I save you from death if  
you were only to betray me?  
Your promises and your vows?  
Liar, faithless man, you have the  
heart to leave me.  
To whom do I turn, from whom  
seek compassion?

I am becoming lightheaded,  
my step is unsteady, and in such a  
bitter moment  
I feel my trembling soul give out  
in my breast.

*Oh if I could only die  
in such an awful moment,  
but heaven has laid out for me  
a cruel torment.*

*Miserable and abandoned,  
I've nobody to console me.  
The one I loved so much has fled  
barbarously and faithlessly.*

—trans. Edward M. Anderson

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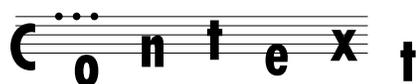


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