Dear Friends of PS21,

We hope that you are safe and healthy during this difficult period. We stand in solidarity with you, our community in Columbia County and around the world, as we struggle to understand and adapt to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural life of our region. As we navigate these uncertain times together, we draw sustenance from the knowledge that you, too, look forward to the moment when we are able to reopen the doors of our theaters.
Like performance venues across the country, we have had to cancel our *spring season* through June 20, and our earlier hopes of reopening this summer appear increasingly unlikely.

Flux and uncertainty are hallmarks of our present moment, yet we at PS21 are working to find ways to offer you performances by artists of the highest caliber and continue fulfilling our commitment to the community of Columbia County. We are exploring innovative performance formats and ways to continue programs for our most vulnerable, like the theater program we run for elders in residential care who are now isolated from friends and family.

Through all this we are thinking a great deal about the interwoven needs of our artists and audience for connection and expression: across the globe, people continue to find affirmation through art and artists, but performers increasingly find themselves bereft of
opportunities to reach audiences and support themselves.

As governments struggle to respond to this unprecedented global crisis, we turn for inspiration to writers and thinkers like Arundhati Roy, author of the Booker Prize-winning novel *The God of Small Things*. In "The Pandemic is a Portal" ([www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), April 3, 2020), she writes:

"Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our databanks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."

Among other questions, given the structural forces that marginalize most artists in the gig economy, we ask how we can find ways to help fill the basic needs of artists whose livelihoods have been "canceled." Should we, for example, commission artists in need to create work that reflects the ways in which the pandemic has altered our lives?

To help fill the void, we recommend two performances from past and future PS21 programs, featuring Adam Tendler and Ensemble Connect. Tendler, the New York-based pianist described by Brian Seibert in the *New York Times* as "joyfully rocking out at his keyboard," plays John Cage's "Dream." Adam was scheduled to appear with Hilary Clark on April 25 as part of our [Dancemakers/Piano Pioneers program](http://www.ft.com).
Jennifer Liu, of Ensemble Connect, plays, talks, and maybe even sings about why she loves John Cage's "8 Whiskus." Last December, Ensemble Connect appeared at PS21, performing a program of Francis Poulenc's "Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano" (1926) and Oliver Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time," which he composed while a prisoner of war in 1940. The piece was first performed on January 15, 1941, at Stalag VIII-A, in Görlitz, Germany, by the composer and three of his fellow prisoners. Alex Ross, in the New Yorker, called the "Quartet" "the most ethereally beautiful music of the twentieth century."
#WeekendSnapshot with Jennifer Liu

There is surely no better time to contemplate adversity and rebirth than Easter.

The Salzburg Easter Festival offers a free video-streaming program of its opera productions from 2013 to 2017. You can access it [here](#).

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**PS21 Grounds Are Open: Come for a Walk in Nature!**
While our theater remains shuttered, PS21’s 100 acres of undeveloped apple orchards and meadows offer a place if respite and recreation. Take a walk along the gravel drive leading to our grounds and explore the many pathways through our fields. There is ample room for all. We advise only that you maintain a safe social distance when you visit and keep an eye out for ticks in a landscape that also provides habitat for wildlife. Parking is available at the top of the PS21 driveway.

Many of you have asked how you can help PS21 as we confront financial losses due to COVID-19. Whatever your means, every contribution is gratefully received and put to prompt use toward the costs of our future performances.

Your gift will help sustain PS21 and our artists during this challenging time so that we can continue to bring art and inspiration to our community when we are together again. Thank you for your support!
PS21's presenting programs are made possible in part by

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The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.
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