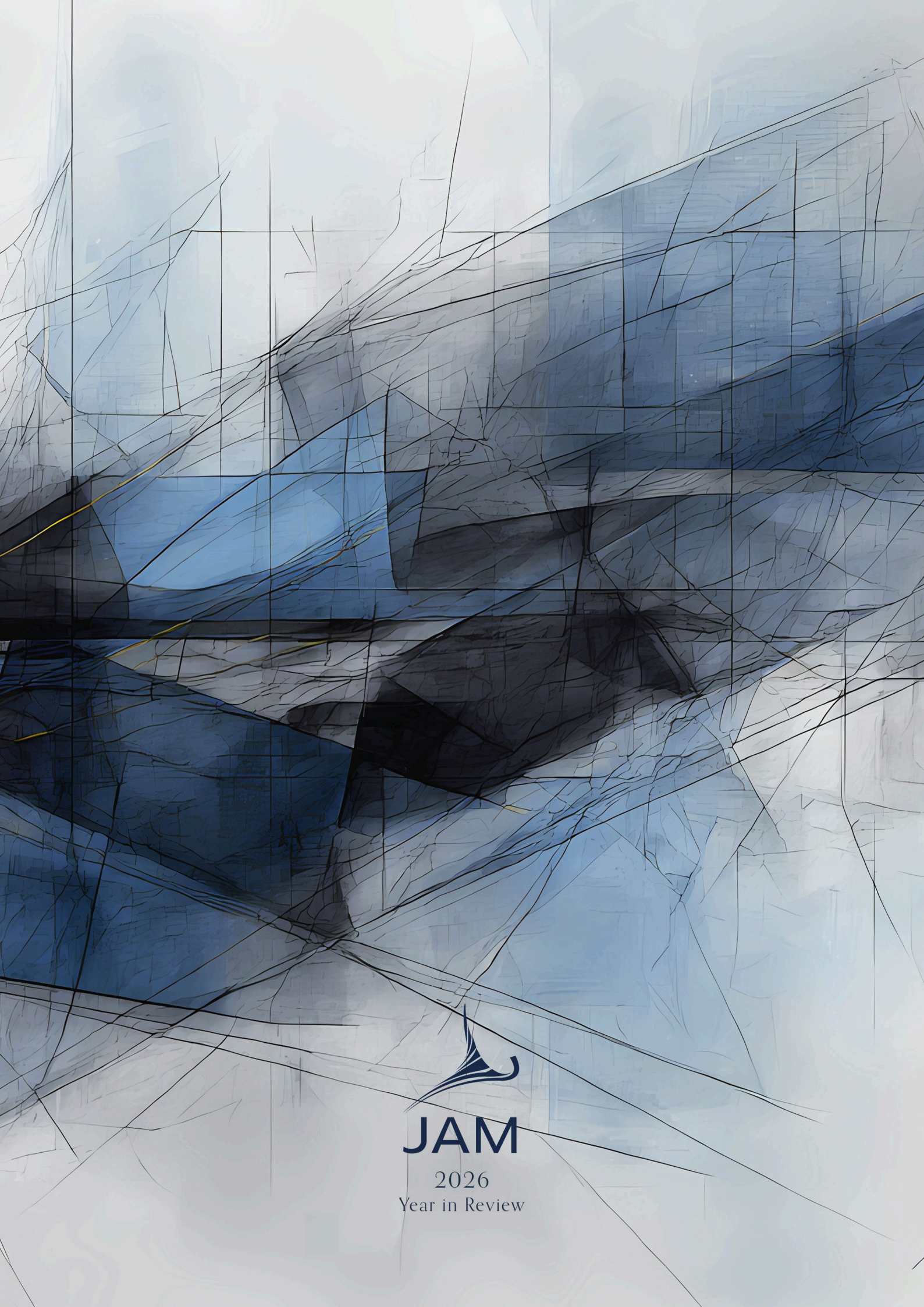


JAM

2026

Year in Review

A YEAR TO CELEBRATE



John Frederick Hudson, PhD
Artistic Director

2026 was a year of impact for JAM. Every month from March to December brought a concert, a residency, a workshop or a new piece of music heard for the first time. Our work reached across England, Wales and Scotland. We ran two composer residencies and sixteen free community art workshops, alongside weekly singing for over-50s. The festival had more sold-out events than ever before, with waiting lists for the first time. JAM's largest commission to date, the opera *The Lost Boy*, went on tour and was performed in the Brunel Museum's Tunnel Shaft in London. For the first time, our residency composers heard their new works performed in the capital, at the VOCES8 Centre: the culmination of more than nine months of mentorship.

What matters more than the count is who it reached. On Romney Marsh, people who once met JAM for a few days each July now make art and sing with us all year. Festival audiences filled our churches, and online our festival films were watched more than 175,000 times. JAM has grown beyond its concert dates into engagement that lasts the whole year.

JAM was founded to support and nurture the composers of our time. This year, we presented twenty premieres, seventeen of them heard for the first time anywhere. Our Associate Artists Thomas Kelly and Ryan Corbett worked side by side with six emerging composers. And this Christmas our new carol, *Christmas hath a beauty* by Sarah MacDonald, will be sung in Britain and Canada.

None of this impact happens without you. Every premiere, every workshop and every voice in these pages is there because of your support. On behalf of the Trustees and the entire JAM team, **thank you**!

6 New works from our Composer Residencies	20 Premieres of New Music	3 Nations: England, Scotland and Wales
16 Free Community Art Workshops	40+ Weekly Community Singing Sessions	175,000 Views of JAM Virtual online







MARCH · LONDON

MUSIC OF OUR TIME

JAM's season opening concert since 2001

Music of Our Time opened JAM's 2026 season at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, on Thursday 26 March, highlighting music by eight living composers. Four of the works were world premieres. **Sarah MacDonald** conducted the **Chapel Choir of Selwyn College**, Cambridge, with **Onyx Brass**, tenor **Sam Madden**, organist **Simon Hogan** and percussionist **Owen Gunnell**.

The programme traced a living thread through JAM's history:
· New to JAM through the *Call for Music*: **Aditya Sharma**, **Brian Inglis** and **Stef Conner**
· Returning with world premieres: **Janet Wheeler** and **Edmund Jolliffe**
· From *Call for Music* to JAM commission: **Steve Richer** and **Paul Mealor**

The evening closed on Romney Marsh, with **Jack Oades**'s *Between the Stormclouds and the Sea*, a JAM commission to words by **Grahame Davies CVO**, five years after its premiere.

This concert showcases what JAM has done for more than two decades: supporting UK's composers far beyond their first performance.

Top: Featured composers at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street

Middle Left: The Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge

Middle Right: JAM's President, Paul Mealor LVO, presenting Edward Armitage BEM with the prestigious President's Award

APRIL & MAY · LITTLESTONE, KENT

COMPOSER DEVELOPMENT

Supporting composers is why JAM exists. In 2026, we ran two residencies at Littlestone on the Kent coast, each pairing three emerging composers with one of JAM's Associate Artists to write for a single instrument.

10 TO 12 APRIL

Sound Under the Hand

PIANO with THOMAS KELLY

Will Frampton, **Margarida Gonçalves** and **Elif Nur Karlıdağ** spent a weekend with pianist **Thomas Kelly,** tutored by Artistic Director **John Frederick Hudson**. Online tutorials followed in May, and the new pieces were workshopped with Thomas at the 1901 Arts Club in London in August. The world premieres were given on 6 November at the VOCES8 Centre in London.

18 TO 24 MAY

Into the Bellows

ACCORDION with RYAN CORBETT

Zhenyan Li, **Noah Max** and **George W. Parris** worked for a full week with accordionist **Ryan Corbett**, led by **Paul Mealor LVO** with **John Frederick Hudson**. Ryan premiered their pieces at JAM on the Marsh on 11 July, following a public composition masterclass the day before. The pieces received their second performance on 6 November at the VOCES8 Centre in London.



Residency Composers Margarida Gonçalves and Will Frampton with Artistic Director John Frederick Hudson

THE 2026 RESIDENCY COMPOSERS

SİX COMPOSERS SİX NEW WORKS



Elif Nur Karlıdağ
April 18 in Five Studies



Will Frampton
In Tension



Margarida Gonçalves
Littlestone



George W. Parris
Cockle



Zhenyan Li
The Tides, The Bones



Noah Max
Blindness, Op. 68

6 NOVEMBER · LONDON

Composer Residency Concert

On 6 November both residencies came together in a single London concert at the VOCES8 Centre. **Thomas Kelly** gave the world premieres of the three piano pieces, and **Ryan Corbett** gave the London premieres of the three accordion pieces. The evening was filmed, so these new works will continue to be heard long after the night itself. All six composers were there to hear their music performed, a fitting culmination of months of writing, mentoring and rehearsal.

Quotes from the Residencies

"With the residency, it felt more like we were building a community of music-making between composers, performer and mentors."

"A really warm, creative space where you're encouraged to grow, experiment and connect with others through music."

"The walks on the beach inspired my piece's title and structure, the quiet environment meant all of us composers were afforded the peace and space of mind to realise our compositions. Opportunities like these are so rare but so so valuable."

8 TO 12 JULY · ROMNEY MARSH

JAM ON THE MARSH



Edward Armitage BEM
FESTIVAL CURATOR

JAM on the Marsh 2026 was a terrific success, with more sell-out events than ever before. The programme was packed with stars and our wonderful audience responded magnificently, enabling Changeling Theatre, The Roaring 20s, Fenella Humphreys and Black Dyke Band all to sell out, with waiting lists for tickets – a first for the festival.

Festival regulars, **Changeling Theatre**, opened the festival with a turbocharged production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, celebrating the company's 25th anniversary. It was a brilliant performance, with audiences laughing out loud beneath the copper beech in the Old School Garden.

The following evening saw our first concert: a high-octane piano recital for four hands by **Thomas Kelly** and **John Frederick Hudson**. In true JAM fashion, the programme included two world premieres by John Frederick, one of which was his arrangement of Mussorgsky's ever-popular *Pictures at an Exhibition*, alongside works by Debussy and Beethoven. It was a stunning concert.

JAM's year-round community work was represented by two exhibitions at the Marsh Academy Leisure Centre, which ran throughout July, and an inspiring concert by the **Sunflower Singers**, led by **Rebecca Lodge Birkebæk**, in which our weekly singing group took great pride of place.



Changeling Theatre



Black Dyke Band

"Not only an outstanding festival but also a powerful force for opportunity, inspiration and social mobility on Romney Marsh."

On the third day, the **JAM Sinfonia** presented the world premieres of two arrangements of much-loved orchestral masterpieces: Ravel's effervescent *Piano Concerto in G*, featuring **Cyrill Ibrahim** and arranged by **Julien Durand**, and Debussy's ground-breaking *La Mer*, arranged by **Timothy Jackson**.

The weekend continued with festival debuts from accordionist **Ryan Corbett**, **Alexander Armstrong, Madeleine Shaw** and **Andrew Matthews-Owen**, before Sunday brought two more highlights: an intimate solo violin recital by the entrancing **Fenella Humphreys**, followed by the festival finale from **Black Dyke Band**.

These final two concerts demonstrated the extraordinary breadth of JAM on the Marsh. Fenella's recital was delicate, intimate and utterly beautiful; Black Dyke Band, by contrast, was an entirely different experience – rather like standing directly behind Concorde as it takes off!

I can scarcely believe that St Nicholas Church has ever been engulfed by such an enormous and brilliant sound. It was an exhilarating climax and a magnificent way to bring the festival to a close.



Fenella Humphreys



Alexander Armstrong



Julien Durand, composer

THE LOST BOY

Music by Jago Thornton & Libretto by Anastasia Bruce-Jones



Brunel Museum Tunnel Shaft

In September, JAM premiered its largest commission to date. *The Lost Boy* is a gripping 90-minute opera that charts identity and belonging through the story of two boys in a 1980s fishing village, in a score where folk song, synthesisers and contemporary classical writing are woven together.

This commission began in 2023. **Jago Thornton** was one of four composers on JAM's first Composer Residency, writing for the **Sacconi Quartet** on Romney Marsh. His string quartet led to a commission for the **London Mozart Players**, *Murmurations*, premiered at the 2024 festival. The same year he returned for our opera residency at Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage, mentored by Paul Mealor LVO, Jonathan Dove CBE, Shirley Thompson OBE, Grahame Davies CVO and Nicholas Cleobury. *The Lost Boy* grew out of that residency.

Jago's journey from a string quartet to an opera is a strong example of how JAM is supporting the next generation of UK composers. Dedicated time to compose in a place like Romney Marsh, collaboration with outstanding musicians, guidance from leading composers and a guaranteed performance are rare in the UK. Every composer who comes through inspires the next.

Directed by librettist **Anastasia Bruce-Jones**, with the composer as musical director and designs by **Ian Kerr**, the production featured countertenor **Collin Shay**, baritone **Jonathan Eyers** and soprano **Patricia Auchterlonie**, with cellist **Wallis Power** and harpist **Olivia Jageurs**. It opened in North Wales, travelled to London and Kent, and has been filmed so the work can reach audiences well beyond those three nights.

11 September

World Premiere

St Asaph Parish Church, North Wales

18 September

London

Brunel Museum Tunnel Shaft

19 September

Kent

St George, Ivychurch, Romney Marsh

A co-commission with North Wales International Music Festival.
Supported by Arts Council England, the Vaughan Williams Foundation and the Hinrichsen Foundation.

MUSIC PREMIERED IN 2026

New commissions and first performances presented by JAM. World premieres unless marked.

MUSIC OF OUR TIME · CALL FOR MUSIC

Janet Wheeler *Salva Nos (Fanfare in Extremis)*

Brian Inglis *Flight*

Edmund Jolliffe *Four Birds and a Fly*

Stef Conner *Flight*

Aditya Sharma *"Hope" is the thing with feathers*
(London premiere)

Steve Richer *Aurora*
(JAM commission, London premiere)

COMPOSER RESIDENCIES

Will Frampton *In Tension*

Margarida Gonçalves *Littlestone*

Elif Nur Karlıdağ *April 18 in Five Studies*

Zhenyan Li *The Tides, The Bones*

Noah Max *Blindness, Op. 68*

George W. Parris *Cockle*

OPERA COMMISSION

Jago Thornton and Anastasia Bruce-Jones
The Lost Boy

JAM ON THE MARSH

John Frederick Hudson *Outside the Lines*

Mussorgsky, arr. by John Frederick Hudson
Pictures at an Exhibition

Ravel, arr. by Julien Durand *Piano Concerto in G*

Debussy, arr. by Timothy Jackson *La Mer*

JAM IN SCOTLAND

Fraser Macdonald *On Passing the New Menin Gate*

Jack Oades *Between the Stormclouds and the Sea*
(JAM commission, Scottish premiere)

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Sarah MacDonald *Christmas hath a beauty*

23 OCTOBER · EDINBURGH

JAM in Scotland

JAM returned to Scotland with a concert for choir, organ and brass quintet at St Giles' Cathedral. The Edinburgh University Chamber Choir was conducted by **Jack Oades**, Master of the Music at St Giles', whose JAM commission *Between the Stormclouds and the Sea* had its Scottish premiere beside a new work by Fraser Macdonald and music by Parry, Paul Mealor and Rory Boyle.

DECEMBER · UK AND CANADA

JAM Carol Commission

This year's carol, *Christmas hath a beauty* by a long-time JAM friend, Sarah MacDonald, will be sung this Christmas at:

12 Dec St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh
15 Dec Lord's Taverners carol concert, The Holst Singers, Holy Trinity Sloane Square
18 Dec Southwark Cathedral
20 and 24 Dec St Bride's Church, Fleet Street
31 Dec Pro Coro Canada

ONLINE

175,000+
views of JAM Virtual 2026

JAM VIRTUAL

The films of JAM Virtual 2026 have been viewed more than 175,000 times across YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. In 2025 the figure was 1,756 on YouTube alone, where views this year rose more than 50-fold. Our free masterclass films remain open to composers everywhere.

Every JAM commission since 2002 at jamconcert.org



ALL YEAR · ROMNEY MARSH

OUR COMMUNITY

Free, local and year-round

Alongside the music, JAM's free community arts projects ran throughout the year, delivered with the Romney Marsh Community Hub. Each free workshop series ran for four sessions, and the lanterns made in October will be carried through the town at Light Up New Romney in December.

MARCH AND APRIL
Lost and Found
Victoria Morris

MAY AND JUNE
Lino Cut
Jillian Bain Christie

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER
All About Drawing
Jo McCormick

OCTOBER
Lantern Making
Frog Morris

Weekly Singing

Led by **Rebecca Lodge Birkebæk**, the **Sunflower Singers** meet every week and gave a free coffee concert at St Dunstan's, Snargate during the festival.



Sixth form futures

Sixth-form students from The Marsh Academy joined the festival team for work experience. Their photography hangs at our Autumn Private View in November.



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JAM is exceedingly grateful to the following individuals and organisations whose generosity enables our work.

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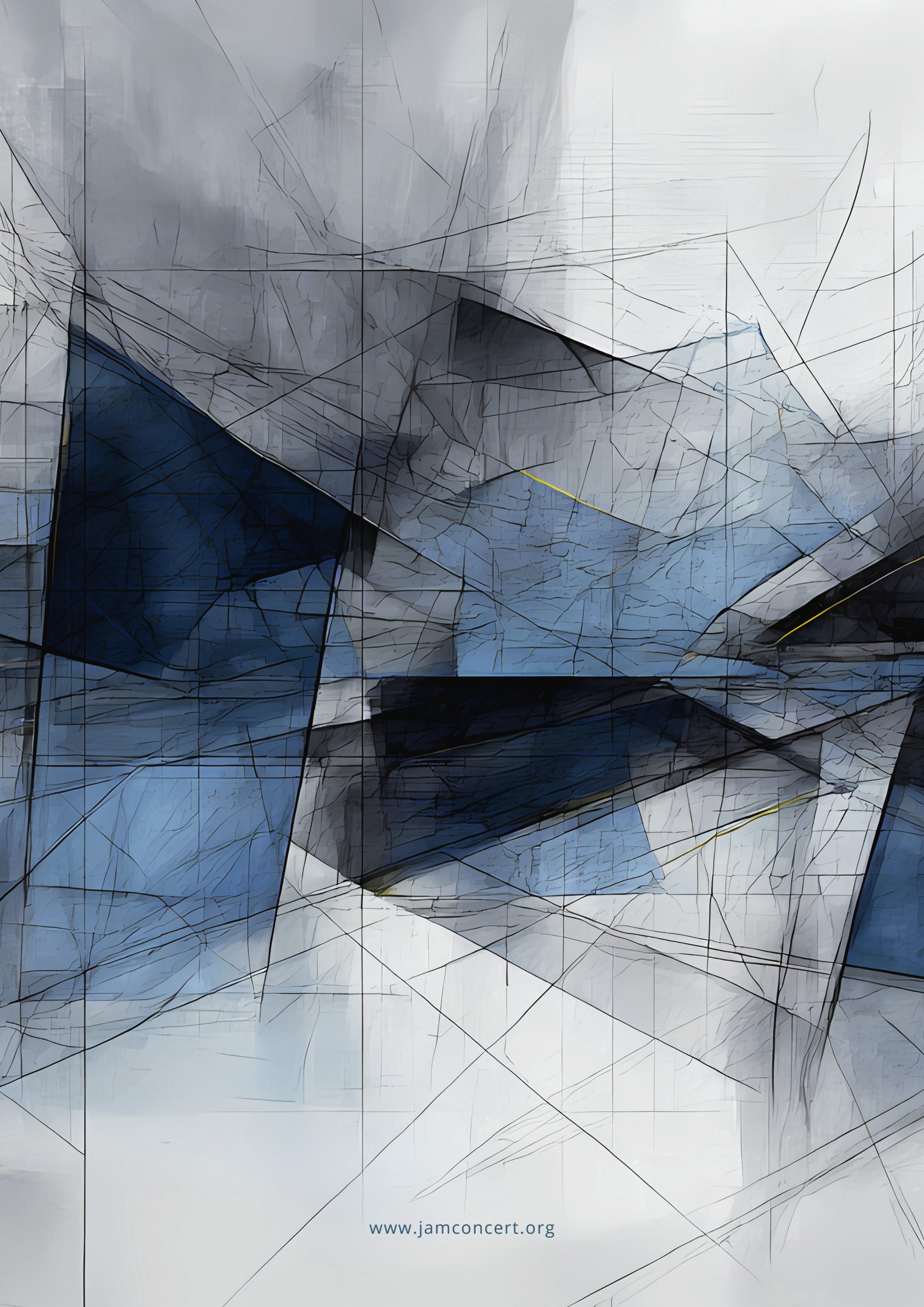
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