

a decade of
**NEW
MUSIC**

10TH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL

HEAR THAT NEW MUSIC
JUNE 3-6 2026

**NEW MUSIC
ON THE
BAYOU**

Welcome!

Welcome to the 10th anniversary of New Music on the Bayou! Each year this festival brings dozens of composers, performers, and audience members together for a series of concerts, presentations, and community gatherings. Our hope is that the interactions among our attendees will continue to reveal a deeper understanding of where contemporary music is headed in the 21st century and the roles we each inhabit to carry it forward.

In addition to the nine concerts found in the program, we invite you to attend short composer presentations taking place Wednesday from 2:20-4:30p in Room 103 of the F. Jay Taylor Visual Arts Center at Louisiana Tech, then again on Thursday from 10a-11:40a and 2:30-4p in Room 3-D of the University Library at ULM. For a behind-the-scenes look at how each piece comes together, stop by any of our open rehearsals occurring mainly in the Band Buildings of both campuses.

Day One starts in Ruston with concerts at Louisiana Tech's F. Jay Taylor Visual Arts Center and Stone Theatre. Day Two involves three concerts in Monroe at the Biedenharn Museum & Gardens, the Biedenharn Recital Hall at ULM, and Flying Tiger Brewery. Day Three is back in Ruston for a morning concert at Louisiana Tech's Biomedical Engineering Building, followed by two evening concerts downtown at Walker & Co. The Loft and the Dixie Center for the Arts. The festival concludes Saturday morning with a concert at the Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge where the 2026 Black Bayou Composition Award Winner will be announced. All events are free and open to the public.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our sponsors and supporters, especially the administration and staff of the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Louisiana Tech University. Deep thanks also to the NMB board members, presentation moderators, selection/adjudication committee members, and student volunteers who have made the festival possible.

As powerful technologies fight to capture our attention and attachment in this frenetic and fraught cultural moment, we hope NMB and other festivals like it can be a place to pause, reequip, and even rethink what music means for you and society. Please enjoy your visit to Ruston and Monroe and thank you so much for your ongoing support of new music.

Greg Lyons and Mel Mobley, directors

Greg Lyons is Associate Professor of Music and Assistant Director of Bands at Louisiana Tech University. He earned degrees from Ohio State (DMA), Central Michigan (MM), and the Wheaton College Conservatory (BME). At Louisiana Tech, he oversees all areas of percussion instruction and serves as the coordinator of instrumental music education. With the Ninkasi Percussion Group, he has presented recent showcase concerts at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy in Memphis, and the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Indianapolis. He co-founded the New Music on the Bayou Festival in 2016 with Mel Mobley. Lyons also instituted the North Louisiana Youth Percussion Ensemble Festival, which has brought widely recognized guest artists and clinicians to Louisiana Tech since 2012. He performs regularly with the Rapides Symphony, the Shreveport Symphony, and the Monroe Symphony. Lyons is a proud endorser of Grover Pro Percussion, Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets, Sabian Cymbals, and Majestic Percussion.

A native of Texas, **Mel Mobley** currently resides in Monroe, Louisiana. As composer, conductor, performer, and advocate of new music, he has been part of numerous premieres and festivals around the country. He is a founder and coordinator of the New Music on the Bayou Festival that connects composers from around the world with the communities of north Louisiana. While frequently performing with the Monroe, Shreveport, South Arkansas, and Rapides Symphonies, Mel is also heavily involved in contemporary chamber music including work with the NMB Percussion Group, and the M2 performance art duo. His current composition work focuses on the blending of speech and instrumental sound and the use of “collage poetry” developed from the mesostic procedures of John Cage. Dr. Mobley teaches at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and at several camps throughout Haiti in the summers. A member of ASCAP, National Association of Composers USA, the Southeastern Composers League, and the Percussive Arts Society, his music can be found on the Ansonica, Navona, and Revello labels. More information can be found at melmobley.com.

Thank You!

Special thanks to our donors! The Festival would not have been possible without their generous support.

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Thank you to the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Louisiana Tech University for their support of New Music on the Bayou.

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Wednesday, June 3, 2026 - 1:00 PM
F. Jay Taylor Visual Arts Center, Bethea Gallery
Louisiana Tech University
1 Mayfield Avenue, Ruston, LA 71272

Breathe..... *Chris Zacharias*
Katrina Clements, clarinet
Gregory Lyons, percussion

La réponse est dans..... *Stefano Gioffré*
Scot Humes, clarinet

Projected Score *Salvatore Siriano*
Megan Ihnen, mezzo-soprano
Alan Theisen, saxophone

A Tree Portrait..... *Xu Zheng*
I. Standing Still, a Tree
II. With Rugged Bark
III. Branches Reaching towards the Stars
IV. The Silence between Leaves
V. Drawing Light from the Eclipse
VI. Thousands of Crescents
VII. As Growth Rings across Time, Year after Year
Paul Christopher, cello

Tidal..... *Paul Oehlers*
Digital Media

Resonant Thresholds *Cecilia Suhr*
Cecilia Suhr, composer

threads *Amy Brandon*
Mia Detwiler, violin
Michael Capone, viola
Kourtney Newton, cello

Breathe seeks to embody a respiratory form, a living cycle of expansion, suspension, and release. Rather than unfolding through linear argumentation or teleological development, the work evolves through gradual shifts in density, register, and timbre, mirroring the continuous negotiation between tension and openness inherent in breathing itself. Acoustic materials are allowed to emerge,

overlap, and recede with a sense of temporal flexibility, while the fixed media articulates more rigid structural shifts in texture. Together, these layers are treated with equal agency, each participating in cycles of inhalation and exhalation that shape the work's temporal and textural flow, resulting in a form functioning as an ongoing physiological process rather than a sequence of discrete events.

La réponse est dans la pelote de laine in French means “the answer is in the ball of wool.” The title evokes the image of a cat finding in a ball of wool a small world to explore. It is not meant as programme music, but rather as an analogy for what the work actually represents: an exploration of the volatility of musical energy and its tendency to dissolve soon after it appears. A cat playing with an object pushes it back and forth, clings to it, tries to give it life, and may spend a long time convinced that it has a living prey in front—even though every movement actually comes from the cat itself, and the toy is animated only from the outside. Sometimes, however, the ball of wool can roll across an unstable surface and, for a moment, seem truly alive. A sudden movement can even frighten the cat and make it recoil: thus, the energy imparted to the object not only animates it, but also reverberates through the environment and back onto the one who set it in motion. Yet that apparent vitality quickly fades, leaving behind only the silence of play. In the end, the cat is a metaphor for an energetic creature transferring life and momentum into inert matter; and the piece, ultimately, is not about the cat, but about its object—or perhaps, with a bit of imagination, about both.

Projected Score is a six-minute, time-based work in which moving image replaces conventional notation. The projected video functions as the score itself, unfolding in real time and inviting live performers to respond to its shifting visual and textual landscape. Rather than prescribing fixed musical outcomes, the work creates a shared temporal environment in which interpretation emerges through attention, memory, and immediacy. The imagery combines newly filmed material with archival Super 8mm home footage, introducing layers of distance and recollection into the projected score. Text fragments surface and recede as open prompts rather than directives to be recited or sung. The projection does not dictate sound; it creates a space for response. Each performance becomes a unique negotiation between image and sound, preparation and spontaneity, structure and intuition.

A Tree Portrait is a set of seven miniatures for solo cello, each inspired by a poetic line that reflects a different aspect of a tree's presence in the natural world. Crafted from wood, the cello's organic resonance acts as a bridge between the instrument itself and the living spirit it portrays. While depicting the tree, the work also carries a subtle wish for the endurance of the wild,

inviting the listener into its quiet beauty and resilience within the vast cosmos we share.

Tidal - Written while on sabbatical at American University, Tidal is an exploration of symmetrical structures and timbral relationships in electroacoustic sounds. The piece mirrors tidal patterns and other repetitive but dynamic patterns.

Resonant Thresholds explores the liminal space between human expression and technologically mediated sound. Structured around a fixed audio score, the work unfolds as a slowly transforming audiovisual environment in which live violin performance interacts with real-time electronic processing. Noise, resonance, and breath-like textures blur distinctions between acoustic intimacy and digital vastness, allowing the materiality of sound to become porous and unstable. Through structured live improvisation, the performer actively shapes the unfolding sonic landscape, while the processed audio simultaneously generates an evolving visual score that functions as a symbolic translation of sound. The work invites listeners to inhabit a threshold between perception and imagination, where meaning emerges through the continuous negotiation between composed structure, live performance, and technological extension.

threads From the most traditional music to the most extreme we almost always include gestures that begin at nothing, gain prominence, and return to nothing – a ‘swell’. The simplest to imagine is a volume swell using hairpins, like this:



This piece explores this particular gesture in many different dimensions, not just in the dynamic profile of traditional melodic lines, but also through swells of microtonal pitch, of white noise, of timbre, of distortion, of pointillistic elements, of density and of nothing.

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 - 7:00 PM
Stone Theatre - Louisiana Tech University
700 W. Adams Blvd.
Ruston, LA 71272

Odaiba Beachside Night..... Guohao Li

Anne Maker, flute Rachel Hsieh, cello
Jose Saavedra, double bass Oliver Molina, percussion
Jung-Won Shin, piano

As a lonely cloud wandering Allen Molineaux

Eric Siereveld, trumpet
Justin Havard, piano

The Center of My Universe..... David John Roche

II. Mender's Dance

Wade Dillingham, alto saxophone Richard Seiler, piano
Gregory Lyons, percussion Mel Mobley, percussion

Echo Flute..... *Philip Acimovic*

Elizabeth McNutt, flute

Gregory Lyons, percussion
Oliver Molina, percussion
Kathryn Irwin, percussion

Kourtney Newton, cello
Wade Dillingham, clarinet
Samantha Parker, violin

Portraits for Brass Quintet Ben Robichaux

L. Mischief

II. Miniature Threnody

III. Cloudburst

IV. Scherzo

Eric Siereveld, trumpet Megan George, trumpet
James Boldin, horn Tyler Coffman, trombone
Richard Perry, tuba

Odaiba Beachside Night – In this piece, I drew inspiration from the hazy, intertwined feelings of tranquility and busyness I experienced on a Tokyo coastline at night. Through a streamlined organization of musical materials, I softened the transitions of fusions of various timbres to convey a monumental sense of power, akin to waves crashing against the shore.

As a lonely cloud wandering - Since the structure of this work is based on the poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud" by William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the listener merely needs to read the poem below to get the point of this composition.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils

The Center of my Universe is a saxophone concerto commissioned by, and written for, saxophonist Wade Dillingham. Composed in memory of his late mother, the concerto as a whole is a reflection on parenthood - especially motherhood - and the ways these relationships shape, deepen, and enrich our lives. This movement explores some of the more tempestuous aspects of the relationships we may have with family members. With its fractured, toybox-style melodies, listeners may reflect on the bittersweet nature of their own memories (noting too that the movement becomes more settled and joyful - it ends restfully and positively). Loving people can be complicated.

Echo Flute is an instruction: echo the flute! That simple directive encapsulates the ensemble's role, realized in various styles, textures, and moods. There is no meter, no beat, and no conductor. Each musician plays in free rhythm, subtly adjusting timing to stay just behind the solo flute. Musicians make decisions regarding register and timbre on their own instruments, as well as timing. The idea of staying loosely tethered to a leader is influenced by the unmeasured textures of pathetan, the preludes and postludes of traditional Javanese gamelan. Echo Flute was originally composed on request for the Empyrean Ensemble in 2022.

Portraits for Brass Quintet is a four-movement journey through four contrasting aesthetics. Each of these utilizes the brilliance and versatility of the standard brass quintet, while periodically emphasizing harsh crunching textures. As with many of my works, I want the perception of the piece to be somewhere between the visually concrete narratives of programmatic music and the purely abstract narratives of absolute music - a compositional approach I like to call "abstractly programmatic". To help accomplish this, each movement is given a title that hints at style and imagery but not explicitly: Mischief, Miniature Threnody, Cloudburst, Scherzo. This allows for listening that is both guided and individualized.

Thursday, June 4, 2026 - 1:00 PM
Biedenharn Museum & Gardens
2000 Riverside Dr.
Monroe, LA 71201

Euthalia *Andrew Trovato*

Scot Humes, clarinet
Diana Thacher, piano

Forget harmony *Norberto Oldrini*

- I. Meditation
- II. Piazzolla

Paul Christopher, cello
Richard Seiler, piano

to Mitch *Justin Friello*

Nancy Carey, soprano

A Nothing That Remembers *Jesse Maker*

Anne Maker, flute
Amanda Hamilton, viola
Jose Saavedra, double bass

Character Pieces *William Toutant*

- I. Quirky
- II. Nostalgic
- III. Bureaucratic

Wade Dillingham, clarinet
Kyle Anderson, cello
Jung-Won Shin, piano

Ego Dormio *Stephen Yip*

Megan Ihnen, mezzo-soprano Lea Baumert-Patterson, flute
Rachel Hsieh, cello Philip Schuessler, reh. conductor

Euthalia - I wrote this piece after dropping out of conservatory and passing through three years of depression during which I was unable to compose. I seldom title my pieces, but I named this one Euthalia, "blooming flower." Its form mirrors a long dormancy: a slow yet dynamic, internal gestation that gradually opens into something living and outward-reaching, a flowering that carries the possibility of future growth — much like the years that preceded it.

Forget harmony – A tempo lento ("Meditation") and a tempo slightly less lento ("Piazzolla"). A composition about harmony? What harmony for these melodies? What rhythm for these harmonies? What sounds for these rhythms? What drama for these sounds? What melodies for this drama?

to Mitch

MITCH: Let's turn the light on here.

BLANCHE: Light? Which light? What for?

MITCH: This one with the paper thing on it.

[He tears the paper lantern off the light bulb. She utters a frightened gasp.]

BLANCHE: What did you do that for?

MITCH: So I can take a look at you good and plain!

BLANCHE: Of course you don't really mean to be insulting!

MITCH: No, just realistic.

BLANCHE: I don't want realism. I want magic!

—Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Scene 9

A Nothing That Remembers – When I was commissioned to write a piece for this unique trio instrumentation of flute, viola, and double bass, I was drawn to the dichotomy of a lone woodwind against the duo of strings. I sought to write a piece that used and intensified this separation of one instrument from the group, but also found ways to bring them together all while maintaining their differences. In the strings, I imagined a blankness, and in the flute a gesture that sought to pierce it. There's an alienation that I hope is felt, at first, in the flute's plaintive gesture against the blankness of the strings. But this disconnect is gently disturbed by the flute's gesture, and, each in their own vocabulary, the flute and the strings reach out for each other.

Character Pieces - According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, a character piece is a "relatively brief musical composition, usually for piano, expressive of a specific mood or nonmusical idea." The titles suggest the mood of each piece. Originally, the first piece was titled "Eccentric," but I changed the title to "Quirky" because I think it better reflects the mood of this version of the piece. "Nostalgic" was composed while I was in university administration and had little time for composition. It is nostalgic in that much of the material consists of quotations from my earlier compositions. For this version, I quoted several newer compositions but kept the overall mood of the piece. My work in university administrative bureaucracy directly influenced "Bureaucratic." It is a musical depiction of the essence of bureaucracy: much motion with little movement.

Ego Dormio (2024) for high voice, flute and cello

This trio piece was based on the excerpts of four verses from the Old Testament: two are from Ecclesiastes and two are from Jobs. It talks about human's sensation and perception such as: hearing, seeing, viewing, feeling, and

dreaming. And there will be a sort of conclusion or answer in the last part from the Ecclesiastes 1:9. Composer attempted to capture of some collection of the natural sound between human voice and two different musical instruments: wind and string. Each sound resource is design to build the relationship to each other. Ego Dormio is presented in Latin. Here are the lyrics in order:

Job 42:4, 5

Audi et ego loquar interrogabo et
ostende mihi
auditu auris audivi te nunc autem
oculus meus videt te

Hear, and I will speak: I will ask thee,
and do thou tell me
With the hearing of the ear, I have
heard thee, but now my eye seeth thee

Job 4:13, 14

In horrore visionis nocturnæ,
Quando solet sopor occupare
homines
pavor tenuit me, et tremor, et
omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt;

In thoughts from the visions of the night
when deep sleep falleth on men
Fear came upon me, and trembling,
which made all my bones to shake

Ecclesiastes 5:6

Ubi multa sunt somnia plurimae
vanitates
et sermones innumeri tu vero
Deum time

Where there are many dreams, there
are many vanities,
and words without number: but do thou
fear God

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Quid est quod fuit? Ipsum quod
futurum es
Quid est quod factum est? ipsum
quod fiendum

What has been? it is what has been
done,
And what has been done? it is what will
be done.

Thursday, June 4, 2026 - 7:00 PM
Emy-Lou Biedenharn Recital Hall
University of Louisiana at Monroe
200 University Avenue, Monroe, LA 71203

Spirare II *Carlos Bandera*

Mel Mobley, percussion
Richard Seiler, piano

Kathryn Irwin, percussion
Diana Thacher, piano

Opus 7a *Ermir Bejo*

Elizabeth McNutt, piccolo

Across the Blackwood Horizon *Steven Landis*

Luke Ellard, clarinet
Oliver Molina, percussion

Amanda Hamilton, viola
Justin Havard, piano

Nong *Edmund Song*

Scot Humes, clarinet
Richard Seiler, piano

Uneven Ground *Michael Mills*

Mia Detwiler, violin
Michael Capone, viola

Kathleen Crabtree, violin
Kourtney Newton, cello

Marcescence *Erik Schmidt*

Luke Ellard, clarinet
Joe Moore, percussion

Martha Muehleisen, viola
Gregory Lyons, percussion
Jung-Won Shin, piano

Fight / Flight *Mara Gibson*

Eric Siereveld, trumpet
James Boldin, horn

Megan George, trumpet
Tyler Coffman, trombone

Richard Perry, tuba

Spirare II for vibraphone, marimba, and two pianos (2023) The *Spirare* series consists of pieces that explore breath through different instrumentations and distinct musical materials. Each *Spirare* in the series shares a similar formal trajectory in which active, turbulent textures are transformed into tranquil musical environments. The title *Spirare* (“to breathe” in Latin) reflects the fundamental goal of each work in the series, which is to musically depict the process of trying, and eventually succeeding, to catch one’s breath during times of turmoil. *Spirare II*, inspired by the imagery of wind blowing through tall grass,

begins with a tranquil texture that resembles the sounding of windchimes during a calm day. This texture gradually accumulates more activity and is transformed into a dense texture of ascending scales. The vibraphone frequently bends pitches by a half-step, allowing the texture to blend seamlessly into new harmonic spaces. At the end of the first *Spirare*, there is a musical depiction of slow, meditative breaths played as clarinet multiphonics. Here in *Spirare II*, a similar kind of musical breathing occurs at the very end, now played through bowed vibraphone dyads. The surrounding accompaniment played by the two pianos and the marimba at the end returns to a calm and sparse landscape, reminiscent of the opening windchimes of the piece, signaling that the gusts of wind have subsided.

Opus 7a explores the virtuosic potential of the piccolo, challenging the performer with demanding passages that test the limits of speed, control, and expression. The musical language focuses on the nuances of linear, fast, and dense melodic writing. This work invites listeners to experience the intense brilliance and refined expressive capabilities of the instrument.

Across the Blackwood Horizon for clarinet, viola, and marimba is inspired by and uses textures, harmonies, and rhythmic devices found in several subgenres of extreme metal. This version was created for and dedicated to Sounding Board in 2024 and revised during the winter and fall of 2025. The title references African Blackwood, which is used in the construction of clarinets.

The title **Nong** (弄) refers to nonghyeon (농현), the Korean ornamental technique of vibrato and pitch inflection that gives traditional music its soulful, singing quality. When writing this piece, I found myself drawn to the expressive vocabulary of East Asian double-reed instruments such as the Korean Piri, Chinese Suona, and Japanese Hichiriki, instruments whose sound-worlds grew out of centuries of attentive listening to the natural environment. The bending of pitch in nonghyeon mirrors the fluid, unpredictable contours of wind through reeds and birdsong across open water, and these gestures informed how I shaped the Clarinet's melodic lines, exploring the space between fixed pitches where so much of nature's music lives. The Piano takes on a different role, treated as a resonating body inspired by the sustained shimmer of large gongs. Its sonorities evoke the slow decay of sound across still landscapes, overtones pooling and dispersing the way ripples travel outward on a bayou's surface. Together, the two instruments create stratified textures not unlike the layers of a wetland ecosystem: the Clarinet inhabits a world of breath and ornament, alive and immediate, while the Piano exists in another of resonance and reverberation, vast and unhurried. These two distinct layers converge and diverge throughout the piece, much as wind and water meet, merge, and separate in the natural world.

Uneven Ground is a love letter to West Virginia, where I was born and raised. The piece draws upon Appalachian folk fiddle traditions refracted through a contemporary lens. The work explores contrasts between rhythmic drive and abstraction, grit and lyricism, creating a sonic world where folk memory and modern expression meet on shared, unsettled terrain.

Marcescence is the persistence of plant organs that are normally shed—a phenomenon where certain deciduous trees retain their withered leaves through the winter months instead of shedding them. These brown, withered leaves cling to their branches, their hold unbroken by wind, rain, ice, or snow. It is not until the arrival of spring, when new growth and green buds emerge, that these leaves are released and allowed to fall. This piece began as a way to amplify the otherwise quiet beauty of this natural occurrence. The sharp angles and jagged shapes dancing in the stark light of winter afternoon became surprisingly intense rhythmic structures. The concurrent delicacy and strength at play inspired moments of crystalline tranquility and beauty. As I worked to transform this imagery into sound, I was reminded of the many hours I spent as a child racing through the woods, especially during this time of year when the landscape is open and clear but for the marcescent leaves adorning the wintery boughs. I would imagine that I was embarking on a daring adventure or an epic quest. And so, that is what Marcescence became: a hero's journey of strength and fragility, of death and the promise of new life, and of finally letting go when the time comes for growth.

Fight||Flight – “Fight-or -flight” is a human response to stress and relates specifically to the release of hormones when the body is in danger. Fight||flight (of the honeybees) is inspired by this metaphor and specifically relates to the process that honeybees go through in making honey. Like brass players, honeybees are sophisticated communicators. After building an intricate hive made up of hexagons, the bees begin their work to make honey. First, a worker bee goes out to gather nectar. The bees do a dance, flapping their wings at a very fast buzz to determine where the nectar is (literally which direction from the sun). Once the worker bee gathers the nectar, she comes back and begins the inversion process. This process occurs several times and they flap their wings to make the serum thicker. Finally, once the honey is made, they cap it off and move on to the next cell. Bees make very little honey in their life span. I wrote the piece during the pandemic and thought a lot about the human stress response to being separated. I titled the piece Fight||Flight because I wanted to bring a human component to the piece and possibly prompt listeners to feel like bees, perhaps like humans during the pandemic.

Thursday, June 4, 2026 - 9:00PM
Flying Tiger Brewery
506 N. Second St.
Monroe, LA 71201

New Music on the Bayou
Presents



NEONAUTICA

DANCE MUSIC FOR ALL Y'ALL



June 4 9:00 PM
Flying Tiger Brewery
506 N 2nd St, Monroe



FREE | BRING YOUR FRIENDS

Friday, June 5, 2026 – 11:00 AM
Daniel D. Reneau Biomedical Engineering Building Rotunda
Louisiana Tech University
Ruston, LA 71272

Hypnotic Spiral *Sami Seif*

Elizabeth McNutt, piccolo
Mel Mobley, percussion

Mire & Earth..... *Kevin Mah*

Anne Maker, flute Katrina Clements, clarinet
Kathleen Crabtree, violin Rachel Hsieh, cello

diwata ng lawa *Josiah Tayag Catalan*

Luke Ellard, clarinet
Michael Capone, viola
Diana Thacher, piano

Buzzards *Ty Blankenship*

Lea Baumert-Patterson, flute Luke Ellard, bass clarinet
Kathleen Crabtree, violin Kourtney Newton, cello
Kathryn Irwin, percussion Justin Havard, piano
Philip Schuessler, conductor

Foxfire *Clem Pearson*

Martha Muehleisen, violin Mia Detwiler, violin
Amanda Hamilton, viola Kyle Anderson, cello

Hypnotic Spiral pulls the listener into a sonic vortex—a space where sounds loop, mutate, and dissolve. The piccolo and percussion come in and out of tension with one another, sometimes fusing, sometimes drifting apart, but always part of the same shifting body. The piece creates a dreamlike state that feels at once continuous and non-continuous, where time stretches, fractures, and reforms. The orientation of the music shifts throughout the piece: sometimes it's beat-oriented, grounded in pulse and repetition; other times it's phrase-oriented, shaped by gesture, breath, or contour. It makes extensive use of carefully notated microtones, drawing from non-Western tuning systems and the influence of Middle Eastern music. At the heart of *Hypnotic Spiral* is *Tarab*, which is the Arabic word for musical ecstasy. Rather than progressing through harmony or narrative form, the piece builds intensity through immersion, subtle transformation, and sinking ever deeper into its microtonal universe.

Mire & Earth – This is a snapshot into my mind at the time of writing. For the first time in a very long time, I had seen fireflies again, and those fireflies had reawakened a love for the natural world I thought I had lost inside a fog of human travesties. This piece is an attempt to recapture some whimsy and optimism, tempered by melancholy.

Diwata ng lawa roughly translates to “spirit of the lake” or “goddess of the lake.” This piece is inspired by the folklore of the T’boli tribe of Lake Cebu and the stories that tribe leaders Myrna Pula and Rosie Sula shared with me during the last couple years I stayed with them. Much of their mythology is centered around Lake Cebu, believing that their ancestors/deities still reside within the lake. The lake is often viewed as a sacred symbol of where their tribe was created as well as a source of strength they hold onto in the face of oppression the T’boli people have experienced from the government and outsiders settling in the region in the last several decades. I was mesmerized by many of the folk traditions they shared with and taught me, especially their vocal traditions that utilize several singing techniques that are unique to the T’boli people. Many of the vocal songs they shared with me are quite simple in their melodic and harmonic constructions, often utilizing only a few notes, and the distinct melismatic and percussive techniques they use in their indigenous singing style capture various and simultaneous emotions such as pain, sorrow, joy, and reverence. Their ability to capture several dimensions of emotions in the stillness of their music was something that I kept in the forefront of my thoughts as I composed this piece and as a result, much of the music is orchestrated in a sparse and delicate manner with fairly exposed vocal-like lines across the trio.

“Buzzards” is an exploration of how vultures move, their flight patterns, and the reasons for both. Vultures ride warm air currents to gain altitude, and in doing so, their path through the air creates a spiral shape. This piece begins with a visceral scene meant to depict a vulture scavenging for carrion, and it is followed by settings portraying the vulture’s ascent in search of more, often structured around their spiraling flight paths. It is meant to be all-at-once macabre, unnerving, unsettling, yet still soaring above it all with a sense of inevitability. Inevitably not only in their gradual ascension, but also in the inevitability of death which sustains them.

“Foxfire” is the common name for certain bioluminescent fungi that grow on rotting wood. This piece evokes the fungus’s subtle, eerie green glow through pulsating lines, timbral effects, and contrast between light and dark. More generally, it represents the stillness of night contrasted against strange bright lights; it is about places that seem to bridge the gap between worlds. While many different kinds of brightness can be found here, none are fully comforting —but some may offer hope.

Friday, June 5, 2026 – 5:00 PM
Walker & Co., The Loft
107 W. Mississippi Ave
Ruston, LA 71270

The Stags on Mutation Plains *Philip Schuessler*

Philip Schuessler, live improvisation

Kari Besharse, electric guitar

rose, aluminum... and steel *Kari Besharse*

- I. Intense, seething with chaotic energy
- II. Like the wind and unseen worlds beneath leaves and stone

Kari Besharse, electric guitar

The Stags on Mutation Plains - Live improvisation duo with electric guitar and computer Player 1 (the “composer) on computer, Player 2 on electric guitar (performers are “supplied” by the composer)

a desert-like rocky plains with high mesas in a hazy atmosphere. Hulking stags linger on the mesas, mutated from some environmental catastrophe. A massive storm is brewing in the distance. The storm finally arrives, and the stags stand in the storm, impervious to the winds, or too stupid to take shelter. The storm finally goes away but leaves sparkling traces of shimmer dust in its wake.

rose, aluminum... and steel for electric guitar is a sister-piece to *rose circles... and aluminum* for harpsichord, alto flute, viola, and cello. Both pieces explore worlds built from a conglomeration of randomly chosen sounds, repetitions, and blocks. Rigidity of loops of rhythms and sounds gives way to (and at times melts or dissolves into...) purely fantastical landscapes of improvised sound created through the impetus of the rose circles and related graphics. Over time the sound world becomes metallic and wholly imaginary.

Friday, June 5, 2026 – 7:00 PM
Dixie Center for the Arts
212 N. Vienna St.
Ruston, LA 71270

FILTH.....Robin Haigh

Anne Maker, flute Katrina Clements, bass clarinet
Eric Siereveld, trumpet Tyler Coffman, trombone Richard Perry, tuba
Martha Muehleisen, violin Mia Detwiler, violin Amanda Hamilton, viola
Rachel Hsieh, cello Jose Saavedra, double bass
Joe Moore, percussion Kathryn Irwin, percussion
Philip Schuessler, conductor

a brief comment on the current state of insanity Amelia Kaplan

Katrina Clements, clarinet
Kyle Anderson, cello

That is To SayAndrew Burke

Martha Muehleisen, violin Kathleen Crabtree, violin
Amanda Hamilton, viola Rachel Hsieh, cello

haven't yet Luke Ellard

Luke Ellard, clarinet Mia Detwiler, violin
Michael Capone, viola Kourtney Newton, cello

Tempo, Terra, Trama...Igor Leao Maia

- I. Primeiro Tempo
- II. Terra-floresta
- III. Tempo dos sonhos
- IV. Arvorés de cantos

Lea Baumert-Patterson, flute Katrina Clements, clarinet Megan George, trumpet
Mia Detwiler, violin Michael Capone, viola Paul Christopher, cello
Gregory Lyons, percussion Diana Thacher, piano
Christopher Heidenreich, conductor

FILTH was commissioned in 2022 by the German ensemble Treppenhauseorchester, to be included in their DISCO project - a high-energy concert series where audiences dance to newly-commissioned EDM-style pieces played live by an amplified chamber orchestra. As part of its extensive tours around Germany and beyond, FILTH has been performed at Beethovenfest Bonn, Istanbul Music Festival, Mozartfest Würzburg, and at a sold-out concert in the Elbphilharmonie's 2100 capacity main hall.

a brief comment on the current state of insanity (Feb. 2017) was composed in February through March of 2017 in response to several incidents, one of which was the 2017 inauguration and initial months of the first administration of Donald Trump. His daily antics that so many of us experienced as acts of annihilation were exhausting beyond belief and urged a musical response, inadequate as it may be.

UPDATE 2026: The second administration of DT has gone far beyond what was already outrageous, no words, or notes, can adequately express such outrage.

That is To Say – When I was working on this piece, I never really got around to answering the question of what it is “about.” Normally, I have non-musical thoughts that are motivating me, but here I was really just focused on the sounds and the music. This experience brought some things into relief, one of which is that, words aside, music for me almost always has something to do with communication. And when you’re writing a piece of music, it’s not just a conversation between you and the audience, or you and the performer, it’s also a conversation you’re having with yourself. It’s as if you’re talking to a one-way mirror, and someone happens to be on the other side watching you. I think that phenomenon of both seeing and being seen extends to everyone involved, the performer as well as the audience. The artist Olafur Eliason once said when you look at a work of art, it should feel like it’s looking at you. So as much as this piece might say about me, I hope it says something about the quartet, and of course something about the listener as well.

haven’t yet is a deeply personal work for me about relationships, thought life, and patience. For myself and many other queer people, the kind of relationships and openness cisgender, straight people experience is often delayed (if we’re lucky to experience it at all). There is a pervasive feeling of being behind, having such formative experiences occur later in life. Yet it is difficult to convey these circumstances in a meaningful way to those in more relationally privileged positions. This piece is about how the longing to find that “someone,” even if you have never met, can quickly turn toward negativity and doubt. “What if I never meet ‘the one?’” “Am I just being ridiculous?” In our most vulnerable spaces, insecurities can take over and sometimes it is hard to come down from that ledge. I have felt this. From daydream to self-deprecation, frustration to repentance and patience. It’ll happen.

"Tempo, Terra, Trama..." explores time through an Amerindian perspective, loosely inspired by Yanomami cosmology and the book *The Falling Sky* by Davi Kopenawa and Bruce Albert. The piece contemplates on nature and memory, embracing a cyclical notion of time. Written in four movements, the music shifts from austere to pulsating rhythms, dreamlike textures, and the endless sounds of a forest. Blending contemporary techniques with a close engagement with the natural world, the work reflects on time, beauty, and renewal.

Saturday, June 6, 2026 – 11:00 AM
Black Bayou National Wildlife Refuge Amphitheater
480 Richland Place
Monroe, LA 71203

Two Poems for Vibraphone *Mel Mobley*

Mel Mobley, vibraphone

From Shadows, Luminescence *Daniel Adams*

Rachel Hsieh, cello

Kyle Anderson, cello

BayouLuminance *Jeremi Edwards*

I. Phosphorescence

II. Incandescence

Anne Maker, flute

Katrina Clements, bass clarinet

Samantha Parker, violin

Paul Christopher, cello

Scot Humes, clarinet

Wade Dillingham, alto saxophone

Kathleen Crabtree, viola

Jose Saavedra, double bass

Chris Heidenreich, conductor

Living Waters *Roydon Tse*

Martha Muehleisen, violin

Kyle Anderson, cello

Scot Humes, bass clarinet

Joe Moore, percussion

Chris Heidenreich, conductor

Two Poems for Vibraphone is one piece from a collection of works written for solo percussion and voice. Each piece uses a different pitched percussion instrument and two non-pitched percussion instruments, of which one is played with a pedal. The text for each piece is generated using a procedure similar to John Cage's mesostics. A center text goes vertically down the page. For this collection, it is the name of the commissioning percussionist. "Wing words" are chosen from source texts, combining the use of Cage's chance methodologies and mesostic restrictions with intuitive choice. Source texts are selected with an attempt to personalize the resulting poetry.

all of the**M**
want to writ**E** about today
circ**Les**
re**Main** unique
That great shuttle **Of**
people a**B**sorbed
brave**Ly**
th**E** weightless
it is a glor**Y**

dying of too **Much**
b**E**auty
swa**Ll**ows
like a **Monk**
what pretensi**Ons**
the **Burden** of this
fi**ll** your lungs
through th**E** dust
she would **ONL**Y be further away

From Shadows, Luminescence – The title of this duet is based on the premise that light and darkness are interdependent. Celestial bodies such as stars and planets are only visible against a dark night sky. Although stalactites form in the complete darkness of a cave, they can only be viewed when light permeates their environment. The low register of the cello has an inherently dark and opaque quality, especially when two are played in close pitch proximity using identical performance techniques. However, when played in its upper register, the cello displays qualities of brilliance and clarity, especially when the two instruments are played using different performance techniques.

Darkness is portrayed through cluster-based passages in which the instruments “shadow” each other in their lower register. Brightness is introduced through higher sonorities, including harmonics. An opening sonority built on consecutive octave-displaced semitones in double stops serves as the harmonic basis of subsequent figures that include a tremolo passage, a polyrhythmic pitch repetition, a glissando-based passage, and a codetta. Melodic materials are developed via counterpoint between the two instruments, with cello one using the bow while cello two plays pizzicato. The sonic variety in this section suggests clarity and lightness.

A darker texture returns in extended passage of unison 16th. notes in close intervallic proximity. Another contrapuntal section follows, this time with both players using the bow. Light returns in the final section, a succession of natural and artificial harmonics that traverses the entire chromatic scale in contrasting registers and summarizes the melodic development of the piece.

BayouLuminance draws inspiration from the living lights of Louisiana’s swamps. Fireflies signal in rhythmic flashes, plankton shimmer when stirred, and comb jellies emit spectral sparks across the brackish waters. Even natural phenomena like “swamp gas” create mysterious, glowing balls of light. These displays reveal the intricate interplay of biology, environment, and physics, reminding us that the bayou itself is a dynamic, living instrument, a landscape of light, life, and transformation.

I. Phosphorescence

In the shadowed heart of the Louisiana bayou, one moves through darkness, uncertain of where the path may lead. Gradually, faint sparks emerge—tiny bioluminescent lights flickering among the cypress and moss, each organism alive with its own luminous pulse. Fireflies blink in rhythmic whispers; plankton shimmer with the touch of a passing current; comb jellies scatter rainbow flashes like fleeting brushstrokes on the water’s surface. These lights gather and breathe, guiding the wanderer forward, turning uncertainty into subtle hope. By the movement’s end, the darkness remains in memory, yet it is transformed—a reminder of where one has come from, even as illumination carries the way forward.

II. Incandescence

A lively, jazz-infused groove emerges, vibrant and insistent, carrying the pulse of life through the swamp. Suddenly, dissonant alarms intrude, fracturing the rhythm and igniting a surge of energy. Light and sound collide in a luminous frenzy, each note and gesture reflecting the chaotic brilliance of a bayou alive with movement. Fire and water, rhythms and glow, merge in an unstoppable torrent, culminating in a dazzling climax of uncontainable energy and brilliance.

Writing **Living Waters** started with an arduous process of research and discovery that began in September 2023 upon receiving the commission from [festival]. I knew that the Colorado river had immense significance for many who live along it, therefore making it a monumental undertaking to distill the river into a musical composition for four performers to be presented in a chamber music format. My research in the form of readings, interviews, and articles, led me to better understand the crisis facing the river as well as its multi-faceted significance it holds for people across generations. At the same time, it became an immense challenge to translate what I had learnt on an intellectual level into something that would resonate with listeners on a musical and emotional level. Months of reading yielded many notes and ideas, yet very few musical notes of value were produced. It wasn't until April 2024 that I had a breakthrough. I was in Japan and Korea doing research into traditional music when I heard the musics of Pansori and Sanjo at the National Gugak Center in Seoul; the former a form of storytelling through voice and percussion and the latter a purely instrumental form for gayageum (zither) and percussion. The Korean musical aesthetic was one that was deeply connected with nature and experiencing the expressive power of Pansori and Sanjo led me to rethink my entire approach to this commission. I realized I had been overthinking and intellectualizing the piece and needed to return to the emotional core of what I want to communicate. The idea that I landed on was Living Waters, based on a short paragraph from the book *River Notes* by Wade Davis. In it, he writes about the beliefs of the Paiute people who had lived along the Colorado for generations. He writes: "The Paiute were a Water People, originally from the Great Basin... Though their material culture was rudimentary, Paiute beliefs were complex and their sense of place complete. They believed that springs and rocks, rivers and rain had life spirits that had to be honoured. They viewed the entire Grand Canyon as something holy." This idea was also partly advanced during our early conversation with renowned river guide [name] where he spoke about the masculine and feminine properties of the Colorado and its tributaries. As a result of the confluence of various ideas, Living Waters became a piece about the life force of the river. The work opens in a declamatory fashion with three pitched instruments in unison before transforming into a vibrant dance fueled by percussion. Just as the Colorado is the soul of the desert, the bass clarinet was chosen to give voice to this timeless entity and act as the voice of the river. Several solos weave in and out of the texture in the slower middle section before building towards the return of the

'masculine' dance again. The work ends with the return of the reflective solo in the bass clarinet, representing the quiet yet yearning call of the river to flow once again as it had before.

FESTIVAL PERFORMERS

Kyle Anderson, cello	Kathryn Irwin, percussion
Lea Baumert-Patterson, flute	Gregory Lyons, percussion
James Boldin, horn	Anne Maker, flute
Michael Capone, viola	Elizabeth McNutt, flute
Nancy Carey, soprano	Mel Mobley, percussion
Paul Christopher, cello	Oliver Molina, percussion
Katrina Clements, clarinet	Joe Moore, percussion
Tyler Coffman, trombone	Martha Muehleisen, violin
Kathleen Crabtree, violin	Kourtney Newton, cello
Mia Detwiler, violin	Samantha Parker, violin
Wade Dillingham, clarinet/saxophone	Richard Perry, tuba
Luke Ellard, clarinet	Jose Saavedra, double bass
Megan George, trumpet	Richard Seiler, piano
Amanda Hamilton, viola	Jung-Won Shin, piano
Justin Havard, piano	Eric Siereveld, trumpet
Christopher Heidenreich, conductor	Philip Schuessler, conductor
Rachel Hsieh, cello	Diana Thacher, piano
Scot Humes, clarinet	Alan Theisen, saxophone
Megan Ihnen, mezzo-soprano	Claire Vangelisti, soprano

BLACK BAYOU COMPOSITION AWARD JUDGES

Stephen David Beck Robert McCormick Trevor Davis

FESTIVAL SELECTION COMMITTEE

James Boldin, Michael Capone, Paul Christopher, Trevor Davis, Mia Detwiler, Scot Humes, Megan Ihnen, Kathryn Irwin, Gregory Lyons, Elizabeth McNutt, Mel Mobley, Martha Muehleisen, Kourtney Newton, Richard Seiler, Eric Siereveld, Diana Thacher, Claire Vangelisti

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Hannah Tripp

RECORDING

Levi Tripp, Aaron Townsend

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Phil Acimovic is a composer and gamelan musician from Easthampton, MA. His music explores austere worlds that contrast states of serenity and disquietude. His recent works use free rhythm and flexible performance elements, allowing players a wide latitude for interpretation. Acimovic served as the first Artist-In-Residence at the Cold Hollow Sculpture Park in northern Vermont in 2018. He studied composition at UC Davis with Kurt Rohde and Sam Nichols, at Tufts University with John McDonald, and at the Hartt School of Music with Ken Steen and David Macbride. He is currently a Lecturer in Music at Yale University and Smith College. Acimovic studied Javanese Gamelan in Central Java with master musicians Bp. Wakidi Dwidjomartono and Bp. Darsono Hadiraharjo, and in the U.S. with Bp. Midiyanto and Barry Drummond. In 2018 he managed a U.S. tour of a gamelan gadhon troupe from Surakarta, Java. He directs the Yale University Gamelan, the Smith College Gamelan, and Gamelan Lebdo Budoyo, a community gamelan ensemble in Western Massachusetts.

Daniel Adams served as a member of the Texas Southern University Music Faculty for thirty-six years. He retired at the rank of full professor in January of 2025. He resides in Houston, TX. Adams holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a Master of Music from the University of Miami Frost School of Music and a Bachelor of Music from Louisiana State University. He has composed numerous published musical works and has authored articles and reviews on topics related to Twentieth and Twenty-first Century percussion music. He is also the author of two entries published in the Oxford Encyclopedia of African-American History: 1896 to the Present (2009) and a revision of the Miami, Florida entry for the Grove Dictionary of American Music. Adams has received commissions from The McCormick Percussion Group, The McCormick Duo, the Robinson High School Percussion Ensemble (Tampa, FL), The Gulf Coast Community Band, The Leechburg (PA) High School Percussion Ensemble, the Louisiana State University Percussion Ensemble, the EOS flute and guitar duo, guitarist Kenneth Kam, VioLet, Lee Hinkle, Richard Nunemaker Studios, Selmer Paris, Buffet Crampon, D'Addario Woodwinds, the Mesquite Trio. and the Texas Chamber Symphony. Adams' music has been performed throughout the United States, and in Spain, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Costa Rica, Turkey, Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Greece, Moldova, and South Korea. His music is recorded on Capstone Records, Ravello, Navona, Phasma-Music, Ablaze, Potenza, Albany, and Summit Records.

Carlos Bandera is a composer whose music explores the expressive potential of contextualization and transformation of musical materials. He often expands simple elements into large-scale, glacially unfolding musical structures, through which he explores the interplay of harmony, noise, and texture. Bandera's orchestral work *Materia Prima*, which was premiered in 2023 at

Carnegie Hall by the American Composers Orchestra, was described by the New York Classical Review as having “one of the most immersive and elegant transitions from nothingness to complexity that one has heard.” His music has been performed by groups such as the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the American Composers Orchestra, the Chicago Composers Orchestra, the Albany Symphony, the Westside Chamber Players, the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, Dogs of Desire, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Mivos Quartet, the ~Nois and Cerus saxophone quartets, Ensemble Linea, Hotel Elefant, Earspace, Hebrides Ensemble, Nebula Ensemble, and Omnibus Ensemble. In 2022, his piece *Meristem* was performed by the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra during their “On the Road” tour across SouthEast England. Recently, his dissertation composition *sic rerum summa novatur semper* was premiered by the Chicago Composers Orchestra. He has been a fellow at Copland House’s CULTIVATE, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s DeGaetano Composition Institute, Composers Conference, and the Underwood New Music Readings. His music has been performed at festivals and conferences such as the 34th International Review of Composers in Belgrade, Serbia, NUNC! 6, the Ear Taxi Festival, the Midwest Graduate Music Consortium’s 29th annual conference, the American Music Festival, the Walden School’s Young Musicians Program, and the Remus Georgescu International Music Festival in Timișoara, Romania. He has been awarded the Otto Ortmann Award in Composition, the William T. Faricy Award, and was a winner of the Remus Georgescu International Music Festival Competition. He has received recognitions from the American Prize, Tribeca New Music, the RED NOTE Composition Competition, and the Cortona Prize.

Ermir Bejo (b. 1987, Tirana, Albania) is a composer of contemporary classical and electronic music. His work explores memory, fragmentation, and the dream-like logic of the unconscious, creating sound worlds that are abstract yet deeply felt. Drawing on the arts, philosophy, and mathematics, Bejo weaves fragments of tradition into experimental forms that open new expressive possibilities. His music has been recognized with an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award and as a finalist for the Prix CIME, among other honors. It has also been featured at leading international festivals such as the Darmstädter Ferienkurse and Mexico’s Foro Internacional de Música Nueva Manuel Enríquez. His compositions have been performed by acclaimed ensembles including Amorsima Trio, Ums ‘n Jip, Calliope Duo, Nova, and Duo Chromatica, as well as by renowned soloists such as Irvine Arditti, Elizabeth McNutt, Redi Llupa, Małgorzata Walentynowicz, Fidan Aghayeva-Edler, Yumi Suehiro, Alexander Richards, and Juan Sebastian Delgado. Beyond his creative work, Bejo helps shape the contemporary music ecosystem as co-founder and director of Score Follower. This pioneering digital platform has redefined how audiences, performers, and composers engage with new music worldwide. His career also bridges music production and education. He currently serves as Technical Director at the Margo Jones Performance Hall at Texas Woman’s University,

where he oversees concert production and recording with an approach that blends technical skill and creative vision. At the University of North Texas, he previously taught composition and electronic music as an adjunct faculty, building on his earlier role as audio technical director, where he collaborated closely with its acclaimed big bands and jazz ensembles on ambitious performance and recording projects. Bejo is a graduate of United World College (UWC) Adriatic in Italy, where he studied art history and world cultures. He holds degrees in music composition from Skidmore College (BA), the University of Louisville (MM), and the University of North Texas (PhD). His principal teachers were Joseph Klein, Panayiotis Kokoras, Andrew May, Marc Satterwhite, and Krzysztof Wołek. He has also taken part in masterclasses with renowned composers including Salvatore Sciarrino, James Dillon, Chaya Czernowin, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Kenneth Tiser Blankenship, Ty for short, is a composer and student from West Monroe, Louisiana. At the moment, much of Ty's work is centered around creating musical narratives about subjects ranging from natural phenomena to personal anecdotes. His music has been awarded in competitions such as the Southeastern Composers' League's Arnold Salop Memorial Competition and was recently chosen as the winner of the Constantinides New Music Ensemble Call for Scores Competition. He has completed a Bachelor's Degree in Music at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Music Composition at Louisiana State University.

JUNO-award winning composer **Amy Brandon's** pieces have been described as "gut-wrenching and horrific" (Critipeg), "otherworldly, a clashing of bleakness with beauty" (Minor Seventh) and "arresting, riveting music, highly original and individual" (Simon Cummings, 5:4). Her orchestral, chamber and choral works have been performed by Canadian and international ensembles including the JACK Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Ekmeles, and Continuum Contemporary Ensemble. She has also created augmented reality and physical installations, including an underwater sound installation in a swimming pool at Memorial University for Sound Symposium 2022. Her works have been featured at the Gaudeamus Festival (Screen Dive), the Winnipeg New Music Festival, the Mizzou International Composer's Festival, Maison symphonique de Montréal, the New School (NYC), Wolfensohn Hall at Princeton University (USA), Hochschule für Musik und Theater (Germany), Clusterfest and Trinity College (Dublin). Amy currently teaches composition at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. amybrandon.ca

Andrew Burke is interested in exploring music's ability to address and elucidate complex issues, providing spaces and experiences for the listener to reflect. His work has been recognized by various awards and organizations including the

Peabody Institute's Prix d'Été electronic music competition, the Macht Orchestral Composition Competition, the DeLillo Composition Competition, Score Follower, and University of Pennsylvania's David Halstead Music Prize. In 2026, he premiered his debut opera *In Open Air*, featuring Charlotte Mundy and Tomás Cruz. He has held artist residencies at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts and the Merriweather District Artist in Residence. His music has been performed by leading ensembles including the Daedalus Quartet, TAK Ensemble, and Ekmeles. Recent commissions include works for Arcana Ensemble and Unheard-of Ensemble. As a multimedia artist, his work has been programmed at the 20/92 Video Festival and SEAMUS 2024 where he was selected to be featured in the album *Music from SEAMUS 34*. He creates pop music under the moniker Danke Shane, recently releasing an EP with Nice Guys Records in December 2024. He completed his master's degree at the Peabody Conservatory and is currently pursuing a PhD in composition at the University of Pennsylvania where he has studied with Natacha Diels, Tyshawn Sorey, and Anna Weesner. Jessica T. Carter (b. 1992) is a composer, violinist, mezzo-soprano, and educator from Indiana whose music has been described as "evocative" (*Aspire Magazine*) and "lyrical" (*Apricity Magazine*). Specializing in concert music, film scoring, and musical theatre, her work seeks to bridge vitriol and compassion through empathy — illuminating the experiences of marginalized children while deepening the universal understanding of the marginalized adult.

Josiah Tayag Catalan (he/him) is a Filipino-American composer born in New York City and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. Recently, his compositional interests have been inspired and centered on retracing his heritage through his travels in the Philippines, spending time with various indigenous communities, and learning about the music, dance, and folkloric/spiritual traditions specific to each tribe. He has been a finalist in the Thailand International Competition Festival and has been awarded prizes from NACUSA, the Sacramento State Festival of New American Music, the Megalopolis Saxophone Orchestra, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Josiah has previously served as a Fromm Foundation Composer Fellow in the Composer's Conference, a Bilinski Fellow at the University of California at Davis, the Composer-in-residence with the Diablo Symphony, and is currently a Lucas Artist Fellow at the Montalvo Arts Center for 2025-2027. His music has been commissioned and performed internationally by individuals and groups such as the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, Earplay, Emyrean Ensemble, Lydian and Arditti String Quartets, the MANA saxophone quartet, The Megalopolis Saxophone Orchestra, Citywater, violinist Miranda Cuckson, percussionist Chris Froh, and soprano Helena Sorokina. His music is published by BabelScores. Currently, Josiah is teaching as a lecturer in Music Theory, Composition, and World Music at Sacramento State, UC Davis, and is an Adjunct Professor at American River College. He received his PhD at UC Davis in composition and music theory.

Dr. **Jeremi W. Edwards** is a composer, educator, and scholar whose work bridges contemporary composition, pedagogy, and interdisciplinary collaboration. A native of Lake Charles, Louisiana, he currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at McNeese State University, where he is also Coordinator of Music Theory. In this role, he teaches the full undergraduate theory sequence, orchestration, and composition, and founded the Music Theory Mentorship Program, an initiative designed to support student success through peer-led instruction and structured academic support. Dr. Edwards earned a Ph.D. in Music Composition with a secondary emphasis in Music Theory from Louisiana State University, a Master of Music in Theory and Composition from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and a Bachelor of Music Education from McNeese State University. His research focuses on contemporary composition pedagogy and interdisciplinary performance, culminating in his doctoral dissertation exploring aleatoric composition and spatialized performance in collaboration with the LSU Museum of Art. As a composer, Dr. Edwards has received national and international recognition, with performances at Carnegie Hall, the Midwest Clinic, and major festivals including the Texas New Music Festival, New Music on the Bayou, and the Alba International Music Festival in Italy. His works span solo, chamber, choral, and large ensemble genres, often integrating technology and visual art. Recent commissions and premieres include works for chamber orchestra, wind ensemble, and interdisciplinary collaborations with visual artists and dance. Beyond the classroom, Dr. Edwards is Artistic Director of the Millennium Composers Initiative, where he leads national mentorship and commissioning projects. He is also an active board member for several arts organizations and contributes regularly to music education through publications, adjudication, and professional service.

Clarinetist, composer, educator, and new music collaborator **Luke Ellard** (they/them) strives for art that continually reaches out, valuing a relational spirit, informed engagement, and unapologetic authenticity. For Luke, collaboration is what gives music life. As a clarinetist, they have performed with members of Bang On a Can All Stars, Eighth Blackbird, International Contemporary Ensemble, Fifth House Ensemble, Arkansas Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony, Charlottesville Symphony, and Mallarmé Chamber Music. As a composer, their music has been performed and commissioned by ensembles such as North Texas Wind Symphony, HOCKET, New Trombone Collective, Barkada Quartet, among others. Their current performance projects center around their self-produced solo cross-genre/electronic band LE, their new music quartet Sounding Board, commissioning new exciting works for the clarinet, and serving on faculty at Newfound Chamber Winds Festival and New Music on the Bayou. Luke is lucky to teach and learn alongside an incredible group of students as Assistant Professor of Clarinet at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Justin Friello is a multi-genre composer and performer who specializes in autobiographical narratives. Originally from upstate NY, he recently earned his Master's degree in Music Composition from the University of North Texas under the mentorship of Dr. Joseph Klein. Justin received his Bachelor's degree from SUNY Albany, where he double majored in Music Theory and Psychology. He also attended SUNY Purchase's Conservatory of Music, studying composition with Huang Ruo and Suzanne Farrin and orchestration with Du Yun. From 2012–2017, he was an active member of the Lehman Engel BMI Musical Theatre Advanced Workshop in New York City, where he met his writing partner, Cleo Handler. Their full-length original musical, *From The Fire*, was selected for the Off Broadway Musical Theater Production Program at the Players Theatre and was a semi-finalist at the National Music Theatre Conference. Justin was featured in Playbill online for his arranging and orchestration work on the video series, "SONDHEIM...In The Style Of..." He has also been a proud member of Actors' Equity since 2015. Justin's most recent theatre project is an original score and sound design for the University of North Texas Department of Dance and Theatre's Spring 2026 production of *The Tempest* (dir. Sasha Maya Ada). Justin has been performing since 2005 as a solo singer-songwriter and frontman for several bands (Filming Ohio, Stockade Kids, Justin Friello Trio). While live performance has always been his focus, his collection of studio releases includes numerous EPs, LPs, singles, and even 10 holiday albums. Justin has opened for bands like Gin Blossoms, Girl Talk, and The Village People. In 2016, Justin released his hybrid EP/Short Film, *Jack & Jill*. His most recent release is a live EP, recorded at the famous Caffè Lena in Saratoga Springs, NY.

Composer **Mara Gibson** originally from Charlottesville, VA, graduated from Bennington College, and completed her Ph.D. at SUNY Buffalo. She has received grants and honors from the American Composer's Forum, the Banff Center, Meet the Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, the International Bass Society, ASCAP, Virginia Center for Creative Arts, the MacDowell Colony, Yale University and the Recording Academy of the US. Internationally renowned ensembles and soloists perform her music throughout the United States, Canada, South America, Asia, and Europe. Dr. Gibson has had performances of her works at prestigious festivals and universities around the country and the world and she currently leads the composition program at Louisiana State University as the McMullan Distinguished Professor.

Stefano Gioffré is an award-winning Italian composer. After graduating in musical composition at the Conservatorio S. Cecilia of Rome under the supervision of Francesco Telli (2012), he attended the composition courses of Salvatore Sciarrino at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana (Siena, 2013) and the composition courses of Prof. Detlev Müller-Siemens at MDW (Vienna, 2014). In 2016, he graduated top of his class at Kunstuniversität Graz, under the supervision of Prof. Beat Furrer. In January 2023, he successfully defended his

PhD dissertation at the University of York. His research area focused on finding ways to make musical experimentation easier to understand for a heterogeneous audience through music itself.

Robin Haigh writes music that blends pop, classical, and experimental ideologies and sounds. His pieces have been performed and commissioned by the LSO, LPO, Britten Sinfonia, City of London Sinfonia, National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta, Treppenhauseorchester, Het Muziek (AskoSchönberg Ensemble), Lowell Chamber Orchestra, Orlando Contemporary Chamber Orchestra, Fiskars Festival Orchestra, and oneMusic Orchestra. Honours include the 2025 Luigi Nono Composition Prize, a 2017 British Composer Award for recorder quintet *In Feyre Foreste*, a 2020 Ivor Novello Award for the chamber orchestra piece *Grin*, and a further five Ivor Novello nominations for *No One* (harp), *SLEEPTALKER* (orchestra), *LUCK* (trumpet concerto), *FILTH* (amplified ensemble) and *AESOP 2* (recorder soloist and ensemble), which was also nominated for the 2025 Gaudeamus Award.

Amelia Kaplan is a composer whose music creates meaning by juxtaposing, filtering, and recontextualizing gestures both ordinary and extraordinary. In recent years her music has mostly responded to the ecological and political crises besetting our warming planet, which we, as humans, seem to have no will to prevent. Ms. Kaplan has been awarded residencies at Copland House, MacDowell, Ucross, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She has received commissions from numerous ensembles and soloists, and her work has been performed at festivals around the world, including *Mise-En*, Thailand New Music Festival, SCI, SICPP, IAWM, The Composers Conference, Gaudeamus, Darmstadt, and others. Recordings are available on Albany, Ablaze, Centaur, and Navona Records, and compositions are published by BabelScores, TrevCo Music, and Warming Planet Music. Ms. Kaplan holds a PhD from the University of Chicago, an AB from Princeton University, and diplomas from the Accademia Musicale Chigiana and the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau. She is Professor of Composition at Ball State University where she heads the Theory & Composition Area and directs the New Music Ensemble.

Steve Landis is a composer and double bassist residing in Greensboro, North Carolina. Steve's music emphasizes extreme contrasts within musical materials and encourages a collaborative relationship between the score and performer. His work synthesizes the craft of Western art music and the energetic DIY spirit of underground punk/metal traditions through the integration of improvisation, performance space, and atmosphere. Steve works with many mediums including solo instrumental, mixed chamber groups, large ensembles, digital and mixed media, as well as film and theater. His works have been performed across the U.S., England, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, and Colombia. In addition to his

freelance work, Steve is Part-time Lecturer at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro where he teaches orchestration, applied composition, computer music, and leads composition seminar. Steve also serves as instructor of double bass and composition at the Music Academy of North Carolina. He is a founding member and double bassist for the eclectic new music group Winnfield Quartet, a section member of The Raleigh Symphony Orchestra, and electric bassist for the rock band, The Nonprofits. Steve earned his DMA in Composition at The University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, an MM in Composition from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and an MM in Double Bass Performance and a BM in Composition from The University of Florida. Steve is a recipient of the Millay Colony, the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, and Wildacres Artist Retreat.

Born in China in 2003, **Guahao Li** began playing the piano at the age of three and a half, and has remained devoted and passionate to music ever since. In 2018, he was admitted to The Middle School Affiliated to Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where he studied composition. In 2022, he was offered by Mannes School of Music in New York with a full - tuition scholarship, where he studied composition with composer Robert Cuckson. He recently earned his Bachelor of Music in Composition from Mannes, and this coming fall, he will continue at Mannes as a graduate student, pursuing a master's degree in Composition while remaining with Robert Cuckson's mentorship. His compositional output is both diverse and prolific. His works have been performed and awarded in seven countries, including China, the United States, Japan, and Austria. He has collaborated with many ensembles across multiple nations, including the Mace Ensemble (New York), Phace Ensemble (Vienna), and the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra (Bulgaria). Concurrently, he minors in Film Production in Media Studies at The New School, he has won the prizes in the film festivals from the United States, France, and South Korea.

Kevin Mah is a composer and violinist from New Orleans with a BM in Music Composition from Loyola University New Orleans and a MA in Music Composition from Tulane University. Described as eclectic and earnest, he enjoys working in both acoustic and electronic music. His musical journey has brought him through several genre practices, focusing aesthetics on textural soundscapes with post-tonal and sometimes filmic undertones. Nowadays, he strives to interpret his thoughts and emotions into his works, often attaching to his acoustic music an admiration of the natural world, and, to his electronica, feelings of technological contentiousness. Recently, his influences come from genres like Cyberpunk, Post-humanism, Hyperpop, and Heavy Metal/Emo. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, photography, card games, and sunsets. He really enjoys sunsets.

Igor Maia is a composer and conductor, Professor of Composition at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). He holds a PhD in Composition from King's College London and is currently Visiting Professor at McGill University (2025–2026) with a CNPq International Award. In 2023, he was an Ernst Mach Scholar at the Anton Bruckner Private University. He has been composer-in-residence with the Quasars Ensemble (2025) and the Orquestra Sesiminas (2024). His music has been performed at festivals and concerts across Europe, Argentina, Brazil, the United States, and Japan, and has received awards in national and international competitions. His research focuses on twentieth- and twenty-first-century orchestral music, with particular emphasis on compositional strategies, timbral innovation, and practices such as microtonality, mimesis, and extended techniques, as well as on the pedagogical and curatorial challenges of programming and disseminating contemporary music repertoire.

Jesse Maker is a writer and composer writing and composing in Arlington, TX. Madly in love with linguistics, he often works in the space between lyrics and poetry, music and words, meaningfulness and meaninglessness. His music is characterized by its breathless intensity. Long-term compositional projects include music for speaking instrumentalists and the development of a Wordmusic notation, straddling the border between sound poetry and music. In addition to his compositional activities, Jesse actively engages in research into musical meaning and composition pedagogy. Jesse serves as Adjunct Assistant Professor of Composition and Music Theory at the University of Texas, Arlington, where he is the primary composition teacher. He received his Doctorate of Music in composition at McGill University. He received bachelors degrees in composition and creative writing at Oberlin College and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and a master's degree in composition at Bowling Green State University. Jesse's music has been performed in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Ann Arbor, Montreal, Italy, and Germany, by ensembles such as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, McGill Symphony Orchestra, Tak, Ensemble L'arsenale, AndPlay, AJA Trio and Departure Duo.

Described as having a "...highly individual sound world..." that is "... both beautiful and piercingly astringent at once," (Richard Sisson) **Michael Mills** composes music that addresses topics of the human condition through an extremely personal lens. Utilizing a unique compositional voice that mixes contemporary and traditional practices as well as Appalachian folk influences, Michael explores and embraces the paradox of universality amongst otherwise highly individualistic lives. His work is defined by visceral gestures, expansive timbres, and the juxtaposition of "natural" and "unnatural" sounds. Michael's work has garnered performances throughout America, on public radio, and across Europe working with groups such as the Tacet(i), Quartetto Indaco, Dal Niente, and Popebama. Beyond composing, Michael is active as an educator, engraver, pianist, and administrator. Michael is a cofounder of TellTale Opera

Theatre, a non-profit organization that focuses on the production and promotion of contemporary dramatic musical works with an expansive and inclusive definition of what opera can be. Michael is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh where he studies with Dr. Charlie Peck. He has an M.M. in Composition from The Peabody Institute where he studied with Dr. Felipe Lara and a B.A. in Music Composition and Technology with a minor in Psychology from Virginia Tech in 2019 where he studied with Dr. Charles Nichols and Dr. Eric Lyon.

Allen Molineux (b.1950) holds degrees in composition from DePauw University, the Eastman School of Music and Florida State University. He also attended the Lukas Foss Workshop at Indiana University in 1981, Gunther Schuller's 1986 Atlantic Center for the Arts Workshop and Pierre Boulez's Carnegie Hall Workshop in 1999. His music has been part of New Music festivals since the 1970's with the most recent ones being Denison University's 2022 TUTTI Festival, Central Washington University's in 2023 and Penn State University's in 2025. There are ten different professional recordings that contain works of his and he has won several first place competition awards by regional orchestras. To date he has 29 non-self published works, but recently has begun self-publishing works via J. W. Pepper and soon through his just being accepted into Universal Edition's scodo platform.

Paul A. Oehlers is most recognized for his "extraordinarily evocative" film scores. (Variety) Films incorporating his music have won the Grand Jury prize at the Hamptons International Film Festival, the Atlanta International Film Festival, and the Indiefest Film Festival. In addition, films with his music have screened at dozens of festivals in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. Paul A. Oehlers' compositions have been performed in the United States and abroad including performances at the Society for Electro-acoustic Music in the United States national conferences, the International Computer Music Conferences, the Gamper New Music Festival, the Seoul International Electro-acoustic Music Festival, the Institut für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung in Darmstadt, Germany, and the VII Annual Brazilian Electronic Music Festival, as well as a 1987 command performance for former United States President Ronald Reagan. He was the first composer ever commissioned by the Nature Conservancy to compose a concert composition about prairie conservation. Paul was named the Margaret Lee Crofts Fellow by the MacDowell Colony for the year 2006. He is currently Associate Professor of Audio Technology at American University in Washington, DC.

Norberto Oldrini was born in Milan in 1968 and is now living in Torrita di Siena (Tuscany, Italy). His compositions, for any instrumentation, from solo instruments to orchestra, have been performed over 250 times worldwide: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, London, Beijing, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Rome, Milan, Budapest, Belgrade, Munich, Manchester, Hartford, Colorado Springs,

Westchester, Knoxville, Monroe, Ruston, Natchitoches, Enschede, Bologna, Siena, Perugia, Montepulciano, and many other cities in the U.S.A., Italy, U.K., Germany, China, Argentina, Mexico, Hungary, Serbia, Portugal, Romania, Libya, Slovenia, Bosnia, Belgium, and the Netherlands. He has frequently worked with the dance (New York, Chicago, Natchitoches, Monroe) and the theatre (Teatro Povero di Monticchiello, Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano, Corps Rompu, etc). His compositions are published by BabelScores Editions and released by Petrichor Records. Founder and artistic director of the festival Musica Prospettiva.

Clem Pearson (they/theym) is a composer, conductor, and fiddle player from the Appalachian foothills of Kentucky. Their music is informed by contemporary, classical, and folk traditions, and they often favor dreamlike atmospheres and moods of contemplation and introspection. In their work, they seek a contemporary music that can live outside the concert hall, in popular music venues, black box theaters, city parks, and other more accessible art spaces. They believe that music and the arts are fundamental to a healthy community, and that the work of an artist is to create space for emotion, communication, and human connection. Clem draws on a wide variety of artistic influences, including composers such as Caroline Shaw and Missy Mazzoli, artist/author Tillie Walden, filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, and folk bands including Punch Brothers and the Chieftains. Their work has been performed by ensembles including ETHEL, Third Coast Percussion, and the Ciompi Quartet. They are currently pursuing graduate study in composition at the University of North Carolina—Greensboro, and they hold a B.A. in composition from Denison University (Ohio) and an M.M. in orchestral conducting from Wichita State University (Kansas).

Ben Robichaux (b.1991) is a dedicated composer who aims to write accessible music that musicians and non-musicians alike can enjoy. As a two-time recipient of the James E. Croft Grant for Young and Emerging Wind Band Composers, his wind ensemble works have been performed across the United States. He was selected as a participant in the National Band Association Young Composers and Conductors Mentor Project, which included a recording and performance with the United States Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. His work *As the Lights Go Out* for wind ensemble and electronics earned him an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award in 2021, and his middle school band piece *Gregorian Fantasy* was awarded honorable mention in the First Annual Barbara Buehlman Composition Competition. His chamber works have been featured at the International Saxophone Symposium, the National Gallery of Art, the Rapido! Composition Competition, the Alba International Music Festival, the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, the Society of Composers, Incorporated Student National Conference, the SEAMUS National Conference, the Electronic Music Midwest Festival, the Atlantic Music Festival, the Electrobrass II

Conference, the Society of Composers, Incorporated Region IV Conference and the NACUSA/SCI Snapshot Conference among others. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition and a Master's of Music in Composition from the University of Georgia where he studied with Natalie Williams, Leonard V. Ball, Peter Van Zandt Lane, Adrian Childs, and Emily Koh. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Instrumental Music Education from Nicholls State University. Additionally, he has been involved in masterclasses and private lessons with Frank Ticheli, Mark Camphouse, Brian Balmages, Jesse Jones, Xi Wang, Melinda Wagner, Paul Koonce, Ben Hjertmann, David Ludwig, Pierre Jalbert, Ken Ueno, Nils Vigeland, Donald Crockett, George Tsontakis, Hannah Lash, Robert Cuckson, Jennifer Jolley, Joseph Dangerfield, Elliott McKinley, Luke Dahn, Robert Paterson and Mari Kimura. He is published by Murphy Music Press, LLC and Noteworthy Sheet Music, LLC and is affiliated with BMI. He is currently the Director of Athletic Bands and Assistant Professor of Music at Nicholls State University where he revived the Music Composition Program after it was discontinued at the school 30 years prior. He is committed to providing meaningful opportunities and experiences to his community.

David John Roche's music is direct, determined, and loud. Strongly influenced by heavy metal, lush orchestral music, and his working-class Welsh background, he has been marked out as a "clear-minded and class-conscious artist" (*Culture Matters*) and "one of the most energetic, driven, and successful of Wales's millennial generation of composers" (Tŷ Cerdd).

His work has been praised for its immediacy and visceral power: a "glorious confusion of rock and film music [...] irresistible" (Stephen Walsh, *The Arts Desk* – "Best of 2025 Classical Concerts"), featuring "excitingly direct [...] passages of intense expressive power" (Thomas Adès). Critics and broadcasters alike have celebrated its "exquisite" and "beautifully realised" sound worlds (Adam Walton, *BBC Introducing Wales*), its "excitingly and rhythmically intense" writing (*Seen and Heard International*), "rhythmic patterns [that] defy expectation" (*The Guardian*), and its consistently "ingenious scoring" (*The Arts Desk*).

Roche's music is published by Productions d'Oz, ABRSM, and Edizioni Curci, with recordings released on NMC Recordings, Willowhayne Records, Prima Classica, and the BBC Digital Concert Series. His work has been broadcast, televised, and written about internationally, reaching audiences of millions. He has received over 50 academic and professional award nominations and holds degrees from the universities of Cardiff, Oxford, and Cambridge.

A string of international performances and commissions form the backbone of Roche's work: BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Florence Philharmonic, Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra, Tanglewood Music Center, Psappha Ensemble, Britten Sinfonia, Sinfonia Cymru, and the Solem Quartet, among others. He has been awarded First Prize in the Dante Moro Composition Award, Orion Orchestra and Dyson Composition Competition, and Dante 700 Composition Competition, Second Prize in the Tōru Takemitsu

Composition Award, five prizes at the International Antonín Dvořák Award, and many more - including a nomination from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the awarding of a Cardiff University 30(ish) Award.

Erik Alexander Schmidt is a percussionist and composer whose work aspires to merge rigorous technicality with inexhaustible curiosity and experimentation. Based in Greensboro, North Carolina, for over a decade, Erik has worked to establish his reputation as a versatile performer and collaborator. As a composer, Erik is motivated by an earnest curiosity to translate scientific and philosophical inquiries into visceral musical experiences. His work seeks to inject heightened emotion into cerebral themes; and by embedding structural complexity just beneath the surface, he hopes to create music that is intellectually rigorous yet intuitively felt. This philosophy is at the core of his work as a founding member of the contemporary chamber ensembles Winnfield Quartet and Sounding Board, for which he composes and performs original works. Erik's career spans the full spectrum of the regional music scene, including frequent engagements with orchestras, opera companies, and musical theater productions. His commitment to exploration has led Erik to a diverse range of interdisciplinary partnerships. He frequently collaborates with film creatives, sculptors, and visual artists. Whether composing for contemporary dance or performing site-specific soundscapes for visual installations, Erik's approach remains ambitious and enthusiastically collaborative. Erik holds a Master of Music in Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a Bachelor of Music in Performance from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Philip Schuessler's music, ranging from soloists to orchestra, often has sense of delicate urgency and rhythmic energy that is characterized by intricate instrumental writing and subtle timbral design. He takes inspiration from a variety of sources, including popular and rock music traditions, experimental improvisation, spectralism, natural and scientific processes, and countercultural political theater. Many world-renowned artists and ensembles have championed his music over the years. These include such artists as Yarn/Wire, Loadbang, Hypercube, Unheard-of//Ensemble, Mantra Percussion Ensemble, Dither Guitar Quartet, Pesedjet, Iktus Percussion, violinist Graeme Jennings, cellist Craig Hultgren, pianist Mabel Kwan, and soprano Tony Arnold. Schuessler's music has been featured at various conferences and festivals across the United States and Europe. Some of these include June in Buffalo, Festival Miami, the Czech-American Summer Music Workshop, CCMIX in Paris, SEAMUS Conferences, New Music on the Bayou, Electronic Music Midwest, New Music Forum, the School for Designing a Society, Society of Composers National Conference, Electroacoustic Juke Joint, and the Spark Festival. He has also been a resident and/or participant at the MusicX Festival, Brush Creek Arts Residency, the Ernst Bloch Music Festival, the Elliott Carter/Oliver Knussen Chamber Music Intensive

Workshop at Carnegie Hall, and the Oregon Bach Festival. His electro-acoustic music has been recognized in France by Elektrophonie's NuitBleue Music Festival, the Futura Festival, and the Bourges Residence. Awards for his music also include the Music Teachers National Association Commissioned Composer of the Year, International Cello Loft Commission for Cello and Percussion, the Duo Fujin Composition Competition, and Random Access Music's call for scores. He is also the recipient of a Composers Assistance Program grant from New Music USA. Schuessler received his Bachelors Degree in composition at Birmingham-Southern College, his Masters Degree from the University of Miami, and his PhD from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His teachers have included Charles Mason, Dorothy Hindman Dennis Kam, Keith Kothman, Dan Weymouth, Sheila Silver, Perry Goldstein, and Daria Semegen. He is currently an instructor of music theory and composition at Southeastern Louisiana University where he was honored with the President's Award in Artistic Excellence. His music is published by his own Pendula Music publishing company, as well as Society of Composers, Inc., Alea Publishing, T.U.X. People's Music, Murphy Music Press, and Potenza Music, and recordings of his compositions can be found on the New Focus, Centaur, Navona, Janus, Curvepoint Media, and Capstone labels. In addition to being a composer and teacher, Schuessler is also assistant director, co-founder, pianist, and conductor for Versipel New Music. Based in New Orleans and now in its seventh year, Versipel presents contemporary music concerts throughout the southern Louisiana region.

Lebanese composer and music theorist **Sami Seif** (b. 1998) has been praised as "a distinctive compositional voice" who creates "intoxicating and fascinating soundworld[s]" (Carla Rees, *Pan Journal of the British Flute Society*). Described as "very tasteful and flavorful" with "beautiful, sensitive writing!" (Webster University Young Composers Competition), his music is inspired by the aesthetics, philosophies, paradigms and poetry of his Middle-Eastern heritage. His latest musical concerns center around the phenomenology of time and of differing degrees of focus. An enthusiastic collaborator, Seif has worked with numerous renowned musicians. Previous and upcoming collaborators include Mary Kay Fink and Stanley Konopka of The Cleveland Orchestra, Carla Rees, Josh Modney, ETHEL, Vinay Parameswaran, Marcelo Lehninger, the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, TAK Ensemble, Earplay, the Odin Quartet, TEMPO Ensemble, Ensemble 126, Ensemble Metamorphosis, Juan Riveros, Drew Hosler, and Dustin White, among others. Seif's music has been recognized internationally by various institutions such as ASCAP, SOCAN, the Society for New Music, the RED NOTE New Music Festival, the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York, the New York Composers Circle, the Stamford Music and Arts Academy, the Foundation for Modern Music, the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs, the Cleveland Composer's Guild, among others. Additionally, he was selected as a finalist for the 2019 Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra call for scores from a pool of more than 2200 applicants from more than 90 countries. In 2020,

he was selected again from a larger pool of almost 8000 applicants. Seif has been accepted to multiple prestigious artist residencies, including MacDowell. Originally from the small town of Ashkout in Mount Lebanon, he was born to a non-musical family in Abu Dhabi and he is fluent in Arabic, French and English. He started out at the age of twelve as a self-taught musician, composing and playing on microtonal keyboards, specially designed for Arabic music. Not having had access to formal music education, Seif taught himself how to read and write music by reading theory textbooks. He later formally studied piano, composition, audio engineering, and sound synthesis. Seif completed his undergraduate studies in composition and music theory at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where, he was honored with the Donald Erb prize in composition and the Beth Pearce Nelson award in music theory upon graduation. He is currently a doctoral fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Salvatore Siriano is a Chicago-based composer, audiovisual artist, and educator whose work engages sound, video, and digital processes. Drawing on field recordings, electronic synthesis, and filmed landscapes that he captures and transforms through digital techniques, his work explores ecological systems, memory, and the relationship between physical and virtual environments. His projects combine natural imagery with digitally altered visuals, reflecting on themes of environmental change, perception, and personal history. Recent presentations include Sound/Image Festival (UK), Seoul International Computer Music Festival (South Korea), Simpósio Brasileiro de Computação Musical (Brazil), NOIS//E Multimedia Festival (Italy), Art Alive Festival (Portugal), New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and the International Computer Music Conference. Siriano is a tenured music faculty member at Triton College, where he was named Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Member of the Year in 2023. In summer 2024, he taught music at the Roi Et School for the Blind in Thailand through a partnership with the U.S. Embassy, Northern Illinois University, and Mahidol University.

Edmund Song is a US-based Singaporean composer whose practice centres on the structural integration of Asian musical traditions with Western contemporary music, translating rhythmic systems, timbral aesthetics, and formal concepts into new works for Western ensembles. His music has been performed by the GRAMMY-winning Akropolis Reed Quintet, San Francisco Contemporary Players, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, and Locrian Chamber Players. As former President of the Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra, he championed new commissions and presented concerts at Singapore's Esplanade Concert Hall. Beyond the concert hall, Edmund works across film, interactive media, and participatory electronics, designing real-time audience-driven concert works with Web Audio and mobile technologies. He has composed for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (2024), and his score *The Smart Dog* was featured by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, with subsequent selections at the Independent Silent

Film Festival (2024) and Film Score Fest (2025). Second Prize winner of the Berliner Kompositionspreis (2026) and winner of the Earplay Vibrant Shores Composers Competition (2025), Edmund is also a recipient of the ARTZenter Institute Emerging Composer Grant and a finalist of the André Chevallion-Yvonne Bonnaud Composition Prize (France). He has received commissions from County Hall Arts London (UK), and serves as Composer-Arranger for One Song Orchestra (Taiwan) and Composer-in-Residence for Bass Around Asia (Taiwan-Singapore). He has served as Composition Faculty at the Jacobs Composition Academy, Indiana University. He has been selected for New Music on the Bayou (2025, 2026), and his work will be performed by DuoPerSe at ClarinetFest 2026 in Korea. As a double bassist, Edmund has performed with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, and Hangzhou Philharmonic, and in touring productions of *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Misérables*, sharing the stage with Martha Argerich, Masaaki Suzuki, and Gábor Takács-Nagy.

Cecilia Suhr is an award-winning intermedia artist, multimedia composer, and researcher whose work bridges music, visual art, performance, and technology. A multi-instrumentalist — violin, cello, soprano voice, piano, and bamboo flute — and painter, she creates immersive performances rooted in electro-acoustic improvisation and real-time audio-visual interaction, merging acoustic and electronic sound worlds into cohesive, interdisciplinary experiences. Her work has earned recognition across music, art, research, and interactive media, with honors from the International Alliance for Women in Music (Pauline Oliveros Award), the MacArthur Foundation (DML Grant), The American Prize, the Global Music Awards, and the Broadcast Education Association (BEA), among others. Her music and intermedia works have been featured internationally at major festivals and conferences, including ICMC, SEAMUS, NYCEMF, the Mise-En Music Festival, the Society of Composers, New Music on the Bayou, the Performing Media Art Festival, Splice Festival, Mantis Festival, TENOR, ACMC, EMM, BEAST Feast, MoXsonic, the Biennial Festival of New Music, and many more. She is the author of *Social Media and Music* (Peter Lang, 2012) and *Evaluation and Credentialing in Digital Music Communities* (MIT Press, 2014), and serves as a Full Professor in the Department of Humanities and Creative Arts at Miami University Regionals.

William Toutant was born in Worcester, Massachusetts. He earned his BA and MA from The George Washington University and completed his Ph.D. in music theory and composition at Michigan State University. In 1975 he joined the faculty of California State University, Northridge, where he taught in the Department of Music and served in a variety of leadership roles, including Dean of the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication. He became Professor Emeritus in 2013. His works have been recorded on North/South, Capstone, Centaur, Phasma, Ariel, and Navona labels. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Ligia Toutant.

William Trovato - I write music as an ends in itself, as a means to both express and uncover those often concealed and complex manifestations of the human condition. That is to uncover even ever so slightly more about ourselves. Tchaikovsky touched upon this in an 1877 letter responding to Nadezhda von Meck who had compared music with intoxication. In his disagreement he replied, "Music is not a deception but a revelation, and its triumphant strength lies precisely in its ability to reveal aspects of beauty to us which are inaccessible in any other sphere, and whose contemplation is not temporary but forever reconciles us with life." Art like science is fundamentally a cognizing of life, of societies ever changing relations and developments as it drags itself from the domination of nature and other laws over itself into the sphere of understanding and changing matter, nature, for itself. In so doing, changing itself in the process. I see music and art arising from a sensitive, penetrating, discerning eye which seeks to be conscious of and empathetic to the entirety of this history as well as and in relation to the totality of life in this interconnected contradictory world.

Named one of CBC Music's Top "30 under 30" Canadian classical musicians in 2017, composer Dr. **Roydon Tse** writes music that bridges cultures, drawing on shared human experience, climate, and our evolving cultural landscape. His recent works have been performed by leading ensembles including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Macao Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, and Tapestry Opera. His recent concerto Restless World Anew was co-commissioned by the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music. In 2025, the Asian Youth Orchestra toured his work Illuminate across nine cities in China, Taiwan, and Japan.

Tse's music has also been presented by the Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Edmonton Symphony Orchestras, as well as the Brussels, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Brno Philharmonics, among others. His work has received numerous honors, including seven SOCAN Foundation Awards, Washington International Composition Prize, Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize, Chalmers Arts Fellowship, and the Lori Davies Composition Award. He studied piano in the UK and music composition at the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto. He is currently the Assistant Professor of Composition & Theory at the University of Saskatchewan.

Stephen Yip (b. 1971) obtained his doctor of musical arts (D.M.A.) at Rice University. He has attended major music festivals including: Wellesley Composers Conference, Aspen Music Festival, Asian Composers' League, ISCM World Music Days, Chinese Composers' Festival, Darmstadt, Germany. Residencies include: Yaddo Colony and MacDowell Colony. Yip's works have been performed in the Asia, Europe and America. He has received several composition prizes, included "Earplay Donald Aird", "Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Award", "Taiwan Music Center International

Composition Prize”, “Singapore International Composition Competition for Chinese Orchestra”, the ALEA III composition Competition. Yip’s music is published by the Universal edition, the BabelScores, and the edition Impronta. His works are recorded in the Kairos, Albany, ERM-Media, PARMA, Capstone, North South recording, Ablaze records, ATMA Classique, and Beauport Classical labels and now serves faculty at Houston Community College and LoneStar College.

Chris Zacharias is a Boston-based composer and guitarist whose work blends jazz, contemporary classical practice, and electronic media into a language shaped by timbre, texture, and formal process. Drawing on influences from mathematics, computer science, and post-tonal theory, his music explores how structured systems can give rise to fluid, expressive sonic environments. He completed his undergraduate in Jazz composition at Berklee College of Music where he studied under Bob Pilkington. Currently, he working on a master's in composition at New England Conservatory where he studies under John Mallia.

Xu Zheng is a US-based Chinese composer who envisions herself as a “music translator,” dedicated to articulating the nuances of life, poetry, and identity through an interdisciplinary sonic lens. Her compositions are characterized by flowing narratives and vivid imagery, often drawing on her cross-cultural background to bridge Eastern and Western musical traditions. Her music has been featured at festivals including Composing in the Wilderness, CAMPGround, Electronic Music Midwest Festival, and the SHE Festival. She has also collaborated with performers and ensembles such as Sandbox Percussion, S.E.M Ensemble, and Kansas City Sinfonietta. Xu holds a Master of Music in composition from the University of Missouri–Kansas City, where her work was awarded First Prize in the 2024 Dr. Gerald Kemner Prize for Orchestral Composition.