

Faculty Recital

Erik Steighner, Saxophone & Oksana Ejokina, Piano

Sunday, September 13, 2026 at 3pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.
Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment, and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

Ballade.....	Henri Tomasi (1901-1971)
Elegy for a Hollow Man.....	Malcolm Lewis (1925-2014)
Second Flight (2017)	Joan Tower
Austintasia (2004).....	Kyle Kindred
<i>I. Riverside Statues</i>	
<i>II. Austin-Autos</i>	
Kol Nidrei, op. 47	Max Bruch (1838-1920)
	arr. Arthur Sagami

Program Notes

Henri Tomasi's *Ballade* is one of the most widely performed works of the French classical saxophone repertoire. Composed in 1938 and premiered the following year by Marcel Mule, it was inspired by a poem by Suzanne Malard:

On an old English theme, long, lean, and phlegmatic
Like him,
A clown tells his melancholy tale
To the night;

Along the quays, the shadow of his fate zigzags,
And his old jokes,
Tasting of cigarette butts in his mouth,
Drive him mad...

To escape his baggy costume and monotonous flesh,
To be,
Between joy and sorrow, nothing but a saxophone
Hesitating!

His despair sinks straight to the bottom
Of a pool of sound,
And the clown resigns himself to making
The audience laugh again!

Little explanatory documentation survives for *Elegy for a Hollow Man* by Malcolm Lewis, an American composer and longtime member of the Ithaca College faculty. Its elegiac character speaks largely for itself, and the work shares a certain thematic resonance with Tomasi's *Ballade*.

Joan Tower describes *Second Flight* as a "sequel" to *Wings*, her 1981 work for solo clarinet, later transcribed by the composer for saxophone. She writes: "To me, the saxophone matches the power of the clarinet in its ability to do so many different things—its slow-to-fast speeds, soft-to-loud dynamics, short-to-long notes, and huge register—which gives it a great musical expressive flexibility. This all inspired me—again—to think of something powerful that flies high and wide above a large landscape."

Kyle Kindred's *Austintasia* takes its programmatic inspiration from Austin, Texas, where the composer and I premiered the piece in 2004. Kindred writes: "*Austintasia* is my second piece for alto saxophone and piano, the programmatic elements of which all come from the great city of Austin. The first movement was inspired by a somber view of the homelessness and poverty of the area of town in which I live. The title for the second movement is a play on words; the obvious reference is to Austin's incredible traffic situation, while *ostinato* is a musical term describing a melodic and/or rhythmic figure that is constantly repeated throughout a section or piece of music."

Max Bruch composed *Kol Nidrei* in 1880 for cellist Robert Hausmann, describing it as an "Adagio after Hebrew Melodies." Its opening theme is the traditional Kol Nidre melody associated with the evening service that begins Yom Kippur; Bruch treats the solo instrument much like the voice of a cantor, unfolding the melody in an expansive, rhapsodic line. A contrasting second melody comes from Isaac Nathan's setting of Lord Byron's "Oh! Weep for Those that Wept on Babel's Stream." Originally written for cello and orchestra, the work has been adapted for many other instruments; this version was arranged by my former PLU student Arthur Sagami.

This performance is offered in memory of my former teachers, Robert Musser (1938-2026) and Harvey Pittel (1943-2026).

About the Performers

Praised by the *Tacoma News Tribune* for his “effortless lyricism” and “smooth tone and fluid virtuosity,” saxophonist **Erik Steighner** has performed with the Austin Symphony Orchestra, the Federal Way Symphony, the Northwest Sinfonietta, the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra, the San Antonio Symphony, the Tacoma Opera, and Symphony Tacoma. Steighner teaches at Pacific Lutheran University, the University of Puget Sound, and Tacoma Community College, where his courses have included saxophone lessons, chamber music, music theory, ear training, music appreciation, and digital music. He also serves on the faculty of the University of Puget Sound Community Music Department and is the founder and conductor of the South Sound Saxophone Ensemble. Steighner has premiered dozens of solo and chamber works and appears on CD releases from labels including Albany Records, Alea Publishing, Mark Custom, Naxos, Reference Recordings, and Vienna Modern Masters. He holds bachelor’s degrees in music and English from the University of Puget Sound and master’s and doctoral degrees in saxophone performance from The University of Texas at Austin. While living in Austin, he served on the faculty at Texas State University. A Conn-Selmer artist, Steighner performs on Selmer Paris saxophones and mouthpieces.

Pianist **Oksana Ejokina** appears frequently as guest recitalist, concerto soloist, and chamber musician on concert series across the United States. Oksana has soloed with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra in Russia, Seattle Symphony, Tacoma Symphony, Washington-Idaho Symphony, and University of Washington Symphony Orchestra, and performed in venues such as the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, Benaroya Hall, Davies Orchestra Hall, and Klassik Keyifler Festival in Turkey. Her recent premier performances include works by Marilyn Shrude, Laura Kaminsky, Wayne Horvitz, and Bern Herbolzheimer. She has been featured on multiple live radio broadcasts on such stations as WFMT-Chicago, KUOW and KING FM in Seattle, and Maine Public Radio. Her collaborations have included concerts with the Seattle Chamber Players, Avalon String Quartet, violinist Ian Swensen, and cellists Johannes Moser, David Requiro, and Meta Weiss, among others. Oksana was awarded a doctor of musical arts degree in piano performance from Stony Brook University in 2004. She is the pianist of the Volta Piano Trio, whose recordings for the Con Brio label received accolades in multiple international music magazines, such as *The Strad*, *Gramophone*, and *American Record Guide*. Her other longstanding collaboration is with the pianist Christina Dahl. A sought-after teacher, she currently serves as Professor of Piano and Coordinator of Piano Studies at Pacific Lutheran University and is in demand as an adjudicator and masterclass teacher. Dr. Ejokina’s students have won top prizes in numerous state, national, and international competitions, have participated in prestigious summer programs, and have been accepted to top colleges and conservatories in the US to pursue their undergraduate and graduate studies. A committed arts educator, Oksana served as Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Festival and Institute at the Icicle Creek Center for the Arts and now directs T-Town Chamber Music Festival and Institute in Tacoma, where she resides.