

Composers Forum

Sunday, December 11, 2022 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
College of Professional Studies / Department of Music presents

Composers Forum

Gregory Youtz, *director*

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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

Buried Love **Emma Christensen**
Poem by Sara Teasdale

Caitlyn Babcock, *alto* • Maria-Viktoria Kovalsky, *piano*

In this art song, I wanted to explore the conflicting and bittersweet emotions of Teasdale's text, particularly through shifting and ambiguous harmonic language. The piece's A section begins with a Dorian motive, while the B section's shift into a contrasting meter and moments of quintal harmony build intensity leading to the climax and the singer's final act of making peace with their former feelings.

A Dream Within a Dream **Natlia Parmly**
Poem by Edgar Allen Poe

Zoe Salyer, *soprano* • Natalia Parmly, *piano*

This art song is a melodic setting of Edgar Allen Poe's poem *A Dream Within a Dream*. Written in the year of his death, this poem is shrouded in mystery and emotion. I was inspired by the music of the Romantic composers during the time this poem was written, with big sweeping melodies, almost operatic in sound, and passionate melodic lines. The words are subsumed into a sound world that tells the story whether or not you can understand the words, appropriate to the poetic setting of songs written during the Romantic period. I strove to achieve a balance of the mystery in Edgar Allen Poe's poem, and the emotional expression of the Romantic art song. Be sure to listen to the beginning melody being echoed in the end of the song as we question: "Is *all* that we see or seem but a dream within a dream?"

Falling..... **Courtney Stark**
Natalia Parmly, *piano*

This piece is an exploration of the whole tone scale, and is meant to imitate the feeling of falling. The mysterious, dream-like sound of the scale gives this piece a suspenseful tone and evokes feelings of uncertainty. This work uses a combination of both the C and C-sharp whole tone scales to create a complex sound and more interesting chords. The inspiration for this composition is Debussy's *Voiles*, which is one of the most well-known pieces that uses the whole tone scale.

Winter Stars **Caitlyn Babcock**
Poem by Sara Teasdale

Ellie O'Brien, *soprano* • Cole Strichertz, *vibraphone* • Caitlyn Babcock, *piano*

When originally writing *Winter Stars*, I knew that I wanted two instruments juxtaposed against each other; one representing grounded earthly sadness, and the other having a clear otherworldly celestial feel. With its chordal ability and shimmering sound, I immediately thought of the vibraphone. Within the piece, you will hear these two elements separate from each other, until they merge together as the singer compares city lights to the night sky. With the cold, night sky theme, I also made an Orion motif using the notes C, D, A, E, and F – an homage to Eriks Ešenvalds’ *Northern Lights*.

Annabel Lee..... Caitlyn Babcock

Poem by Edgar Allen Poe

Isabella Daltoso, *mezzo-soprano* • Arthur Keast, *baritone* • Fiona Ashton-Knochel, *piano*

This poem has had a special place in my heart for a long time. I always thought it would be beautiful set to music with its range of emotions from loving to macabre. In this particular setting, I have changed some of the syntax of the poem to fit a duet setting. *Annabel Lee* starts with a warm love interest character, and by the end transforms into a ghostly memory driving Poe to grief-stricken madness. There are many uses of motifs tied to specific repeated words throughout the poem. Pay close attention to the melodic material of “Annabel Lee” and “kingdom by the sea”.

Wild Nights..... Mateo Acuña

Poem by Emily Dickinson

Hailey Wharton, *vocals* • Mateo Acuña, *piano* • Marisa Robbins, *bass* • Evan Nakanishi, *drums*

This text setting extrapolates the wildness and sexual liberation of Emily Dickinson’s poem and contextualizes it as a contemporary jazz combo. The moodiness and ominous quality harken to speculations around Dickinson’s queerness and isolation while emphasizing her longing and desire.

Voyage..... Arthur Keast

Arthur Keast, *vocals*

The composition is about one’s internal struggles and the questions that are asked about a not so clear future. It can be easy to give up, it can be easy to run away from adversity. But no matter what, we have to face these problems sometime in our life. Musically, I use an emphasis on electronic themes to convey emotions. The flow that is witnessed in the chorus represents a sense of direction like a flowing river that brings in and brings out events in our life. The final part of the song brings in a flood wave of emotions. It represents the final stretch of a sunset before the day ends. I used many layers of sounds to represent the opening of salvation or the open door to a new day. My goal was to use analogue and digital aspects of music in one piece. I had a lot of fun throughout this experience and learned quite a bit through trial and error.

Scylla.....Hailey Wharton

Text from Homer’s *Odyssey*

Sophia Barkhurst, *soprano* • Lindsey Hansen, *alto* • Trevor Kytola, *tenor* • Ryan Shane, *bass*
Hailey Wharton, *conductor*

Book XII of the *Odyssey* denotes sailors being led to their unexpected deaths by both Sirens of the deep, and a horrific monster with many heads, known by the name Scylla. This text setting of the story sheds light on the mystery of the Sirens through medieval melodies and unconventional harmonic development. Listen for the wailing sounds of Scylla and the Sirens in the treble voices, and the worried sounds of the sailors in the tenor-bass voices.

Remember Me.....Daniel Beck

Text from Christina Rossetti and Mark Twain

Hailey Wharton, *soprano 1* • Maggie Sheldon, *soprano 2*
Sophia Barkhurst, *alto 1* • Maria-Viktoria Kovalsky, *alto 2*
Spencer McCray, *tenor 1* • Dane Schmidt, *tenor 2*
Arthur Keast, *bass 1* • Jack Burrows, *bass 2*

This composition was written in honor of the mother of the composer’s friend who had passed away in the Summer of 2022. The piece utilizes text from Christina Rossetti’s *Remember* and Mark Twain’s *Warm Summer Sun* to create a warm, enveloping a cappella texture that intends to bring comfort, even in the midst of death. Throughout the work, tonal, folk-esque melodies invoke this comfort in a nostalgic manner, harkening back to joyful memories of times gone by.

The Forest Village **James Gibson**

Ellen Coburn and Eli Lockhart, *flutes* • Ainsley Fuerst, *oboe*
Jeremy Wuitschick and Matthew Helmer, *clarinets* • Benjamin Birmingham and Mateo Acuña, *horns*
Rorie Millward and Grace Karns, *bassoons* • Owen Dumas, *piano*

This character piece tells the story of a small town deep in the forest. The opening horn call sets the scene of a forest in late autumn, with the clarinet taking up the melody as the protagonist walks through the woods. As the walk continues, the protagonist approaches a small village and spends the day exploring its shops, meeting its inhabitants, and seeing the sights. As the sun begins to set, the villagers begin to come out of their homes with lights for a midnight dance. The protagonist joins in at the end of the night before everyone gets tired and goes to bed, returning to the original horn theme.

Hades Horn Quartet **Mateo Acuña**

I. Styx
II. Fanfare

Mateo Acuña, *horn 1* • James Gibson, *horn 2*
Rosalyn Tobeck, *horn 3* • Benjamin Birmingham, *horn 4*

The *Hades Horn Quartet* takes motifs from my *Hades Horn Concerto* and arranges it for four horns. The quartet was conceived while working on the concerto. While composing the slow section (that is the *Fanfare* in the horn quartet) I accidentally pasted the piano part into the horn part. I was struck by how majestic the harmonies sounded with the horns. I then decided to take my favorite moments from the piece and create a horn quartet out of it.

String Quartet No. 1 **Gabriel Casey-Aguinaga**

I. Vicacidade (Vivacity)
II. Saudade (longing or missing something which is absent)
III. Fascínio (Allurement)
IV. Nostalgia
V. Festejo (Festiveness)

Naomi Southard, *violin 1* • Justin Singh, *violin 2*
Alyson Rake, *viola* • Marisa Robbins, *cello*

This five-movement string quartet is an exploration of my connection to Brazil, both musically and emotionally. The first movement, *Vivacidade*, is a statement and development of two motives both based on the winding eighth note melodic ideas often found in Choro music. There is also a hectic quality in the counterpoint (not arguing but definitely not always agreeing) that I think gives the piece liveliness. The second, slower and more melancholic movement, *Saudade*, is loosely based around European Renaissance music to give it a bygone quality. The third movement, *Facínio*, is a Choro. Choro is one of the vernacular styles of Brazilian music and is the precursor to Samba. Movement four, *Nostalgia*, uses a more homophonic texture than the other movements as well as thicker jazz harmony to convey the warm bittersweet tone I associate with *Nostalgia* rather than the distant sorrow of *Saudade*. The last movement, *Festejo*, is based on Brazilian popular music but begins with a fanfare as if to call in a celebration.