

# **Composers Forum**

Sunday, May 22, 2022 at 3pm  
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University  
School of Arts and Communication / 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

**Dove of Peace I Call Upon Thee** ..... **Maria-Viktoria Kovalsky**  
*Maria-Viktoria Kovalsky, piano*

After hearing about the events in Ukraine and Russia, it felt necessary to write a piece in reaction to such happenings. My mother showed me a video, presumably from Ukraine, in which an Orthodox church service is held outside. As the priest stands in front of the image of Mother Mary and Jesus, a white dove flies down and sits on top of it. In Christianity, a white dove can symbolize the Holy Spirit and can also be a symbol of peace. I wanted to write a piano piece about this very moment with aggressive and hard-hitting arpeggiations to mimic the sounds of violence and destruction. I use a major sixth chord to derive a feeling of militaristic pride, only to be overshadowed by more clamorous arpeggiations. I use an Orthodox church hymn, *Lord I Call Upon Thee*, within the piece as a plea to end the terror. Yet in the madness, a dove descends to the image of Mother Mary and Jesus and thus concludes my piece.

*Lord, I call upon thee hear me! Hear me, O Lord! Receive the voice of my prayer, when I call upon thee, hear me! Hear me, O Lord!*

**Alone**..... **Lennon Green**  
*Sophia Barkhurst, alto • Maria-Viktoria Kovalsky, piano*

I am alone, in spite of love,  
In spite of all I take and give,  
In spite of all your tenderness,  
Sometimes I am not glad to live.

I am alone, as though I stood  
On the highest peak of the tired gray world,  
About me only swirling snow,  
Above me, endless space unfurled;

With earth hidden and heaven hidden,  
And only my own spirit's pride  
To keep me from the peace of those  
Who are not lonely, having died.

*(text: Sarah Teasdale)*

This piece, based on a beautifully melancholy work from poet Sara Teasdale, was meant to test my skills for writing melody. I wanted, in particular, to give this piece a sound that was intimate and strong while also conveying a deep emotional longing for change. I took inspiration from Steven Sondheim and his wonderful eye for color and expression. There is a small motif that I've threaded throughout this song that I call the "Alone" theme, which continually appears in a variety of chord structures, rhythms, and durations. The lyrics in this piece are truly what makes the song come alive, so I would highly encourage you to read the whole poem before listening.

**Bring Me Joy** ..... **TJ Wheeler**

Jackie Wray, *tenor* • TJ Wheeler, *piano*

*Bring Me Joy* is an emotional art song composed for solo tenor voice and piano accompaniment, with original text by the composer. The song serves as an emotional plea for internal peace as the world feels loud and dark, specifically as one wrestles with depression in a time of internal tumult and sorrow. I wrote it for a friend who was dealing with depression last year, with me trying to musically and lyrically remind the performer that music oftentimes can seem like a rescue boat on stormy seas, hearkening back to one of my all-time favorite choral pieces I performed in Choir of the West: Richard Nance's *In Profundum Maris*, a piece with text by Kathryn Sparks. I wanted to loosely reference the pandemic with lines such as "covered smiles will not be broken" (which can also be interpreted metaphorically), but specifically I wanted the piece to feel sort of like a prayer, even ending with a IV-I cadence in an ambiguous, open-ended conclusion. However, despite the darker moments in the piece, there are moments of powerful resolve and determination in the midst of turmoil that I hope can resonate with those affected by depression, like a sunbreak in the fiercest of storms.

**Zest for Life** ..... **Carina Collier**

Ben Martin, *soprano saxophone* • Jason Parshall, *alto saxophone*  
Marie Morgan, *tenor saxophone* • Aidan Hille, *baritone saxophone*

Almost three years ago I adopted an energetic little mutt named Peach. Her constant tail-wagging and enthusiasm has brought a lot of joy to my life. I once asked my sister, "Why is Peach always happy?" and she responded, "I don't know, zest for life." That inspired me to write this piece that captures not just her wild energy, but the joy she brings to everyone around her. You'll hear themes that represent different aspects of my life with her. The intro is melancholy with no melody, which represents my life before Peach. Then the piece bursts into a busy, fun theme inspired by her infinite energy. A second, bouncy theme represents how she turns every day into a happy day. Then, a third more lyrical theme depicts warmer moments like snuggling with me or comforting me when I'm sad. The ending stretch of the piece is a take on the "every day" theme as I look ahead to the life I'll have with her.

**Rabbit** ..... **Joy Han**

- I. Rabbit on the Moon*
- II. Umma*
- III. Earth and Her*

Naomi Southard and Kaden Samanmit, *violins*  
Alyson Rake, *viola* • Madelynne Jones, *cello*

A small tribute to my mother. As a first generation Korean American, she always is brought to the forefront of my mind whenever I think about where I am in life now. She would never share her experiences with me about the time when she moved to the states, so I wanted to envision what it could have been like for her from the little bits that I do know.

**Time's Persuasion** ..... **Will Bentley**

- Like You Used To*
- Be*
- The Best Night's Sleep*

Will Bentley, *vocals and piano* • Jessa Delos Reyes, *trumpet*  
Ben Martin, *alto saxophone* • Marie Morgan, *tenor saxophone*  
Ethan Moon, *electric bass* • Josh Hansel, *drum set*

These three jazz pieces are based on time as well as Aristotle's modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. The first piece, *Like You Used To*, represents past and pathos, looking at how the past is often observed from a very emotional perspective, especially when it comes to romance. *Be* represents present and logos, offering a very logical lens as we

contemplate our existence in the present. Lastly, *The Best Night's Sleep*, represents future and ethos, discussing the ethics of how I personally perceive the future, and some of my questions and anxieties regarding my Catholic upbringing, specifically how it views death.

**12 at 8** ..... **JAG**

Ben Martin, *alto saxophone* • Aidan Hille, *baritone saxophone*  
Felix Halvorson, *guitar* • Joshua Green, *bass* • Josh Hansel, *drum set*

*12 at 8*, by Joshua Green (JAG), is an Afro-Cuban inspired groove set in 12/8 time. The bridge brings a twist, shifting the feel to a 4/4 swing feel. As a listener, notice what feelings this shift brings as a contrast from the 12/8 groove.

**Green's Groove** ..... **JAG**

Ben Martin, *alto saxophone* • Aidan Hille, *baritone saxophone*  
Felix Halvorson, *guitar* • Joshua Green, *bass* • Josh Hansel, *drum set*

*Green's Groove* is a standard 32 bar song form with a funk-rock feel. The written melody line is truly a rhythmic line in the A section. This leads to the B section which finally releases a melodic line, which subsequently returns to the original groove.