Composer’s Forum III

Thursday, May 12, 2022 • 7:00 PM

Murray and Michele Allen Recital Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago
Thursday, May 12, 2022 • 7:00 PM
Allen Recital Hall

COMPOSER’S FORUM III

PROGRAM

Xavier Davenport (b. 1995)
Harmful Leaves (2022)

Xavier Davenport, guitar & electronics

Grant Cottier (b. 1998)
Partita for Solo Percussion (2022)
   I. Flexatone
   II. Timpani
   III. Bass Drum
   IV. Gong

Collin Wittlich, percussion

Morgan Easterday (b. 1998)
The Leaves Change So Quickly (2020-21)

Ryan Christianson, trombone

Sam Kudra (b. 2001)
Sleep Cycle (2021)

Grant Cottier, piano

Luke Sailstad (b. 2001)
Suite No. 1 for Three Trumpets (2019)
   I. Fanfare
   II. Chorale
   III. Minuet
   IV. Toccata

Adam Czader, Margaret Thompson, & Ethan Mogilner, trumpet

Masks must be worn at all times. As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted. Thank you.
Jimmy Levi (b. 1999)
Three Settings of James J. Ryan (2019)
   III. Petersen
   Corinne Klein, mezzo soprano
   Ava Wirth, oboe & English horn
   Ari Scott, cello
   Todd Humphrey, cello
   Christopher Jones, conductor

Sam Kudra (b. 2001)
Coastal Dark (2021)
   Evelyn Gerhart, flute
   Sam Kudra, piano

Peyton Gatza (b. 1999)
Untethered Perspectives (2021)
   TBA, horn

Justin Torzala (b. 2002)
Two Faces (2021-22)
   I. A Cloudless Sky
   II. Two Faces
   III. The World Falls Apart
   IV. Distance
   V. Looking In
   Corinne Klein, mezzo-soprano
   Dominic Reyes, tenor
   Sam Kudra, piano
Xavier Davenport (b. 1995)
**Harmful Leaves (2022)**
*Duration: 6 minutes*
Harmful Leaves is a study in generating multiple natural and artificial harmonics high in the overtone series on classical guitar. One technique in particular is developed throughout the piece: a raking technique in which multiple harmonics are engaged in an upwards strumming motion. Electronics are used to emphasize the overtones which do not ring so clearly on the guitar, and also serve to compliment the improvisatory texture of the latter half of the piece. The piece is unusually meditative for me, as can be the autumnal activity of raking leaves.

*Notes by Xavier Davenport*

Grant Cottier (b. 1998)
**Partita for Solo Percussion (2022)**
*Duration: 10 minutes*
In writing this piece, I sought to explore unconventional modes of sound production utilizing instruments which tend to be closely associated with certain playing techniques and timbres. The constraint of only working with one percussion instrument at a time necessitated an approach to creating and developing material different to that with which I am typically accustomed.

The title is derived from the fact that each movement is loosely based on formal and rhythmic conventions of a different Baroque dance. Each movement joins to the next through specific timbral features, and a distinctive motif recurs throughout, thus binding the work as a whole.

*Notes by Grant Cottier*

Morgan Easterday (b. 1998)
**The Leaves Change So Quickly (2020-21)**
*Duration: 6 minutes*
I wrote this piece with the changing of the seasons in mind. The idea being that you go about your life with minimal changes occurring everyday, but when you look back, you realize that everything has seemingly shifted all at once.

*Notes by Morgan Easterday*
Sam Kudra (b. 2001)
Sleep Cycle (2021)
*Duration: 4 minutes*
*Sleep Cycle* is a musical interpretation of the biological phenomenon known by the same name. The Sleep Cycle is a natural pattern that has been observed in all humans and most mammals. The Cycle is split up into four segments, with each segment having its own varying length and characteristics that alter the body during sleep. The piece exemplifies these aspects through four different sections that use different musical characteristics to detail the body’s progression through the Sleep Cycle. At the end of the piece, the REM section of the Sleep Cycle is musically presented as ‘up to the performer’s interpretation’. Due to the random nature of the REM section and its involvement in the creation of dreams, the performer is encouraged to approach the ending in a way that is unpredictable to the audience.

*Notes by Sam Kudra*

Luke Sailstad (b. 2001)
Suite No. 1 for Three Trumpets (2019)
*Duration: 5 minutes, 30 seconds*
Trumpet Suite No. 1 was composed as a commission for members of the DePaul University classical trumpet studio. The piece uses four very old forms as a base from which to expand upon musically, and they provided a good limitation that helped foster creativity in my composition process. I tried to feature the entire expressive range of the trumpet through use of different mutes and playing styles. Because of this, a wide variety of moods are presented in this piece, such as melancholy, gusto, whimsy and intensity.

*Notes by Luke Sailstad*

Jimmy Levi (b. 1999)
Three Settings of James J. Ryan (2019)
*Duration: 6 minutes*
*Three Settings from James J. Ryan* is a brief song cycle I wrote over the course of my degree at St. Olaf College, and was the first piece of vocal music I ever completed. I was drawn to the writings of James J. Ryan, an obscure Chicago composer active in the 20s and 30s, for its pastoral imagery and earnest (if over-the-top) penchant for drama. Each poem comes from a collection of Ryan’s sonnets and quatrains published in the June 1930 issue of *Poetry* magazine. The poems range from angsty, like *Snow* (the first poem I set), to simple and beautiful, like *Spring* (the second).
Petersen, which completes the cycle, synthesizes these contrasting moods: The first part of the sonnet depicts an adventurer steeled against war and the elements, while the second part explores the softer, more pastoral side of nature. The poem is about peace and healing, and finding beauty in a large and indifferent world.

The images of storms and the raw power and beauty of nature lent itself well to writing accompaniment textures, especially in the melodic instruments that make up the ensemble. The piece from its conception had two celli in the ensemble, which allows for antiphonal and hocket textures. The oboe and English horn provided a contrasting timbre, which I found I wanted once I started writing the 2nd movement. The 3rd movement begins with a pizzicato gesture followed by longer, more sustained notes, capturing this juxtaposition. After some floaty melodic lines, the instruments transition into a jagged cascade of pitch and rhythm for which the voice to brace against, with several variations on the material cycling through as the poem explores different scenes of chaos and power, then mellowing out for the second part.

*Notes by Jimmy Levi*

Sam Kudra (b. 2001)
**Coastal Dark (2021)**
*Duration: 5 minutes, 30 seconds*
*Coastal Dark* is a piece that takes the idea of “a sunny day on the beach,” and flips it on its head. Oftentimes, the word “coast” is associated with soft sands, the light summer breeze, the salty waves of the ocean, and the bright rays of the sun. There is hardly any consideration for what a seaside paradise might look like when the sun is down and the clouds move in. The sounds of *Coastal Dark* aim to embody the elements of the seashore that many people do not think about and the emotions one might feel if they were to witness the scenery of a shrouded, coastal night.

*Notes by Sam Kudra*

Peyton Gatza (b. 1999)
**Untethered Perspectives (2021)**
*Duration: 6 minutes*
Written for solo French horn, *Untethered Perspectives* is a piece that travels and develops modally around the same center. As the piece continues to take shape, the modes start to become more recognizable and the material shapes itself to fit the mood of the present mode. The shifting of weight towards particular beats, fluctuating time, and chromaticism are all
incredibly present techniques in this piece that keep the listener on their toes as the material continues to spiral through its different modalities. As the piece breaks out into its most climatic and triumphant moment, bear in mind how the material throughout finds ways to come back to passages that might have been stated earlier in the piece but with a new modal context.

*Notes by Peyton Gatza*

Justin Torzala (b. 2002)

**Two Faces (2021-22)**

*Duration: 16 minutes*

*Two Faces* is a five-number and 16-minute continuous piece written in the style of musical theatre. The show follows a proposed marriage between a young couple, a woman’s mental turmoil and self-doubt, and their relationship’s ultimate end. The story explores love between characters who are fundamentally unaligned and the process of growth from heartbreak. “Distance” takes place over the course of approximately one year, as each character grows out of their failed relationship. I intend to fully realize the piano reduction into a quintet, adding a string quartet to the instrumentation. *Two Faces* utilizes a calculated key scheme and deliberate harmonic language, all of which reacts to the narrative supporting the large-scale form of the piece. Motives are used throughout the music and respond to plot events within the story, including a theme that is set to mimic the sound of a music box of a snow globe. Repetition and variation is very intentional, as I attempt to avoid a traditional song form with verse and chorus in each number. Thank you to Macy Berendsen for conceiving the storyline and providing lyrical outlines, Corinne Klein for lots of vocal workshopping, and Fredrick Gifford for guidance and clarity throughout the entire process.

*Notes by Justin Torzala*
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DePaul University School of Music

Annual Spring Gala

THE EVENING OF

Saturday, May 21, 2022

FEATURING
DePaul Symphony Orchestra, Cliff Colnot, Conductor
DePaul Jazz Workshop, Dana Hall, Director

AND THE PRESENTATION OF THE
2022 DePaul Pro Musica Award to Mary Patricia Gannon

Join us for this festive evening – the School’s only fundraiser – celebrating the talents of our students and our 2022 Pro Musica Awardee. We look forward to welcoming you to this celebratory evening with all of the proceeds benefitting the students of the DePaul University School of Music.

For more information about the evening, please contact: music@depaul.edu
**Upcoming Events**

**DePaul University School of Music**

Ronald Caltabiano, DMA, Dean

**Ensembles in Residence**

- June 10 • 7:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  Ensemble Dal Niente

**Faculty Artist Series**

- May 15 • 3:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  Jason Moy, harpsichord

- May 28 • 3:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  Ian Ding, percussion

**School of Music**

- May 14 • 8:00 P.M.
  Gannon Concert Hall
  DePaul Concert Choir

- May 16 • 7:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  Wind/Mixed Chamber Showcase I

- May 17 • 7:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  String Chamber Showcase I

- May 18 • 7:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  Wind/Mixed Chamber Showcase II

- May 19 • 7:00 P.M.
  Allen Recital Hall
  String Chamber Showcase II

- May 21 • 8:00 P.M.
  Gannon Concert Hall
  Spring Gala

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