

Queer Excellence Through Musical Activism

by

Brandon LePage

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Amy Porter, Chair
Doctor Kelly Askew
Professor Chad Burrow
Doctor Colleen Conway
Professor David Zerkel

Brandon LePage

blepage@umich.edu

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Dedication

This Dissertation is dedicated to all members of the LGBTQ+ community, but especially those who gave their blood, sweat, and tears fighting for a better world including Marsha P. Johnson, Harvey Milk, and RuPaul Andre Charles among many others. It is my hope that this document will add volume to the cacophony of voices demanding equity, justice, dignity, and grace for LGBTQ+ persons in the United States of America and around the world.

Acknowledgments

First, to Professor Amy Porter, it is with gratitude and joy that I say from the bottom of my heart, thank you. Your guidance, mentorship, and breadth of knowledge inspired me to rise to the occasion and have set me up for success.

Second, to my mother Marie, father Robert, and sister Rachel (along with her husband Mauro) my life in music started with you and the legacy of music shall continue to live on through me thanks to your unwavering support and love.

Third, to all the other members of my committee, Dr. Colleen Conway, Dr. Kelly Askew, Professor Chad Burrow, and Professor David Zerkel, the guidance, perspective, and support offered by you throughout this process made a huge impact on me and I am forever grateful to you all.

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Fifth, to the composers from the Alphabet Mafia; Alfredo Cabrera, Harry Castle, Alexis Lamb, Ryan Lindveit, and Peter Cohn, thank you for writing such vibrant and colorful works and sharing space with me as I barreled through the creative process with each of you.

Finally, to the teachers and mentors of my past (Carole Scott, Ervin Monroe, Richard Sherman, Timothy Day, Jeffrey Zook, Mark D'Angelo...the list goes on), your exceptional and unconditional support of me throughout my career and education has not gone unnoticed. This document is a testimony to the village that raised me.

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Abstract

In lieu of a written dissertation, three recital programs/projects were presented.

With a focus on the exploration of the world from the queer perspective through music, these recitals highlighted the LGBTQ+ experience in America through the themes of Excellence, Politics, and Representation. Recital 1, "Focus on Flint" showcased Queer Excellence through the performance of pieces written by composers from Flint. The composers themselves were not all members of the LGBTQ+ community, but I (as an unapologetically queer person) was able to uplift the voices most closely representing the community of Flint while funneling resources (money, positive representations of Flint, etc) directly back into the community itself. Recital 2, "On the Treatment of Repertoire in the Age of the Gun ", used the music of lesbian composer Jennifer Higdon to talk about appropriate ways to program and present music involving gun violence at a time when mass shootings have become commonplace. Highlighting queer politics, I also showed how paradoxical it is that the United State of America is having such a difficult time figuring out how to legislate guns while, particularly in the rural south, there seems to be no shortage of anti-LGBTQ+ laws being presented aiming to eradicate us from the public eye. In my final recital "Exploring "Representation" Through a BIG (intermediate) Recital", I charged 4 LGBTQ+ identifying composers to write for professional wind trio and also intermediate level middle/high school wind trio, being certain that the instrumentation remained flexible. Through the creation of repertoire for the intermediate age range, I am able to start filling a gap that exists in our canon while simultaneously offering students and teachers solid examples of positive queer representation. Finishing the recital with my Flute/Harp duo "The Dynamic Duo", I was

also able to foster queer excellence through representation by commissioning a young second-year student at the University of Michigan studying composition. By collaboratively working with him on his composition, I was able to model and represent the highest caliber of queer professionalism while validating the right we have to exist within public spaces without feeling the need to diminish or apologize for our obvious queerness. It is my hope that this dissertation becomes a blueprint for other LGBTQ+ musicians to feel emboldened to exist loudly and proudly through their artistry.

Sunday, October 22, 2023, 4:30pm, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Britton Recital Hall, University of Michigan. Assisted by: Dr. Elizabeth Ames, piano; Jordan Smith, flute; Melissa Coppola, synthesizer. Program: Desmond Sheppard, *Kattalagé (Reconciliation)*, Haden Ploufee, *Three Short Streams of Consciousness*, Dr. Gary Powell Nash, *Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo*, Dr. Jonathan Bailey Holland, *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, Dr. Samuel Zyman, *Fantasia Mexicana*.

Friday, January 19, 2024, 8pm, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Britton Recital Hall, University of Michigan. Assisted by: Dr. Elizabeth Ames, piano. Program: Jennifer Higdon, *rapid◇fire*, Jennifer Higdon, *Legacy*.

Monday, April 22, 2024, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Stamps Auditorium, University of Michigan. Assisted by: Roberto Campa, saxophone; Rachel Miller, harp; Nathan Rodriguez, clarinet. Program: Alfredo A. Cabrera, *Mountain Antics & Tiny Beings* and *Shenanigans Ahead!*, Alexis C. Lamb, *Help me name this!*, Harry Castle, *Bagatelephone*, Ryan Lindveit, *Pastorale*, and, *Anti-Pastorale*, Lowell Liebermann, *Sonata for Flute and Harp, Op. 56*, Peter Cohn, *He Waits for You*, B. Spears/Dynamic Duo, *I'm Not that Innocent*.

Recital 1, “Focus on Flint”, Program

Kattalagé (*Reconciliation*) (2023)

Desmond Sheppard

(b. 1991)

Flute, Brandon LePage

Piano, Dr Elizabeth Ames

Keyboard/Synthesizer, Melissa Coppola

WORLD PREMIERE

Three Short Streams of Consciousness (2023)

Haden Plouffe

(b. 1998)

1. Recollections of The Man With The Harmonica

Sinuous and Dramatic

2. Echos of a Stochastic

Unyielding, each sound a universe

3. If you Can Believe It

Extremely fluid, caring for each note or gesture

WORLD PREMIERE

Flute, Brandon LePage

Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo (2001)

Dr. Gary Powell Nash

(b. 1964)

Flute, Brandon LePage

Piano, Dr. Elizabeth Ames

–Intermission–

Sonata for Flute and Piano (1993)

Dr. Jonathan Bailey Holland

I. Flowing

(b. 1974)

II. A Fast Waltz

III. Serenely

Flute, Brandon LePage

Piano, Dr. Elizabeth Ames

Fantasia Mexicana (2013)

Dr. Samuel Zyman

(b.1956)

Flute, Brandon LePage and Jordan Smith

Piano, Dr. Elizabeth Ames

Recital 1, “Focus on Flint”, Program Notes

“*Focus on Flint*” aims to show various ways that we as individual artists can more directly serve our communities while also being able to maintain an equitable and socially just mindset all viewed through the lens of “Queer Excellence”. My queerness is inextricable from my wholeness as a human and it consistently shapes the way that I see and interact with the world around me. Unfortunately, in 2024 there is a large portion of society who are unable to separate sexual identity from the idea of sexual activity leaving me often at odds with the heteronormative society that I live in. As a gay person who constantly feels the need to validate my existence in any space, I feel an exceptional form of kindredness and empathy for a community which has had so many assumptions placed onto it without others ever truly getting to know the people who actually represent the breadth of the population there. In order to bring ourselves above this mindset, we are constantly expected to “rise above” to a level of excellence that is higher than expected for the average person in order to pull ourselves out of the situations that we find ourselves forced into.

As Principal Flute of the Flint Symphony Orchestra for almost 7 years, having also served for 3 of those years on faculty at the Flint School of Performing Arts, my perception of Flint has radically evolved from when I was just another citizen in Michigan hearing tall tales about the “dangers” of this city. With a proud and artistically driven community mindset, the city of Flint is much more than the water starved and violent community it has been made out to be and I am proud to consider myself a vibrant thread in the fabric that is Flint. This recital showcases the real and raw truth about the complexity of a city that is *choosing* to be defined by its citizens rather than the opinions of others.

Achieving this is no small feat, but what better way to celebrate the complex and diverse stories of this controversial city than by performing music created by composers who call Flint home? First on the program are two world premiere works written by two very different composers who share the common bond of having grown up steeped in the musical traditions that Flint has to offer. Then, two works by living composers whose careers have influenced and shaped the very fabric of the classical world when it comes to accepting and embracing Composers of Color, both of them from Flint, both of them alumni of the Flint School of Performing Arts. I end by bringing my good friend and current FSPA Flute instructor Jordan Smith on stage to join me in a performance that celebrates professional queer musicians proudly representing Flint and showing what it means to embody Queer Excellence in action.

“Kattalagé” (Reconciliation) (2023 - World Premiere)

From the Composer:

The first word in the title of the piece, “Kattalagé”, is a Greek word meaning “Reconciliation” (the translated title of the work appearing next to it in the score) or “Atonement”. When considering how the meaning of these words relate to certain figures found within ancient Greek mythology, we find that even those with divine lineage ultimately had irreconcilable flaws that even the “purification rituals” which have been hinted at within each Deities’ mythos were unable to fix. Written in the style of an Epic Poem, this piece follows the stories of Medea (the consort of Jason from the “Golden Fleece” myth), Oedipus (the curse-fated king of Thebes), Icarus (son of Daedalus the inventor), and Peles (father of Achilles, high ruler of the Myrmidons).

As the Epic unfolds, we realize that each of these characters have some form of murder on their hands that stems from things that they “neglect”. First we encounter Medea who neglected to trust others due to her ability to see into the future causing her to always assume that it must somehow manifest as she saw it, rather than considering the possibility that what she sees is not certain unless nothing were to change. Her theme is heard first in the flute representing her contemplation of those she could not bring herself to trust, and then the synthesizer hauntingly responds with a similar melody as if to suggest that the ghosts of these people will not leave her alone until she is able to reconcile with what she did to them. We then meet Oedipus, who neglected the reality of his origins and refused to come to terms with his incestual past. We hear in the flute a clearly triumphant tune representing his status as the King of Thebes, but the anxious underpinnings of the repetitive eighth notes in the piano let us know that this is only an illusion and as the flute plays on, it seems as if he is becoming erratic and unhinged and once again the theme has no clear resolution as it leads directly into Icarus’ theme. Icarus neglected to listen to his father and his desire to fly as high as he could towards the sun caused his wax wings to melt, sending him plunging to his death. All three instruments take part in Icarus’ journey upwards (heard clearest in the flute) with his fall to earth heard in the downward cascade of chromatic notes in the flute that seem to come from nowhere. Finally, we fall into Peleus’s story. Peleus neglected to be aware of his own actions which lead to the death of his first wife and also caused his second wife, Thetis, to leave the spell she was weaving upon Achilles (their son) unfinished which ultimately lead to his downfall in the Trojan war. As the final myth to contemplate on this Epic journey, we get bits and pieces of all the other stories haphazardly strung together, which points to Peleus’ inability to remain focused on the task at hand, or to be able to see what truly matters which is what eventually leads to his downfall.

This piece and the stories that it contemplates reflect on several topics as they relate to Flint, and to other culture-shocked areas at large. Most notably when it comes to “neglect”, this manifests in a way that leaves the citizens of these places to live with a feeling of "relentless pursuit" trying to balance their lived reality with that of society being pitted directly against the people who actually live and have roots in these areas. Despite all of the promises made each election cycle to the citizens of Flint, neglect is rearing its ugly head as many members of the community feel as if they are being fated to an existence mired in loss and betrayal. They are ultimately being forced to “make friends” with reality as it is rather than feeling empowered to make the changes needed so that life would be as many of us wish it would be. Sometimes, our shared humanity tends to involve scenarios far beyond our control, but this is a fallacy, and hopefully in learning to make the best of it in those circumstances, we will be able to lay our neglects to rest as well.

From Brandon:

Truly interested in collaboration, Desmond and I had many conversations while discussing the various goals and themes of his piece. He wanted to write me a piece that would become “addictive” to perform, and I believe that this will indeed be the case not only for me, but any who are inspired enough to program and perform it! Beyond that, we spoke frequently about the city of Flint and our experiences with the city and the particular spirit and energy that its residents possess. I have been privileged enough to perform in the Flint Symphony Orchestra now for almost 7 years, 5 of them as Principal Flute, and also taught at the Flint School of Performing Arts for 3 years before starting my Doctoral Studies giving me a unique perspective as an “outsider” who still feels very attached to the fabric of the city. I also have a very close friend who grew up in the area who attended the Flint School of Performing Arts and then subsequently subbed in the cello section of the Flint Symphony before moving away. As I have

worked in Flint, he has been able to give me context and insight into what Flint was like during the 2008 recession and during the water crisis (which, incidentally, is still immortalized in the Symphony's contract which stipulates that "bottled drinking water needs to be present at every service"). I take my role as an ambassador for and member of the Flint community seriously, and hope to do all I can to represent them well, but even with all this nothing can beat the lived experience of growing up in what could now be considered one of the most controversial cities in the country (something this piece acknowledges and also directly pushes back against). It was in the gray and murky parts of my discussions with Desmond, who did have this lived experience, that the concept for this piece emerged.

Three Short Streams of Consciousness (2023 - World Premiere)

Three Short Streams of Consciousness is a work for flute alone that utilizes extended techniques, mixed meters, and a gigantic range of dynamics to bring the listener into three different sound worlds created and meditated upon by the composer, Haden Plouffe. The first movement is titled "*Recollections of The Man With The Harmonica*". We open with a loud accented high note that decrescendo's to almost nothing before jumping down over an octave. This opening is reminiscent of what it would sound like if one were to pick up a harmonica and just blow into it to see what happens. The movement features pitch bends, quarter tones (which are notes tuned up or down a quarter of what it usually would be), key clicks, flutter tongue (which sounds close to the "buzzy" sound of a harmonica), time altering notation asking the performer to speed up or slow down at will, and tongue slaps (loud accented notes that are more percussive than rich with a sound core, but you are still able to hear the pitch). These techniques are used throughout the piece, allowing the performer and listener to travel into the ethereal rather than staying fully grounded here on Earth. As I worked on and explored this movement, I

was able to use the memories of playing around with my grandfathers harmonica as a budding musician myself to more solidly connect to the depth of the movement and I would encourage you as listeners to think back on a time you played around with a harmonica, or even a kazoo.

“Echos of a Stochastic ” (which means random and unpredictable) came about from a malfunctioning microphone that Haden heard during a C-SPAN show that was playing in the lobby of a waiting room. Taken out of context, they felt like the sound was reflective of some of Iannis Xanakis’s electro-acoustic works, and indeed there is a quote found near the end that is taken from his piano concerto. Initially, the piece presented today was going to be for flute and electronics, but as Haden lived with the piece, she decided that both the flute and electronics deserved to be their own work and that is how this solo composition manifested itself. You will hear a lot of sporadic notes and the special technique featured in this movement is the jet whistle which is a sound created by the flutist fingering a note and blowing directly into the tube so you get a loud blast of air that is also sometimes pitched. There are many high and loud notes followed frequently by frantic sections of erratic technical moments. The movement comes to a head when the flute plays a series of high D’s (one of the highest notes possible on the instrument) which most closely mimics the sound of feedback coming over a loudspeaker from an unbalanced volume level being fed into the microphone. A quick movement, it seems to be over as soon as it begins also in the most unpredictable way.

“If You Can Believe It” was a catch phrase used by filmmaker David Lynch during the COVID-19 quarantine when he ran a daily YouTube show presenting daily weather reports. David is an exceptionally influential artist in Haden’s life, and they consumed this show diligently, and on each Friday he would say “And if you can believe it, it’s Friday again!” which intensified over the course of the seemingly endless lockdown many of us found ourselves in. The phrasing of his words sounded so musical to Haden that if you listen closely, several times

throughout the movement you will be able to hear a melody of sorts that mimics the cadence of Lynch's speaking patterns as they developed over the course of quarantine. This movement is driven by various motives and is almost cadenza-like in nature. Most striking in this movement is a section labeled "improvise on gesture for 8-12", growing louder and more frantic as you proceed, slowly expanding the range. With each variation reduce key clicks." The piece ends with a joyful cacophony of sound before gently settling back into reality bringing the listeners back to Earth and out of the dreamy consciousness of Haden's fabulous sound worlds.

Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo (2001)

From the Composer:

Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo, which is Filipino-Tagalog for "movement of dance in four and three", was composed during Gary Powell Nash's residency as a 2000-2001 U.S. Fulbright Lecturing Grant Scholar, serving as Visiting Professor of Music Composition at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. "Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo" is a light, playful and dance-like single movement work with an A section in quadruple meter (4), a B section in a waltz-like triple meter (3) and a return to the A section's quadruple meter with a vibrant flute cadenza bridging the B and A' sections. The harmonies found throughout this work stem from the open fifths presented by the piano in the opening section and then developed throughout. The A and A' sections are in a G major modality and the B section begins in G-flat major and then proceeds through D minor and B-flat minor.

From Brandon:

This piece lives somewhere between the Avante-Garde and neo-Romantic feeling large in scale and difficulty (as one expects to find in Romantic music) while also not always being totally settled or grounded within a specific key (although as seen above, the piece does have

several tonal centers). The piano and flute exist in different worlds that seem related yet distant which can be heard right from the start of the piece. It is clear that the intention here is to have two people represented by each voice that are dancing both with and around each other. The piano starts us off with a hemiola rhythm combining both the 4 and 3 feel that the piece will explore, yet the flute comes in very specifically in 4 perhaps indicating that our dance partners either don't know each other, or have a bit of difficulty getting into sync with one another as the dance begins. The piece heats up moving from embers of passion to a full on fire and just as we feel a climax approaching, the piano and flute engage in a call and response section with 5 notes per large beat interrupting the flow that has been established. Our dancers are perhaps catching their breath and preparing themselves for the much more lyrical waltz-like section that interrupts our movement in 4. The flute goes on to play longer sweeping lines with many held notes while the piano keeps things moving along underneath. As the spinning intensifies, we finally reach what feels like a climax with the flute wailing away on a high C (one of the highest notes possible for the instrument) leading the movement directly into the short yet exciting cadenza that bridges the B section back into a version of the A section. The piece finishes with the piano continuing its dance in 4 while the flute valiantly attempts to spin large 3's around the piano's frantic fingers. An exciting and exceptional piece, I look forward to performing this work many times beyond this dissertation recital.

As an Artist, the composer, Gary Powell Nash, has always made known that one of his goals as a composer is to encourage his students and others to go well beyond the act of producing art. To not only be a creative artist, but to see oneself as an artistic ambassador, educator and, most of all, a communicator. The piece you will hear today expresses these intentions well. It was dedicated to David Johnson and Maria Aldecoa, who were good friends of his during his time teaching in the Philippines on a Fulbright Lecturing Grant from 2000 to 2001.

When Nash's time was ending there, he decided that the best way to impress upon his friends just how influential they had been on his artistry, was by writing a piece that incorporates Filipino dance traditions that Gary was exposed to during his time there. When asked about "Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo" in particular, Dr. Nash said "it is one of my few compositions that I believe should have received more performances than it actually has." In an interview posted on 91classical.org, Nash self-described his musical style as "Neo-Romantic, bordering on Avante Garde"¹, and "Galaw Ng Sayaw Sa Apat At Tatlo" fits this description exceptionally well.

Sonata for Flute and Piano (1993)

Jonathan Bailey Holland's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* was composed in 1993 and was originally premiered by current Seattle Symphony Principal Flutist Demarre McGill. This three movement work features two outer movements with gorgeous and lush harmonies in the piano supported by simple yet stunning melodies in the flute while the second movement sounds like a whirlwind of improvised technical passages strung together in a way that makes it feel simultaneously unrelenting and relaxed. This piece was the one to spark the idea to do a recital focusing on composers from Flint. When the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown first hit, I came across a website that was taking each week of the month of June to feature BiPoc composers with each week focusing on a different group of instruments. Finding it during the "woodwind" week, I was excited to find that Dr. Holland was originally from Flint and I found his piece so enamoring that I began my hunt to find more composers from the city where I work and serve, and out of that this recital was born.

¹ Gary Powell Nash, "Six Questions: Composer Gary Powell Nash And Music For Enriching The Spirit", interview by Kara Mcleland, 91classical.org, July 17, 2019, <https://91classical.org/post/six-questions-composer-gary-powell-nash-and-music-for-enriching-the-spirit/>

The first movement of this sonata opens with a simple melody in the piano which the flute takes over when it enters. Titled "*flowing*" and marked at quarter = 92, this movement is felt both in 1 and 3 allowing listeners to settle into a comfortable aural experience. We gain some motion midway through the movement with much more activity in the flute, yet the feeling is still very relaxed and "in the pocket". The climax of the movement happens organically yet fades away rather quickly into a slower section that in spite of the moving part in the flute feels still and glassy ending with a recapitulation of the opening melody and coming to a gentle stop on a long C, which I have come to believe is the tonal center of the work, but in this case I mean the note "C", rather than the key center of C Major or minor.

We are then ushered into "*A Fast Waltz*". At first, it doesn't seem very fast as the piano begins with a slow feeling jaunty tune, but when the flute enters it is clear that a tour de force is about to take place. By midway through the movement, the flute is moving at breakneck speed with constant 16th notes having only two sections of resting to recover and prepare to continue. I hear this movement as a written out "improvisation" and cannot help but feel as if it would lay idiomatically well on the saxophone (possibly a high soprano sax) and this gives it a slightly "jazzy" vibe.

If movement 2 is heat and passion, then movement 3 takes us back to a colder climate. "*Serenely*" starts with a melody totally around the note "C" and spans less than an octave. This melody is repeated twice, each time not taking us outside that octave, but then we get a more active section meant to create passion rather than drama as the serenity our flutist feels gives way to warmth and joy. We are then taken back once again to our icy fortress and eventually are laid to rest once again on the "C" featured so prominently throughout the piece.

Fantasia Mexicana for Two Flutes and Piano (2013)

At first glance it may seem strange to see this piece on a recital that is titled “Focus on Flint” as Samuel Zyman is from Mexico City, Mexico, but rather than focus on just the composers and their identities, this performance ties in to the larger theme of my dissertation which aims to shine a bright light on queer musicians and persons in a positive way. I will be joined on stage by Jordan Smith, current Flint School of Performing Arts faculty member, to do just this. As proud queer musicians who serve the city of Flint, our goal is not only to embrace and lift up the city, but to be authentic about who we are so that the work we do is as honest and transparent as possible. To try and remove this aspect of who we are when considering our roles as Artists in the modern world and our duty to serve the citizens of Flint would be impossible, and rather than try to diminish or hide this we want to remain beacons of joy, love, and hope for other queer people (particularly queer students and children) who are hungry for positive representation of queerness in the world.

Fantasia Mexicana is a vibrant work that was originally scored for two flutes and orchestra, but will be heard today in its reduction for two flutes and piano. The work introduces the lighter side composer Samuel Zyman and uses folklorist idioms from his native Mexico to build a duet concert piece as thrilling as his larger works, and as immediately engaging as “pops” music should be. The piece opens with a somber syncopated rhythm in the piano that the flutes mimic when they come in with accented notes. The flutists weave a melody that flirts with open harmonies that are sometimes challenged with the tinge of a major second (two notes that are right next to each other and create a dissonant “crunchy” sound when played at the same time). As they play on, they become more and more energized and frantic leading to a vibrant and technically stunning (and rhythmically challenging) cadenza that leaves the audience unsure of which person is playing the main melody. The entire piece is written in such a way that one is

never sure which flute has the main line, seemingly making it sound as if there is one flute that can somehow play two different lines at the same time. This brings us back to a repeat of the opening themes, but this time much quicker and harmonically joyful. A true tour-de-force, this piece is flashy and fabulous making for the perfect way to end any concert.

Recital 1, “Focus on Flint”, Composer Biographies

Desmond Sheppard is a proud member of the United States Army serving as a member of the 338th Army Reserve Band while also working as a professional freelance voice actor. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan, Flint where he received degrees in Voice Performance (with minors in piano performance and musical theater) and Science. Upon graduating in 2015, Desmond was honored to receive the “Maize and Blue Distinguished Scholars Award”, which is the highest academic honor available at the University of Michigan, Flint. He is also an alumnus of the Flint School of Performing Arts and considers himself to be a lifelong haver of many interests. In that spirit, he is currently working on a Master’s Degree in Computer Science (also from the University of Michigan, Flint).

Haden Plouffe is a composer, pianist, and musicologist currently living in Flint Michigan. She is a graduate of Western Michigan University, where she studied for both undergraduate and Master’s studies. Her output as a composer is stylistically eclectic, but is principally focused on chamber music. As a pianist, she focuses on works outside of the standard Western canon, with particular emphasis on the music of the 20th century and the output of American composers. Her scholarly work focuses primarily on music and sound in film and video games, with her thesis examining the link between character and musical voices in the game NieR: Replicant.

Haden’s music has received acclaim for its expressive breadth and detailed construction, as well as its emphasis on non-linear development of musical ideas. “Three Short Streams of Consciousness” continues a multi-year exploration of musical miniatures as an expressive frame, with loose allusions to music and artwork that has proved influential in her output.

When not teaching, writing, or otherwise working on music, Haden enjoys spending time at home with her wife and cats, as well as watching movies and playing games.

A native of Flint, Michigan, **Dr. Gary Powell Nash** serves as Professor of Music at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he teaches music theory, technology, composition, applied woodwinds, and is also conductor of the Fisk Jazz Ensemble. His Phd in Music Composition was obtained from the Michigan State University College of Music, and his music is steeped in the traditions of both Western Classical Music, and American Jazz. Although “Galaw Ng Sayaw Ao Apat At Tatlo” is not about Flint, considering we are all the sum of our lived experiences, it is important to acknowledge that since Dr. Nash is from Flint, it will forever have an impact on his musicianship (even when it is not a conscious part of the piece in question).

Originally from Flint, MI, composer **Dr. Jonathan Bailey Holland** (b. 1974) began studying composition while a student at the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he received a school-wide award for his very first composition. Upon graduation from Interlochen, he continued his composition studies with Ned Rorem at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree. He went on to receive a Ph.D. in Music from Harvard University in 2000, where his primary teachers were Bernard Rands and Mario Davidovsky. He has also studied with Andrew Imbrie, Yehudi Wyner, Robert Saxton, and Robert Sirota. He has recently been named the Jack G. Buncher Head of the School of Music at Carnegie Mellon University. He has served as Chair of Composition, Contemporary Music, and Core Studies at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and was a Founding Faculty member in the low-residency MFA program in Music Composition at Vermont College of Fine Arts, where he also served as Faculty Chair from 2016 until 2019.

**Recital 2, “On the Treatment of Repertoire in the Age of the Gun”,
Lecture Recital Program**

Rapid◇fire (1992)

Jennifer Higdon

b. 1962

Flute, Brandon LePage

Piano, Dr. Elizabeth Ames

Legacy (1999)

Jennifer Higdon

Flute, Brandon LePage

Piano, Dr. Elizabeth Ames

Recital 2, “On the Treatment of Repertoire in the Age of the Gun”, Lecture Recital Program Notes

Although many artists tend to agree that a large amount of thought should go into the act of selecting pieces to program for performances and giving those pieces plenty of life during the learning process, I have noticed that we do not always agree on how those pieces should be framed or presented to audiences in order to give them autonomy over what they are exposing themselves to. Frequently I have also seen many artists giving little to no thought to who might be in the audience or what those listeners might actually need from the artist they are engaged in hearing. It is my opinion that if we are to engage Art to its fullest capacity, we need to think about how it can be utilized towards the common good and this recital aims to show how music can be used to support a direct moment of political activism through performance.

During this lecture, we explore what a musician has to go through when learning a piece of music that is meant to audibly replicate what it is like to be caught in active gunfire during a mass shooting event, followed by examples of how pieces like this can be appropriately presented to audiences both within promotional materials (posters, press releases, etc) and in the treatment of program notes and spoken words from the stage itself. The topic to be discussed could be seen as controversial, intense, political, and exceptionally depressing. Although I believe there is a place for music to simply encourage beauty, love, and compassion, I will instead be using music today as a vehicle for a call to action and change. All opinions presented are my own and I politely ask that when engaging in discussion you act with respect acknowledging that this room is filled with many people who have varying views, and also

remember the very real possibility that someone in attendance could have been involved in a mass shooting event.

With a specific emphasis on Queer Politics (beyond shining the spotlight on gun reform), this recital not only hopes to challenge the way we program and engage with violent repertoire, but also highlights the irony that while Americans can't seem to figure out how to regulate guns, they have no shortage of ideas about how to regulate queer bodies (particularly the bodies of transgender children). Sexual activity and sexual identity are not the same thing, an idea that is sorely left out of the conversation, and while this performance demands civic engagement as it pertains to gun violence, it also challenges listeners to contemplate that a Lesbian composer wrote the music performed for this recital, showing that Queer people are more than just sex. We are community leaders who want what is best for the world, and our children. We are whole and complete human beings who are worthy of dignity. We have always and will always be present in the world.

Rapid◇fire (1992)

Jennifer Higdon's groundbreaking work *rapid◇fire* is an explosive piece that directly depicts and details a mass shooting event specifically inspired by the "LA Riots" of the 90's, having been written in 1992 for flutist Peter Brown. Keeping this bit of historical context in mind when talking about this piece, here is what Ms. Higdon wrote as a program note for this hard hitting work:

“This work is about the violence of the cities, more specifically, the innocent young who are cut down in their homes and on the streets. It is an expression of rage, of pain, and of disbelief. It is the fear and the terror. It is an inner city cry.” - *Jennifer Higdon, 1992*

Although the wording is outdated (and not framed in an anti-racist way which makes it problematic), the intent behind these words still holds truth. I have chosen to reframe this piece, thinking of it more as a warning that was ignored, in order to highlight our current reality where school shootings and mass shooting events have become all too common. My focus when preparing this piece has been on the phrases “violence”, “innocent young”, “It is an expression of rage, of pain, and of disbelief”, and “It is the fear and the terror”. As will be explored in the lecture, these words not only informed the imagery that I chose to imbue this piece with in order to bring more reality to my performance, they also felt like a slap in the face when I was researching this piece for a paper as the 2023 mass shooting took place at my alma mater; Michigan State University. Not only did that horrific event take place exceptionally close to the music school in a building where I know many music students (including myself once upon a time) went for a break from the atmosphere of the practice room, but a former student of mine was in her Junior year at MSU in the College of Music, and a dear friend of mine was teaching the flute studio while Professor Sherman (who I studied with) was on sabbatical. Much to my relief, they are ok, but the passion I’m bringing to my lecture and performance today aims to continue to move the needle forward faster so that common sense gun legislation can finally be passed in order to stop the senseless violence that we have now come to expect in our daily lives.

As you listen and experience this piece today, I encourage you to take it all in as one giant sonic event. Immerse yourself in horror and live in discomfort. Find a way to empathetically connect

with those around you who are all experiencing this piece in different ways and being affected by it on many levels from simply listening, all the way up to the possible person in attendance who has chosen to re-traumatize themselves to come today to support me, even though they may have been in attendance for one of the hundreds of mass shooting events that happen each year. My hope is that you leave this performance in contemplation. Ask yourself, what do I stand for and do I care?

Legacy (1999)

“How many years has it taken people to realize that we are all brothers and sisters and human beings in the human race?” This quote by Marsha P. Johnson² is one that speaks directly to my goal as an artist and commentator on society. It is my hope to always give of myself through music so that I am able to bring everyone together in a true moment of communal awareness.

My selection of *Rapid◇Fire* for this program is meant to create an honest spectacle to help us to better feel and understand what going through a mass shooting event might be like. Likewise, programming *Legacy* serves two specific purposes for today. First, since the piece was composed in 1999 for flutists Laurel Ann Maurer and Kim Tyler Ashwell, I see this as a contemplation on the part of the composer acknowledging that as we walk through life, our focus changes from the moment we are in or where we are going, to what kind of world we want to shape and leave behind for others. Higdon writes about the work:

“Legacy ponders the questions...

where does mourning begin and end?

² Gahmya Drummond-Bey, “Black Realstory Series: Marsha P. Johnson”, most recently accessed April 1, 2024, <https://www.evolvedteacher.com/blog/black-realstory-series-marsha-p-johnson>

when do we cross over the lines of pain and abuse?
does the sadness begin somewhere deep within leading us to that place?

when we remember, do we remember the pain or the sadness?
how are we marked for such a destiny and how are we marked after passing?

through that door?
what leads to this path?

Legacy represents life's wholeness, the good and the bad, and all of the learning and experiencing that goes with living. One's life is a song, continuous, complex, ever- eventful. We share and we love and we lose, but we gain in the process. Everyone leaves a legacy.” -*Jennifer Higdon*

Her words lead spectacularly to my second reason for choosing this work, and that is to give every person in attendance (including myself) an opportunity to have what I would call a “palate cleanser” after experiencing the trauma of *Rapid◇Fire*, while simultaneously allowing us all space to contemplate what kind of legacy we we see ourselves leaving.

The content presented in this lecture deserves nuance. I am clearly and vehemently against gun violence, but I am not against the ownership of guns so long as that ownership is responsible and regulated. It is not my desire to take away rights, but it is my intention to make certain that the rights of others do not get in the way of my fundamental right to live life as peacefully as I choose without the fear that I could be shot at any moment. Wherever you land on the political spectrum, it is my sincere wish that we have all been affected by our time together, and if I have inspired at least one person to become more active (after all, what is music as social justice if not

a call to DO something), then there is tangible truth in the power of music to be an instigator of change in the larger social world we are *all* a part of.

Recital 2, “On the Treatment of Repertoire in the Age of the Gun”, Composer Biography

Jennifer Higdon, Pulitzer Prize and three-time Grammy winner, is one of the most performed living American composers working today. She is the recent recipient of Northwestern University’s Nemmers Prize and the UT Austin EM King Award. Other honors include the Guggenheim, Koussevitzky, and Pew Fellowships, as well as two awards from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Commissions have come from a wide range of performers: from the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony, to The President’s Own Marine Band; from the Tokyo String Quartet to Eighth Blackbird, as well as individual artists such as singer Thomas Hampson, violinist Hilary Hahn and pianist, Yuja Wang. Her first opera on Charles Frazier’s book, *Cold Mountain*, was commissioned by Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, NC Opera, and Minnesota Opera and won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere. Higdon makes her living from commissions and serves as composer-in-residence with various orchestras throughout the country. Her works are recorded on over 80 CDs.

**Recital 3, “Exploring “Representation” Through a BIG (intermediate)
Adventure!”, Program**

ACT I:

Shenanigans Ahead! (2024)	Alfredo A. Cabrera (b. 1996)
Mountain Antics & Tiny Beings (2024)	Alfredo A. Cabrera
Help me name this! (2024)	Alexis C. Lamb (b. 1993)
Bagatelephone (2024)	Harry Castle (b. 1997)
Pastorale (2024)	Ryan Lindveit (b. 1994)
Anti-Pastorale (2024)	Ryan Lindveit

Trio Faboosh:

Flute, Brandon LePage

Clarinet, Nathan Rodriguez

Saxophone(s), Roberto Campa

–Intermission–

ACT II:

Sonata for Flute and Harp Op. 56 (1997)	Lowell Liebermann (b. 1961)
He Waits for You (2024)	Peter Cohn (b. 2004)
I. Prelude and Memory	
II. Passionate Dream	

III. Lullaby

IV. Interlude and the Sea Goddess's Lament

V. Troy

VI. In the darkness, two shadows

I'm Not That Innocent

B. Spears

(arr. Dynamic Duo)

Dynamic Duo:

Flute, Brandon LePage

Harp, Rachel Miller

Recital 3, “Exploring “Representation” Through a BIG (intermediate) Recital”, Program Notes

Through each of my three Dissertation Recitals, I have worked hard to highlight voices from the LGBTQ+ community in various positive and impactful ways. My first recital focused on “Queer Excellence” through the lens of a solo recital performed by a queer artist (myself) celebrating the community of Flint, MI by uplifting the voices that directly come from the Flint community itself, and I was overjoyed to share the stage with Flint Institute of Music Instructor (and gay professional) Jordan Smith to perform chamber music together in a show of Queer Excellence and solidarity. In my second recital, the topic of “Queer Politics” was showcased as I explored appropriate ways to program and perform music involving gun violence, while also highlighting the disparity between America’s lack of common sense gun legislation vs. the slew of anti-LGBTQ+ laws and bans that have been sweeping the nation through much of the 2020’s. Not wanting to end this project on a fighting limb, my final recital will shine the spotlight on “Queer Representation”, showcasing the beauty and joy that the queer community has to offer society while also continuing to remind us all that we are human and because of that simple fact, we all deserve to be treated equally and equitably under the law.

The recital you are about to experience will feature music exclusively by Queer composers and includes 7 World Premieres! In Act I, composers Alfredo Cabrera, Harry Castle, Alexis Lamb, and Ryan Lindveit were all charged with writing side by side works for “professional” level players as well as “intermediate” level middle/high school. A simple search through the catalog of any sheet music store shows that there is almost no original repertoire written for the intermediate level (that would be a difficulty rating of a 3 or below according to Flute World or

J.W. Pepper). On top of that, the few pieces that are able to be found on these mainstream websites do not offer “flexible” instrumentation which means that band directors and teachers are unable to accommodate the unique instrumental makeup that their ensembles may boast. When reaching out to colleagues across the country, it became abundantly clear that this was a major issue! This recital gets the ball rolling to help begin filling the gap, while also exposing students in a positive way to the work of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Act II brings to the stage my professional chamber group, “The Dynamic Duo” to perform three exceptional works for flute and harp. First, you will hear Lowell Liebermann’s dark and delicious *Sonata for Flute and Harp, Op. 56*, followed by the premiere of *He Waits for You* by University of Michigan second-year flutist and composer Peter Cohn. We will end the recital with a medley of tunes by a prolific pop artist who can be identified as one of the most influential “Gay Icons” of the early - mid 2000’s. Although the artist in question is not queer themselves, the effect that their work has had on the gay community and their importance to me from a musical and emotional standpoint is exceptional, and in the spirit of inclusivity, it seems only appropriate to end with the music of a strong ally!

My goal with this recital is to offer a blueprint that will allow young students to be positively exposed to queer professionals in a way that has their humanity to shine through. By engaging with this music, students will be able to see examples of healthy, fully actualized, stable, and successful queer adults (should they be a part of the queer community themselves and looking for hope through representation), or at the very least they will be able to see that queer people are not the scary predators we are sometimes made out to be (particularly in the rural south) but rather many of us are safe, honest, and hard working individuals who strive to add beauty, joy,

and love to the world around us. This also gives teachers the power to decide how much or how little they would like to focus on the composer's queerness (keeping them in compliance with the laws they may live under) while giving young students the opportunity to look up each composer for themselves, hopefully starting them on a journey of inclusivity, tolerance, and acceptance..

From the standpoint of suicide prevention in particular, the need for this type of project is indeed dire. According to the Trevor Project, LGBTQ+ youth are 4 times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers and in 2022, they reported that LGBTQ+ students were 45% more likely to have considered suicide, while transgender and non-binary youths had considered suicide OVER 50% of the time³. More up to date information can be found on their website:

www.thetrevorproject.org

Mountain Antics & Tiny Beings (2024 - World Premiere)

From Brandon:

Mountain Antics & Tiny Beings by Venezuelan composer Alfredo Cabrera feels like a perfect piece to begin any program, and it will be performed that way today. Its speed and rhythmic variance offers a challenge to the players that, if approached with frivolity (particularly through the use of articulation choices - keeping things short), welcomes listeners into the space while its programmatic story engages the imagination, setting both the musicians and audience up for an engaging experience.

From the Composer:

Though often forgotten, Venezuelan folklore and mythology are filled with figures dedicated almost entirely to the protection of the natural environment. Of these, perhaps the most playful

³ Information accessed via "The Trevor Project Website", accessed April 15, 2023, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

one is the Momoy, a type of gnome, dwarf, or leprechaun whose legend can be traced back to pre-Columbian times in the Venezuelan Andes. Momoyes are characterized by their adorned appearance, bowler hats, and mischievous nature, which they use to protect the mountainous regions they call home.

Mountain Antics & Tiny Beings takes us on a short yet eventful stroll through the mountains above the town of Bonocó in Venezuela. As an eager tourist traverses this stunning landscape, weird things start to happen. Tiny steps and what seems like the tapping of a cane, grunts and screeches, and a soda can they accidentally dropped keep appearing next to them. As our traveler notices an angry-looking man, barely over a foot in height, they try to approach... only to be hit in the face with the same can of soda! Our traveler flees, leaving a once again peaceful mountainside behind. Our tiny prankster scoffs and thinks: “They did not even pick up their trash... I should adjust my methods.”

Shenanigans Ahead! (2024 - World Premiere)

As the title suggests, this piece offers sass and playfulness to the intermediate player. With a combination of smooth melody and rhythmic sections that have over-accentuated accents, this piece allows for the exploration of matching articulation and style. Emphasizing staying together throughout, especially in moments of individual notes that are attacked all at once and are short in length, young players will be encouraged to open their ears beyond their own instrument in order to more cohesively perform this piece. Its cute nature also allows for a good amount of artistic input from the performers themselves giving students the ability to truly make this piece their own, and it is perfect for solo and ensemble (particularly for intermediate players who are in youth orchestra or other youth programs that require the use of an A clarinet).

Help me name this! (2024 - World Premiere)

Help me name this! is a trio written for “flexible” wind ensemble (meaning the actual instruments playing are not fixed to a specific kind of wind instrument) giving performers and teachers the ability to tailor the instrumentation of this work to the specific needs of their ensembles. The unique title as it appears on this program is a placeholder for the title that will be given to the work when it is first performed by a group of intermediate high school students in the fall of 2024 offering them the opportunity to closely collaborate with the composer, Alexis Lamb. This work is a sneaky sounding “bop” with elements of pop music and seems to have some influence from the music of prolific movie music composer John Williams in its cinematic material and overall contour as it almost acts as a caricature of some kind. Based on the instrumentation choice for tonight’s performance, the flute (playing the top line) takes center stage starting off the piece and having much of the melodic material. The range offered here gives just enough of a challenge to the intermediate player to push their comfort level, while being presented in such a rhythmic way that it will allow students to explore the third register in style. The alto saxophone and clarinet (playing parts 3 and 2) offer constant support to the melodic line keeping it moving forward while every once in a while coming out of the texture to allow the sonic differences of our chosen instrumentation to shape the listeners experience. If I had to name this piece, I would name it “Mouse in Search of Cheese”.

Bagatelephone (2024 - World Premiere)

From the Composer:

Bagatelephone is a musical play on the game "telephone," where participants pass a message around via whisper and then compare the final phrase with the original one. In this short piece, the original theme (in triple invertible counterpoint) gets passed around the trio instruments,

appearing in different guises and supported by different combinations of harmonic fragments. It's also a bagatelle -- a short, light piece, intended for students -- and features a variety of attacks and sustained playing styles to help intermediate players practice ensemble coordination, legato phrasing, and chordal balancing.

From Brandon:

When asking composers to write for younger students, one can never be one hundred percent sure what they might get. Preparing for this recital in particular (knowing that I wanted true intermediate works to be written), a lot of time was taken to be certain that each composer understood the parameters surrounding what I meant by “intermediate”, and getting such a lovely and playful work as Harry’s is the ultimate fruit of that labor. This piece doesn’t move at a quick pace allowing for students to explore intonation, color, and phrasing beyond the bar lines. From my perspective, it is the perfect piece to bridge the gap between a group that might have a mix of upper level beginning and middle level intermediate players. The piece is able to be accomplished at a high level allowing coaches or teachers the time in rehearsals to focus on foundational aspects of music making including how to play with others rather than alongside them. The “Telephone” game aspect gives a playful element to the work and helps students to get their ears out into the room to really try and *listen* to what is happening around them and how they are adding to, or taking away from the texture. This work is a truly sweet treat.

Pastorale and Anti-Pastorale (2024 - World Premiere)

From the composer:

Pastorale and *Anti-Pastorale* are companion pieces commissioned by the flutist Brandon LePage for a recital featuring both young student musicians, and advanced professional musicians in the Spring of 2024. The two pieces share musical motives in common, but their contexts and

energies are starkly different. With its peaceful and bucolic 6/8 lilt, *Pastorale* explores the rustic beauty and lyricism of the three wind instruments. By contrast, *Anti-Pastorale* is an anxious, off-kilter romp that features rhythmic precision, mixed meters, and blazing virtuosity.

As “intermediate” pieces go, *Pastorale* fits perfectly into the pocket. The range demands for the instruments stay mostly within what one would expect, keeping mostly out of the stratosphere where young students sometimes struggle, while simultaneously pushing the player into these register “extremes” in an accessible way. A 6/8 time signature (six eighth per measure typically divided into two “big beats” with three eighth notes contained within each) keeps the piece just difficult enough to expose intermediate students to a possibly new way of feeling time, and the few measures of 9/8 strewn throughout allow coaches to talk about moving through meter changes in a way that is approachable for students who might be encountering mixed meters in particular for the first time.

Anti- Pastorale is a fabulous work that would serve well as a bookend on any recital! It is rambunctious, effervescent, and exceptional allowing the musicians to show off their counting prowess and take the audience on a fantastic journey. This piece has become a gem to me and will be one I expect to perform often!

He Waits for You (2024 - World Premiere)

“I would know him in death, at the end of the world.”

Madeline Miller, *The Song of Achilles*

From the Composer:

He Waits for You is a musical retelling of Madeleine Miller's *The Song of Achilles*, itself a retelling of the story of Achilles through the eyes of his lover Patroclus. Amidst one of the greatest wars in mythic history, they desperately seek to evade fate, forcing love and prophecy into cruel opposition. This piece is about the greatest warrior of the ancient Greek world, prophesied for valor and greatness; about the man he cared about more than anything; and about the divine fate that seeks to tear them apart. Their story haunts and inspires us today, and questions whether the love of two men can overpower the fate of the gods.

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Achilles, son of the sea goddess Thetis, is prophesied to be the greatest warrior Greece has ever seen. He spends his youth learning from the centaur Chiron, along with a young man named Patroclus. Amid this mythical idyll their friendship blooms into a romance; but the passionate fog of youth sits under the shadow of fate. Achilles is called to Troy, bound by honor to fight for the kidnapped princess Helen. Thetis warns them that their love will not survive, and that Patroclus must die in order for the prophecy realized. Torn between his love for Patroclus and fulfilling his fate as the greatest warrior in Greece, Achilles sails to Troy with Patroclus at his side. Seeking to steal time from the fates themselves, they maintain their love through a decade long siege and countless trials. But prophecies cannot be avoided, even by love. As Achilles achieves his prophesied victory, he is forced to make a final plea to Thetis. In the end, we are forced to question whether love extends into the great beyond, and what would happen if we were forced to choose between a place in the annals of history and a place beside those we love. *He Waits for You* is about love, honor, and fate; how we are remembered after we die, and whether our love extends into eternity.

From Brandon:

The premiere of this piece is exceptionally special to me. Peter started his career at the University of Michigan in the fall of 2022 not yet a music major. I was privileged enough to be his Instructor on Record during that first year and had an exceptionally wonderful time getting to know Peter, helping him to make the essential moves he made that led to his acceptance into the University of Michigan Composition Program to start in the fall of 2023. His passion, courage, and care inspired me to take a leap of faith (having not actually *heard* any of his music) and the commissioned work you are about to hear is a result of that joyous jump. Now studying with Professor Amy Porter, I have been enjoying the shift in our relationship from teacher/student, to studio mate/friend/mentor/collaborator and if this piece is any kind of premonition, I look forward to being a part of the healthy and vibrant career that I know is in store for Mr. Cohn!

Sonata for Flute and Harp. Op. 56 (1997)

Lowell Liebermann's dark and affective *Sonata for Flute and Harp, Op. 56* was commissioned in 1966 and premiered by the Sparx Duo in 1997. Sparx Duo flutist Joan Sparks is also the owner of the Delaware based Flute Pro Shop, and their website boasts that Joan has been involved in the creation of over 12 pieces of music, more than half of which have been specifically for the Sparx Duo (which includes harpist Anne Sullivan). In discussion with Joan about the commissioning of the Sonata in particular, it was a treat to learn that the reason behind asking Lowell specifically to write this piece was the infamous public performance of his *Sonata for Flute and Piano* at the National Flute Convention in 1989 with none other than eventual University of Michigan Professor of Flute Amy Porter playing for a full house.

My own duo partner, Rachel Miller, and I have also been invested in expanding and enhancing the flute and harp repertoire the entire time we have collaborated. In 2009, we commissioned a work for Wind Quintet and harp based loosely on Camille Saint-Saens *Carnival of the Animals* (with one movement in particular - the Hippopotamus - featuring the harp and contrabassoon). Again in 2011 we enlisted the help of Rachel's harp duo "Beyond Pluck" to create "The B Project" which brought to life three new works by composers Nina Shekhar, Michael Lanci, and Nathan Campbell written for harp duo, flute, and percussion. The performance in collaboration with the Detroit Bureau of Sound and New Music Detroit was presented in a historic church in Downtown Detroit to much critical acclaim.

Lowell Liebermann's *Sonata* is not for the faint of heart! Although it is not as technically challenging as many of his other works, this piece requires the performers to explore the darkest regions of their souls in order to bring out the piece's many subtle timbres, and asks that "light" only shines through temporarily at any given moment. Although it seems to be filled with despair, I am reminded of the quote offered by Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series; "happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light."

"I'm Not That Innocent" is a surprise piece that will be explained from the stage using the music of B. Spears to bring the audience together in Allyship through the celebration of music. The performance will feature audience participation through group song.

Recital 3, “Exploring “Representation” Through a BIG (intermediate) Recital”, Composer Biographies

Alfredo A. Cabrera (b.1996) is an accomplished composer, instrumentalist, writer, and activist from Caracas, Venezuela. His music focuses on the deconstruction of his identity as a queer, Latinx immigrant and aims to invite both performers and audiences to reclaim their artistic and perceptive agency as it relates to ourselves and our environment. Cabrera is currently pursuing a DMA in Music Composition at the University of Michigan.

Alfredo started his musical education at age 3 and began playing the violin at age 7. At the age of 8, he was accepted to Escuela Experimental de Música Manuel Alberto Lopez (EEMMAL) in Caracas, Venezuela, where he studied the violin and piano, and completed studies in harmony, music history, counterpoint and aesthetics. In 2013 Cabrera began his work as a composer. He has won multiple awards and recognitions since, including the Artist of the Future Award (El Hatillo municipality, Caracas, 2012 and 2013), 1st place on Lynn University Conservatory of Music Composition Competition (2017), The Marshall Turkin Honors Award (2018 & 2019), and the Brehm Prize in Choral Composition (2020). In 2018, Cabrera reestablished the Lynn University Contemporary Music Ensemble which, under his guide as Artistic Director, became The New Collective, an organization dedicated to the promotion and performance of all forms of 21st-century art. Under Cabrera’s direction between 2018 and 2019, The Collective served as a platform for generating a discussion through art performances and installations of some of the most pressing issues of our time, issues such as racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and climate change.

Some recent works by Cabrera include: *Iridescent Porcelain* for choir, 4-hand piano, and four soloists (2020 Brehm Prize in Choral Composition,) *Paper Homes & Dreams Away* for piano trio

(Commissioned by Trio Paradigm,) Overcast Moonlight for percussion quartet, spoken word, and electronics (Commissioned by Hohner Porter,) and Rogue Flare, Fly Away for sax quartet (commissioned by the Invictus Duo and the Eros Quartet.) In addition to his work as a composer, Cabrera is passionate about racial equity in music education and has taken an active role in pushing for curricular and pedagogical reform in music academia, including as a panelist at the "Music School for Tomorrow" Symposium hosted by the Alliance for the Transformation of the Musical Academe in partnership with the College Music Society.

Alexis C. Lamb (b. 1993) is a composer, percussionist, and educator whose work seeks to cultivate a connectedness to natural, historical, and societal relationships. Her music incorporates a variety of mediums, such as oral histories, field recordings, improvisation, and community input. Lamb's music has been regarded as "a pleasure in its own right" with "sparkling optimism throughout" (I Care If You Listen).

As a composer, Lamb has collaborated with numerous ensembles and individuals, including Third Coast Percussion, Aizuri Quartet, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Percussion Ensemble, Opera Omaha, Albany (NY) Symphony, Vera Quartet, Camilla Tassi, Contemporaneous, Emily Roller, Yale Philharmonia, Evan Chapman, University of Nebraska Percussion Ensemble, Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra, and Northern Illinois University World Steelband. Her music has been performed in North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Currently, Lamb is working on recording an album of her "percussion plus" solos to be released in May 2024, as well as her dissertation, which is a long-form outdoor performance that will ask individuals to listen and resonate with their natural surroundings.

As a percussionist, Lamb has recently found joy in improvising in a variety of natural soundscapes, listening to how the natural world responds to her human-made music. Her performance is highly influenced by the philosophies and Deep Listening practices of the late Pauline Oliveros. Lamb was also a performer from 2013-2020 with Projeto Arcomusical, the berimbau ensemble associated with Arcomusical. Her performance has been hailed as “riveting visually as well as sonically” (Centerline).

As an educator, Lamb’s work runs the gamut from private lessons to curriculum development, to clinics and large classes. She is a passionate advocate for students with disabilities and encourages creativity at every age and ability level. Her work in New Haven included developing the Creative Music-Making program for the Yale Music in Schools Initiative as well as serving as a Teaching Fellow for the Department of Music at Yale University and Teaching Assistant in the Yale School of Music. Prior to returning to graduate school, Lamb was the 6-12th grade band director for Meridian CUSD 223 in Stillman Valley, Illinois. Lamb is currently serving as a Graduate Student Instructor at the University of Michigan, and she runs her own private studio that meets both in-person and online.

Lamb is a recipient of a 2022 Presser Foundation Graduate Music Award, a 2021 Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a 2018 ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Award. She is a Doctoral Candidate in Music Composition at the University of Michigan. Lamb earned a Master of Music in Composition at the Yale School of Music and two Bachelor of Music degrees in Music Education and Percussion Performance from Northern Illinois University. Her compositions can be found on Innova Recordings, National Sawdust Tracks, Evan Chapman’s Caustics, and Third Coast Percussion's Currents,

Volume 1. When not working on music, she can be found playing board games with her wife at an overly competitive level, teaching new tricks to her dog and two cats, and fishing in every possible body of water. She is originally from Denver, Colorado, and is currently based in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Harry Castle is a British composer, tenor, and music director, currently studying for a DMA in composition at the University of Michigan with Evan Chambers, Roshanne Etezady and Kristin Kuster. He works at the intersection of contemporary classical, pop, jazz and musical theatre genres, and writes music as frequently at home in concert halls as it is in bars. Harry is particularly drawn to musical storytelling, and as an LGBTQ+ creative he is especially interested in telling stories that center queer and marginalized narratives.

As much in demand for his electronic music as his musical theatre work and pop/jazz originals and arrangements, Harry maintains a busy schedule of projects and commissions across a wide spectrum of musical styles. Some ongoing projects include *State of Motion*, an original musical exploring competition and success in the fashion influencing industry through the lens of a queer neurodivergent relationship, and *I am your mother; this is your home*, an extended work for soprano and ensemble, conceived and written in collaboration with [t.r.h. \(torri\) blue](#), a Michigan-based writer, poet, artist, photographer, and advocate.

Harry is an experienced vocalist, with training in classical, choral, pop, musical theatre and jazz styles, as well as extended vocal techniques. Some recent performance highlights include Handel's *Messiah* with [Apollo's Fire](#), performing solos in Craig Hella Johnson's [Considering Matthew Shepard](#) with the U-M Chamber Choir, and touring with the Yale Schola Cantorum. Harry recorded six albums for [Harmonia Mundi USA](#) with the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, and works regularly as an ensemble vocalist and vocal coach.

As a music director, Harry has worked with many ensembles and casts: he particularly enjoys projects involving new work in contemporary classical, musical theatre or jazz idioms. Some recent highlights include a workshop performance of *Siluetas* by [Robi Hager](#) & [Erlina Ortiz](#) (U-M New Works Festival), *Take Flight*, a concert of brand new vocal and instrumental jazz at the U-M Museum of Art ([Touch of Blue: New American Vocal Ensemble](#)), and a concert of his own musical theatre work, *Isn't It Queer?* (McIntosh Theatre, Ann Arbor).

A passionate educator, Harry brings his practical experience and poly-stylistic expertise into the classroom. College-level classes he has taught include composition for non-majors, aural skills for music majors, theory & ear training for musical theatre majors, and musical theatre composition. Harry is well-versed in Western music theory and musicology, but finds the most joy leading classes on topics such as vocal jazz arranging, the history of musical theatre, vocal jazz and contemporary a cappella ensemble skills, and musical theatre ensemble techniques. Harry is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Drama at Syracuse University. He has held graduate teaching positions in the Composition department at Yale University and the Theory department at the University of Michigan, as well as forming part of the collaborative piano staff for the Musical Theatre department at U-M.

Prior to moving to Michigan in 2021, Harry graduated with a BA in Music from Clare College, University of Cambridge (studying composition with Richard Causton), and an MA in Composition, Theory and Musical Theatre Writing from Yale University (studying with Kathryn Alexander, Konrad Kaczmarek, Jeanine Tesori & Scott Frankel). He stayed on at Yale for an additional year as a Research Scholar, studying groove and writing electronic music. Harry's music has been heard at the BBC Proms, the New World Symphony, the Rhode Island International Film Festival, the National Centre for Early Music and the Edinburgh Fringe

Festival, and has been performed by Eleni Katz, the University of Michigan Chamber Choir, the Marea Duo, the Albatross Duo, Margaret Lancaster, the Yale Symphony Orchestra, the Da Capo Chamber Players, the English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble, and chamber ensembles of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Aurora Orchestra. Awards include: U-M Brehm Prize for Choral Composition, Made at the Red House Residency (Wild Plum Arts/Britten-Pears Foundation), Special Jury Prize (Yale in Hollywood Film Festival), Zodiac International Music Competition (Finalist), BBC Proms Young Composer of the Year, National Centre for Early Music Young Composers' Award (Finalist), Clare College Carol Competition, Outstanding Arrangement Award (International Competition of Collegiate A Cappella), Paul Mellon Fellowship (Mellon Foundation).

Ryan Lindveit (lind-vite) is an American composer who takes inspiration from literature, art, science, technology, and personal experience in order to craft colorful and emotionally vivid musical journeys. These works range from orchestral pieces premiered in Carnegie Hall and wind ensemble pieces performed at top universities to pieces for chamber ensembles, soloists, electronics, dance, and visual media. Ryan composed the score for the four-part, Sam Elliott-narrated docuseries *Honor Guard* released on Amazon Prime. He holds degrees from the University of Southern California (BM), Yale University (MM, MMA), and the University of Michigan (DMA). In addition, he earned the Certificate in Music Theory Pedagogy from the University of Michigan. At USC, he was selected as Salutatorian for the class of 2016, named an Outstanding Graduate from the Thornton School of Music, and awarded the competitive Discovery Scholars Prize, a postgraduate grant awarded to ten graduating seniors for the creation of outstanding original work in any discipline. His teachers include Aaron Jay Kernis, Michael

Daugherty, David Lang, Martin Bresnick, Christopher Theofanidis, Bright Sheng, Frank Ticheli, Andrew Norman, Ted Hearne, and Donald Crockett.

His works have been commissioned and performed by several distinguished ensembles including the Minnesota Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound, “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, American Composers Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony, Interlochen World Youth Symphony Orchestra, Sioux City Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra, Orkest de Ereprijs, Yale Philharmonia, USC Thornton Symphony, Donald Sinta Quartet, FearNoMusic, the City of Tomorrow, and the wind ensembles at Northwestern, USC, UT Austin, Arizona State, Texas Tech, Illinois, and Yale, among others. His works for winds have been commissioned by H. Robert Reynolds and the Big 12 Band Directors Association, among other. His work has received recognition from BMI, ASCAP, SCI, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Band Association, Symphony in C, Tribeca New Music, and the Texas Music Educators Association. Ryan also won both the New Music for Orchestra and New Music for Wind Ensemble competitions at the University of Southern California. He has held fellowships or residencies at the Aspen Music Festival, Mizzou International Composers Festival, ACO Underwood New Music Readings, Next Festival of Emerging Artists, Red Note New Music Festival, the International Young Composers Meeting (Apeldoorn, NL), Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium, and California Summer Music. As a conductor, Ryan has premiered several of his own works as well as works by other living composers. A committed educator, Lindveit has taught composition, music theory, orchestration, film music, and music technology privately and at the collegiate level. He currently serves on the faculty of the College of Music at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville as Lecturer of Music Theory and Composition.

Lowell Liebermann: At once unabashedly romantic and modern, American composer **Lowell Liebermann** is internationally recognized as an artist of uncommon profundity and popularity. Time Magazine proclaimed: “Now brazen and glittering, now radiantly visionary...the work of a composer unafraid of grand gestures and openhearted lyricism.”

Mr. Liebermann has written more than one hundred forty works in all genres, several of which have gone on to become standard repertoire for their instruments. He has composed four symphonies, a Concerto for Orchestra, three piano concertos, and concertos for many other instruments. His works have been premiered by major orchestras, including the Dallas Symphony, the National Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic. His Sonata for Flute and Piano and Gargoyles for piano are among the most popular contemporary works for their instruments, regularly included in recital and competition programs. His full-length ballet *Frankenstein*, co-commissioned by London’s Royal Ballet and the San Francisco Ballet, has been released on Blu-Ray and DVD. Mr. Liebermann has written two full-length operas, both enthusiastically received at their premieres: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the first American opera commissioned by and premiered in 1995 by l’Opéra de Monte-Carlo, and *Miss Lonelyhearts*, after the novel by Nathanael West, for the Juilliard School’s 100th anniversary in 2005. A prolific pianist both live and in recording, Mr. Liebermann has given the world premieres of his own solo piano works as well as works by his fellow composers Ned Rorem and William Bolcolm. In 2021, the Steinway label released an CD of works by Schubert, Liszt, Kabełáç, Busoni, and his own composition. A year later, Steinway sponsored a second solo piano album by Mr. Liebermann, *The Devil’s Lyre*, featuring music of contemporary British composer David Hackbridge Johnson.

Mr. Liebermann has over one hundred fifty recordings to his credit, released on Deutsche Grammophon, Hyperion, Virgin Classics, Hungaroton, New World Records, Albany, RCA Red Seal, Reference, and many others. His works are published by Theodore Presser Company, Schott, and Faber Music. He has been invited to serve as Composer-in-Residence for numerous distinguished organizations including the Dallas Symphony Orchestra; the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan; the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Mr. Liebermann has been a faculty member of the Composition Department of the Mannes School of Music of the New School since 2012. He was the founding conductor of the Mannes American Composers Ensemble, devoted to performing works of living American composers.