



Society of Composers, Inc.

2021 Online National Conference Concert No. 1

Thursday, May 6 | 10am ET

Marcel Castro-Lima

Interference

Bass Clarinet, Fixed Media
Batista Jr., bass clarinet

Emily Joy Sullivan

Dangerous Curves Ahead

Piano Trio
Jenny Guerra (violin), Elena Solanes
(cello), and Carlos Apellániz (piano)
(B3: Brouwer Trio)

Jennifer Bellor

Amethyst Sunset

Pianos and Percussion
Olga Shupyatskaya and Futaba
Niekawa, pianos, Hannah Weaver and
Kyle Peters, percussion

Greg Simon

Draw Me the Sun

The UNL Percussion Ensemble,

dir. Dave Hall: Olivia Boldt,
Paige DeDecker, John Wayne Duke,
Korry Friend, Chris Goulet,
Dan Hartung,
Ryan Kimball, Jack Kloecker,
Dominic Loutsch, Anthony McIntosh,
Jonah Payne, Louis
Raymond-Kolker, Mike Roe,
George Warner, Andrew Wray

Thomas L. Wilson

Duality
'Cello and Loop pedal
Eduard Teregulov, Cello

Deborah Kavasch

Nocturne
Solo piano
Stephen Thomas, piano

Biljana Bojović

Flight of Freedom
Cello Ensemble
UC Davis Cello Ensemble
Susan Lamb Cook, Director
Alexander Condon,
Ananya Narasimhan,
Laura Houshmand,
Clio Capaccioli

Audio mixing and video editing:
Stephen Bingen,
Head Audio Engineer
UC Davis Department of Music

John G. Bilotta

Capricci
Flute and Piano
Dieter Flury, flute
Ieva Oša, piano

Lawrence Mumford

Adagio: Of Times and Seasons
Full Orchestra
Janacek Philharmonic Orchestra
Stanislav Vavrinek, conductor

Robert Fleisher

Six Little Piano Pieces
Solo piano
William Koehler, piano

Martin Blessinger

*Three Romances - Homage to
Clara Schumann, Romance No. 2*
Violin and Piano
Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Edward Newman, piano

Program Notes and Composer Biographies

Marcel Castro-Lima - Marcel Castro-Lima is a Brazilian composer and conductor based in Texas - USA. He is currently pursuing a doctorate at the University of North Texas, in addition to being a professor of composition at the University of Texas at Tyler. His music is versatile and ranges from a more traditional approach, rooted in Brazilian music, to experimental approaches involving electronics, improvisation, instruction-based works and graphic scores.

Emily Joy Sullivan - Emily Joy Sullivan (b. 1987) is a composer, educator, and choral director based in Northern California. Her music is animated by the spirit of song, dance, and storytelling, and often embraces vernacular traditions. Sullivan's works have been performed in New York, Chicago, Memphis, Melbourne, Vancouver, Valencia, and Cape Town, South Africa. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Music Theory & Composition at UC Davis. Primary areas of research include music and gender, musical theater, lyricism, and creative pedagogy. Sullivan has also founded and directed several singing groups, with a focus on helping people of various backgrounds find community, empowerment, and joy through singing. She is currently working on a musical drama retelling fairy tales from the heroines' points of view.

Dangerous Curves Ahead was inspired by the road sign of that name. I wanted to write a piece that unabashedly embraced my love of song and dance traditions and explored rapid, dramatic changes instead of slow, linear processes. The first section

features the swift, albeit repetitive, movement we might associate with driving. It swerves “dangerously” at times, but always returns to its incessant forward movement. The second theme is a more sultry, calm interpretation of “curves.” The third theme reflects more on the idea of something “ahead” of us. Here, instead of momentum, action, and unprepared changes, we enter the world of reflection. We experience the tension that can accompany feelings of spaciousness and groundlessness: the unknowability of the future, the terrifying vastness of time and space. From that somewhat heavy, climactic place, the piece returns to the more kinetic, blues-influenced themes it began with, and ends with a bang.

Notes about the performance: B3: Brouwer Trio: Jenny Guerra (violin), Elena Solanes (cello), and Carlos Apellániz (piano). Recording of the premiere in July 2018. Premiered via the VIPA Festival 2018.

Jennifer Bellor - Described as "evocative" (Jazz Weekly), "lyrical," and "mesmerizing" (textura), the music of Las Vegas-based composer Jennifer Bellor has been presented by Washington National Opera, American Composers Orchestra, Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Clocks in Motion, Transient Canvas, ShoutHouse, Sonic Cluster Duo, Eastman New Jazz Ensemble, UNLV Wind Orchestra, Eastman Saxophone Project, Elevate Ensemble, and many others in the US and abroad. She is currently the resident Clock Shop Composer for the percussion quartet Clocks in Motion.

Bellor's recent album “Reflections at Dusk” was released by Innova Recordings November 2019, and showcases instrumental music inspired by the Nevada sunsets. The album has been described as “crepuscular,” “mystical,” and “magical.” Textura stated, “She's also that rare composer whose music manages to be instantly listenable and emotionally resonant without any compromise to its sophistication.” “Reflections at Dusk” nabbed the #20 spot in the classical/opera category in textura's 2020 year-end roundup. Her next album will feature all of the music written for Clocks in Motion as their resident composer, and it will be recorded and released in 2021.

Born and raised in Northern NY, Bellor earned a PhD in music composition at Eastman School of Music, a Master of Music degree in composition at Syracuse University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in music at Cornell University. Her primary composition teachers included David Liptak, Bob Morris, Andrew Waggoner, Sally Lamb-McCune, and Steven Stucky. She is on the music composition faculty at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and artistic director of the new music series Nextet. Please visit her website www.jenniferbellor.com.

Greg Simon - Greg Simon (b. 1985) is a composer and jazz trumpeter from California, by way of Oregon and Colorado. His works have been performed by ensembles and performers around the country, including the Nu Deco Ensemble, the Cavell Trio, Alarm Will Sound, the Fifth House Ensemble, and the Playground Ensemble of Denver. He has won the NACUSA Young Composers' Competition and the POLYPHONOS competition from the Esoterics, and was a second-prize winner in the Moscow Conservatory's New Classics Competition. Greg studied jazz improvisation and composition with Bill Lucas, Ellen Rowe, and Brad Goode, and is an active freelancer in the Omaha-Lincoln area.

Greg is Assistant Professor of Composition and Jazz Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and he teaches at the Brevard Music Center. He received a D.M.A. in composition from the University of Michigan. When he's not composing, Greg enjoys hockey, bourbon and short stories.

Thomas L. Wilson - Thomas L. Wilson is a Ph.D. Candidate in Music Composition at Louisiana State University with a minor in Experimental Music and Digital Media. He received his M.M. and B.M. in Music Composition from The University of Alabama. Prominent mentors throughout his studies include Mara Gibson and C.P. First. Thomas enjoys collaborating internationally with performers, including at festivals such as the Atlantic Music Festival, highSCORE Festival, and ArtPlay Festival. His thesis *The Reflections of My Introverted Sneakers* can be found on the album *Early Musings: New Music for Violin* performed by Davis Brooks and released through Navona Records. Prominent performances of the work include the Electronic Music Midwest Festival, New York City Electronic Music Festival, and National Student Electronic Music Event. It was also broadcast on WPRB's *Classical Discoveries* in the setlist "Music of the Americas - Part 1" on November 23, 2016.

Duality reflects the pulling directions the composer has experienced in recent years. Throughout the work, many seemingly opposing elements occur simultaneously or back to back, but in apparent calm. As the composer struggled with their place in the world, they wondered if there was a single answer or if it were *Duality*.

Deborah Kavasch - Deborah Kavasch, BMI composer, soprano, and specialist in extended vocal techniques, has received grants and residencies in composition and performance and was a 1987 Fulbright Senior Scholar to Stockholm. She has had works commissioned and performed in North America, Europe, the United Kingdom and China, and has appeared in concert in major international music centers and festivals. Her compositional output features much solo and solo vocal chamber music as well as choral works, instrumental solo and chamber music, wind ensemble and orchestral compositions, and opera. She frequently presents on new music and women in music conferences and festivals, has premiered over 75 new works, and has been described as a “multifaceted, multi-timbral vocalist” with “articulate radiance” (Los Angeles Times) and “astonishing range and agility” (Cleveland Plain Dealer). Her compositions have been described as “electrifying” (Synapse), “splendidly diabolical” (ILWC Journal), and “virtuosic sound picture” (Bremen Weser Kurier). Kavasch is distributed by Fish Creek Music and recorded on Soundset Recordings, Cambria Recordings, Troppe Note Classical, Lovely Records, and Composers Recordings, Inc. Kavasch holds degrees in German and Music Theory/Composition from Bowling Green State University, Ohio, and the Ph.D. in Music from the University of California at San Diego. She was Chair of the California State University, Stanislaus, Department of Music from 2006-2016 and continues to serve as Professor and Coordinator of Music Theory/Composition.

Nocturne (2002) for piano was written for Stephen Thomas in response to his request for my late husband, John Marvin, and myself to each write a nocturne for him, which he subsequently referred to as the “His and Her Nocturnes.” Although I immediately looked at Chopin’s nocturnes for structural ideas, I was ultimately influenced by a recent study and performance of Messiaen’s song cycle, *Chants de Terre et de Ciel*. Inspired by Messiaen’s harmonic language, *Nocturne* is based on the opening gesture of a rolled open-fifth “polychord” structure: B-flat, F, B-flat combined with B, F-sharp, B, set in the high ringing register of the piano. The arpeggiated monophonic texture at the beginning becomes contrapuntal before leading to a lower, lyrical middle section interpolated with higher filigree figures. This melds into a shortened return of the opening section overlaid with similar filigrees that disappear into the resonance of the underlying gestures as though disappearing into the night. *Nocturne* is recorded by composer/pianist Jeffrey Jacob on New Ariel Recordings, *Jazz and Meditation, Volume 16* (2020).

Biljana Bojović - After graduating from music high school in Bitola, North Macedonia, Biljana Bojović continued her studies at Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, completed her undergraduate studies at West Virginia University in Morgantown

and graduate studies at Butler University in Indianapolis. She studied cello with Pande Tuntevski, Cassel Grubb, Crispin Campbell, William Skidmore, and William Grubb, music composition with John Beall, Frank Felice, and Michael Schelle, and music education under the mentorship of Penny Dimmick.

Biljana has participated in composition masterclasses with Goce Kolarovski, William Bolcom, Eric Ewazen, Seymour Barab, Elvis Costello, Paul Chihara, Elliott Schwartz, Bright Cheng, Stephen Gryc, and Evan Chambers. Her compositions have been performed at the Illinois Modern Ensemble Concert Series, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival, Finger Lakes Summer Chamber Music Festival, New York, at several of the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI) conferences, at the International Double Reed Society Conference (2009), Birmingham, England, and at many other concerts in the USA, Czech Republic, and Slovenia.

Her works are written mostly for solo instruments and chamber ensembles, and often draw inspiration from Balkan folk and Orthodox church music. She currently lives and creates in California.

Flight of Freedom (2020) for cello quartet or cello ensemble was commissioned and is dedicated to cellist Susan Lamb Cook and the Cello Ensemble of University of California, Davis. It explores the different ranges and the lyrical side of the cello. The trills in the beginning measure outline the lydian mode out of which springs forth the rest of the piece. Throughout, the harmonic and melodic lines linger around the lydian mode and the half-diminished and major-major seventh chords, which give the listener a feeling of floating, openness, brightness, and movement, yet with a sense of steadiness, confidence, and strength. The composition suggests that freedom, as much as it is a gift, requires our constant willingness and effort. No one can take it from us unless we relinquish it. There is never enough of freedom, rather it is an endless, breath-taking process.

John Bilotta - John G. Bilotta was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, but has spent most his life in the San Francisco Bay Area where he studied composition with Frederick Saunders. His works have been performed by soloists and ensembles around the world including Rarescale, Earplay, the Talea Ensemble, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, Chamber Mix, North/South Consonance, Musica Nova, the Avenue Winds, the Presidio Ensemble, the Boston String Quartet, the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Kiev Philharmonic, the Oakland Civic Orchestra, San Francisco Cabaret Opera, Bluegrass Opera, Boston

Metro Opera, the Thompson Street Opera, New Fangled Opera, Floating Opera, and VocalWorks. His music is available on Capstone Records, New Music North, Beauport Classical Recordings, Boudi Music/Australia and Navonna Records, and are distributed by Naxos. He serves on the Board of Directors for Goat Hall Productions and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc. He is currently president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of NACUSA.

Capricci was written to serve as a colorful virtuosic encore for flute and piano. A single movement about five minutes in length, it features three contrasting sections brimming with syncopations and off-beat musical gestures. It opens in an explosion of energy followed by an elegant central section and closes with a light-hearted dance.

Lawrence Mumford - Lawrence Mumford's music, published by eight different companies, has been premiered in cities across the country. He is a winner of the Culver Chamber Prize, and has been a finalist or semifinalist for The American Prize six times. His symphonic works have been performed and recorded by many organizations including the Janacek Philharmonic (Czech Republic), the Bellflower Symphony, Chicago's American Wind Band (3 different premieres), the Carson City Symphony, the Ensemble Christo Los Angeles Orchestra, Portland's Warner Pacific Wind Ensemble, and many university orchestras including the University of California at Irvine Symphony (which has begun rehearsing his Symphony No. 3).

He has received world premieres of dozens of other choral and instrumental works in various venues including the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, Cal. State University Northridge, Cal. State Dominguez Hills, Los Angeles Valley College, large L.A. area churches, and several smaller universities and halls from California to New York City. These performances have included members of the L.A. Philharmonic, members of the USC Symphony, and many other noted area professionals. Some of these premieres have led to publications, available at Sheet Music Plus. He has also composed for producers at 20th-21st Century Fox in Hollywood, and several of his original orchestral themes played daily on radio in over 50 cities nationwide for 14 years. Earlier in his career he placed a popular song on a Billboard #1 album and Record of the Year.

After earning a doctorate in music composition at the University of Southern California, he has been a member of the music composition faculty at Los Angeles-area universities for over 2 decades. He is married to a soprano and, as a

hobby, is a certified sailing instructor. More information is available at LawrenceMumford.com.

Adagio: Of Times and Seasons is a slow movement for orchestra. It owes its inspiration to various iconic 20th-century symphonic adagios by composers like Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, and Dmitri Shostakovich; and to the mildly syncopated, modal musical language found in both recent dramatic film scores and various American root musics. A strident opening theme is later answered with a more subdued one, and as both are developed they prove to be drawn from the same patterns. Instrumentation is straightforward, except that the Violins are divided into three groups and the Cellos into two.

A visual slide sequence has been included. Between about 1920 and 1950 a school of artists flourished in California, calling themselves “Plein-Air” (outdoor) or California Impressionists. The landscapes and other images that they created are the closest thing we have to color photographs of the state’s landscape before it was developed.

Robert Fleisher - ROBERT FLEISHER attended the H.S. of Music and Art (NYC), graduated with honors from the University of Colorado, and earned his M.M. and D.M.A. degrees at the University of Illinois, studying with Ben Johnston, Salvatore Martirano, and Paul Zonn. In addition to artist residencies in the U.S. and abroad, Fleisher has received support from the Illinois Arts Council, NEH, National Foundation for Jewish Culture, and Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. Author of *Twenty Israeli Composers* (1997) and a contributor to *Theresa Sauer’s Notations 21* (2009), he is Professor Emeritus at Northern Illinois University. Fleisher’s acoustic works have been described as “eloquent” (*Ann Arbor News*), “lovely and emotional” (*Musicworks*), “astoundingly attractive” (*Perspectives of New Music*), and “ingenious” (*Strad*)—his electroacoustic works as “rich, tactile” and “endearingly low-tech” (*New York Times*). His music is regularly performed in the U.S. and abroad may be heard on Albany, Capstone, Centaur, Navona, Petrichor, Sarton, and SEAMUS labels.

Performer: WILLIAM KOEHLER, a native of Houston, taught piano at Northern Illinois University from 1985 to 2014. He studied with Moreland Roller, Adele Marcus, and William Race, and his awards include first prizes in the 1984 San Antonio International Keyboard Competition and the 1989 New Orleans International Piano Competition. Koehler received his D.M.A. degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1986. Prior to teaching at NIU, he was on the piano faculty at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1981 and 1982. He is an active performer of chamber music

throughout the Midwest and has recorded for Cedille Records, Canti Classics, and Centaur Records as a collaborative pianist. In 2011 and 2013, he taught masterclasses and appeared on chamber music concerts in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas State, Mexico. Koehler is a past president of the Waubensee Valley chapter of the Illinois State Music Teachers.

The Six Little Piano Pieces were composed (mostly in 2018) under the influence of Schoenberg's Op. 19 for the noted British pianist Martin Jones, who premiered them at Radford University (VA) the same year. His recorded performances of this work and of my *Gig Harbor* (2010) appear in Volume 5 of the American Piano Music Series on PnOVA (2019). Much of No. 1 and most of No. 6 date from the early 1970s.

No. 1 has a new middle section derived from the movement's opening phrase.

No. 2 begins with a brief gesture from the middle of a piece in Op. 19. (Each piece here briefly references another from that work.)

No. 3 contains multiple encryptions of the name Martin Jones and appears to quote the unifying motive of a solo flute composition by one of Schoenberg's contemporaries.

No. 4 combines material from Schoenberg's *Transfigured Night* and a mass *Sanctus* Mr. Jones composed while a student at the Royal Academy of Music.

No. 5 recalls the familiar tune known as "Westminster Chimes." An interior phrase encrypting Schoenberg's name recalls the opening of another of his solo piano works.

No. 6, largely unchanged after nearly 50 years, has one new pitch in the melody and a new chord from Op. 19. In recognition of Schoenberg's triskaidekaphobia, this movement's coincidental 13 measures served as a model for all but the first of these pieces.

Martin Blessinger - Martin Blessinger is a Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Texas Christian University. He holds a DM in Music Composition from Florida State University where he was a University Research Fellow, studying with Ladislav Kubik and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. He received undergraduate and master's degrees from Stony Brook University, studying with Sheila Silver and Perry Goldstein. Prior to

arriving at TCU, he worked as a Lecturer in Music Theory at the Ithaca College School of Music.

Blessinger's works have been performed around the country and abroad by distinguished soloists, collegiate ensembles, professional groups, and community organizations, as well as on conferences and festivals at the national and international level. His orchestration of Jessica Grace Wing's score for the critically-acclaimed off-Broadway musical *Lost* won Best Music in the 2003 New York City Fringe Festival and received a revival performance by the Arizona Onstage Theater Company. Further, he has won awards from the Diana Barnhart American Song Competition (cum laude, for *Cradle Song*), the Eppes String Quartet Competition (for *Postcard from the Americas*), the Illinois Wesleyan University Young Composers Competition (for *Fanfare for Brass Quintet*), the NACUSA Young Composers Competition (for *Duo for Saxophone and Piano*), and ASCAP.

In 2014, Blessinger served as guest composer for the Talis Festival & Academy in Saas-Fee, Switzerland and has since been a featured composer on the Cliburn Foundation concert series (Fort Worth), the Basically Beethoven concert series (Dallas), and with the Texas New Music Ensemble (Houston). Further, he was an invited composer at the 2018 Beijing Modern Music Festival/International Society for Contemporary Music World New Music Days Festival in Beijing, China and was named the 2020 Texas Music Teachers Association Commissioned Composer.

His music is published by Reed Music, C. Alan Publications, and ALRY (Nourse Wind) Publications, and can be heard on Albany Records.

Clara Schumann's 23 opuses and various unpublished works demonstrate flashes of genius that ache for a proper airing. The best of Schumann's works, those written in the latter years of her creative period, are absolute gems of the mid-century Romantic style, worthy of the increased musical and scholarly attention they have received, particularly in connection with the composer's recent bicentennial. Among these are her 3 *Romances for Violin and Piano*, op. 22. These three short movements, sadly the only she composed for the solo violin, are gorgeous, expressive character pieces that exemplify her "mature" style—composed at the ripe old age of 34. My own *3 Romances for Violin and Piano – Homage to Clara Schumann* are not straightforward imitations of these pieces specifically, or her style in general, but rather an echo of them. They fuse the harmonic tensions and melodic lyricism of the Romantic era with my own American- and French-inflected language. *3 Romances for Violin and Piano – Homage to Clara Schumann* was jointly commissioned by the Texas Music Teachers Association and the Music Teachers National Association. The piece is dedicated to Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, a woman whose

gracious teaching contributed greatly to my understanding of music, an excellent violinist herself, and composer of her own wonderful Romance for Violin and Piano.