



Society of Composers, Inc.

2021 Online National Conference Concert No. 3

THURSDAY, MAY 6th | 7PM ET

Daniel M. Cavanagh

Melting Pot II. Ballade-Cinquain

Bassoon and Piano

Laura Bennett Cameron, bassoon

Daniel M. Cavanagh, piano

Nickitas Demos

Frontlash

Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano

Unheard-Of//Ensemble:

Ford Fourqurean (clarinet), Matheus

Souza (violin), Issei Herr (cello), and

Daniel Anastasio (piano).

Andrew Walters

Of Gossamer Webs

Dez Cordas:

Craig Butterfield, Double Bass

Matthew Slotkin, Guitar

Justin Writer

COVID Canon
Two Channel Fixed Media

Adam Vidiksis

Hyperdyne
Percussion and Electronics
Adam Vidiksis

Kirsten Volness

The Pathless Woods
Piero Guimaraes, vibraphone
EmmaLee Holmes-Hicks,
violin + kick drum

Hongwei Cai

String Quartet No. 1..to the shore...
String Quartet
The JACK Quartet

Charles Halka

Fever Dream
Sinfonietta
Alarm Will Sound,
Alan Pierson, conductor

Andrew Hannon

Boundaries
Drum Set and Fixed Video
Brad Meyer, Drum Set

Jennifer Margaret Barker

Ealasaid
Violin, Erhu, SATB Choir
6-WIRE (Cathy Yang and Xiang Gao)
University of Delaware Chorale,
conducted by Dr. Paul D. Head

Carter John Rice

Ink Spots
Fixed Media

Program Notes and Composer Biographies

Daniel M. Cavanagh -

DANIEL M. CAVANAGH is a composer and pianist who has garnered numerous awards in both areas. He has been commissioned by a wide range of jazz and classical artists throughout North America and Europe, and his music continues to be performed across the globe. Cavanagh has released four jazz CDs as a leader, including *Pulse and Heart of the Geyser* on OA2 Records, and two recordings with vibraphonist Dave Hagedorn. His compositions can be found on a wide variety of recordings, most recently "Reach" on *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* (Troy Records) by Martha Walvoord (violin) and Jack Unzicker (bass). He is Professor of Music and Interim Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Melting Pot was commissioned by bassoonist Scott Pool and completed in summer 2015. Scott asked for a composition that reflected the jazz side of things. However, rather than just writing out rhapsodies or fantasias, *quasi-improvisatory*, in a jazz style, I opted to reflect on ideas and styles that either influenced jazz or appeared as an outgrowth of typical, "mainstream" jazz. The piece is in three movements, roughly chronologically ordered as far as style is concerned. Movement I, "Booze Blooze," is a sort of mid-20th-century non-standard treatment of a standard 12-bar traditional blues form. Movement II, "Ballade-Cinquain," (presented here) draws on the poetic tradition of the ballade as well as the distinctly American poetic form the cinquain. The form of Cinquain known as "American Cinquain" was inspired by Japanese haiku and has five lines, with syllable patterns of 2, 4, 6, 8, and 2 again. American poet Robert Smith once described the pattern and emotional content of a cinquain as a crashing wave. The movement utilizes five-measure phrasing and the delayed-arc form typical of a cinquain. "Swamp Funk," the third movement, is perpetual-motion-in-7, stratified by contrasting sections which begin to compete with each other in ever-closer configurations.

Nickitas Demos - Nickitas Demos (b. 1962) holds a DMA from the Cleveland Institute of Music, a MM from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and a BM from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His principal teachers were Donald Erb (1927-2008) and Roger Hannay (1930-2006). Commissions include works for the Cleveland Orchestra, Atlanta Ballet, Nashville Chamber Orchestra, Atlanta Chamber Players, and the National Association of College Wind & Percussion Instructors. His awards include: Finalist in the 2016 American Prize in Composition – Orchestra; Semi-Finalist in the 2015 Rapido! Composition Competition; MacDowell Arts Colony

Fellowship (2012); Grand Prize in the 2004 Millennium Arts International Competition for Composers; Grand Prize in the 2005 Holyoke Civic Symphony Composition Competition; and 22 ASCAP Awards among others. Demos's works have been programmed at festivals, symposia and conferences including the 43rd Dimitria Festival (Thessaloniki, Greece); the 18th International Review of Composers (Belgrade Serbia); the New Music Forum Festival of Contemporary Music (San Francisco, CA); and at National and Regional Conferences of the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI) and the College Music Society (CMS). His music is self-published through Sylvan Lake Press (ASCAP) and recorded on Ablaze Records, Albany Records, MSR Classics and Capstone Records. Demos is the Director of the Georgia State University School of Music and Coordinator of Composition Studies. He is the Artistic Director of the neoPhonia New Music Ensemble and Director of the Center for Collaboration & Innovation in the Arts (CENCIA) within the Georgia State University College of the Arts. Co-Artistic Director of the SoundNOW Contemporary Music Festival, he also served on the Board of Directors for the MacDowell Colony (2013-2016), the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc. (2005-2014) and was a Co-Founder of Bent Frequency, a professional ensemble based in Atlanta, serving as Composer-In-Residence.

Andrew Walters - Andrew Walters' music has been performed at various conferences throughout the world including SEAMUS, SCI, ICMC, Spark, Imagine II, Electronic Music Midwest, Electroacoustic Barn Dance. His music appears on volume nine and sixteen of the "Music from SEAMUS" compact discs. Currently, he is Professor of Music Theory and Music Technology at Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

Justin Writer - Justin Writer is Associate Professor of Composition and Music Theory at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Writer's music is performed by professional and university ensembles throughout the United States, Europe, Mexico, and South America. His music is published by Cimarron Music Press, Media Press, and Fatrock Ink. Writer's works have been performed at several conferences including the International Tuba and Euphonium Association, North American Saxophone Alliance, European Bass Congress, Viola Congress, International Trumpet Guild, The Society of Composers Inc., New York City Electroacoustic Festival, Chicago Bass Festival, International Society of Bassists and other venues. Writer received his D.M.A in Composition from the University of Oklahoma, his M.M. in

Theory/Composition from Wichita State University, and a B.M.E. from Pittsburg State University (Kansas).

COVID Canon represents the waves of turmoil the global pandemic brought to society. Each voice represents a new wave, or heightened crisis, brought by the virus itself, or by imposed restrictions due to the virus. The work is a five voice canon that started as a simple step sequence. Each voice represents a letter from "COVID." The sequence was then played using five different voices from Native Instruments' Kinetic Treats. After picking five eerie sounds from Kinetic Treats, each voice was time stretched, slightly processed, and then spaced apart as a canon.

Adam Vidiksis - Adam Vidiksis is a composer, conductor, percussionist, improviser, and technologist based in Philadelphia whose music often explores social structures, science, and the intersection of humankind with the machines we build. Critics have called his music "mesmerizing", "dramatic", "striking" (Philadelphia Weekly), "notable", "catchy" (WQHS), "magical" (Local Arts Live), and "special" (Percussive Notes), and have noted that Vidiksis provides "an electronically produced frame giving each sound such a deep-colored radiance you could miss the piece's shape for being caught up in each moment" (Philadelphia Inquirer). His work is frequently commissioned and performed throughout North America, Europe, and Asia in recitals, festivals, and major academic conferences. Vidiksis's music has won numerous awards and grants, including recognition from the Society of Composers, Incorporated, the American Composers Forum, New Music USA, National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, and ASCAP. His works are available through HoneyRock Publishing, EMPIRE, New Focus, PARMA, and SEAMUS Records. Vidiksis recently served as composer in residence for the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and was selected by the NEA and Japan-US Friendship Commission to serve as Director of Arts Technology for a performance of a new work by Gene Coleman during the 2020 Olympics in Japan. Vidiksis is Assistant Professor of music technology at Temple University, President and founding member of SPLICE Music, which includes the annual Institute, Academy, and Festival, a Resident Artist at the Renegade Theater company, and a founding member of the Impermanent Society of Philadelphia, a group dedicated to promoting improvisation in the performing arts. He performs in SPLICE Ensemble and the Transonic Orchestra, conducts Ensemble N_JP, and directs the Temple Composers Orchestra and the Boyer College Electroacoustic Ensemble Project (BEEP). He produces real-time generative improvised electronic music (a.k.a 4EA and Circadia of Circadia & Currency). [www.vidiksis.com]

Hyperdyne explores the dynamics of force as the impetus for vibration, both electrical and mechanical. This work features frenetic rhythms which are then processed by the computer, variably expanding or diminishing the resonant characteristic of the sound produced by the drum. As the piece progresses, the digital filtering is accompanied by increasingly less resonant sound production by the performer, through the use of various extended techniques that reveal harmonic spectra of the drum, sticks, and performance space. The result is a process of diminishing resonance throughout the work, leading to a sense of wilting or decay.

Kirsten Volness - Smart, transcendent, and immersive, Kirsten Volness' emotive soundscapes integrate electronics and modern composition techniques with jazz and pop influences. "Irresistible" (San Francisco Chronicle) and "nothing short of gorgeous." (New York Arts), each of her compositions reveals "an exquisite sound world" (New Classic LA) inspired by nature, myth, spirituality, and environmental and sociopolitical issues. With commissions from the World Future Council Foundation, ASCAP/SEAMUS, BMI Foundation, and The American Opera Project, Volness received MacColl Johnson and RISCA Fellowships. She holds composition degrees from the Universities of Michigan and Minnesota, and is Visiting Assistant Professor at Reed College. · kirstenvolness.com

The Pathless Woods

- I. By allowing the will to float, we might see and hear more clearly
- II. Trees bend in submission to storms
- III. The good times of today are the sad thoughts of tomorrow
- IV. A place where no one knows...

The title is taken from a quote on a tea bag—"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods"—an excerpt from Lord Byron's poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in which a disillusioned world wanderer marvels at the ways in which Nature's sheer power overwhelms Humankind. Written in December 2020, amidst peak burnout and COVID spike, my piece is a stream-of-consciousness reflection on this critical moment when we have awakened to an opportunity to reimagine the world together. Our priorities have come into focus, new paths forward have been illuminated, a hopeful spirit rises, and as much as action is overdue and necessary, we must also rest and gather strength to navigate difficult times ahead. Commissioned by Verdant Vibes, many musical choices were inspired by my dear friends for whom it was written, EmmaLee Holmes-Hicks and Piero Guimaraes, who also graciously provided percussion samples.

Hongwei Cai - Hongwei Cai (b.1988), a Chinese composer and pianist, is currently a Ph.D. candidate in music composition at the University of Iowa. He has composed for various ensembles, and his works have been performed by the Ensemble Dal Niente, the University of Michigan's Contemporary Directions Ensemble, the University of Cincinnati Collage-Conservatory of Music Chamber Orchestra, the University of Iowa Center for New Music, the Ensemble Accroche Note, and the JACK Quartet. He has been active as both a composer and a pianist in the Midwest Graduate Music Consortium, the Midwest Composers' Symposium, and the Exchange of Midwest Collegiate Composers. Hongwei Cai received his MM in composition at Oklahoma City University and a BA in composition and theory from Shenyang Conservatory of Music (China). His teachers have included David Gompper, Josh Levine, Edward Knight, and Shenglin Jiang.

Partly inspired by Michael Jackson's song *Heal the World*, my *String Quartet No.1 "...to the shore..."* is an imaginary journey searching for a "place" where there is no damage or hurt, sorrow or fear. The music begins moaning-like and is slow-paced, constantly changing timbre with a dark expression. After a sudden flash — a metaphor for the dawn of hope—, the music shifts, sending a signal to God asking a way to travel from shore to shore. After a difficult trek, the "place" appears unexpectedly. It is quiet and peaceful, like a beautiful meadow, birds singing and with flowers fragrant. Everything is created in beauty and exists in harmonious coexistence.

Charles Halka - Charles Halka is a Pacific Northwest-based composer whose music spans the broad space between "energetic" and "crazed" (New York Times) and "haunting" and "reflective" (Houston Press). His acoustic and electronic works for concert, dance, and opera often seek to recreate natural phenomena, human interaction and movement, or visual art and poetry, while at other times they are novel worlds born of improvisation, play, and daydreaming.

With performances and commissions from the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra led by Marin Alsop, Alarm Will Sound, Mivos Quartet, the Mexican National Symphony Orchestra, the Lviv Philharmonic, counter)induction, Callithumpian Consort, Volti, and ÓNIX Ensemble, among many others, Halka's music has been heard by audiences in North America, Europe, Asia, and Brazil at venues and events such as The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, The

Intimacy of Creativity, ISCM World Music Days, the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, and Foro Internacional de Música Nueva.

Among Halka's recent honors are a Barlow Endowment General Commission and the Copland House Residency Award, and he was in residence with Houston's critically acclaimed Musiqa and the Foundation for Modern Music. In addition, he completed residencies at MacDowell and the M.K. Sarbievijaus Cultural Center in Kražiai, Lithuania. Further support for his work has come from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the U.S. Fulbright program (2008-09 grantee), and the Nevada Arts Council.

Halka earned degrees in piano and composition from The Peabody Conservatory and Rice University, and is Assistant Professor of Composition and Theory at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA.

Andrew Hannon - Andrew Hannon's musical life is a combination of diverse influences. He composes for the concert stage and has performed in metal core bands. His music alternates between moments of violence and serenity creating an element of tension. In addition to musical tension, he incorporates technology as an aesthetic statement. For example, *Two Lost Loves* draws its material from anonymous voicemails, *Night Watch* transmits audio through audience's smart devices, and *News Flash* uses a YouTube video as source material for audio and video.

His compositions are performed throughout the United States at SEAMUS, North American Saxophone Alliance national conference, College Music Society's national conferences, Electroacoustic Barn Dance, and USF New Music Festival. His compositions are published by Warwick Music and Potenza Music. He strives to foster creative community by collaborating with performers and mentoring students.

Andrew earned his DMA in music composition from the University of South Carolina. His research focuses on composition pedagogy, fear and aural skills, and the music of Ligeti. He is Assistant Professor of Music Composition at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC.

Boundaries for drum set and fixed video segments nine videos and disperses them throughout the composition based on magic squares. The formal structure is like a collage of diverse ideas. Each of the videos concentrates on nature and has its own musical texture. The center, tenth, video is an educational video explaining the

formation of boundary layers. Against this video, the drum set settles into a beat as it mimics the voice.

Jennifer Margaret Barker - Described as “a composer of profound sensibility”, Scottish-American Jennifer Margaret Barker has received performances of her compositions on six continents. Hailed by critics as “extraordinarily moving”, “soul-stirring”, “at once gripping and timeless”, “show-stopping”, “anything but passive”, “blazingly alive, with lovely, aching melodies”, “haunting”, “beautiful...warm”, and “illuminated by dreamy images”, her compositions have been performed by orchestras such as the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and the Virginia Symphony; choral ensembles such as Vocal de Cámara Platense, the Bearsden Choir, the Virginia Children’s Chorus, and the Children’s Chorus of Maryland; chamber ensembles such as VocaliZe, Orchestra 2001, Network for New Music, 6-WIRE, Relâche, the Society for New Music and Mélomanie; and an extensive list of international artists including British pianist, Martin Jones and Powell Artist, Alice K. Dade. Recent international festivals in which her music has been featured include Malta’s Victoria International Arts Festival, Brazil’s Festival Internacional Compositores de Hoje, and America’s Festival Mozaic. Her compositions have been featured on documentaries and promotional videos; exhibited as music-video art in galleries; utilized as underscoring to theatrical productions; and broadcast on American public radio (including 'Performance Today'), Canadian radio, Hong Kong radio, Swedish radio and the BBC. Published by Boosey & Hawkes, Theodore Presser, Southern Percussion, Vanderbeek & Imrie, and McKenna-Keddie, Barker’s compositions have been released on the Naxos, Albany, New World Records, Composers Recordings Inc., Meyer Media, and PnOVA labels. Dr. Barker is Professor of Composition/Theory at the University of Delaware.

Titled *Ealasaid* (Scottish Gaelic for ‘Elisabeth’), Jennifer Margaret Barker’s composition sets the poetry of Helen Burness Cruickshank (1886-1975). Writing in the Scots and English languages, Cruickshank hailed from Angus in the northeast of Scotland, but spent most of her adult life in Edinburgh. In addition to being a poet and a suffragette, Cruickshank is credited with helping mobilize and document the mid-twentieth century Scottish Literary Renaissance movement. Her dedication and work ethic is evident by the fact that, in passing, she left an unfinished poem about a woman who could not stop for death because she had so much to do!

The ‘wee’ island of Tiree, described in *Ealasaid*, lies off the West coast of Scotland and currently hosts a population of around 650. It is the furthestmost island in the

Inner Hebrides. In setting this poem, Barker chose to commence with the final verse, thereby creating an almost cyclical flow to the order of the verses, as a nod to the cycle of life.

Carter John Rice is in need of updating his bio and is far too busy putting together the rest of this conference to bother. If you've made it this far, congrats!

In 2019 Jo Verdis was honored to collaborate with four composers affiliated with Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. The resulting pieces were performed on a concert presented at the opening of her art show, "Flow", at the Spirit Room in Fargo, ND. She also told her story and participated in a panel discussion around themes of creativity, trauma, and healing at Concordia. *Ink Spots* is one of the four pieces that was created for this event.