



Society of Composers, Inc.

2021 Online National Conference Concert No. 7

SATURDAY, MAY 8th | 10AM ET

Ryne Siesky

glass, evaporate[d]
Three Quarter-tuned pianos
Jacob Mason, pianos

Xuesi Xu

Red Winter
String Quartet
Arditti Quartet

Brittany J. Green

there is only you and i
Flute and Live Electronics
Alex Sopp, flute

Jonathan Newmark

Arithmetic
Alexandra Porter, soprano
Phoebe Bognar, flute
Ashlee Booth, cello
Sarah Barham, piano

Hannah Dick, percussion
Michael Truesdell, conductor.

Joshua Hey

lens flare from Alpha Centauri
String Quartet
Daedalus String Quartet

Paul Oehlers

Flux Hammer
Electronic Playback

Alex Tedrow

Biff
Baritone Saxophone and Electronics
Jake Simons, baritone saxophone

Kevin Salfen

After Reading Baudelaire
Poem by Wendy Barker
Orit Amy Eylon, mezzo-soprano
Ara Koh, piano

Benjamin Rieke

Feature Selection
Violin, Viola, Clarinet, Piano, Percussion

Helena Michelson

From Chansons Innocents
Soprano, solo treble voices and organ
Natalie Buickians, soprano
Abraham Ross, organ
Choir consisting of participants from
the 2020 N.E.O. Voice Festival (Los
Angeles)

James Romig

Palindrogram
Solo Flute
John McMurtery, flute

Program Notes and Composer Biographies

Ryne Siesky - Ryne Siesky is a Miami-based composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music. His music explores the intersections of art and music, bringing focus to the idiosyncrasies of music creation and sonic processes. His work has been described as “beautifully haunting” (Robert Avalon Competition), “attractive and inventive” (Dorothy Hindman), and “patiently evocative” (George Lewis). His work has been performed by Hypercube, Transient Canvas, the Sprezzatura Horn Quartet, the Braeburn Brass Quintet, Robert Black, Lindsay Garritson, Jacob Mason, and Laura Silva, among others. His music has also been featured at several festivals and conventions including the Society of Composers, International Trumpet Guild, Diffrazioni, Festival DME, NYCEMF, and SEAMUS, among others.

Recently, his work for 8.1 channel fixed media entitled “...grind...” was programmed on the International New Music Festival at USF and the SEAMUS National Conference. The work was also published on Petrichor Records album New Music by Living Composers Vol. 6 and was featured on Un-American Blackbox’s digital gallery, SINGLE ISSUE, and on Rummage Radio’s 77th episode. Additionally, his work yellow drips from my head won the Ensemble Ibis Composition Competition and will be premiered in April 2021.

Ryne earned his Bachelor of Arts in Music from Virginia Commonwealth University and his Master of Music in Music Composition from Ohio University, studying under Robert McClure. He is currently working towards his Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Miami – Frost School of Music. His primary teachers are Dorothy Hindman and Lansing McLoskey. Ryne is currently a member of the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI) National Student Council, Author and Curator of the Charlotte New Music Opportunity Newsletter, and Co-Founder of the -NESS Composer Collective.

Website: <https://www.rynejsmusic.com/>

Within the first month after its premiere on "A Night of Robert Black," my piece "*lips evaporate*" for double bass and piano received several performances and recordings all around the United States. While mixing the recordings, my curiosity spiked after accidentally displacing certain tracks within the mix session. "*glass, evaporate[d]*" is the self-plundered amalgamation of this experiment.

Xuesi Xu - Born in Shanghai, China, Xuesi Xu holds a B.M. from Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and a M.M from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he studied composition with Heinrich Taube, Reynold Tharp, and Stephen Taylor, and electronic music with Eli Fieldsteel. His music has been performed by the Arditti Quartet, the Eppes Quartet, the University of Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Shanghai Opera House Orchestra. He has received numerous awards, including the 2018-19 American Prize Finalist Honorable mention, the 2013 Chinese Instruments Composition Competition in Music Universities and Colleges, and the 3rd Rivers Awards Composition Competition. He is currently pursuing a D.M. in composition at Florida State University, studying composition with Mark Wingate, and Liliya Ugay.

When I was writing this piece, I always imagined that I was sitting around a campfire with my family. In this piece, I tried to tell stories that our family shared through campfire time. I tried to depict those images that I saw through the campfire.

I tried to convey the feeling that draws me in, makes my eyes bright from the smoke, warms my face and hands, and feeds my soul.

Brittany J. Green - Brittany J. Green (b. 1991) is a North Carolina-based composer, creative, and educator. Described as “cinematic in the best sense” and “searing” (Chicago Classical Review), Brittany’s music is centered around facilitating collaborative, intimate musical spaces that ignite visceral responses. The intersection between sound, movement, and text serves as the focal point of these musical spaces, often questioning and redefining the relationships between these three elements.

Her research and creative interests include mapping aural gestures to gestural recognition technology and exploring virtual reality platforms as a tool for experiencing immersive, intimate musical moments. Her music has been featured at concerts and festivals throughout the United States and Canada, including the Society of Composers National Conference, New York City Electronic Music Festival, SPLICE Institute, the West Fork New Music Festival, Music by Women Festival, and Electroacoustic Barn Dance Festival. She has presented research at the North Carolina Music Educators Association Conference, East Carolina University’s Research and Creative Arts Week, Darkwater Women in Music Festival, and the Intersection@ Art and Science Symposium. From 2018-2019, Brittany served as composer-in-residence for the PCS/ECU Young Composers Project. Current projects

include commissions from the JACK Quartet as an inaugural member of JACK Studio Artists and Mind on Fire, along with an artist residency with TimeSlips.

Brittany holds a BM in Music Education from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and a MM in Music Composition and Theory from East Carolina University. She is currently in residence at Duke University, pursuing a Ph.D in Music Composition as a Deans Graduate Fellow. Brittany is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda and Society of Composers, Inc., where she serves as the national student representative.

there is only you and i (2020) is a piece for flute and live electronics that explores connections between the flute and voice.. Fleeting gestures of amplified flute and voice weaves in and out of layered textures created through live processing. The text heard throughout the piece is taken from the poem there is only you and i, a computer-generated poem.

Jonathan Newmark - Composer Jonathan Newmark, born New York City in 1953, pianist, violist, and conductor, received his MM in composition from University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 2015. His teachers have included Joel Hoffman, Douglas Knehans, and Michael Fiday, at CCM, as well as Jonathan Kolm, Gloria Wilson Swisher, and James McVoy. He has participated at the Chamber Music Conference at Bennington, VT since 1981 and worked there with composers Allen Shawn, Martin Bresnick, Daniel Strong Godfrey, Kurt Rohde, Paul Moravec, Chen Yi, Pierre Jalbert, Jesse Jones, and Ted Hearne. His works have premiered at the Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival, Charlotte New Music Festival, Connecticut Summerfest, nief-norf summer festival, and Walden School's Creative Musicians' Retreat. His bass clarinet trio Secret Atop the Bluff won the Juventas New Music score competition at the Boston New Music Festival in 2017. A CD of four chamber works was released in 2009 on the Music Unlimited label. His string quartet appears on a 2019 CD by the Altius Quartet; his piano sonata appears on a 2019 CD by British pianist Martin Jones. His works are published by TrevCo Varner and BrassArts. A 1974 graduate of Harvard College, he earned his MD from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1978. He is a board-certified neurologist, staff neurologist at the Washington DC VA Medical Center, full professor of neurology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, retired Colonel, US Army Medical Corps, former Chemical Casualty Care Consultant to the Army Surgeon General, consultant to the National Institutes of Health and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and one of the nation's leading authorities on medical response to chemical warfare and terrorism. In 2018 he was appointed by Virginia Governor

Ralph Northam to a four-year term on the Secure and Resilient Commonwealth Panel of Virginia. He lives in Burke, Virginia.

"Arithmetic" is a setting of a poem by Carl Sandburg, depicting a child's view of mathematics. It was commissioned for and premiered at the nief-norf summer festival at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2018. Don't take either the text or the music too seriously.

"Arithmetic" from THE COMPLETE POEMS OF CARL SANDBURG, Revised and Expanded Edition. Copyright 1969, 1970 by Lillian Steichen Sandburg. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Joshua Hey - Described as "imaginative and daring" (Broad Street Review) and "trippy... forward looking" (Oregon Arts Watch), Joshua Hey's music has been performed by leading ensembles such as the Daedalus String Quartet, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Ensemble Dal Niente, Quatuor Bozzini, Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble, Omaha Symphony, PRISM, and soloists of Ensemble Intercontemporain. Festivals and venues which have presented his music include IRCAM-ManiFeste, Nokia Bell Labs, Musiikin Aika (Time of Music, FIN), reMusik's St. Petersburg International New Music Festival, and the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau.

Josh has received a Barlow General Commission, first prize in the Salvatore Martirano Award and Sergei Slonimsky International Composition Competition, and residencies from Copland House and Yaddo. His work has been supported by commissions and grants from the American Composers Forum-Philadelphia, ICon Arts (ROU), Sachs Program for Arts Innovation, and Network for New Music. In 2014-15, he was a visiting scholar at the Sibelius Academy with a grant from the American-Scandinavian Foundation. He earned degrees from the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D. 2019), the Eastman School of Music (M.A. 2010), and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (B.M. 2010).

His current projects include an evening-length piece for voice-actor, mixed chamber ensemble, electronics, lighting, and video, which will premiere with the support of a grant from the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation. He is also collaborating with visual artist Michelle Lopez and sound artist Eugene Lew on The Joplin Project, which features a robot in choreographed motion beneath a video projection designed for planetariums.

Paul A. Oehlers is most recognized for his “extraordinarily evocative” film scores. (Variety) Films incorporating his music have won the Grand Jury Prizes at the Atlanta International Film Festival and the Hamptons International Film Festival. His music has also appeared in broadcasts on PBS, NBC, and other commercial venues.

As a composer of concert music, Paul’s compositions have received hundreds of performances in the United States and abroad. For his achievements in concert music composition, Paul was awarded the 2006 Margaret Lee Crofts Fellowship from MacDowell. He is currently Associate Professor of Audio Technology at American University in Washington, DC.

An exploration of sounds derived from a piano, *Flux Hammer* employs sounds of physically altered piano strings. Source samples were prepared acoustically and manipulated through various processes, such as convolution, resonance filtering, and granular synthesis.

Alex Tedrow is a composer, musician, and educator who strives to inspire and connect performers and listeners of all ages to fresh, fun, and innovative music and technology. Offering a “vivacious and colorful” voice described as a “topography of beautifully integrated and deliberate sounds” (Eric Smedley), his diverse catalogue includes band, orchestra, choral, chamber, solo, electroacoustic, and sound installation pieces.

In 2019, Alex studied at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique in Paris where he premiered Planet Playground – an interactive, data-driven project incorporating crowd participation via mobile devices. He is currently co-composing the soundtrack for a new video game by Crimson Ink Games, *The Shadows that Linger*.

As an active member of the new music community, Alex’s work has been featured at the SCI Student National Conference, the Midwest Composers Symposium, the National Student Electronic Music Event (NSEME), the Navy Band Saxophone Symposium, and the New Mexico Music Educators Association (NMMEA) All-State Conference. In 2020, he was awarded the IU Morris and Sheila Hass Award in Computer Music. He also recently received the Austin B. Caswell Musicology Award for his research in medieval-era music notation.

Alex is committed to assisting others through the arts. In 2018, he co-founded Composing for a Cause – a not-for-profit program in which members travel to hospitals for children to host songwriting workshops. In 2020, he joined the Jacobs Community Engagement Initiative focusing on cultivating sustainable development in rural Indiana communities through collaborative programming.

Alex is currently pursuing a B.M. degree in music composition with minors in music education, electronic music, and conducting at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music where he serves as president of the IU Student Composers Association. He is an avid animal lover, biker, and spelunker – all themes that often inspire his work.

Male betta fish are surprisingly aggressive for their small size, and will attack any other males (and often females) in their vicinity. Despite their belligerent behavior, bettas are very beautiful and innocent looking to the human eye. This poses a really interesting juxtaposition of ideas in my mind, since we generally think of them as these tiny, colorful, harmless pets to keep in our homes. From the perspective of the fish, however, protecting territory daily is an arduous and dangerous task. This piece attempts to bring these ideas into the realm of music – mixing very serious, intense material inside the context of a sporadic and playful, sometimes melodious soundscape. The whole thing is meant to be loud and aggressive yet almost a bit silly, not unlike the personality of my own pet betta, Biff. *Biff* is written for and dedicated to my good friend, Jake Simons, who has known and admired Biff for almost as long as I have.

Kevin Salfen - KEVIN SALFEN (Associate Professor of Music, University of the Incarnate Word) is a scholar and multimedia artist and producer. His writing on Benjamin Britten has been widely published, and he has presented his work at numerous conferences, including the American Musicological Society and the Society for Ethnomusicology. Kevin is a student of Japanese noh theater and a member of international performing ensemble Theatre Nohgaku, whose 2018 tour of *_Blue Moon over Memphis_*, a noh about Elvis, was positively reviewed in the *_Los Angeles Times_*. Kevin's music has been performed in England, China, Japan, and throughout the US, and his intercultural work *_Phoenix Fire_*, about the failed 1940 and successful 1964 Olympics, received awards from the Japan 21st-Century Exposition Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts. He writes for and curates the blog *_Sound Trove_*.

“After Reading Baudelaire,” by San Antonio poet Wendy Barker, is an extended meditation on the choices a mother makes and how those choices affect family and career. Over the course of the poem, the writer reflects on her son, now grown, musing about what it must be like to “regret nothing,” like Edith Piaf in the famous song. The poet’s rich world of reference – Baudelaire, Piaf, mothers, sons – inspired me to set the poem as a “quodlibet,” a genre dating back to the Renaissance in which the composer pieces together a variety of quotations to make a new work, often parodistic in nature. Here I use three “parent” quotes (or misquotes) – Debussy’s “La balcon,” from the Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire; “Summertime” from Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess; and “Non, je ne regrette rien” as sung by Edith Piaf – and a number of “children” quotes – arias from Die Zauberflöte, the “Coronation Scene” from Boris Godunov, and another song of my own – to suggest a similarly rich field of musical reference. With its frequent forays into opera and its refusal to commit to a single aria-like melody, the song resembles something like the recitative of an operatic character.

Benjamin Rieke - Ben Rieke (b. 2000) is a composer and pianist from Naperville, Illinois. He is currently a junior at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music where he has studied composition with David Dzubay, Claude Baker and Don Freund as well as piano with Roberto Plano. He has previously won awards from Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, the Indiana MTNA Student Composer Competition as well as the National Federation of Music Clubs and has participated in masterclasses with Georg Friedrich Haas, Du Yun, and David Ludwig.

Ben is pursuing a B.S. in computer science, which has carried over into an interest in the intersection of music and concepts such as self-reference and recursion. Other musical influences include electronic music, rock, and his experience playing jazz piano.

In machine learning, a common problem is classification of individuals into groups based on their features. A model might be trained to recognize patterns in the features of a member of a population; however, more does not always equal better. The observation of increasingly many different features eventually introduces confounding variables and statistical noise into the model, so it is often better to verify if a feature is hurting the accuracy of the model and eliminate it from consideration accordingly.

Feature Selection begins with a frantic oscillation between multiple different textures. As the piece runs its course, the textures are gradually pruned. By the end, only a small fragment is left of the array of materials presented in the opening.

This piece was written for the first "48 hours" program at IU.

Helena Michelson - Helena Michelson is a composer based in the San Francisco-Bay Area. First trained as a pianist, she studied with Mack McCray at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and in master classes, with Richard Goode and Awadagin Pratt. She completed her studies in Music at the University of California, Berkeley (BA) and University of California, Davis (PhD) and has been a fellow at numerous festivals including Composers Conference, June in Buffalo, and NEW MUSIC SYMPOSIUM in Domaine Forget, Québec. She has also been a participating composer in the 2018 Opera from Scratch program (Halifax, Canada), New Music at the Bayou 2019, Music by Women Festival in Columbus, Mississippi (2020 and 21), N.E.O. Voice Festival (Los Angeles) in 2020 and '21, and the Really Spicy Opera Aerial Institute, Mezzo Soprano edition (2020).

From Chansons Innocents has been composed for the 2020 N.E.O. Voice Festival in Los Angeles as part of "ExplOratorio," an oratorio, inspired by Medieval morality plays.

It is set to two poems by E.E. Cummings from the set, "Chansons Innocents" (*Tulips and Chimneys*, 1923), the first, "in-Just Spring" and the fourth, "why did you go." The poet's bold, peculiar, and sometimes ambiguous word constructions, odd and provocative punctuation, spacing, and capitalization pose many challenges. They also create opportunities for word painting.

In "in-Just Spring," Cummings' world of innocence is marred by several occurrences. One is gender stereotyping: little boys "come running from marbles and piracies," while little girls "come dancing from hop-scotch and jump-rope." Then, there is a strange and bizarre figure of the balloonman. First, we learn he is lame, then queer (i.e. weird; not present-day meaning), and lastly, goat-footed, a reference to Pan, the god of the wild, shepherd and flock in the Greek Mythology. In his three appearances he grows from an eccentric, nearly lovable old man to a disfigured repulsive presence. In my setting, I aspire to project the cinematic and carnivalesque atmosphere of this poem.

If "in Just-Spring" creates tension and moral ambiguity, "why did you go" inspires the search for purity and high moral ground, however elusive. The young kitten, the

personification of Spring, rejuvenation, and all awakening, literal and figurative, surreptitiously slips away. The serene world is left in a sad standstill. The voices are now a cappella, presented in a madrigalesque setting.

James Romig, finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Music, responds to an increasingly fragmented and accelerated world by creating highly isomorphic works that evolve slowly and reveal themselves gradually. Endeavoring to reflect the fragile intricacy of the natural world, his compositional designs exert influence on both small-scale iteration and large-scale structure, obscuring boundaries between form and content. Critics have described his music as “rapturous, slow-moving beauty” (San Francisco Chronicle), “developing with the naturalness of breathing” (The New Yorker), and “profoundly meditative... haunting” (The Wire). He is a two-time Copland House award recipient and has served as artist-in-residence at numerous national parks including Everglades, Grand Canyon, and Petrified Forest. Recordings have been released by New World Records, Navona, Blue Griffin, and Perspectives of New Music. His scores are published exclusively by Parallax Music Press. Guest-composer visits include the Eastman School of Music, the Cincinnati Conservatory, SUNY Buffalo, Bowling Green State University, and the American Academy in Rome. Romig holds degrees from the University of Iowa (BM, MM) and Rutgers University (PhD). His primary teachers were Charles Wuorinen and Milton Babbitt, both of whom served on his doctoral dissertation committee. He has been on faculty at Western Illinois University since 2002.

Palndrogram, for solo flute, was commissioned by John McMurtery and a consortium of fourteen additional flutists. The single-movement work, completed in August 2018, lasts approximately seven minutes. Its title is an invented portmanteau defined in the score as: “1. A combination of the words palindrome and anagram. 2. A musical form that reverses direction at its midpoint and returns to its start via structural retrograde with some surface elements reordered.” *Palndrogram* is something of a sequel to *Sonnet 2* (1999), which was also commissioned by McMurtery. The two works share compositional characteristics at the structural level (two strands of musical information unfolding simultaneously) as well as on the surface (certain extended techniques, and a preponderance of staccato articulation).

