



# Society of Composers, Inc.

## 2021 Online National Conference Concert No. 8

SATURDAY, MAY 8th | 1PM ET

Christopher Biggs and Noa Even

*Imprints in Time*

Saxophone, thunder tube and  
interactive audiovisual media

Noa Even, saxophone

Daniel J. Armistead

*The Acquisition*

Derek Dillman (Picc. Tpt.,

Jessica Sawall (Tpt. 1),

Ayanna Posipanko (Tpt. 2/Flg.), Nathan

Wade (Hrn. 1),

Liz Bellotti (Hrn. 2),

Ross Forney (Euph.),

Ryan Meredith (Ten. Tbn.),

Daniel Morrison (Bs. Tbn.),

Joshua Brown (Tba.),

Lauren Reynolds (Conductor)

Kari Juusela

*Cornered*  
String Quartet  
Francine Trester - violin  
Mimi Rabson - violin  
Melissa Howe - viola  
Kari Juusela - cello

Benjamin Fuhrman

*In Darkness We See Ourselves  
Reflected*  
Fixed Media

Joshua Haugen

*Truckee Lake*  
Solo Baritone Saxophone  
Joshua Haugen, saxophone

Jared Bradley Tubbs

*Performance: Anxiety*  
Voice, live electronics and fixed media  
Jared Bradley Tubbs, performer

Alexander Nohai-Seaman

*Beyond the Ends of the Earth*  
Katie Cox, flute  
Mara Mayer, clarinet  
Andie Tanning, violin  
Maria Jeffers, cello  
Joseph Bergen, percussion

Jorge Variego

*La Caja de Musica*  
Viola, electronics and video  
Hillary Herndon, viola

Joseph Koykkar

*Lacrimosa MMXVIII*  
Electric cello and fixed media  
Craig Hultgren, electric cello

Wenxin Li

*Blue Bamboo*

Alto saxophone

Gabriel Sánchez Porras, saxophone

Natalie Draper

*Three Meditations for Organ*

Anne Laver, organ

Garrison Gerard

*Switchback*

Full orchestra and electronics

UNT Symphony Orchestra

### **Program Notes and Composer Biographies**

Christopher Biggs - Christopher Biggs is a composer and multimedia artist whose “original and unique musical language” blends dense, contrapuntal textures with direct, visceral expression. His music presents a “masterful combination between acoustic instruments and electronics” (Avant Scena), and has been described as “heartbreakingly beautiful” (Classical Music Review), and a “sonic foodfight” (Jazz Weekly). His recent projects focus on integrating live instrumental performance with interactive audiovisual media.

Noa Even - Noa Even is a versatile saxophonist whose work as a performer and educator is dedicated to the arts of today. In addition to creating new music through commissioning and close collaboration with living composers, she interprets traditional concert music and improvises.

Atomic, Noa’s solo commissioning project, features works for saxophone, interactive electronics, and video that explore themes of human connection, such as support for the transgender community, immigration policies, and feelings of regret. Since premiering atomic in September 2019, Noa toured the program across the country, including appearances at several Michigan universities, Stack Overflow series’ Colombian Composer Collective Residency (Austin, TX), fp presents (Cleveland, OH), Fuse Factory (Columbus, OH), University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and a guest artist visit to the University of Georgia as a 2019-2020 Willson Center Distinguished Artist.

*Imprints in Time* for alto saxophone, thunder tube, and computer was written for and is dedicated to a consortium of saxophonists consisting of Noa Even, Drew Whiting, Zach Shemon, Henning Schröder, and Justin Massey. The work abstractly reflects on how people are connected through their interactions.

The title comes from an article by Michael Tze-Sung Longnecker that posits that we can think of objects as creating a curve in time, just as objects curve space, and he refers to these curves as imprints in time. I imagined personal interactions as having an analogous mass-energy to objects and that interactions imprint on our personal histories similar to how objects bend space and possibly time. The audio consists of three, interactive sonic layers – the saxophone, live processing of the saxophone, and fixed media files. The visuals for the work are generated in real time: the energy in the low, mid, and high frequency regions of the three audio layers is extracted and mapped to control the parameters of visual events.

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Daniel J. Armistead - Daniel J. Armistead is a composer, arranger, and saxophonist in the greater Philadelphia area. He has written for countless ensembles ranging from chamber ensembles, choirs, marching bands, symphony orchestras, and wind ensembles. While attending the University of Delaware for his undergraduate degree in Music Composition, he studied with renowned teachers Todd Groves, Jennifer Barker, and James Ancona. His primary influences for his works are derived from neo-romanticism and jazz, exploring numerous statements of minute motifs that develop and fuse throughout a piece. In the summer, Daniel works for the Bluecoats Drum & Bugles Corps touring the country as their associate stage manager and a part of their administrative team. In May 2018, Daniel obtained his music composition degree and took a year off, composing daily and fulfilling commissions. Currently, he is in his 2nd year of his masters of music composition degree at the University of Delaware.

*The Acquisition* is a single movement brass choir piece composed during the fall of 2016. Showcasing the versatility of brass instruments, the piece encompasses a variety of brief phrases each geared towards this flexibility. Effects including the use of muted trumpets, piccolo trumpet, and flugelhorn are used as coloring effects throughout the piece and provide an appeal to the listener and a diversity in sound. Additionally, difficult techniques such as woodwind-like runs and double tonguing, in combination with constant rhythmic changes, keeps the piece driving forward and interesting throughout.

The piece itself is about a search for identity. The process by which you acquire this sense of individuality is strictly represented in the 3 main sections of this piece: 1) Currently knowing who you think you are, 2) Not knowing who you are, where you are going, or what you are going to do next, and 3) Becoming comfortable with oneself, and finally acquiring your own sense of uniqueness and self-distinction in the world. This transformative phenomenon is primarily represented rhythmically through the ambiguity/syncopations in meter, and alterations in motifs. Throughout

the piece, players are often playing in 2 different interpretations of a meters at the same time, resulting in syncopations such as 88 being 44 and 128 being 64 (or vice versa). These ambiguities in meter progress throughout the piece, with the middle section being quite uneasy in terms of subdivisions and material, as the performers play in 2 completely different time signatures at the same time.

Motifs are augmented as well through these metric changes with the opening trumpet motif returning several times through the piece, and the euphonium melody (originally heard in m.54) returning as a slow horn solo in m.136. As the tempo settles in the 3rd section, a new motif is introduced solidifying this new-found sense of self. However, the beginning motif is also quoted subliminally here (first seen in m.144 by the tenor trombone) and is not forgotten, representing that people do not change who they once were, but rather continually grow into something new over time.

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Kari Henrik Juusela is a Finnish/American composer, performer and educator who served for fifteen years as the Dean of the Professional Writing and Music Technology Division at Berklee College of Music. Prior to his work at Berklee, he served as the Associate Dean, Director of Composition and Almand Chair of Composition at Stetson University. Currently, he teaches and mentors young musicians at Community Music Works, a music program for underserved youth in Providence, Rhode Island. He also teaches music composition and theory at BerkleeOnline.

Juusela's compositions have been performed around the world in concerts and festivals ranging from the Moscow Autumn Festival to the Shanghai Electronic Music Weeks. His music has won many awards in competitions including the Vienna International Full-Length Opera Competition, the International Trumpet Guild Composition Competition, the International Red Stick Composition Competition; Aliénor Harpsichord Composition Contest, and London Chamber Groups "Piece of the Year Competition."

Juusela is an active performer serving as principal cellist for the Narragansett Bay Symphony, cellist for the world music group Afrimanding, and concertizes in a variety of new-music chamber ensembles.

His music is recorded and published by MuusJuus Music, Beauport Classical, ERM Media, Lakeside Records, Capstone Records, ISG Publications, and Yelton Rhodes Music.

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Born in Lansing, Benjamin Fuhrman is a graduate of the doctoral program in music composition at Michigan State University, where his primary instructors were Dr. Ricardo Lorenz and Dr. Mark Sullivan. He also holds a master's degree in music composition from Michigan State University, and a bachelor's degree in violin performance from Hope College, where his principal instructor was Mihai Craioveanu.

He has had works commissioned from a number of performers, including Drake Dantzler, Violet, Jeffrey Loeffert, Nathan Boggert, the H-2 Quartet, the East Lansing High School Orchestra, REACH Studio Art, and the MSU National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory and Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, and has been performed throughout the world. His works are available on the Albany Records, Argali Records, Blue Griffin, Elmstreet, and SEAMUS labels.

He maintains an active role as a performer and teacher of composition and music technology at Oakland University. [www.benfuhrman.com](http://www.benfuhrman.com)

This piece is a meditation on isolation, existential dread, and anxiety. What else can I say? 2020 was one hell of a terrible year, and this is the result.

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Joshua Haugen - I'm a composer and baritone saxophonist from Kalamazoo, Michigan and studying at Western Michigan University. I have large appreciation of new music and contemporary classical, with intersectional interests in writing, politics, art, history, philosophy, and the humanities.

*Truckee Lake* was written in early 2019 and premiered by myself in late February. The work in part seeks to explore and demonstrate the full capabilities of the baritone saxophone and all possible extended techniques, from slap-tonguing to multiphonics to overtone glissandos to microtonality. The work is guided by two competing gestures, both wild and aggressive, and seeking to emulate the horrors and violence of the events surrounding Truckee Lake and the Donner Party, which have always been of great interest to myself. The work is broken up into three sections, and requires both a great deal of endurance as well as elements of improvisations with the musical material. The work should, if possible, be performed in a concert hall with dark blue lights and the hall darkened.

Any performance of the work should seek to emulate the horrors of the events surrounding the Donner Party trapped at Truckee Lake during the winter of 1846-1847. Themes of desertion, unbearable cold, violence, death, and cannibalism should be active thoughts in the performer.

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Jared Bradley Tubbs - Jared Bradley Tubbs, native to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, is a composer and percussionist currently pursuing the Master's degree in Music Composition, studying under Dr. Christopher Biggs and Dr. Lisa Coons at the University of Western Michigan after receiving his Bachelor's degree in Music Composition at the University of Alabama.

Since he began his studies, JBT has had numerous performances by various ensembles, including the UA Contemporary Ensemble and UA Percussion Ensemble, and his work for solo violin, "Unknown Conversations", is featured on PARMA's Early Musings: New Music for Solo Violin. His collaboration with choreographer Rebecca Salzer for the premiere of his work To Whom It May Concern for fixed media and dancers received multiple performances during the 2016 Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre season. His work for live biofeedback electronics, Internal, was featured in an installation in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center from May 4 to May 15, 2018. 52Factorial, an improvisational work featuring live electronics, was chosen for performance at the 49th Annual Festival of New Music at Ball State University.

With an open and multi-faceted compositional interest, Jared Bradley Tubbs aims to reflect upon and learn from the world around him, and create art based on these reflections.

*Performance: Anxiety* is an exploration of the composer's experiences with social anxiety. Centering around poetry written by the composer, sounds shift between the internal and external, growing in deviation and distortion as anxiety takes a hold.

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Alex Nohai-Seaman's music has been performed by members of soundSCAPE, guitarist Daniel Lippel, soprano Tony Arnold, Sinopia, the New York and Chicago Miniaturist Ensembles, a very small consortium, the Duo Figer-Khanina, at the Catholic University of America's New Voices Festival, Voices Up! at Fordham University, Rhymes With Opera salon, New Music Hartford, the Ball State University New Music Festival, the La Crosse New Music Festival, as part of the Vox Novus Fifteen Minutes of Fame Concert Series, Oh My God, My Body, My Ears!, and a

number of his works were featured at Turning Old Pages, Singing New Notes, a multimedia collaboration with performers, artists, and composers at St. Norbert College. International performances of his works have taken place in Israel, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and Taiwan.

The premiere of his 53' dissertation composition, Requiem for soprano and chamber orchestra on a text of Rilke (2006), at the University of Wisconsin-Madison served as a fundraiser to build an AIDS clinic in sub-Saharan Africa.

Alex has received multiple fellowships to The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in, has attended the soundSCAPE International Composer and Performer Exchange, and participated in Composing in the Wilderness.

Alex holds a D.M.A. in Composition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and studied with Laura Schwendinger, Stephen Dembski, David Brackett, Fred Thayer, and Joel Naumann.

Currently, Alex is an Associate Professor of Music at Suffolk County Community College, where he teaches music theory, aural skills, directs the contemporary music ensemble, and advises the SCCC Outdoor Club.

*Beyond the Ends of the Earth* was composed for the 2018 Composing in the Wilderness Arctic Adventure. I, along with six other composers, canoed approximately 100 miles down the North and Middle Forks of the Koyukuk River in Gates of the Arctic National Park. Gates of the Arctic NP has no roads, official trails, or buildings. This remote, extreme, and largely untouched landscape is as intense, dramatic, and stunningly beautiful as one would expect. These are the images and words I kept returning to as I composed this piece. The title is a reference to a quote by Robert Marshall in which he describes the joy and exhilaration of the isolation found when traveling to the most distant unexplored corners of the world. Marshall is the founder of the Wilderness Society and as one of the first explorers to visit the Brooks Range in northern Alaska, he dubbed Boreal Mountain and Frigid Crags the "Gates of the Arctic". In the river between these mountains is where my journey began.

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Jorge Variego - Jorge Variego was born in Rosario, Argentina. He is a former Fulbright Scholar and is currently on the Music Theory/Composition faculty at the University of Tennessee. His book publications include "Algorithmic Composition" with the



National University of Quilmes (2018) and the upcoming “Composing with Constraints” with Oxford University Press.

His recordings as composer and performer are available on Albany Records, Naxos, Centaur and Parma Records.

Violist Hillary Herndon has earned a national reputation for her brilliant playing, “sweetly soaring tone” (Time Out New York), and insightful teaching. She has been heard on NPR and PBS and has collaborated with some of the world’s foremost artists, including Itzhak Perlman, who described Hillary as “having it all... a gifted teacher and an excellent musician.” Ms. Herndon teaches at the University of Tennessee, the Viola Winter Intensive and is the director of Daraja Strings in Moshi, Tanzania. Her recordings are available on MSR Classics. Herndon holds degrees from Eastman and Juilliard and serves as President for the American Viola Society.

“*La Caja de Música*” (the music box) proposes a journey through an imaginary world filled with memories tinted with the sounds of nostalgia. Embracing the metaphor of machine-made sounds, the piece offers an opportunity to glide away.

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Joseph Koykkar - Joseph Koykkar, is a musician at home in a variety of music from classical to avant-garde to rock and blues. A native of Milwaukee, he has had his musical compositions performed nationally and internationally for over 35 years. His music can be heard on 11 CDs, including an all-Koykkar CD released by Parma Records in 2016 (Double Takes and Triple Plays) and on Northeastern Records in 1992. He has composed in a variety of media including chamber music, orchestral scores, music for dance, film/video scores, and electronic/computer music. Prior to his retirement from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Professor Koykkar taught courses in electroacoustic music/sound design and served as Music Director for the UW's Dance Department. He had been on the UW-Madison faculty since 1987. In addition to composing he is a pianist and conductor, and is the founder/artistic director of the Madison New Music Ensemble. He served as the President of the Wisconsin Alliance for Composers from 1990-1993, and was instrumental in shaping the University of Wisconsin-Madison's unique Interarts and Technology Program in the 1980's-1990's, acting as the coordinator from 1995-2005.

Historically, *Lacrimosa* (Latin for weeping) is a text that is part of the Requiem Mass often set by past composers for chorus and orchestra. My composition breaks with that tradition since it is a 9-minute instrumental work featuring the electric cello blended with a “virtual” ensemble comprised of sounds based on acoustic cello

techniques, effects and musical motives. Using a variety of software programs I have made pre-recorded tracks (the “virtual” ensemble) which the soloist will synchronize with in performance. It was composed during the summer of 2018 and premiered in November of that year at the La Crosse New Music Festival. Premiered by cellist Craig Hultgren.

Emotionally, this composition reflects the somber, sorrowful and darker side of the human experience. In many ways *Lacrimosa MMXVIII* may be interpreted as a musical statement for the times we live in.

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Wenxin Li - Wenxin Li is a native of Chongqing, China, and is currently pursuing her PhD degree in composition at the University of Iowa, studying with Jean-Francois Charles and Sivan Cohen Elias. Li's music has been featured in a variety of festivals, including Aspen Music Festival and School, Composers Conference, TURN UP Multimedia Festival, National Student Electronic Music Event, Midwest Graduate Music Consortium, SCI Student National Conference, FSC New Music Festival, Midwest Composers Symposium and Caroga Lake Music Festival. Her music has also been performed by the JACK Quartet, Accroche Note, Western Percussion Ensemble and Sound Out Loud Ensemble. Li received her master's degree in composition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and bachelor's degree from Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

*Blue Bamboo* focuses on Saxophone's multiphonics technique. An air sound, a single tone, an interval, and a chord can all be derived from a single fingering, which is like how bamboo grows, from the bottom one chunk above another. Besides, Saxophone's texture (especially with heavy key clicks) sounds bamboo-like to me. This piece is written for Gabriel Sánchez Porras in collaboration with the 24+24 Composers Project at the University of Iowa.

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Natalie Draper - Praised for her "individual and strong voice" (Colin Clarke, *Fanfare Magazine*), Natalie Draper explores character and evocative sound-worlds in her music. Upcoming projects include a multimedia work for fixed electronics and video ("Monochrome") and a piano trio ("Fragile Music"), both premiering in the winter of 2021. Recently, her music has been included on recordings by Akropolis Reed Quintet, soprano Danielle Buonaiuto, and Baltimore's Symphony Number One. She has been featured in articles in *Vox Humana*, *I Care If You Listen*, and *Van Magazine*.

Draper has held residencies and fellowships at the Ucross Foundation, the Tanglewood Music Center, the I-Park Foundation, Yaddo, and St. David's Episcopal Church in Baltimore, MD. She is an assistant professor in the music theory and composition department at the Setnor School of Music at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York.

*Three Meditations for Organ* were written for organist Anne Laver to premiere as part of Syracuse University's day-long organ festival on September 12, 2020: Composing for the Organ Webinar & Virtual Concert. Funding for this commission was supported by the San Francisco AGO Special Projects Grant. These meditations are three abstract memorials to the church service: a florid alleluia, a passionate prayer, and a simple amen. More generally, the music is a tribute to prayer and contemplation—and to the hope that we might find some peace during these dark times.

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Garrison Gerard (b.1994) is an American composer of electroacoustic and concert music. Characterized by dramatic gestures and moments of arresting luminosity, his music is an exploration through intimate sound worlds. His work builds on multiple traditions spanning from spectralism, modernism, and minimalism as well as reaching back to the classical canon and renaissance music.

His music has been presented internationally with performances by groups such as [Mod]ular Ensemble, Fort Worth Symphony, and Nu Atmospheres Ensemble. An ardent collaborator, he has been commissioned by ensembles and soloists such as Andrew Cook, Spencer Byrd, the Avenue C Project, Atelier Piano Quartet, and Amorsima String Trio. In 2020 Gerard served as Artist-in-Residence of Padre Island National Seashore—he recorded sounds across the island and incorporated them in multiple pieces exploring the biomes and environmental impact of society along the coast of Texas.

In addition to composition, Gerard is a conductor, pianist, trumpeter, improviser, and avid advocate for new music. He is a founding member of the Nu Atmospheres Ensemble and conducts the NOVA New Music Ensemble at the University of North Texas. In 2018 he was the Guest Director for the UNT Percussion Ensemble. A member of the UNT Free Improvisation ensemble, he regularly performs on both trumpet and piano. Working with contemporary composers is a particular focus for him, having conducted the premiere of more than 30 pieces by living composers.

Gerard completed his Masters degree in Music Composition from the University of North Texas and received a Bachelors in Piano from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of North Texas in Denton, where he serves as a composition teaching fellow. His composition teachers include Joseph Klein, Sungji Hong, Panayiotis Kokoras, Andrew May, Kirsten Broberg, and Jay Walls.

*Switchback* combines the forces of an orchestra with spatialized audio. The audio is taken from field recordings made across the American Southwest, particularly from Grand Canyon, Zion Canyon, and the Guadalupe Mountains. Over the course of the piece, some sounds become progressively more processed and change from their original sound to an electronic version of themselves, mirroring the impact of society on these wilderness locations. The orchestra plays material within a non-metric framework, the freely repeating material weaves together with the electronic sounds to create a shifting patchwork of evolving sounds and moods.