



Society of Composers, Inc.

**2021 Online National Student Conference
Concert No. 3**

Saturday August 28, 2021 | 4:30 pm ET

Ramin Roshandel

*what if(s)**

Kamraton

Isaac Raymond Smith

Everyday Absurdity

Fixed Media

Conner Cook

Into the Heart

Fixed Media

Rodney DuPlessis

Coacervate

Fixed Media

Hannah Selin

Meditation on 6/5

Jennifer Sternick, violin

Robert Chedville Jr.

Blanched Blackrooms

Fixed Media

Michael Selvaggi

*Discontinuity, Noise Field**

amplified prepared bass

clarinet, violin, cello,

electronics

Kamratōn

Tianyi Wang

Song of Normality

Sarah Steranka, flute

Becky Brown

And you still won't find it,

even after you stopped

looking

Mixed Media

*Denotes World Premiere Commission

Program Notes and Composer Biographies

Ramin Roshandel's compositional work is based around incorporating 'experience' as a fundamental concept through a non-experimental approach in performance.

Considering phenomena such as instability, cultural identity, and communicational language on one hand, and being inspired by Persian music microtones as a setār (an Iranian instrument) player on the other, has led him to consider indeterminate, improvisatory, and abstract structures in his music to contrast or converge with post- or non-tonal forms.

He is currently a PhD candidate in Music Composition at the University of Iowa, where he has studied under Josh Levine and Sivan Cohen-Elias and currently working with David Gompper. He holds a Master of Music in Composition from the University of Tehran and a Bachelor of Arts in Iranian Music Performance from Tehran University of Art.

He has two analytical papers on Hossein Alizadeh's Neynavā and Elliott Carter's Dialogues published in Persian journals.

www.souncloud.com/ramin-roshandel

Isaac Raymond Smith (b. 1998) currently studies at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky, where he studies with Steve Rouse while pursuing a master's degree in music composition as the recipient of the Bomhard Fellowship for 2020-2022. In May of 2020, he graduated summa cum laude from the University of Northern Iowa with a BM in composition and theory and a minor in jazz studies. Isaac's compositions include works for woodwind, brass, and mixed chamber groups, as well as pieces for solo piano, tuba ensemble, and men's choir. He is the winner of the 2020 National Federation of Music Clubs Marion Richter Award, the 2019 Iowa Composers Forum Student Composition Competition, and the 2019 UNI percussion student composers' competition. He also placed third in the 2019 National Association of Composers/USA Composers' Contest. Isaac's music has been performed at the 2019 Society of Composers', Inc. Region VI Conference, the 2019 International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, and the Spotlight Competition Finals at UNI. In 2019, he was accepted to the Atlantic Music Festival, held at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Isaac is a member of the Society of Composers, Incorporated; Broadcast Music, Incorporated; and the Iowa Composers Forum.

Over the past thirteen months, it seemed at times like the entire world was plunging into absolute chaos. Any sense of normalcy or orderly life was replaced by disorder, division, and fear of the unknown. Yet amongst this craziness, when I reflect on living through the pandemic, I find that much of life has been routine and largely unremarkable. I found myself in my own little world, staying at home every day and looking at the same computer screen hour after hour.

Everyday Absurdity is an attempt to explore the simultaneity of these ideas despite their seeming contradiction. All of the sounds in the piece come from samples of everyday sounds, like writing with a pen or shutting a door. Nevertheless, I found the busyness and chaos present in these ordinary events to create exciting sound worlds, which were only furthered by extreme audio manipulation and movement of the sounds in space.

Conner Cook (b. 1996) began work as a composer during his sophomore year of undergrad at Ohio Northern University studying under Dr. David Kosmyna. Originally, he was conflicted with choosing between Medicine or Music. Ultimately, he chose what made him happy. Although he has felt "late to the game" of writing music, he has found every opportunity he could to make himself the best he can be. He has had masterclasses with composers/performers like Douglas Tappin, Yianni Papadimos and Ben Chavez, and Andrea L. Cheeseman. He doesn't put limits on his writing mediums, which includes pieces for two clarinets, solo flute, Symphony Orchestra, String Quartet, percussion ensemble, fixed media, and voice. He has written for the Ohio Northern

Symphony Orchestra, a sound installation for Improvisatory Dance, and the female vocal quartet: Quince Ensemble. Conner takes opportunities and morphs them into his own, while infusing elements of storytelling, spirituality, and the existential into the works he creates. He is currently a graduate composition student studying with Dr. McClure at Ohio University.

I looked into the Heart, as I found myself often doing these days, and wondered how far it went. The depth was incomprehensible and there was no sight of the other side. Its bottom seemed endless – sunless and obscure like ink dripping – only beaten by that invading Presence to the North. Its length stretched for miles like a vast ocean reaching up to seize my boot and pull me into its sway. There are tales of wastelands more barren than the Heart to the West past those malevolent hills, but with this trench before me, it was impossible to imagine such a place.

I looked to my left and watched an unclothed woman pace at the edge. She looked to be in her twenties. Frizzy chestnut hair that matched her absent eyes. Wholesome and palpably beautiful; not from the influence of the prurient parasite Helena, but maybe from the deeper unacquired “love” of Emmanel (probably the former).

Suddenly, the woman stopped pacing and, after mindlessly staring into the abyss as if in search of something, walked into the void. Of course, just another weak-minded wannabe martyr: following a cause that she doesn’t fully understand and never will. Now, she is just another lost soul in a lost country surrounded by bullshit and Hell. At least down there, they can’t take her body to Hell.

Hell? Amenti? Whatever you call it, that country in the east where my station required me to go to transport the dead must be worse than any ending down there.

Gods, those wretched lands of Amenti with images that have permanently branded my mind. The endless sea of the dead. Mountains of bodies in the distance. The sounds of pulping flesh and mangling souls. The un-parasitic appetite of Ahemait. And worst of all: the inevitability of my inanimate return. I can’t do it... I shuddered as I found myself at the edge of the chasm.

I looked into the Heart, as I found myself often doing these days, and wondered how far it went.

As a composer and researcher, **Rodney DuPlessis** primarily explores intersections of science and music. He is interested in creating powerful sonic experiences grounded in scientific models of physics, chemistry, biology, thermodynamics, and meta-science. His music has been performed and recognized internationally. As a programmer, DuPlessis has created innovative software tools for composition and worked to preserve and reincarnate preexisting software. He has also directed multiple festivals and concerts, and currently serves as co-creative director of the Nomadic Soundsters art collective.

His teachers have included Curtis Roads, Clarence Barlow, João Pedro Oliveira, and Martin Kutnowski. He's currently at UCSB completing a PhD in composition.

Certain mixtures of polyelectrolytes can spontaneously form dense liquid droplets (called coacervates) suspended in water (dilute phase). These liquid droplets are often filled with complex molecules, proteins, polymers, and nucleic acids. Coacervate formation has been suggested as a possible mechanism through which the first simple cells formed on earth (Abiogenesis). In composing *Coacervate*, I worked closely with violinist and chemical engineer Chelsea Edwards to create a sonic narrative from this chemistry. Distinct musical motives are inserted into dilute textures where they compartmentalize, chain together like charged polymers, and erupt into the beginnings of life.

Composer, violist and vocalist **Hannah Selin** juxtaposes acoustic instruments and voices with electronics and field recordings to create striking and vibrant sound-spaces. Her music delves into the inner lives of sounds: shimmering sound-masses interact in unexpectedly emotional ways, and instruments merge and separate to create sounds beyond their own. Hannah's music has been commissioned and performed by ensembles and soloists including Brooklyn Metro Chamber Orchestra, S.E.M. Ensemble, Chromic Duo, One Quiet Plunge, in Ensemble, Collide-O-Scope Music, Frame Dance Productions, Xanthoria Quartet, soprano Stephanie Lamprea, violinist Charlene Kluegel, percussionist Lucas Conant, and violists Kallie Ciechowski and Karen Ritscher. Her score for short film 222, directed by Delfine Paolini, was nominated for the 2018 Peer Raben Music Award at the Soundtrack Cologne Festival.

Hannah is currently working on *Pieces of Place*, a series of chamber pieces with electronics that explore the effects of global warming on specific places she has lived. Hannah is also co-founder and lead singer with the band GADADU, and violist and co-founder with Xanthoria Quartet. She lives in New York, NY.

Meditation on 2/5 is part of a series of solo and duo meditations, all of which are all somehow based around numbers interpreted especially as frequencies, but also as rhythms and other musical parameters. This one draws its numbers from global warming projections, in degrees Celsius. The IPCC calls for no more than $^{\circ}\text{C}$ of surface temperature rise above preindustrial levels, which in itself will cause massive climate change. A 2013 IPCC report projects a rise of nearly 5°C by the year 2100 if the global carbon emissions continue on their current trajectory.

Robert Chedville Jr. is currently an undergraduate student at Louisiana State University studying Music Composition as well as Experimental Music & Digital Media. He has composed chamber music, ensemble music, and electroacoustic music alike. In his music, he envisions motion and still pictures to establish his themes and settings. By exploring different timbres, Robert crafts music for telling an audible narrative. Works have been submitted to competitions around LSU, around the regional area such as

Electric LaTex, and internationally such as the Score Relief Film Composer Competition in the UK. He has many works forthcoming that fit within acoustic and electronic instruments alike, including laptop ensemble pieces, traditional concert hall music for orchestra and wind ensembles, and a unique film score live performance.

This media work is about the creepypasta topic known as the backrooms. This origin story sparked on the internet about a year before this composition developed. The Backrooms are a separate dimension from our own that has endless empty rooms with the musty hue of yellow walls, the dampness of the carpet flooring, and the everlasting hum of the overhead fluorescent lights. The creepypasta website has this quote from one individual who has experienced the backrooms followed with a photo of one of the rooms taken by him.

If you're not careful and you noclip out of reality in the wrong areas, you'll end up in the Backrooms, where it's nothing but the stink of old moist carpet, the madness of mono-yellow, the endless background noise of fluorescent lights at maximum hum-buzz, and approximately six hundred million square miles of randomly segmented empty rooms to be trapped in.

Intrigued by its existence, I have made a musique concrète based composition on my take on what you would hear in the backrooms. I compiled original sound files and distorted them with VST plugins, both built-in on Studio One, the DAW I used to make this, and third-party plugins from the internet, to create the audio representation of what you would hear in this inner dimension.

Michael Selvaggi is a Richmond Hill-based Canadian composer of contemporary music and a soon-to-be fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where he is working towards a B.Mus. in Composition. He has been a participant of the Precept.Concept.Percept masterclass in Amsterdam, has received Honourable Mention in the ACTIVATE Award Program, was selected to premiere a work with the Julius Quartet through EMERGE, was selected as the 2020 OSSIA International Call for Scores winner, and will soon collaborate alongside Toronto-based performers through the Canadian Music Centre for a premiere. Michael has worked with Concreamus Chamber Choir, Women on the Verge, and is a current Lead Composer for Green Room Music's newest multimedia project, "The Gallery". His interest in exploratory music manifests through combining the familiar with the unfamiliar, specializing in the discomfiting realm of new concert music. Currently studying under the mentorship of James Rolfe, Michael is exploring the realms of spectral and experimental composition, microtonality, and soundscape. His output lies within a wide variety of genres, often incorporating various forms of electroacoustic media—and anything between.

Discontinuity, Noise Field was commissioned by the Society of Composers Inc. and the Kamratōn Ensemble as part of the 2021 SCI National Student Conference. This idea for this work emerged during a period of intense sound discovery I was experiencing during

the months of May, June, and July. At this time, I was focused on exploring the nuances in amplified instrumental sound—particularly in very quiet, unstable sounds—sounds that might not be heard without amplification. In this work, instruments are not only amplified, but are prepared in various ways, allowing the resulting acoustic body and the sounds they produce to become even more unstable and further disconnected from their parent counterparts. In addition, various objects are utilized and also included in the amplified soundscape—these objects are familiar, but their sonic characteristics and intentions become unfamiliar in this work.

Discontinuity, Noise Field mainly explores ideas of purity and impurity, as well as continuity and discontinuity. Before starting the work, a variety of sounds from multiple familiar objects—such as aluminum foil, stones, gravel, paper, glass, clay pots, and sea shells—were all recorded by me, cleaned-up, and processed to create continuous strata that shift slowly and evolve gradually over time. I conducted spectral analysis on these noisescapes, documenting emphasized partials, formantic zones, and shapes in the sounds; this spectral data was a guiding force in how I was to orchestrate and in which order I should feature these sounds in the electronics. This material was also used to create a collection of chords in *Just Intonation*, that evolve naturally and transition smoothly from one to the next, built on purely tuned approximations of these various spectra. The impurity in the noisy sound masses is therefore contrasted with the purity of these justly tuned chords; the ensemble members complete this ever-evolving soundscape with a wide palette of unstable timbral extensions.

Amplification allows for the listener in the audience to experience the unstable sounds up-close, almost as if they are sitting right next to the instruments. The variety of sounds explored in this piece may often require careful listening from the performer, as nuance and error is almost unescapable—however, such notions should be embraced as they are a large part of the work.

Born in China, **Tianyi Wang** is an award-winning composer, conductor, and pianist, whose music vocabulary is diverse and much inspired by subjects beyond music. Tianyi's repertoire spans over solo, chamber, choral, orchestral, electronic, as well as film scoring. His works have been performed by ensembles and festivals around the globe, including Darmstädter Ferienkurse (Germany), Boston Modern Orchestra Project (USA), impuls Festival (Austria), Festival Mixtur (Spain), Meitar Ensemble (Israel), iNEensemble (Russia), Audiograft Festival (UK), Ashmolean Museum (UK), Ensemble MISE-EN (USA), and many others. Mr. Wang is the winner of 2020 MUSIQA Emerging Composer Commission Competition, 2018-19 New England Conservatory of Music Honors Composition Competition, 2018 BMOP/NEC Composition Competition, 2017 Longy Orchestral Composition Competition, and 2016 Sanya International Choral Festival. A recipient of China National Arts Fund in 2017, Mr. Wang is also a National Finalist of the 2019 American Prize and an Honorable Mention of the 2019 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. Tianyi's recent commissions include MUSIQA, Alea III, Atlantic Music Festival, and Northeast Normal University (China). His music has been

released by Navona, Ablaze, and Petrichor Records. For more information on Tianyi Wang's music, please visit <https://www.tianyiwangmusic.com/>.

Song of Normality explores the potentiality of utilizing the flute as a companion and extension of the human voice. Through the pitch fluctuations of air noises amplified by the flute, the various syllables that articulate musical gestures, and the most primitive form of human singing/shouting...the work develops into a song comprised of unconventional elements.

Becky Brown is a composer, harpist, artist, and web designer, interested in producing intensely personal works across the multimedia spectrum. She focuses on narrative, emotional exposure, and catharsis, with a vested interest in using technology and the voice to deeply connect with an audience, wherever they are. She is currently pursuing graduate studies in Composition and Computer Technologies at the University of Virginia.

There's always another, every time. One more, and one more, and one more, and you're still back at the beginning, after all that about how going was going and leaving was leaving. "Let alone what can't," you'd say, "if only the back and back and back again meant you'd really, truly spun to the other and elsewhere."