



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Student Composers' Concert

Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 7:30 pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

PROGRAM

Nigun of Four Gates

Benjamin Gabbay

Benjamin David Louwersheimer : Cello I
Tuuli Olo: Cello II, Lyndon Kwan: Cello III,
Hayley Chan: Cello IV, Maren Helyar: Cello V
Kevin Zi-Xiao He: Cello VI, Sirui Chen: Cello VII

Blue

Salome Zhang

Piano: Sumi Kim
Cello: Samantha Yang, Violin: Alicia Ingalls

Maritime Landscapes

Justin Lapierre

- I. Sunrise on the Water
- II. Echoes of Sea Shanties Past
- III. Brightly Painted Beach Town

Lydia Kim: Piano

Sonata for Bass Trombone

Aaron Joseph Claude Gascon

Bien Carandang: Bass Trombone
Carina Shum: Piano

Samba No.1

Alexander La

Joseph Park: Piano

Toccata for Solo Piano

Joseph (Sehyeok) Park

Joseph (Sehyeok) Park: Piano

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

<Partita Rococo> for two clarinets, Percussion, and Piano

Minjoo Kim

- I. Grotesque March
- II. Corellianic Chasing
- III. Notturmo
- IV. A Break Valse
- V. Ridiculous Exit

Emma Colette Moss: conductor
Gavin Warren: Clarinet I in Bb, Emerald Sun: Clarinet II in Bb
Bevis Ng: Marimba and Xylophone, Martin Kesuma: Piano

INTERMISSION

Life Cycles of Visual Settings

Chiara Urban

- I. Melt
- II. Spark

Veronica Zupanic: Violin, Rosie Ryel: Violin
Thijs Vorstman: Viola, Chloe Liang: Cello

Open Graphic Score #2

Nolan Hildebrand

Erik Kreem: Piano and interpretation

Piano Fantasia No.1

Kyle Meng

Joseph Park: Piano

Coup de Grâce

Anthony Gunadi

Vincent Poon: Violin I, Satchi Kanashiro: Violin II
Thijs Vorstman: Viola, Maren Helyar: cello

Castles

Stephen Morris

Thomas Li: Marimba and Wind Chimes

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Yu-Pin Lai

Katie Kirkpatrick: Soprano
Jisu Woo: Violin, Thijs Vorstman: Viola
Hayley Chan: Cello

PROGRAM NOTES

Benjamin Gabbay: *Nigun of Four Gates*

Nigun of Four Gates is a reimagining of “The Alter Rebbe’s Nigun of Four Gates” (aka “The Nigun of Four Stanzas”), a wordless nigun attributed to 18th-century rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. In the original tune, each of the four musical phrases (“stanzas”) is meant to correspond to one of the four Kabbalistic spiritual realms, through which the singer’s spirit is raised by the recitation of the nigun. In this interpretation for cello ensemble, each stanza undergoes extended thematic metamorphoses intended to reflect the improvisatory, meditative, and intimate manner in which a nigun is typically performed. Colour and momentum are built up with each stanza before culminating in the spiritual ecstasy of the fourth stanza.

“There are gates in heaven that cannot be opened except by melody and song.” - Attributed to Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady

Salome Zhang: *Blue*

A fog, lingers above my eyes,
the fog, raised from the blue aghast.
weaved by your deep blue eyes-
A siren, drilling my ears.

Your eyes bleed out the blue,
nourished by this tearless sea.
The blue, is fog, is blood, is your eyes-
I am drowned in this arid sea.

Take-me-to-leave,
away from this strident ocean,
My breath is suffocated by the fog,
Your obnoxious blue eyes are the sole accompany.

Justin Lapierre: *Maritime Landscapes*

I. SUNRISE ON THE WATER: A traditional motive-prelude based on a neighbour-tone 'wave' gesture, which is brought through many remote tonal centres just as the sunrise creates many different hues on the surface of the water at dawn. The only tonal piece in the suite (i.e. in the Ionian mode), so as to reflect the nobility of the rising sun and natural world beyond the waves.

II. ECHOES OF SEA SHANTIES PAST: A kaleidoscopic vision of multiple contrasting, oblique motifs derived from old sea songs from the East Coast, bound together in a rhetorical dialogue between tempi, meter, and tone as if the songs were emanating from a time long gone. First of the two modal movements (in the Dorian mode).

III. BRIGHTLY PAINTED BEACH TOWN: A joyful rondo based on syncopated dance gestures. Second of the two modal movements (in the Mixolydian mode).

Aaron Joseph Claude Gascon: *Sonata for Bass Trombone*

This piece was a chance to explore an instrument that does not have a lot of solo repertoire: the bass trombone. It has many underappreciated timbres across its range, and this was an opportunity to explore what I could do with them. In its deliberation with the piano, the bass trombone explores as many dynamics, articulations, and stylistic changes as I was able to fit in, all held together by a few key motifs.

Alexander La: *Samba No.1*

Samba No.1 is a playful, Brazilian-inspired piece that explores samba rhythms and jazz harmonies. Featuring a strong syncopated bassline, a memorable melody, and a boastful solo section, this piece is a joyful tribute to my love for Brazilian music. This piece features improvisations by Joseph Park.

Joseph (Sehyeok) Park: *Toccata for Solo Piano*

The Toccata for solo piano is a virtuosic showpiece. It has a trajectory from a state of temporal instability to stability. Throughout the piece, the solitary repeated “D” acts as a structural anchor that signifies the change from instability to stability and vice versa.

Minjoo Kim: *<Partita Rococo> for two clarinets, Percussion, and Piano*

Partita Rococo for two clarinets, percussion, and piano was written in 2022 and 2023. This work consists of five movements, each with only one or two very simple ideas appearing intensively, using the traditions of the Bagatelle in eighteenth-century music. No particular continuous story runs through this whole piece, no narrative, but I tried to maintain an atmosphere of 'ridiculous,' 'humorous,' and 'scathing satire' throughout the piece. It can be called "grotesque" to express the emotions dominating this work in a word. In terms of content and artistic depth, this work takes a very intuitive and simple attitude (Rococo style).

Chiara Urban: *Life Cycles of Visual Settings*

Cycles of Visual Settings was inspired by the environmental climate of Toronto, where the weather is dramatically indecisive. In this piece, the two ends of hot and cold are depicted in two images, with two movements. The first movement, *Melt*, recreates the life of an icicle. Starting as a frozen structure that slowly defrosts, creating puddles until forming a wintry melody. The end of the movement finds itself frozen once again. *Spark*, starts with sizzling embers attempting to ignite heat. Only when the meter switches to irregular time, does one hear the ignition of flames take off, rushing to finish the music before their life goes out.

Nolan Hildebrand: *Open Graphic Score #2*



Kyle Meng: *Piano Fantasia No.1*

The Piano Fantasia No.1 depicts the word “Kenopsia”, first coined in “The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows” by John Koenig: “the eerie, forlorn atmosphere of a place that’s usually bustling with people but is now abandoned and quiet”. The music is built on distorted impressionism. The introduction exposes a short motif, representing those unknown voices in the unsettling environment, they are intertwined with the following icy chorale, describing the growing tension of the unknown place. All the sounds do not exist in Kenopsia, but the mind of the observer.

Anthony Gunadi: *Coup de Grâce*

The story behind this piece is that there has been a very long war. The protagonists are exhausted, morale is at an all-time low, and the army has suffered countless losses. The state of the war has been a stalemate, but the protagonists are on the brink of collapse and cannot sustain this much longer while the enemy relentlessly pushes for domination. However, the general has recently found a fatal flaw in the enemy's strategy. He does not hesitate to gather whatever numbers he has left to coordinate a final attack to end the war. In this music, the general inspires his troops to carry out his plan, barking orders and assigning crucial roles, uplifting them with his menacing authority. The soldiers are so moved by their general and they immediately agree with their unwavering loyalty. Even though they are terrified for their lives, they know that this must be done. By the godlike inspiration of the general, this vastly outnumbered army sets up for battle to deliver the coup de grâce. The aftermath of this devastating attack by this small unit will look like it was created by a colossal military.

Stephen Morris: *Castles*

Castles express the mysterious and imaginative qualities of castles. This expression is built on the hard and magical tone qualities of the marimba and wind chimes. Creating castles that only exist in sound and imagination. The work is written for and dedicated to my friend Julia Tan.

Yu-Pin Lai: *I'm Nobody! Who are you?*

I'm Nobody! Who are you? is a piece based on the poem by Emily Dickinson. The poem caught my first sight when I saw it; it is ironic, like a complaint - but also implies an eagerness to find another perplexed person in the same boat. On the other hand, the narrator in the poem is also as if talking to another self-personality which is constating to their ego. To me, the hyphens in the poem symbolize the hesitation of the narrator in not having the courage to express themselves. As a society that seamlessly classifies people into different hierarchies, speaking up and recognizing our individuality requires the confidence that most people lack. The piece aims to encourage the audience to trust themselves and follow their intuition in life.

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know! How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June – To an admiring Bog!
– Emily Dickinson

Benjamin Gabbay is a classical pianist and composer. He holds an ARCT in piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music in Composition (Hons.) from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where he is currently pursuing his Master's in Composition, studying under Prof. Gary Kulesha. He previously studied under Dr. Roger Bergs and Dr. Alexander Rapoport. He is currently an Associate Composer with Arcady, a contemporary music ensemble in Brantford, Ontario (www.arcady.ca).

Benjamin's compositions have received recognition by Toronto's St. James Cathedral (co-winner of the cathedral's 2018-2019 composition competition), Fondation Jeunesses Musicales Canada (Artistic Prize, "Do Mi Si La Do Re" Competition, 2020) the Amadeus Choir (hon. mention, International Seasonal Song-Writing Competition, 2015) and the Ruth Watson Henderson Choral Competition (hon. mention, 2017). He has composed works for major choral ensembles, including highlight premieres for the Mississauga Summer Chorale's 2018 end-of-season concert (*Requiem l'homme armé*, 2018), Musicata choir in Hamilton (*Prelude to Winter*, 2019), and a fully virtual double-choir premiere for the University of Toronto's MacMillan Singers (*The Answer*, 2021). www.benjaminabbay.com

Salome Zhang is a Toronto-based Chinese composer, producer and multi-instrumentalist. Her composition thematic material explores across topics of dream, hallucination and reality by using artistic element such as poetry. Winning a total of 25,000 dollars of scholarship, her music has been performed in Beijing, Moscow, Vancouver, Boston and Toronto. Recent and upcoming engagements include work with the Bedford Trio, Allegro Choir, UTSO, Symphony Orchestra at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, a, Red Herring inc., Fourth Film Studio, UofT Film Club, Handsworth Secondary String Orchestra, Richard Wong and Lucy Zuo.

Justin Lapierre currently holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Composition from Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario; he is currently working towards his Master of Music degree in Composition at the University of Toronto under Christos Hatzis.

Justin's works have been programmed by many performers and ensembles including the Canadian Chamber Choir, the DaCapo Chamber Choir, the Wilfrid Laurier University Concert Choir, and the Aliro Voices, among others; his works have also been read and workshopped by notable ensembles such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

As of 2022, Justin's piece *Auprès de la baie* has become part of the Canadian Chamber Choir's regular repertory, who brought the piece on their last two concert tours. Justin looks forward to his premières in the coming months, such as his *Stabat Mater* in June.

Aaron Joseph Claude Gascon (n.2001) is a Sudbury-raised composer completing the third year of his undergraduate degree at UofT under the tutelage of Dr. Abigail Richardson-Schulte. His main instruments are voice and trumpet. Aaron previously worked with the Orpheus Choir of Toronto for their Shining Stars project in 2021.

Alexander La is a student composer in the 2nd year of his undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto. He is currently studying with Nolan Hildebrand, has previously studied under Roger Bergs, and is currently studying piano with Younggun Kim. Alexander also plays in the Hart House Jazz band and is interested in discovering and appreciating music in every genre.

Joseph (Sehyeok) Park is a composer who is currently in the first year of his undergraduate composition degree at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. He is currently studying composition under Norbert Palej and piano with Younggun Kim. He previously studied composition under Abigail Richardson-Schulte. His music is primarily concerned with organic development of musical ideas and cultivating a personal musical language by examining traditions of classical music in novel and unique ways. Joseph performed in venues such as the Roy Thomson Hall and the Toronto Arts and Letters Club. He was awarded the highly coveted BMI Student Composer Award in its 70th year and was also awarded the Carlos Surinach Prize as the youngest winner of the annual competition. As a result of

this win, his score is archived at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts along with the past winners of the competition. He is currently a member of BMI as a composer.

Minjoo Kim, originally from South Korea, she is a composer based in New York City and Toronto. Most recently, Minjoo was awarded 'The Martinu Composition prize' at Mannes School of Music. Her orchestral piece 'A Brutal Music Box' will be premiered in New York City by the Mannes Orchestra in April 2023. In February 2020, Minjoo was commissioned by the Mannes Sounds Festival to premiere her solo piano piece. This event was held in honor of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth at the German Consulate General in NYC. She was a concert planner in charge of both the Casals Music Festival and Seoul International Music Festival in Korea. She has contributed to the fields of piano performance and composition in Korea, and the United States, where she studied with David T. Little. She completed her Master of Music and Professional Studies Diploma in composition at Mannes School of Music. She is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in composition at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music under Norbert Palej.

Chiara Urban is a Canadian singer and composer from Toronto. Her works have been performed at the Canadian Art Song Showcase (2022) and the student composer concerts at the University of Toronto. Her most recent choral piece, Spellbound, was recorded by Concreamus Chamber Singers in 2022. She is currently studying composition under the tutelage of Abigail Richardson-Schulte. Outside of her studies, Chiara is an active member of the local band scene where she performs her original songs with her self-titled pop band.

Erik Kreem is a Toronto-based composer and pianist, especially influenced by musical minimalism and the natural sounds of his Estonian and rural Canadian roots. Erik's music has been performed by the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra, with whom he was apprentice conductor in 2019-20; the Kindred Spirits Orchestra, with whom he was composer-in-residence for 2020-21; Continuum Contemporary Music; Concreamus; and numerous solo and chamber performers. He is completing a Bachelor of Music in composition at the University of Toronto this year, studying with Norbert Palej.

Kyle Meng is a Toronto-based composer and pianist, born and raised in Chengdu, China. He is especially influenced by musical impressionism and Chinese folk music, and has composed different kinds of works including chamber music, film soundtrack, art songs, and piano solo. Apart from these, he is also skilled in music production and started arranging accompaniment for Chinese Christian hymns in 2018. As a pianist, Kyle was introduced to the public performance of both contemporary and classical music in Canada. In May 2019, he performed Ligeti's "Musica ricercata" twice at Canadian Music Centre and Heron Baptist Church in regard to the "Prehistoric Ligeti Concert," an event planned and hosted by Classical Context. Kyle is currently in his second year of comprehensive study and composition minor program at the Faculty of Music in University of Toronto, studying composition with Menelaos Peistikos.

Anthony Gunadi is a Canadian composer from Mississauga composing contemporary classical music. Before formally notating music, he produced electronic dance music and received commissions for pop and rap backing tracks. He strives to learn from many different genres and implement these sounds in his compositions by being involved in a variety of ensembles; he plays violin in the UTSO, the double soprano in the U of T steel band, performs in the U of T African drumming and dancing ensemble, and the trombone in the Etobicoke Jazz Band. Altogether, Anthony's compositions draw from a combination of classical, film, electronic dance, pop, jazz, and non-western world music. Anthony Gunadi is currently studying at U of T, aiming to develop his composition skills as well as seeking professional connections and opportunities. Visit www.anthonygunadi.com to get in contact or for more information.

Stephen Morris is a composer based in Toronto, whose music strives to create musical experiences which separate the listener's connection to the world through the expression of atmospheric and trance inducing works. His music has been published in the SCI Journal of Music Scores and included in concerts, conferences, short films, theatre productions, and installations around the world. Stephen's music has been programmed in places such as Arizona State University, Carnegie Hall, Chateau De Fontainebleau, Trojhalí Karolina, Yancheng First Public Retail Market, New York University, and the University of North Carolina Greensboro. He has collaborated with ensembles and artists like the Prague Philharmonia, Imani Winds, Moscow Contemporary Ensemble, Odin Quartet, Hanzhi Wang, and the Lincoln Centre Theatre Directors Lab.

Stephen has participated in various music festivals as a composer such as Ostrava Days (Czech Republic), Écoles d'art américaines de Fontainebleau (France), IMPULS (Austria), reMusik (Russia), Don't Sleep In Yancheng (China), Scarborough Philharmonic New Generation Composer's Project (Canada), Imani Winds Chamber Festival (USA), Charlotte New Music Festival (USA), Music At The Close (USA), and SCI Regional Conference (USA).

Stephen is a graduate of Mannes School of Music where he earned his Masters of Music in composition. In his year of graduation, his work *Nocturnal* was performed by MACE, a school chamber orchestra under the direction of Lowell Liebermann. Stephen was also a part of the Glassbox Collective at Mannes, which consisted of fellow composers and performers. Stephen's string quartet *After The Light* was included in the Carnegie Hall Concert *Music At The Close*, which included members of the Glassbox Collective.

Stephen is currently a DMA candidate at the University of Toronto, studying with Gary Kulesha. He has recently served as the composer in residence for the percussion ensemble, which premiered his work *Subterranean Dreams*. He is currently the composer in residence of the University of Toronto Wind Symphony. Stephen is the recipient of the Fondation DRG award through the University for his performances abroad in France.

Stephen has previously studied with Reiko Fütting, and Huang Ruo. He has taken lessons and master classes with Tristan Murail, George Lewis, Christian Wolff, Bernhard Lang, Bright Sheng, Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Kotoka Suzuki, Deqing Wen, and Ana Sokolovic.

Yu-Pin Lai is a pianist and composer based in Toronto. Currently, she is a fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Toronto, pursuing her Bachelor of Music in composition under the tutelage of Christos Hatzis; she is also studying piano with Mia Bach. Born in Taiwan, Yu-Pin is interested in exploring various musical cultures, and her music aims to experiment with timbre to imply complex human emotions. Yu-Pin is actively performing and participating in music events. She is enthusiastic about sharing her music, and she invites the audience to explore their lives along with her through music.