



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

# University of North Texas College of Music

GAC Recital | Sunday, March 29, 2026 | 3:30 p.m. | Recital Hall

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**Natalie Zeles, flute**

**Teng Cao, piano**

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- Poem for flute and piano (1918)..... Charles T. Griffes  
(1884–1920)
- In Search of Aquatic Life (2024)..... Jonathan Mitchell  
(b. 2002)
- Murali for Solo Flute (2004)..... Marilyn Bliss  
(b. 1954)
- Velvet (2014)..... Gary Schocker  
(b. 1959)
- Suite for Woodwind Trio (1981)..... Elliot Kaplan  
(1931–1992)
- I. Allegretto assai
  - II. Lento con moto
  - III. Quasi allegro; energico
  - IV. Non espressivo
- Spider Suite (2010) ..... Jenni Brandon  
(b. 1977)
- I. Along came a spider...
  - II. The Spider's Flight
  - III. Spinning Song
  - IV. A Wicked Waltz: The Spider and the Happy Bug (unsuspecting)
  - V. The end of the day...begin again
- Rubi Winds  
Natalie Zeles, flute  
Leah Price, clarinet  
Donovan Neal, bassoon

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**Program three hundred eighty-nine of the 2025–2026 season**  
**Photography and videography are prohibited**

## Program Notes

Charles T. Griffes, *Poem* for flute and piano

Charles T. Griffes composed *Poem* in 1918, towards the end of his short but influential career. *Poem* moves through a wide variety of colors and emotions. Each transition brings new ideas and characters, which opens up a world of creativity and exploration.

*Poem* begins with a dreamlike tune between the flute and the piano. It gradually grows more passionate and slightly agitated in the middle section. A lively, jig-like passage follows before the music settles back into the same dream-like atmosphere that began the piece. *Poem* has remained an iconic work for over a century, and it continues to stand as one of the most expressive pieces for storytelling on the flute.

Jonathan Mitchell, *In Search of Aquatic Life*

*In Search of Aquatic Life* captures what the title suggests: an exploration of mysterious, dark waters and the diverse life that moves within them. The reflective opening transitions to an emotional ebb and flow shaped by rubato scale passages and expressive leading tones. The piece is both atmospheric and deeply lyrical, giving the performer space to sing and evoke the feeling of moving through an underwater landscape.

Jonathan Mitchell is a second-year Master's flute and composition student from The Ohio State University.

Marilyn Bliss, *Murali*

From Marilyn Bliss:

"Murali is the name of Krishna's flute. In Hindu cosmology and tales, such as those set forth in Robert Calasso's book *Ka*, Krishna plays his flute at the first full moon of autumn. It is a very alluring, seductive melody, and it calls for the female cowherds (the *gopis*), who are all in love with Krishna. At the sound of Krishna's flute, they come out of their dwellings and dance, surrounding Krishna. The dancing becomes more and more fevered when suddenly Krishna disappears before their eyes. Soon they once more hear the *murali*, from a location just beyond the horizon. Is he calling them, or taunting them? The *gopis* can never decide but Krishna is always in their hearts."

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Marilyn Bliss is a New York-based flutist and composer, composing works for the National Flute Association and commissioned works for Nina Assimakopoulos, James Zellers, and James Pellerite. She studied with modern composers George Crumb, George Rochberg, and others who have been influential in the post-tonal era of music. Bliss is inspired by "the beauty of nature, world of culture, art, literature," and she enjoys bringing a breath of fresh air into any concert program.

Gary Schocker, *Velvet*

*Velvet* is the perfect title for this warm and luxurious piece for alto flute and piano. The music draws out the alto flute's rich and velvety tone, supported by a smooth and gentle piano line. Together, it creates a tender and intimate atmosphere that feels both inviting and expressive.

Gary Schocker is an American flutist, composer, and pianist who has performed with major ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as many other established orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. He is the most-published living composer of flute music, with more than 200 works currently in print. His career includes numerous awards for both performance and composition, and he continues to write engaging works for flute regularly.

Elliot Kaplan, Suite for Woodwind Trio

Elliot Kaplan studied composition with Paul Hindemith, Quincy Porter, and Nadia Boulanger. He earned a conducting degree from the Paris Conservatory, and went on to compose and record music for film and television. Although Kaplan was a prolific composer for film scores, TV soundtracks, and ballet music, his classical music works have rarely been performed.

Suite for Woodwind Trio is a challenging and vividly crafted work divided into four movements. *I. Allegretto assai* is rhythmic and groovy, with each line locking together like pieces of a puzzle. *II. Lento con moto* is a somber and melancholic waltz. This movement is much more emotionally charged than the others, with lyrical melodies that move fluidly through the trio. *III. Quasi allegro; energico* is full of energy and drive. This movement feels the most "rock and roll" out of all of them, and it is exciting to perform. *IV. Non espressivo* is stoic and still, offering an unexpected conclusion to this evocative work.

Because this work has been performed so rarely, Rubi Winds is excited to bring Kaplan's Suite piece to life.

Jenni Brandon, *Spider Suite*

From Jenni Brandon:

"Spider Suite tells the story of the adventures of a spider and her daily activities. We are first introduced to the world of spiders through the fast and many-legged theme in "Along came a spider..." full of skittering, racing, and lurking. In movement two, a young spider takes flight – baby spiders will spin a balloon out of silk and fly away from their mother's web to embark on their own journey, letting the wind take them wherever it might. Our spider lands gently and immediately begins to make her web in "Spinning Song." Once the web is spun, it is time to wait for dinner to come along. Our spider dances "A Wicked Waltz," laughing manically as she waits for the "Happy Bug (unsuspecting)" to get stuck in her web. As the bug flies and sings, he gets increasingly stuck in the web – listen as the timbral trills in the piccolo become more and more frequent as he is unable to free himself from the spider's web. In the final movement, the spider reflects on her day (flying, spinning, and hunting...), tearing down her web, as spiders often do, to begin the next day."

Jenni Brandon is an award-winning composer. Many ensembles perform her commissioned work both nationally and internationally. She enjoys engaging with performers and audiences, often giving talks about the business of music and the art of collaboration. As a conductor, she has led both church and community choirs, and she makes guest appearances to conduct her works.