SPECTRUM: New Works from North Texas

Fanfare for the Righteous (2022) ........................................ Ryan Fillinger (b. 2001)

Quasar Trombone Quartet
Tim George, Connor Altagen, Kyle Husby, tenor trombones
Connor Fallon, bass trombone

Memory (2022) .......................................................... Kahan Taraporevala (b. 1999)
Helen Lundy, violin • Bennett Morgan, bass clarinet
fixed media

Albumblatt (2022) .......................................................... Willyn Whiting (b. 1993)
Benjamin Damann, percussion

from Polarity (2016) .......................................................... Patrick Reed (b. 1991)
II. In Exaltation

Alvin Leung, piano

Two Hölderlin Songs (2022) ........................................... Erik Ulman (b. 1996)
I. An
II. Gestalt und Geist (Form and Spirit)

NOVA Ensemble
Te Yu Huang, tenor • Anne Dearth Maker, flute
Justin Weis, euphonium • Amanda Hamilton, viola
Kory Reeder, bass
Scenes from Somewhere  (2022).................................................Heather Pryse  (b. 2000)
  I.  Like Clear Fog
  II.  Floating
  III.  Dancing
  IV.  And Fading Away to Nothing

       Felicity Fulton, flute • David Kriete, clarinet
       Victoria Donaldson, bassoon

Frison  (2022)..............................................................................Dylan Pich  (b. 1995)
  I.  Flow
  II.  Linger
  III.  Erupt

       Maxwell Borah, alto saxophone • Graham Viegut, drumset

Parting Dance  (2020)......................................................................PJ Mooney  (b. 2000)

       Pyxis Saxophone Quartet
       Ronald Bonitatibus, soprano saxophone • Max Windsor, alto saxophone
       Devon Isaac, tenor saxophone • Beige Cowell, baritone saxophone

       the emergency alert system is
       on alert and will be with you
       shortly  (2021)............................................................ Louise Fristensky  (b. 1987)

       Justin Kujawski, double bass • Conner Simmons, double bass

Klar bäck  (2022)..........................................................................Beige Cowell  (b. 2001)
  I.  Back to Nature
  II.  Unafraid
  III.  We Must Leave Them Behind

       Helena Vassiliades, voice and frame drum
       Zoe O'Shaughnessy, harp and frame drum

       performed in Spec's Courtyard
Fanfare for the Righteous by Ryan Fillinger
During the late fall of 2021, I was approached by Connor Altagen, a trombonist in the Quasar Quartet, who asked me if I'd compose a piece for their spring recital in 2022. An homage to the University of North Texas, the recital sought to showcase works by UNT composers and new music for the trombone. I gladly took up the offer, though quickly realized I’d never written a trombone quartet, so I’d have to experiment. While it seemed cliché, my first instinct was to write a fanfare; something flashy, impressive, and energetic. For inspiration, I studied some works of the great John Williams. Williams is especially known for his bright, triumphant fanfares, so borrowing a bit of his technique seemed appropriate enough. In particular, influences from the original Superman theme and "The Flight to Neverland" from Hook can be heard throughout. The feeling of this style of music, and the overall nature of the trombone, seemed self-described as righteous. Thus, the title Fanfare for the Righteous was born. The best qualities in us as people are defined by righteousness: excellence, confidence, and heroism. From a more precise perspective, righteousness can also define a strong friendship: nobility, trust, and honor. These two characters are the makeup of the piece, represented by two contrasting themes tied together by acrobatic fanfares and piercing ostinatos.

Memory by Kahan Taraporevala
Memory is a piece inspired by a particular feeling we all encounter. It is the moment where we experience something that simultaneously causes us to feel polar opposite emotions. For example, the thought of an old friend that brings back wonderful memories yet sends a twinge to your heart because you miss them.

Albumblatt by Willyn Whiting
Written in 2020, but fully notated in 2022, this piece focuses on the intimate sounds of paper and their relation to my creative work.

Polarity Movement II In Exaltation by Patrick Reed
The second movement In Exaltation focuses on the Divine, moving through fields of beauty to the slow waltz of death.

Two Hölderlin Songs by Erik Ulman
These brief songs set two fragments by Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843); they were written expressly for the Nova Ensemble, and are dedicated to my dear friends Elizabeth McNutt, Andrew May, and Daniël Franke. In his book Hölderlin's Madness, the British poet David Gascoyne renders Hölderlin’s poems as follows:
An (To the Beloved [Diotima])
Elysium
There with certainty I find
Towards you, Gods of Death
There Diotima                     Heroes
I would sing of thee
But only tears
And in the night in which I walk I see extinguish thy
Clear eyes!
              O spirit of the Sky.

Gestalt und Geist (Form and Spirit)
All is an inscape
          And yet separates
Thus shelters the Poet
Fool! dost thou hope from face to face
           To see the soul
              thou shalt go among the flames.

**Scenes from Somewhere by Heather Pryse**
Scenes from Somewhere is an abstract recall of memories in four parts from living in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Central Virginia. The piece evokes both the feeling of presently embodying this place while simultaneously losing grasp of its tangibility. Each characteristic of the corresponding movements reflects the different perspectives of my experience living in this place, and as a whole attempts to capture the elusive nature of its beauty.

**Frision by Dylan Pich**
Frision was inspired by a desire to compose a “classical” piece of music for drumset in which I could explore the melodic capabilities of the instrument. Each of the three movements aims to embody a specific verb, as reflected in their titles. Flow is a persistent, rhythmic movement that makes use of a variety of percussive timbres and includes some of the most melodic drumset material. It has been described as an “impression of someone having a fun quick exploration around the drumset.” Linger is warm, intimate, improvisatory, and reminiscent of a jazz ballad. Erupt is a highly energetic, beat-based romp that is firmly rooted in metal.

**Parting Dance by PJ Mooney**
Originally written for string quartet during the pandemic, Parting Dance was rewritten for the Pyxis Saxophone Quartet (because Beige was right - it does sound better on saxophones). The Pyxis Quartet will perform this piece again at the 2023 Texas Music Educators Association Convention.
The emergency alert system is on alert and will be with you shortly by Louise Fristensky

The emergency alert system is on alert and will be with you shortly is a panicked meditation on the sonic geographies of continuous catastrophe. This piece specifically explores the timbral similarities between the mechanical air stream sirens iconically associated with many different systems of emergency alerts and the double bass bow artifacts and ability to duplicate and fine-manipulate tones across its range. Special thanks to Justin Kujawski for prototyping this piece with me.

Klar bäck by Beige Cowell and text by E. F. Hayward

Klar bäck (Clear Creek) is named after the Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center in Denton, TX. The area is a beautiful nature reserve with a prairie of native wildflowers, a small wetland, trails, and the Clear Creek itself. I was moved by the poetry of E. F. Hayward in his collection Poems from the North Woods, so I set three poems for this song cycle.

The connection to nature that Hayward writes about, is both a very human and very magical thing. It's a sentiment at the core of the ancient Swedish practice of kulning, a feminine style of singing or herding call. I have leaned into kulning for several aspects of this piece, but in Unafraid, which is a quick but reluctant acceptance of Death, I find a spiritual dwelling that can only be expressed through the haunting, piercing, and melismatic cry of kulning.

I. Back to Nature
I've played my part in Life's affairs
I'm weary of the noise and strife
So let me put aside my cares
and live the quiet simple life.

I love to dwell in forest wild
Where giant pine trees pierce the sky
A beauty spot where nature smiled
A fitting place to live and die.

II. Unafraid
I have no fear of this thing called Death.
When the body goes back to the Earth,
and I breathe the last bit of breath
that was breathed in my nostrils at birth.

I'm not afraid to lie down and die,
I shall quit this old world with a smile.
But I'm not ready to say Good-bye,
I would like to stay here, yet a while.
III. We Must Leave Them Behind
I ponder and marvel at Nature’s great plan,
The vast panorama She spreads before man;
A World filled with beauty of every kind,
Man views them awhile but must leave them behind.

There are some who forget while passing along,
That avarice and greed are essentially wrong.
They covet and claim the treasures they find,
May use them awhile but must leave them behind.

So enjoy the beauties of Nature each day,
For you like all others must soon pass away.
The things that we love and our hearts have entwined,
are snatched from our grasp we must leave them behind.

The beautiful things which today we behold,
Keep their beauty forever they never grow old.
The eyes which now see them will someday be blind,
They’ll see them no more they must leave them behind.

The pleasures of life which now hold us so fast,
Will greet those who follow when we shall have passed.
While Life, Death, and the Soul, three words undefined,
Shall mystify those we are leaving behind.