



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

# University of North Texas College of Music

Senior Recital | Saturday, April 22, 2023 | 8:00 pm | Voertman Hall

**Samuel Ash, composer**

**Devin Klar, composer**

## CAVE OF DREAMS

peach breeze (2023) .....Samuel Ash (b. 2000)

- I. fluffers
- II. so simple
- III. cusps

Joseph Reding, voice • Samuel Ash, digital keyboard

Ocean Odyssey (2023).....Devin Klar (b. 2000)

Trumpet: Guillermo A. Villa, Ian Aigner-Varoz,  
Abby Ward, Zachary Dyess

Horn: Nicole Keller, Haley Ginn, Benjamin Ruiz

Trombone: Reuben Dean, Molly Lum, Trinity Jones (bass)

Tuba: Raegan Dishman • Timpani: Nick Fryar

Percussion: Katie Crouch, Elijah Roth

Sympathy: A Musical Setting of

P.L. Dunbar Poetry (2022).....Devin Klar

Matthew Dexter, bass voice • Ella Curb, violin

Ethan Gaskin, cello • Abby Rieger, flute

Rey Rostro, clarinet

--5-minute Intermission--

Nonet (2023) .....Samuel Ash

- I. Dolce e esressivo
- II. Like a broken clock
- III. Mercurial
- IV. Maestoso

Abby Rieger, flute • Connor Rury, oboe • David Molina, clarinet  
Haley Ginn, horn • Colin Hilliard, bassoon • Ella Curb, violin  
Joseph Reding, viola • Colin Stokes, cello • Matt Luse, double bass

call of the void (2023) .....Samuel Ash

Samuel Ash, piano

Cave of Dreams (2022) .....Devin Klar

- I. Stalactites
- II. Water

Maria De Jesus Contreras, harp

Flying Together (2022) .....Devin Klar

- I. Dance of the Flies -
- II. Flying in Separation
- III. Is There Love In This World?

Ella Curb, violin • Joseph Reding, viola  
Ethan Gaskin, cello

### Program Notes

**Peach Breeze**—visited New York City the summer before freshman year of college. I stayed with my great aunt Susie in Newark. A couple of days, we sightsaw the big apple. Susie's friend Mrs. Flaherty and her daughter Sarah joined us. They knew the city better than us. One of the days, Sarah and I wanted to find a jazz club. We spent a few hours trying, but no cigar. By this time, we were only a few minutes away from Washington Square Park, so we started over. Upon arriving, we were greeted by a jazz duo of bass and vibes. Though the jazz was not in the form we imagined, we hailed our operation a success. Before long, we noticed a sign that read "ASK ME FOR A POEM" propped against a tiny table on which an odd-seeming man was writing poetry. We came over, and he was just as odd as we thought. Notwithstanding, we noticed how keen and clever he was. We naturally asked him for a poem. He sat there stumped for a minute, looking as if he had never written a poem in his life. But then he went to work on a small sheet of paper. . .

Cheekcusps kissed pink by sun  
as the white sheet of my breath fluffers in the sweet peach breeze —  
some days it is so simple  
to praise everything you see

It took him all of two minutes, after which we inquired about his life and work. Charmed by the man, I shelled ten or twenty dollars for his Park Poems, a collection of his year's work. We went our merry way, stopping by a peer to enjoy the technicolor sunset. On the train back to Newark, Sarah and I read his book of street poetry in delight. She let me keep his impromptu tailored words. I read it now, and I feel that day. Credit to Peter Chinman for graciously allowing me to set his powerful and evocative poetry to music. Visit his Instagram page (@theparkpoet) and show him some love!

**Ocean Odyssey**—\*READ WHILE LISTENING TO THE PIECE\* A man on a cliff looks out over the sunlit clouds that expand over the sea before him, he makes his way to shore and pushes his boat into the water seeing the sun light his way, later when the moon is the only guide he encounters his first great battle, the waves which aim to tear him from his boat, he grips the oars, barely surviving finally forced to give into the will of the waves, he falls deeper into the sea, until he is washed upon the shores of a land unfamiliar to him, in front of him lies a path curving between parallel cliffs, he follows the path watching it get narrower and higher, passing strange rock formations along the top of the cliffs just out of reach, as the man reaches the top, he notices one eye that has followed him and at it reaches to grab him, a beast with one eye lurches at the man, he fights back dodging, nearing the cliff edge, waves reaching for him below, finally the beast gives but one choice, his knife, lunging he cuts and blinds the beast, groaning the beast backs away but the man is plunged into the rocky waters below, moving with the waves he gasps for air, reaching for the surface but only reaching it every other breath, then he feels a push against his legs in the water, the water was deep and dark as the day, he searches but sees nothing but he feels them, serpents from the depths have come to feast, he starts towards a rock island, the waves are relentless, pushing him back, he knows he must make it, but a mass moves up from underneath him rising pushing him far past the surface, a whale, unknowingly the massive creature lifts the man to safety as the serpents return to the murky depths, the whale moves out to sea with the man, eventually he sees sails in the distance, he watches and waits, massive sails approach, but the massive ships do they begin firing, canons boom, into the water, the man dives fearful, but they don't come for him but for the whale, for its flesh, once the ships are on the horizon he realizes, sees them pull the massive creature on board, and he watches from the rocks, safety, the creature that saved him is ravenged, he must continue on inspiration, loosely based on the Odyssey.

**Sympathy**—The vocal melody of this piece was co-written with my mom late at night. The product was a tune reminiscent to song of the early nineteenth century Black American music. I say reminiscent because there are definitely several European departures from traditional African slave song, especially for the instrumental parts. In this piece you will hear a musical setting to the poem "Sympathy" by Paul Laurence Dunbar who was a Black American poet in the late nineteenth century. It circulates around the idea of a 'caged bird' and what it feels to be entrapped or blocked off from a world of pastoral beauty. The chords that I use all share the same goal, that being an evocative portrayal of the feeling of sympathy for someone in pain or distress.

**Nonet**—The first movement, *Dolce e espressivo*, is a songlike prelude. The second movement, Like a broken clock, is an homage to Charles Ives's fast-changing and humorous musical style. The third movement, *Mercurial*, is a slow and dark dance (of sort). The fourth movement, *Maestoso*, is an exploration of melody, harmony and rhythm all contained and driven by a "crippled symmetry."

**call of the void**— "call of the void" is a psychological phenomenon wherein a person peering over a cliff feels the nonsuicidal urge to jump.

**Cave of Dreams**—This piece is an aural depiction of the journey that one experiences in a cavern. From the sharp and pointy stalactites to the delicate water droplets, every musical gesture is designed to mimic the reality of a cave or cave-like environment. This piece was primarily written from the perspective of an Inner Space Cavern goer in Georgetown, Texas. It is in this particular cave that the first five pitches of the piece were derived as they represent the jagged, disjunct nature of the cave's inner structures. Most notably, the audience should listen for the low pitched dissonance and how every musical gesture is framed by reverberation. Certain figures may emerge from this reverberation or aggressively crescendo into it. On a more stylistic note, this piece takes a spin on what has been dubbed polystylism, originally coined by Russian composer Alfred Schnittke. In *Cave of Dreams* one may hear sudden shifts in rhythmic schema as there is some juxtaposition between a more 'groove/jazzy based' style as well as a more 'spatial/ametric based' one. Finally, one should think about how the title of a movement is reflected by what they are hearing; they will help paint the narrative and are equally important as the music itself.

**Flying Together**— This piece has gone through many changes from when I first started it in the Fall of 2021. The first movement is a nod to American post-modernist composer George Crumb with his *Electric Insects* movement in his *Black Angels* string quartet. Programmatically, I was going for the sound of flies dancing around a group of birds in formation. This is represented by the contrast of tremolo, crescendos, and silence, which evokes the flies passing by someone's ear. The second movement slows things down and is continuously connected to the first. Throughout, the violin and viola are fighting musically and don't land with each other until the end of the movement. Finally, the last movement plays around with a love theme. Each instrument takes a stab at finding out what love is through different solo features. Ultimately, the question seems to remain unanswered.