



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas
College of Music

Composition Recital | Monday, April 1, 2024 | 8:00 pm | Voertman Hall

**SPECTRUM: A Performance of New Works
by North Texas Composers**

verticals (2023).....Sabren Espinosa (b. 2004)

Marimba Trio

Devin Brown, Eli Roth, Nick Fryar

Trio for Oboe, Horn and Harpsichord (2024).....Simon Kaplan (b. 1993)

I. Prélude balladé

II. Lento

Kit Hawkins, oboe • William Foss, horn • Michael Soto, harpsichord

Brennan Lullaby (2024).....Beige Cowell (b. 2001)

Lady Brennan, mezzo-soprano • Anna Schmelter, alto

Anne Bonny, alto • Helena Vassiliades, alto

Ella Curb, violin • Zoe O'Shaughnessy, harp

Yellow Leaf Trail (2023).....Nathaniel James Gustafson (b. 2002)

Dominic Willis, marimba • Taylor Hatch, electric guitar

Margaret Anne Gunter, harp

Where The Mind Is Without Fear (2021).....Kahan Taraporevala (b. 1999)

Gavin Godbey, tenor • Kahan Taraporevala, piano

Opus 12 (2023).....Ermir Bejo (b. 1987)

Ted Powell, piano

verticals is a marimba trio that explores the concept of verticality in both its spatial arrangement and melodic variations. This three-minute composition revolves around the interplay between the marimbas, as they take turns presenting the main melody and its variations. The piece aims to create a sense of height and depth, both in the sonic space and the musical motifs. These variations can range from subtle embellishments to rhythmic transformations or harmonic explorations. The performers should showcase their individual artistic choices and expressive qualities while remaining connected to the core melodic motif.

This work represents a turning point in my artistic development, as it marks a tonal direction in my use of diatonicism, the system of quarter-tone composition I invented in 2021 and which is originally modal. It is titled **Trio for Oboe, Horn and Harpsichord**, lasts approximately thirteen minutes, and consists of two movements being conceived as a book.

The first movement is a prelude lasting about five minutes. I wanted this prelude to be a poem, so I immediately thought of using one of the three medieval *formes fixes*, conceived as both poetic and musical forms. I excluded the rondeau because its structure distinguishes the sections not only according to the musical themes, but also according to the lyrics, and my project for the piece is exclusively instrumental. Between the two remaining *formes fixes*, the ballade and the virelai, I chose the ballade because it contains the idea of musical rhyme, which I find interesting. With this choice in mind, this movement is subtitled *Prélude balladé* in honor of Guillaume de Machaut's *chansons balladées*. This "balladed prelude" consists of several stanzas and follows the French-Renaissance ornamental principle of doubles, that is French-style diminutions. As this movement is conceived in three voices, this led me to treat the texture as that of a trio sonata: A melodic voice in the oboe, another melodic voice in the horn, and a bassline in the harpsichord above which the right hand doubles the oboe and horn parts, thus reinforcing the melodic structure since it does not play the diminutions but only the main notes and adding a timbral element via the doubling.

The second movement lasts about eight minutes and begins with a slow, spectral introduction à la *Das Rheingold*. As the sonata form has the dual interest of being intrinsically narrative and of putting into practice my recent tonal developments of diatonicism, I have decided to use it for the body of the movement, which follows the introduction. The thematic material is treated in the manner of the Brahmsian developing variation theorized by Arnold Schönberg. The different sections—introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda—respect the temporal proportions of the golden ratio, an idea that comes to me from Béla Bartók and which is adapted to the form of the movement. Harpsichord registration and muting (with a *Buff stop*), horn stopping and muting (*con sordino*), singing in the horn (multiphonics), and *hocket* between the oboe and the horn and between the two harpsichord manuals are all timbres employed to exploit the coloristic potential of the Debussian instrumentation.

From a currently untitled opera.

Anne Bonny was born a bastard to a loving mother, a servant, and an abusive father, a wealthy lawyer. Deeply mistreated by her father, she grows angry and resentful of her lot in life. As a young woman, she falls in love with the dashing Calico Jack, soon running away with him. She disguises herself as a pirate boy, but it isn't long before she's discovered. With Jack's aid, they stage a coup to take control of their ship and Anne cements herself as the fearsome pirate queen. Life with Jack on the sea is everything she dreamed of, money, respect, affection, fame, and adventure. Only after he starts to control every aspect of her life, does she reexamine who she was and who she left behind.

Brennan Lullaby is Anne's turning point, where she sees a vision of her mother Lady Brennan keening, singing a mourning song for the death of a child. It makes her think about her mother; does she think Anne dead? Did she mourn her daughter? Is she still waiting for her to return? These thoughts spiral around Anne and she finally regrets.

Yellow Leaf Trail: Bare trees, low clouds, a park bench, yellow rays, a faint mist.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.
--Rabindranath Tagore

Opus 12 explores a musical language of recurring gestures, particularly in the evocative opening measures, which serve as structural and melodic touchstones. The composition takes the form of a free rondo, where episodes often veer into the unconscious, creating an introspective and dream-like atmosphere.

*Seven hundred first program of the 2023–2024 season
Photography and videography are prohibited*