

MASC Winter 2023 Concert
COMPOSERS' NOTES

Lily Koslow: *The History Of...*

The History Of... for high soprano and piano is a musical realization of a poem written by the composer in 2021. In the piece, an outcast visits a church at night for some quiet solitude and meditation, and comes across a mysterious book on the altar: The History of Everything. Each chapter of this book elaborates on a particular strand of history, starting from the creation of time itself and spanning across the development of modern human civilization. The poem concludes with the omniscient narrator zooming back into the outcast's disposition, implying that each life is in itself a notable strand of history. Using a musical language that oscillates between mystical, uncanny, dark, and bright, the piece aims to embody the expressive force of the original poem.

Chelsea Komschlies: *Decaying Leaves*

The folia chord progression originated in 15th-century Portugal and spread around the world as a popular composition form over the next centuries. *Decaying Leaves* for baroque violin is a set of folia variations that slowly decomposes over the course of the work. At the outset, the harmonies are clear, but over each variation, they become increasingly broken and wispy with microtones coming from a spectral interpretation of the folia progression based on the uppermost odd partials of the harmonic series. The piece is one of many in my catalogue that treats an older musical form as an item in a curio cabinet, picking up dust while succumbing to the effects of time and decay. The music and special effects are also inspired by imagery: the muted browns and rusts of dead leaves on the forest floor, textures that are slippery and damp below and dry and brittle on top, getting whisked away by the wind. A special thank you goes to Gracie Carney, without whose collaboration and input this piece would not be possible.

Elyse Wolman: *The Golem*

The following piece is inspired by the first tableau from H. Leivick's play *The Golem*. It's meant to evoke the feeling of wrongness linked with going against the will of the creator and though the creation ends with what seems to be a sense of finality, the emptiness of the last P5 interval reminds that something fundamental is missing. There is no real resolution to be had. The story has just started.

Jonas Regnier: *Under the indifference of the sky*

A moving body - in limbo
Enclosed in a cocoon
Pressing, wrenching, pushing
Deforming its walls
 forging different shapes
 an elastic
Then it snaps back to its original form
Annihilating all hopes of escape
Unable to break the edge
At the mercy of the sun and rain
Under the indifference of the sky

Nicholas Ma: *Bull in a China Shop*

The phrase "...like a bull in a china shop" describes a person who behaves recklessly or clumsily in places that require careful action. Much like the idiom, I tried to evoke the slightly comical image of a clumsy person, unintentionally causing damage and commotion wherever they go. The beginning of this piece features the noisiest sounds possible (flutter tonguing, multiphonics) juxtaposed with more sheepish quiet remarks. The middle section follows a more lyrical linear motion and *bisbigliando* color changes, occasionally interrupted by loud interjections, before returning to a more noisy, rhythmic, and energetic final section, ending the piece with a bang!

Anita Pari: *Colours Afar*

Colours Afar evokes, never quite in sync, inner voices emerging and receding, staggered layers of depth and subtle shades. Fragments, reconstitution, and dissipation trace the work's arc from the entrance of the piano motive in the highest register. Prior to this entrance, smooth lines unfold in the violin along with carefully coloured piano chords that move slowly to points of rest.

Nora Popescu: *Flute Poems*

"Flute poems" is not based on a specific set of poems but rather on the idea of how the elements and structure of poetry resemble musical means of expression. I was interested in exploring how form is determined by different types of repetition and variation, both in speech and in music. The "Preface" serves as the basis of ideas on which the subsequent movements expand and reflect. The reappearance of these cells of ideas in different forms sometimes obsessively occupy the entire movement mirroring how the protagonist of a poem might contemplate a specific moment of a past experience to try to decipher its meaning. The main characteristics of these short pieces which are linked together through their combined musical materials are playfulness, curiosity, wistfulness -- at times serious, at others, mischievous. The piece offers the flute player many opportunities to showcase their virtuosity, with fast runs, adventurous leaps, and triple tonguing. These technical demands are balanced with passages of heartfelt lyricism. At the center of the work, is a movement which represents an invitation to explore different sound worlds through extended techniques such as bamboo tones, multiphonics and whistle tones.

Richard Davis : *One need not be a Chamber*

"One need not be a Chamber" is a work for solo clarinet and optional narrator, based on the Emily Dickinson poem "One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted—". The music maintains an intimate, line-by-line relationship with the poem, translating various motifs and features of the text into leitmotifs—in the loosest sense—that accompany the emotional arc of Dickinson's poem.

Fiona Marchetto: *IV. Pursuit (from String Quartet No. 1)*

This is the final movement of my first string quartet. Its title is in reference to the momentum and energy throughout, creating a sense of direction and potentially a feeling of being chased. The entire piece is inspired by the forms in which string quartets are found outside the concert hall. The fourth movement is my take on music that you might find at some sort of gala or fundraiser. This movement is transformative and largely textural; something that could be played in the background of a function, but being interesting enough to grab the attention of partygoers.