



School of Music  
University of Missouri

2020-2021 Series | Student Ensemble

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# Mizzou New Music Ensemble

**Tâmila Freitas de Souza, flutes**

**Andrew Wiele, clarinets**

**Johanny Veiga Barbosa, violin**

**Andy Lewis, cello**

**Stephen Landy, percussion**

**Jordan Nielsen, percussion and electronics**

**Eve Werger, piano**

**Yoshiaki Onishi, conductor**

**Stefan Freund, director**

*with guests*

**David Myers, piccolo trumpet**

**Josh Boyer, trombone**

**Julie Rosenfeld, violin**

**Morgan Owen, viola**

**February 17, 2021 | 7:00pm**

**Livestreamed Performance**

## Program

**Antefenas-Studies (2018, rev. 2021)..... Yoshiaki Onishi**  
(b. 1981)

- I. L'antienne acoustique 1
- II. Mouvements
- III. L'antienne acoustique 2

**Living in Color (2019)..... Alex Berko**  
(b. 1995)

## Program Notes & Composer Biographies

### Antefenas-Studies

*Antefenas* is a spelling variant of an Old English word, *antefn*, meaning an “antiphon,” “anthem,” or a “hymn song sung in alternate parts.” No religious connotation is intended in this piece; however, throughout the piece I focus on the physicality of alternating sounds. In particular, I am interested in the kinetics of one sound responding to another, eventually forming the perception of a dialogue.

Throughout the piece, dialogue is implied in various ways. In the first part, *L’antienne acoustique I* (The acoustic dialogue I), an exchange between real and virtual acoustics takes place: the live musicians play short sounds through their instruments that would highlight the acoustics of the room or the hall where the piece is being played. The electronic part responds to these live instrumental sounds with sounds that are passed through impulse responses, artificially generated reverberations that simulate a “virtual” room.

In the second part, *Mouvements* (movements), the electronic part is absent, and the focus is on the activities on the instrumental parts. “Movements” here refer not only to the fast passages that dominate this part, but also to the movements of the sounds that are exchanged from one instrumental group to another.

The last part, *L’antienne acoustique II*, is essentially an inverse of the first part, where the live instrumental parts simulate the acoustics that the electronics produced in *L’antienne acoustique I* by producing the airy and hissing sounds that quickly decay in volume. The electronic part predominantly produces sounds with dry acoustics. New to the revised version, fast delays are added to the electronic sounds that bounce off left and right. Such sounds are put together with the live instrumental sounds to create a more immersive experience. The electronic part also plays a series of bell-like chords, which come from the residues of compositional materials that did not make their way into the second part, *Mouvements*. I think of them as a signifier of the irreconcilable past. I find them particularly poignant, considering how turbulent the world has been for the past few years. Indeed, working on a now two-year-old piece makes the passing of time so visceral and palpable.

*Antefenas-Studies* was commissioned by and written for University of the Pacific’s 28/78 New Music Ensemble and Andrew Lu, in partnership with the Conservatory of Music. I dedicate this piece to Robert Coburn, in gratitude for introducing me to the world of Max/MSP while I was an undergraduate at the university, which has proven essential for creating the electronics component of this piece.

–Yoshiaki Onishi

### Yoshiaki Onishi

Japanese-American composer, conductor, and clarinetist Yoshiaki Onishi received his doctorate in music composition from Columbia University in 2015 and is currently the Postdoctoral Fellow in Music Composition at the University of Missouri, serving as Assistant Conductor for the Mizzou New Music Ensemble. As a composer, he is interested in exploring a wide range of instrumental timbres and finding ways to incorporate them in musical syntaxes and forms that disrupt the sense of expectation. He has worked on commissions that have come from such festivals and organizations as Philharmonie Luxembourg, Takefu International Music Festival, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, and his music has been performed by many ensembles, including Asko|Schönberg Ensemble, Klangforum Wien, Nieuw Ensemble, Distractfold Ensemble, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Quatuor Diotima and JACK Quartet. He is the recipient of the 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2018 Fromm Commission, and the Gaudeamus Prize 2011, and his works are published by Edition Gravis in Berlin, Germany. As a conductor deeply engaged in promoting the music of today, he was

one of the founding members of Ensemble Exophonie Tokyo and its Artistic Director/Conductor/Composer Associate. Other ensembles he has worked with as a conductor include Nieuw Ensemble of Amsterdam, ECCE Ensemble and Wet Ink Ensemble. Increasingly active as a re-emerged clarinetist in the recent years, he has collaborated with composers Carolina Heredia, Oswald Huynh, Bret Bohman, and Andrew Crossley.

Website: <http://www.yoshionishi.com>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/yoshiakionishi>

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/yoshiakionishi>

## **Living in Color**

Lately, I have been thinking a lot about *influence*. How does one mold his/her unique personal and musical motivations into a distinctive artistic voice, and in what ways can the many influences that constantly surround us tastefully converge? *Living in Color* is an exploration of these thoughts.

As inspiration for this piece commissioned by and premiered in Boston, I chose to use Boston-based artist, Melanie Long's work *Curls*: a vibrant and elegant image that bursts with a multitude of color and detail to depict the wonderfully simple state of content. Shortly after beginning sketches on this piece, my grandmother suddenly passed. Her daughter (my mother) happened upon an image of my grandmother wearing a jacket with the same color pallet as the protagonist in Melanie's work. With this image, I discovered a theme of connectedness and tangling of worlds that made its way deeply into the architecture of this music.

The seed of this piece is a simple motive: a descending minor third. It is the first thing we hear and it is played by the piano: *my* protagonist because it is my instrument and the one that my grandmother most associates with me. That minor third transforms into a lament-like, R&B- flavored chord progression containing three chords that also happen to be separated by a minor third. The construction of this piece is held together by that chord progression, and although there is an overwhelming sense of lift throughout the course of the work, every major landmark is a lower rendition of the three-chord progression until it eventually spirals back to its original state.

The cross-pollination of R&B with a contemporary classical palate is my attempt to further explore this intertwining of worlds. My belief is that creative expression transcends genre and it is my belief that music is more powerful when we choose to open our ears wide and allow ourselves to hear all colors.

–Alex Berko

## **Alex Berko**

Driven by a love of narrative and a deep interest in capturing human emotion, American composer/pianist Alex Berko draws from a wide array of influences to create dynamic and deeply expressive music.

Berko's music has been widely performed throughout the U.S. and abroad by orchestras, choirs, and chamber ensembles. His recent collaborators include the Monterey Symphony, Cape Symphony, Plymouth Philharmonic, Bloomington Symphony, Donald Nally, The Crossing, Craig Hella Johnson, Conspirare, NOTUS Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Cathedral Choral Society and the Washington National Cathedral, Del Sol String Quartet, Boston New Music Initiative, and jazz/folk duo Kate McGarry and Keith Ganz.

Most recently, Berko was selected as the winner of the 2019 American Prize in Choral Music. Another project in collaboration with composer Daniel Bayot and the LeBron James Family Foundation landed Berko a regional EMMY® for his music. His work has also received national recognition from the Society of

Composers, Inc. (SCI), American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP; three-time Morton Gould Finalist), American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI; two-time Student Composer Awards Finalist), and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Additionally, he has held fellowships or residencies at Big Sky Choral Initiative, RED NOTE New Music Festival, Atlantic Music Festival, Glen Deven Ranch in Big Sur, California Summer Music, and NYU/ASCAP Film Scoring Institute.

Recent and upcoming projects include an orchestra work for the Cape Symphony and Plymouth Philharmonic, choral works for Conspirare and the Miró Quartet, *Stare at the Sun*, and *Constellation Men's Ensemble*, and solo works for pianist Seolyeong Jeong and guitarists Bokyun Byun and Alexandra Iranfar.

### ***Mizzou New Music Ensemble***

The Mizzou New Music Ensemble is dedicated to promoting new music at Mizzou through performances on and off campus. The Ensemble is the repertory group for the Mizzou New Music Initiative, working with faculty, students, and visiting composers, and giving public performances on campus and in the community. The Ensemble is comprised of seven University of Missouri graduate students under the direction of Stefan Freund, a cellist, composer, conductor, professor of composition, and artistic director of the Mizzou New Music Initiative.

### ***Mizzou New Music Initiative***

The Mizzou New Music Initiative brings together an array of programs intended to position the University of Missouri School of Music as a leading center in the areas of composition and new music. The Initiative is the direct result of the generous support of Dr. Jeanne and Mr. Rex Sinquefield, and the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation. The Sinquefields' vision is to create an incubator for the composition and performance of new music, and to position Missouri as a major center for the music of tomorrow.