



Mizzou New Music Initiative  
University of Missouri

University of Missouri School of Music  
2023-2024 Series • Student Ensemble

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## **Mizzou New Music Ensemble**

Nicholas Wu, flutes  
Meghan Brown, clarinets  
Alexandre Negrao, violin  
Dean Wibe, cello  
Emily Rahn, trumpet  
Miles Bohlman, percussion  
Olivia Sletteland, percussion  
Seda Balci, piano  
Jinhong Yoo, piano

with

Stefan Freund, director  
Amanda Collins, Horn  
John McKeever, Guest Conductor  
Shanyse Strickland, Guest Composer

7:30 PM, Saturday, February 24, 2024  
Sheryl Crow Hall

# Program

Quintus ..... Robert Paterson  
(1996) (b. 1970)

Speechless ..... Harry Gonzalez  
(2024) (b. 1997)

The Balance of Infinite Cosmos ..... Atticus Schlegel  
(2024) (b. 2002)

Disco Ball ..... Nicky Sohn  
(2019) (b. 1992)

Sketches of a Life ..... Shanyse Strickland  
(2024) (b. 1991)

## **John McKeever** **Guest Conductor**

John McKeever is currently the Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. In 2022/23 Dr. McKeever was the Assistant Conductor for the UNC School of the Art's Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Dr. McKeever also worked as the Assistant Conductor for Piedmont Opera, where he conducted their 2023 production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Dr. McKeever earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating in 2021. As a graduate teaching assistant, he served as the director of the CU Boulder Campus Orchestra. He also served as an Assistant and Cover Conductor for the Boulder Philharmonic.

Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Dr. McKeever began his studies on the piano. While continuing on the piano, he switched his focus to the double bass in elementary school. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Double Bass Performance at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Paul Sharpe. While a student at UNCSA, Dr. McKeever developed an interest in conducting and began to work as an assistant conductor for the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute, Piedmont Opera, and several UNCSA musicals. Dr. McKeever continued his studies at UNCSA, earning a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting in 2015.

From 2012-2018, Dr. McKeever served as the Assistant Conductor for Piedmont Opera in Winston-Salem, NC. In 2018 he made his conducting debut with the company in Piedmont Opera's production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In 2016, Dr. McKeever shadowed the American Ballet Theatre's spring season at the Metropolitan Opera at the invitation of the company's principal conductor, Charles Barker. Dr. McKeever's teachers include James Allbritten, David Amado, Charles Barker, Michael Jinbo, Christopher James Lees, Gary Lewis, Jonathan Schiffman, and Kevin Stites.

## Program Notes and Composers Biographies

### Robert Paterson (b. 1970)

American composer Robert Paterson is a true New Yorker—born and raised in Buffalo, he lived in Rochester and Ithaca for over ten years, in New York City for over twenty years, and now lives in Saratoga Springs, near the Adirondacks. Paterson’s colorful music embraces everything from goddesses and online dating to mathematics and the environment. His music is filled with emotion and fierce rhythmic energy, marked by elegance, wit, and meticulous craftsmanship. Named *Composer of The Year* by the Classical Recording Foundation at Carnegie Hall, Robert Paterson is the winner of the *Alfred I. DuPont Award*. His opera *Three Way* won the Grammy® under *Best Classical Producer of the Year*. His music is often a *Best of the Year pick* on National Public Radio. His orchestral tone poem, *Dark Mountains*, regularly airs on NPR’s *Performance Today*. *Three Way* premiered with Nashville Opera, then the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and across the United States. The Minnesota Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Oratorio Society of New York, Buffalo Philharmonic, Albany Pro Musica, Albany Symphony, Musica Sacra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, and ensembles worldwide perform his music. Paterson gives masterclasses at the Curtis Institute of Music, New York University, the Aspen Music Festival, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and more. He is the Artistic Director and house composer for Mostly Modern Projects. Robert is a lifelong vegan and an advocate for animals and the environment, celebrating the natural world with ground-breaking works such as his *Triple Concerto*, *A New Earth*, *Listen*, and *I Go Among Trees*. robertpaterson.com.

### Quintus

In medieval music, ‘quintus’ means the fifth voice or part. In *Quintus*, I highlight each part, usually as a solo, but sometimes two at a time, either in rhythmic unison or with a kind of call and response. Unless the solos are exposed, such as in the piano part, they are often backed by a virtual drumset consisting of percussive sounds made by the other instruments. A bass drum sound is created with deadstrokes on the marimba and by striking the body of the cello, a snare drum is created with clarinet multiphonics (playing more than one note at a time) and high marimba notes. Other sections just groove along, often with the marimbist playing a funky pattern using “marimshots” in the left hand (striking four notes at once, two with mallet heads and two with the shafts).

## **Harry Gonzalez (b. 1997)**

Harry is a Colombian composer of contemporary, chamber, and orchestra music, and a violin and piano performer. His music has been commissioned by organizations like The Sheldon Arts Foundation, the Medellin Philharmonic Orchestra, and the new music ensemble Periscopio of Universidad EAFIT, and it has been performed in well-known musical events in Colombia, such as the XIV Cartagena Music Festival, Concurso Nacional Violinissimo in Medellin, and Colombia se Compone in Bogotá, and internationally, in Contemporáneos III in San Ramón, San José, Cartago and Turrialba, Costa Rica, in the Student Composers Recital and the Missouri Composers Project, Del Mar International Composers Symposium, Odyssey Chambers Music Series with Mizzou faculty performers and The Sheldon Concert Hall in collaboration with St. Louis Symphony Orchestra players. Professionally, González has gained important experience playing violin with the Colombian popular music singer Arelys Henao, editing music by Manuel Maria Párraga and Pedro Morales Pino for the project Historias del Piano Colombiano, and recently won first place in the Humanities division of the RCAF (Research and Creative Activities Forum) at Mizzou with his research on how music can be used as a means to convey climate change. Currently, González is pursuing his Master of Music degree in Composition at the University of Missouri-Columbia with the guidance of Stefan Freund and Utku Asuroglu and working as a teaching assistant for the Mizzou New Music Initiative.

## **Speechless b. 1997)**

Nowadays, with the current climate crisis that is challenging our ways of living and how we interact with nature, there are millions of living beings whose ecosystems and lives are being threatened. These organisms, mammals, birds, fish, and reptiles, among others, are facing a significant reduction in their habitat and their possibility of extinction due to the actions humans have done since the eighteenth century. Certainly, many tribes, and particular populations whose territories will be affected due to the changing climate conditions, are facing similar challenges that other species do. However, unlike these populations, animals cannot speak up, they cannot act, they are just suffering without comprehending the reasons behind... they are just dying in silence.

## **Atticus Schlegel (b. 2002)**

Atticus Schlegel first began his musical journey in 6th grade on the euphonium at Wydown Middle School in St. Louis, Missouri. He later switched to the tuba in high school, while around the same time developing his interest in composition. With the encouragement of his band director, Jennifer Shenberger, Atticus became more involved with composition with the participation in the Missouri Summer Composition Institute at Mizzou. He is grateful to have been awarded a Sinquefield scholarship in the 2022-23 school year as it has allowed him to continue his studies in composition at Mizzou in addition to jumpstarting his future career in composition.

### **The Balance of Infinite Cosmos**

My piece, *The Balance of Infinite Cosmos*, is an exploration of the feelings of existential dread that we may sometimes experience when we become wrapped up in the world around us and how we can combat this with an awareness and understanding of our place in the universe and its infinite beauty.

The first movement, titled, "Disaster," depicts the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty we occasionally experience in the modern world. The music features frequent use of complex meters (mostly  $\frac{5}{8}$ ) which establishes an off-kilter feeling throughout the movement.

In the second movement, "A Dream of Space," the soundscape morphs into an expansive atmosphere that is composed of many stars and celestial bodies. The music is much more still and balanced than that of the first movement.

Finally, "The Balance," is when we realize our place in the infinite cosmos and come to the peaceful conclusion that our existence in it is a purposeful meaningfulness. The music in this movement goes through many different changes and we, ourselves, may come out changed on the other side.

## **Nicky Sohn (b. 1992)**

Selected as one of Houston CityBook Magazine's "Cool 100" alongside icons like Simone Biles and Megan Thee Stallion, composer Nicky Sohn is a versatile talent celebrated across the US, Europe, and Asia. With a distinctive style characterized by jazz-inspired, rhythmically driven themes, Sohn's compositions have earned high praise, being compared to "John Adams' 'Short Ride in a Fast Machine' on steroids" (YourObserver) and celebrated for her "elegant wonder" (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung).

Recent highlights include commissions and performances by St. Louis Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Annapolis Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke's, ROCO, Bergamot Quartet, Isidore Quartet, and WindSync. Sohn's music debuted at number one on the Billboard Traditional Classical Albums chart in 2023 with Kinetic Ensemble's album. Upcoming projects feature a guitar concerto for Bokyoung Byun with Albany Symphony, a quartet to mark Cavani Quartet's 40th anniversary, and chamber works for the 2024-25 season supported by six grants from Houston Arts Alliance.

## **Disco Ball**

*Disco ball* was inspired by Justin Son's original song with the same title. Justin has been one of the most influential people in my life as a brother, friend, and artist. His songs, especially the melodic and thematic materials have such an optimistic and positive sound quality to them. The opening gesture of the work was directly taken from his song, *Disco Ball*. The piece is mono-thematic with several variations and alternations in harmony, texture, and dynamic. Justin worked on his song during his time in Korea with me and working with him on his music was such a fond memory from the time. I began working on the piece a few weeks before he had to begin his military service in Korea. He and I used to speak nearly everyday, but this was not possible once he joined the army. Writing this work was a good compensation and made me feel that I was somehow in a conversation with him. This piece is also the first piece I wrote since moving to Houston.

## Shanyse Strickland (1991)

Shanyse Strickland is a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, composer and arranger. Originally from Akron, OH, Shanyse received her undergraduate degree in Music Performance at Youngstown State University, along with a Masters degree from Duquesne University and an Artist Diploma from Montclair State University, all focusing on horn. Some highlights of her career include playing trombone and flute for the reuniting Ohio Players, winning the 2016 International Horn Symposium's jazz competition, performing at the 2019 and 2021 Heisman Trophy Ceremony aired on ESPN, and playing principal horn on the national tour with the Broadway Sinfonietta and the film score production of Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. Shanyse is currently freelancing and composing in New Jersey and New York City, creating new and innovative works for the chamber music and the ensembles she actively performs in. She has written and published over twenty-five original works, one of which was premiered by the horn section of the New Haven Symphony titled Moods. Shanyse's newest work, *Empathy*, was premiered in March 2023 by the Seattle Symphony horn section. Shanyse also arranged a pop-tune for Ghengis Barbie, which was released on their most recent album titled *Songs for Summer*. Shanyse continues to write for her colleagues and studios in various universities, establishing new chamber music for common and not so common orchestrations.

## Sketches of a Life

Neo-soul has been one of the most influential sub-genres of RnB since the late 90s/early 2000s to date. The combination of modern RnB most commonly associated with pop-music today, along with some jazz and hip-hop elements, make the genre a unique and personal experience to its audiences for the similar resonance of its predecessor, Black soul music. *Sketches of a Life* encompasses the classic elements of Neo-Soul by taking listeners on a journey filled with imagery, joy, pain, groove and funk. In this scene, the solo horn is the main character and voice telling the story of a life from beginning to end in three sections, from the roots of ancestry, to the ascension into the afterlife and beyond. The accompaniment and unique instrumentation it is made up provides the context for this journey, taking on traditional roles from the genres mentioned above, including a jazz rhythm section, RnB horn section parts, and additional classical music elements involving strings. This new work for horn is one of the many examples of the chameleon like capabilities that the horn possesses to adapt to any context it is included in, which will hopefully expand the horizons of what both composers and performers take into consideration when assessing the impact of the instrument in it's entirety.



## **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 eight 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, and Yoshiaki Onishi, composer, conductor, clarinetist, and Visiting Assistant Professor of Music Composition at the University of Missouri School of Music.

## **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.

### **Upcoming MNMI events**

#### **Premiere of Morima's Sheldon Commission, St. Louis**

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 6, Sheldon Concert Hall, St. Louis

#### **Missouri Composers Project (MOCOP)**

7:30 PM, Sunday, March 10, Broadway Christian Church

#### **JT Wolfe's Sheldon Commission Premiere, St. Louis**

3 PM, Sunday, April 7, Sheldon Concert Hall

#### **Creating Original Music Project (COMP) Festival**

9 AM - 5 PM, Saturday, April 20

***Visit [newmusic.missouri.edu](http://newmusic.missouri.edu) for a full list of events and opportunities.***

Requests for accommodations related to disability need to be made to building coordinator, Susan Worstell, 206 Sinquefield Music Center, 573-884-2604, at least seven days in advance of the event. Events are subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit our web site: [www.music.missouri.edu](http://www.music.missouri.edu)

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