



Mizzou New Music Initiative
University of Missouri

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

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

Stefan Freund, Director

7:30 PM, Sunday, April 28, 2024
Sheryl Crow Hall

Program

Taking Flight Henry Rusten
(2024) (b. 2006)

Sea of Two Colors Mary Kouyoumdjian
(2011) (b. 1983)

Arcane Fire Ethan Sanders
(2024) (b. 2005)

Intermission

Thistledown George Lewis
(2012) (b. 1952)

Dueling Laptops Yoell Tewolde
(2024) (b. 2005)

Program Notes and Composers Biographies

Henry Rusten (b. 2006)

Henry Rusten is a freshman undergraduate music composition student at the University of Missouri. He began playing music from an early age by taking piano lessons starting at 5. During high school, he participated in choir, jazz band as a pianist, and orchestra as a violist. His music composition achievements include winning the University of Missouri Composers Project Orchestra High School Division which included a performance from the Columbia Civic Orchestra, winning 1st Place in the University of Missouri COMP Contest Jazz Category, and winning the Missouri Association for Jazz Education Jazz Band Composition Contest.

Taking Flight

The opening idea to *Taking Flight* is inspired by standing in a place with overlapping storm sirens with contrasting notes swelling in and out. The rest of the piece builds on this with contrasts between tonally sound sections and more unstable and tonally ambiguous sections. The themes of the piece slowly build upon each other until the end of the piece where the movement and intensity die down and fly away.

Mary Kouyoumdjian (b. 1983)

Mary Kouyoumdjian is a composer and documentarian with projects ranging from concert works to multimedia collaborations and film scores. As a first generation Armenian-American and having come from a family directly affected by the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian Genocide, she uses a sonic palette that draws on her heritage, interest in music as documentary, and background in experimental composition to progressively blend the old with the new. A strong believer in freedom of speech and the arts as an amplifier of expression, her compositional work often integrates recorded testimonies with resilient individuals and field recordings of place to invite empathy by humanizing complex experiences around social and political conflict.

Kouyoumdjian has received commissions for such organizations as the New York Philharmonic, Kronos Quartet, Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Beth Morrison Projects/OPERA America, Alarm Will Sound, Bang on a Can, International Contemporary Ensemble, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, the American Composers Forum, Roomful of Teeth, WQXR, REDSHIFT, Experiments in Opera, Helen Simoneau Danse,

the Nouveau Classical Project, Music of Remembrance, Friction Quartet, Ensemble Oktoplus, and the Los Angeles New Music Ensemble among others. Her work has been performed internationally at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, the Barbican Centre, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Millennium Park, Benaroya Hall, Prototype Festival, the New York Philharmonic Biennial, Cabrillo Festival, Big Ears Festival, 21C Music Festival, and Cal Performances. Her residencies include those with EMPAC, Buffalo String Works, Alarm Will Sound/The Mizzou International Composers Festival, Roulette/The Jerome Foundation, Montalvo Arts Center, and Exploring the Metropolis. Her music has been described as "eloquently scripted" and "emotionally wracking" by *The New York Times* and as "politically fearless" and "the most harrowing moments on stage at any New York performance" by *New York Music Daily*. In her work as a composer, orchestrator, and music editor for film, she has collaborated on a diverse array of motion pictures including orchestrating on the soundtracks to *The Place Beyond the Pines* (Focus Features) and *Demonic* (Dimension Films).

Kouyoumdjian holds a D.M.A and M.A. in composition from Columbia University, where she studied primarily with Zosha Di Castri, Georg Friedrich Haas, Fred Lerdahl, and George Lewis; an M.A. in Scoring for Film & Multimedia from New York University; and a B.A. in Music Composition from the University of California, San Diego, where she studied with Chaya Czernowin, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, Anthony Davis, Steven Schick, and Chinary Ung. Dedicated to new music advocacy, Kouyoumdjian is a Co-Founder of the annual new music conference New Music Gathering, served as the founding Executive Director of contemporary music ensemble Hotel Elefant, and served as Co-Artistic Director of Alaska's new music festival Wild Shore New Music. As an avid educator, Kouyoumdjian is an Assistant Professor of Composition at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Lecturer at Columbia University; she has been on faculty at The New School, Brooklyn College's Feirstein School of Cinema, Mannes Prep, and the New York Philharmonic's Very Young Composers program. Kouyoumdjian is proud to be published by Schott's PSNY.

Sea of Two Colors

A portrait of Armenian composer Komitas Vardapet, who survived the Armenian Genocide. Upon release, Komitas spent 20 years and the remainder of his life in various psychiatric hospitals.

A portrait of the deterioration of his mind.

A portrait of the deterioration of his Armenian culture.

"I have seen a black sea, and all around was white.
The waves crashed, but the two did not mix.
Who has ever seen a sea of two colors?"
- *Komitas*, "Andouni (Homeless)"

i. Behind the Trees

On his deportation route to Ankara,
it is said Komitas was obsessively convinced that
there were bandits hiding behind the trees.
This is the first recorded instance of his
post-traumatic stress disorder.

mm. 219-250 quote Komitas' "Oror" [Lullaby]

ii. House in Ruins

"My heart is like a house in ruins.."
- Komitas, "Andouni (Homeless)"

On his deportation route to Ankara,
it is said Komitas would sing the Armenian church hymn
"Der Voghormia (Lord Have Mercy)"
to calm himself and those around him.

Fragments of this hymn are quoted in the movement

Ethan Sanders (b. 2005)

Ethan Sanders is a student at the University of Missouri in Columbia, currently studying composition under Utku Asuroglu, with generous financial support through a scholarship provided by Jean and Rex Sinquefield. His music can best be described as post-romantic, with influences from all periods of "classical" music, from medieval *fauxbourdon* to modern extended techniques. Emotional expression is always at the forefront of his music, even when presented through an occasionally abstract soundscape. He hopes that the music can always remain enjoyable, and that listeners will be able to find something of emotional value in each new work.

George Lewis (b. 1952)

George Lewis is an American composer, musicologist, and trombonist. He is the Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music and Area Chair in Composition at Columbia University. In 2020-21 he was a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study), and he currently serves as Artistic Director of the International Contemporary Ensemble. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, a member of the Akademie der Künste Berlin, and an Honorary Member of the American Musicological Society. Lewis's other honors include the Doris Duke Artist Award (2019), a MacArthur Fellowship (2002), and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015). A member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971, Lewis's work is presented by ensembles worldwide, published by Edition Peters. A Yamaha Artist, Lewis is widely regarded as a pioneer in the creation of computer programs that improvise in concert with human musicians.

Lewis's central areas of scholarship include the history and criticism of experimental music, computer music, interactive media, and improvisation, particularly as these areas become entangled with the dynamics of race, gender, and decolonization. His most frequently cited articles on these topics include "New Music Decolonization in Eight Difficult Steps" (*VAN Outernational*, 2020) and "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives" (*Black Music Research Journal*, 1996). His widely acclaimed book, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press, 2008) received the American Book Award and the American Musicological Society's Music in American Culture Award. Lewis is the co-editor (with Harald Kisiedu) of the bilingual edited volume *Composing While Black: Afrodiasporic New Music Today/Afrodiasporische Neue Musik Heute* (2023), as well as (with Benjamin Piekut) the two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* (2016). Lewis's many publications on technology include "Too Many Notes: Computers, Complexity and Culture in Voyager" (*Leonardo Music Journal*, 2000) and "Why Do We Want Our Computers To Improvise?" (*Oxford Handbook of Algorithmic Music*, 2018). Lewis holds honorary doctorates from the University of Edinburgh, Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Oberlin College, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, New England Conservatory, New College of Florida, and Birmingham City University, among others.

Thistledown

Thistledown was written for Ensemble Either/Or, and performed by them in November 2013 as part of the concert series of the New York Chapter of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM).

Yoell Tewolde (2005)

Yoell Tewolde (he/him) is a composer and multi-instrumentalist from Columbia, Missouri. He aims to make music that creates an emotional impact for the listener. He enjoys listening to music that causes him to relive familiar emotions or experience new emotions.

Tewolde is currently a freshman composition student at the University of Missouri. He has studied with composers such as Utku Asuroglu, Yoshiaki Onishi, and Bonnie McLarty. He has also attended masterclasses by composers Maria Schneider, John Fedchock, Stefan Freund, Katahji Copley, and others. Tewolde was recently commissioned by MU alum Dr. Allison Davis to write for the Rock Bridge High School Woodwind Choir (Columbia, MO). The Rock Bridge Woodwind Choir performed the piece, "respiration", at the 2023 MSHSAA State Large Ensemble festival. He also arranged wind ensemble parts for selections from Louis Spohr's Clarinet Concerto No. 2, and premiered this arrangement in 2023 with the Rock Bridge High School Wind Symphony. Additionally, Tewolde earned 2nd place in MTNA's 2023 Missouri Senior Composition Competition and 2nd place at MU's 2022 Creating Original Music Project in the Senior Jazz division.

Dueling Laptops

Dueling Laptops is a reflection of my experience purchasing a laptop for college this past summer, but through the eyes of two personified laptops. While I was choosing which laptop best fit my needs, what emotions would these laptops have been feeling? This piece depicts these two laptops displaying their strength, memory, and speed capabilities to a customer.

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 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 MU Student Works by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

8:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 30, Touhill Performing Arts Center, St. Louis

Summer Composition Institute, June 9-15

Mizzou International Composers Festival, July 22-27

Visit 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

Please consider visiting our partner organizations:

University Concert Series • www.concertseries.org | Odyssey Chamber Music Series • www.odysseymissouri.org Columbia Civic Orchestra • cco.missouri.org | We Always Swing Jazz Series • www.wealwaysswing.org CAAM • www.ChoralArtsAllianceofMissouri.com | KMUC Classical 90.5 FM • www.kmuc.org