

**2024**

**MICF**

MIZZOU INTERNATIONAL  
COMPOSERS FESTIVAL

**JULY 22-27**  
COLUMBIA, MO

GEORGE LEWIS  
MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN

**ALARM WILL SOUND**



Mizzou New Music Initiative  
University of Missouri



SINQUEFIELD  
Charitable Foundation

[www.composersfestival.missouri.edu](http://www.composersfestival.missouri.edu)

**NEW MUSIC FOR EVERYONE  
ALL EVENTS ARE FREE**

# MIZZOU INTERNATIONAL COMPOSERS FESTIVAL

## July 22 – 27, 2024 Festival Schedule

Schedule subject to change. For an updated schedule, please visit  
[composersfestival.missouri.edu](http://composersfestival.missouri.edu)

*ALL EVENTS ARE FREE*

\*Stream selected events live at the University of Missouri School of Music's YouTube

### Monday, July 22

**5:00 – 8:00 PM**

Sheryl Crow Hall  
Sinquefield Music Center

### RESIDENT COMPOSER PRESENTATIONS

Resident Composers Yingting Liu, Lila Meretzky, Mahbod Shirvani, and Davor Vincze give presentations on their music.

### Tuesday, July 23

**5:30 PM**

Ragtag Cinema  
10 Hitt St.

### AN ACT OF WORSHIP

A screening of Nausheen Dadabhoy's documentary *An Act of Worship*, followed by a brief Q&A with Distinguished Guest Composer Mary Kouyoumdjian, who composed the score.

**7:30 PM**

Sheryl Crow Hall  
Sinquefield Music Center

### DISTINGUISHED GUEST

### COMPOSER PRESENTATIONS

### GEORGE LEWIS & MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN

Distinguished Guest Composers George Lewis (7:30 PM) and Mary Kouyoumdjian (8:30 PM) deliver lecture presentations on their works and careers.

### Wednesday, July 24

**7:30 PM**

Locust Expressive  
Arts Elementary

### DISMAL NICHE AND LANDLOCKED OPERA

Experimental harpist and composer Zeena Parkins, followed by the world premiere of *Pompadour Porcelain*, an opera by Felix Jarrar.

# MICF

MIZZOU INTERNATIONAL  
COMPOSERS FESTIVAL

SCAN FOR FULL  
SCHEDULE



**Thursday, July 25**

**4:00 – 7:00 PM**

Sheryl Crow Hall  
Sinquefield Music Center

## RESIDENT COMPOSER PRESENTATIONS

Resident Composers Claire Hu, Benjamin Scheuer, and ess whiteley give presentations on their music.

**7:30 PM**

Missouri Theatre

## ALARM WILL SOUND\*

Alarm Will Sound performs the music of Distinguished Guest Composers Mary Kouyoumdjian and George Lewis, alongside compositions by Andrew Norman, Stefan Freund, and Lukáš Janata.

**Friday, July 26**

**7:30 PM**

Sheryl Crow Hall  
Sinquefield Music Center

## MIZZOU NEW MUSIC\*

The Mizzou New Music Ensemble and Mizzou faculty perform works by Mary Kouyoumdjian, George Lewis, Utku Asuroglu, Lila Meretzky, and Shanyse Strickland.

**Saturday, July 27**

**7:30 PM**

Missouri Theatre

## EIGHT WORLD PREMIERES\*

Alarm Will Sound presents the world premieres of eight new works by 2024 MICF Resident Composers Claire Hu, Lukáš Janata, Yingting Liu, Lila Meretzky, Benjamin Scheuer, Mahbod Shirvani, Davor Vincze, and ess whiteley.

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# Welcome!

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome you to the 15th Annual Missouri International Composers Festival (MICF)! As we gather once again to celebrate the vibrant art of music composition, I am filled with anticipation for the remarkable experiences that await us. Our festival boasts four captivating concerts that promise to showcase a wide array of musical styles, pushing the boundaries of what's possible in composition. From opera to groundbreaking film scores, we'll explore the many facets of new music.

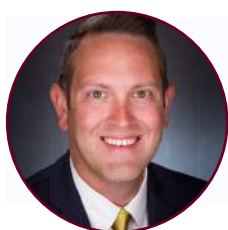
Indeed, music's eternal quality is its capacity for renewal, change, and transformation. This week, we are fortunate to have an abundance of musical offerings to celebrate. Of course, none of which would be possible without the support from the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation and I extend deep appreciation to Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield for their vision and dedication to the School of Music.

One of many events during MICF is a special screening of Nausheen Dadabhoj's powerful documentary *An Act of Worship*, followed by an enlightening Q&A session with our Distinguished Guest Composer, Mary Kouyoumdjian, who crafted the film's evocative score. This event exemplifies the fascinating intersection of visual storytelling and musical artistry. Another feature of this year's festival are performances sponsored by the avant-garde music organization Dismal Niche and the compelling *Landlocked Opera*. Their contributions will undoubtedly enrich our festival experience.

It's a joy to welcome back our dear friends and colleagues from Alarm Will Sound as our ensemble-in-residence. Their presence has become an integral part of MICF, and we are grateful for their continued dedication to new music and MICF. A highlight of our festival will be Alarm Will Sound's presentation of world premieres by our eight talented 2024 MICF Resident Composers: Claire Hu, Lukáš Janata, Yingting Liu, Lila Meretzky, Benjamin Scheuer, Mahbod Shirvani, Davor Vincze, and ess whiteley. These new works represent the pulse of new music and the bright future of our art form.

As we embark on this week of musical exploration and celebration, we are honored to host two luminaries in the world of composition: Mary Kouyoumdjian and George Lewis. Their participation as Distinguished Guest Composers will surely inspire and challenge us all. We are looking forward to sharing this music with you, in person and on livestream, over the next few days.

Jared R. Rawlings, Ph.D.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared R. Rawlings".

Director, University of Missouri School of Music



**STEFAN FREUND**  
Artistic Director

**Stefan Freund** received a Bachelor of Music with High Distinction from the Indiana University School of Music and a Master of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music. His primary composition teachers included Pulitzer Prize winners Christopher Rouse and Joseph Schwantner as well as Augusta Read Thomas, Frederick Fox, and Don Freund, his father. He studied cello with Steven Doane, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, and Peter Spurbeck, among others. He is presently Professor of Composition at the University of Missouri. Previously he was Assistant Professor of Composition at the Eastman School of Music.

Freund is the recipient of two William Schuman Prizes and the Boudleaux Bryant Prize from BMI, five ASCAP Morton Gould Grants, twenty ASCAP Plus Awards, a Music Merit Award from the National Society of Arts and Letters, and the Howard Hanson Prize. He was selected as the 2004 Music Teachers National Association-Shepherd Distinguished Composer of the Year. In 2006 and 2013 he was awarded Outstanding Faculty Research and Creative Activity Awards from MU. In 2024 he was recognized as Professor of the Year by the MU College of Arts and Sciences. Freund has received commissions from the Barlow Endowment, the New Spectrum Foundation, the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Lincoln Center Festival, the St. Louis Symphony, the New York Youth Symphony, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Verdehr Trio, Town Hall Seattle, Sheldon Concert Hall, and SCI/ASCAP. His music has been performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Merkin Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Library of Congress as well as by ensembles such as the Copenhagen Philharmonic, the Phoenix Symphony, and the US Marine Chamber Orchestra. International performances include the Berliner Philharmonie, the Moscow International Performing Arts Center, Glinka Hall (St. Petersburg), Queen's Hall (Copenhagen), the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre, and concert halls in seven other European countries, Canada, and Mexico. His works have been recorded on the Albany, Centaur, Crystal, Innova, New Focus, and Ravello labels.

Active as a performer, conductor, and producer of new music, Freund is the founding cellist of the new music ensemble Alarm Will Sound. His cello performances include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Met Museum, Merkin Hall, Millennium Park, Disney Hall, the Barbican (UK), the Hermitage Theatre (RU), the Muzikgebouw (ND), the Bonn Beethovenfest (DE), the Cité de la Musique (Paris), the World Financial Center, Culture Station Seoul, and the Beijing Modern Music Festival. His cello playing can be heard on 18 released albums featuring Alarm Will Sound. In addition, Freund is the Artistic Director of the Mizzou New Music Initiative and the Music Director of the Columbia Civic Orchestra.

**MICF**  
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**ANDREA LUQUE KĀRAM**  
Managing Director

**Andrea Luque Kāram** is a professional musician, an arts manager, an entrepreneurial leader, and advocate for diversifying music practices. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Music with a minor in Arts and Cultural Management and was selected as the Outstanding Graduating Senior of the College of Arts and a Master of Music in Composition from Northern Arizona University, and a PhD in Arts Administration, Education, and Policy from The Ohio State University. Andrea is equally appreciative of classical, contemporary, and popular music genres, and these are all important to her artistic voice.

Andrea's passion for music is tied to her intentions of making music experiences and education more accessible and appealing. She has presented new music concerts in Mexico and the United States, and she founded a summer music school in the state of Sonora to bring to her hometown community an integrated music curriculum that had never been offered to young ages in the area.

In 2020 Andrea received a cross-disciplinary grant through The Ohio State University's Global Arts and Humanities organization for a research project involving access to music professionalization in Mexico. She was awarded a University Fellowship at OSU for her doctoral studies and was selected as a recipient of the Columbus Foundation fellowship in the summer of 2020. Upon graduating from her Master in Music Composition, Andrea was awarded the Research and Creativity Award from Northern Arizona University for her orchestral score *Innocence*.

Andrea was selected as a 2023-24 Cambio Center Fellow, she is a member of the Association of Arts Administration Educators, was selected as a grantee of *The Project* of the National Arts Strategies, and is the Managing Director of the Mizzou New Music Initiative.

# DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMPOSERS

## MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN



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 places 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, 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, and many others. Some of her residencies include those with EMPAC, Buffalo String Works, Alarm Will Sound/The Mizzou International Composers Festival. 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 writing the original score for documentary *An Act of Worship* (Capital K Pictures and PBS's POV Docs) and orchestrating on the soundtracks to *The Place Beyond the Pines* (Focus Features) and *Demonic* (Dimension Films). Upcoming projects include an album of her works with the Kronos Quartet and the West Coast premiere of her opera, *Adoration*, with LA Opera in 2025.

Kouyoumdjian holds a DMA and MA in composition from Columbia University, where she studied primarily with Zosha Di Castri, Georg Friedrich Haas, Fred Lerdahl, and George Lewis; an MA in Scoring for Film & Multimedia from New York University; and a BA 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 Elephant, and served as Co-Artistic Director of Alaska's new music festival Wild Shore New Music. As an avid educator, Kouyoumdjian is on the composition faculty at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University and The New School; she has previously been on faculty at Columbia University, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Brooklyn College's Feirstein School of Cinema, Mannes Prep, and the New York Philharmonic's Very Young Composers program. Kouyoumdjian is proud to have her music published by Schott's PSNY and is based in Brooklyn, NY.



# GEORGE LEWIS



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.

# RESIDENT COMPOSERS



CLAIRE HU

**Claire Hu** is an electroacoustic composer and multimedia artist. She explores the narrative and communicative power of music and synthesizes surreal worlds with fantastical juxtapositions of cultures, imagery, and characters. Claire enjoys collaborations with visual artists, engineers, architects, dancers, and sculptors as she imagines sounds rooted in connectedness and viscerality. She also writes and produces electronic, indie pop, and dance music. Described as colorful, engaging and imaginative, Claire's works have been featured at the highSCORE Festival, Mayflower Art Center, Mise-En Music Festival, New York City

Electroacoustic Music Festival, SoundSCAPE, Suncoast Composers Fellowship Program, Sō Percussion Summer Institute, Clyde Built Radio, and Classical WSMR's Modern Notebook with Tyler Kline. She is the winner of the 2023 Mayflower Composition Competition and 2022 Vienna International Composer Competition.



LUKÁŠ JANATA

**Lukáš Janata**, a Czech San Francisco-based artist and composer, explores empathy in various forms, serving as a composer, educator, performer, and organizer. His recent endeavors include board directorship at The Resonance Project, a nonprofit focusing on music as a conflict transformation through neuroscience. He co-organized a San Francisco Ukraine-benefit Concert of Compassion, uniting national American and Ukrainian artists on one stage. Lukáš co-curated SUMU in Helsinki, supported by the EU Commission, and regularly co-hosts the international empathy-provoking new-music

festival ECHOES in Prague. He instructs at The Walden School and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In 2024, Lukáš will be Composer-in-Residence at the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, ISCM's VICC, and received the Susan and Ford Schumann Fellowship for the 2024 Aspen Music Festival. His compositions have been commissioned by renowned ensembles, including San Francisco Symphony, Cantori New York, Friction Quartet, and Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava.



YINGTING LIU

**Yingting Liu**, a composer from Hunan, China, studied at the China Conservatory of Music as an undergraduate and achieved top honors upon admission to the Central Conservatory of Music for her master's degree. Liu's creative journey is centered around exploring the harmonious blend of Chinese Taoism and Jesa culture with contemporary music, and her works are deeply rooted in religious music culture. Liu has won numerous awards in international music competitions, including the 10th Rivers Awards Composition Competition, the 17th Sun River Prize (ISCM) New Music Competition, the 4th "New Music Generation" International Composition Competition, the 2nd Ise-Shima International Composition Competition, and the 2nd Luciano Berio International Composition Competition (Finalist).

In addition, Liu actively engages in various music festivals and master classes, such as the Kansainvälinen sävellysmestarikurssi, Avanti! Summer Sounds festival, International Composition Masterclass Stefano Gervasoni, and Darmstadt Summer Course. Currently, she plans to pursue a doctoral degree in composition in the fall of 2024.



LILA MERETZKY

**Lila Meretzky** is a composer, educator, and visual artist born and raised in New York City. She works primarily in chamber, vocal, electronic, and electroacoustic mediums for concerts, dance, film, and installation. Her work often concerns (the warping of) memory and language, and subjective experiences of time. Lila's music has been programmed and commissioned by leading ensembles and institutions including Contemporaneous, TAK Ensemble, the MATA Festival, Sandbox Percussion, Unheard-of//Ensemble, icarus Quartet, and percussionist Ji Hye Jung. Lila is a composer-in-residence with the Cincinnati-based collective New Downbeat.

She has created music for the dance companies New Dialect, X-Contemporary Dance, and the Nashville Ballet. Lila has taught composition and musicianship at the Walden School in Dublin, New Hampshire, W.O. Smith Music School in Nashville, Tennessee, and Yale University's Music in Schools Initiative. She has also taught composition and music technology as a teaching fellow in the music department at Yale University.

# RESIDENT COMPOSERS



BENJAMIN SCHEUER

**Benjamin Scheuer's** music is all about sensuality and humor. Both his staged and concert pieces contain theatrical elements and often evoke an atmosphere of darkly colored playfulness. In his works, found objects from daily life are frequently presented on stage – either live or sampled: Scheuer nevertheless doesn't consider himself to be a composer of electronic music but rather focuses on a world of “live-electrics” in which sounds are produced with the easiest and most economic means possible. His main interest is the human being playing music with its individual characteristic and its tendency to fail whilst technology just serves as a tool.

Benjamin Scheuer studied in Hamburg and Karlsruhe, Germany with Fredrik Schwenk and Wolfgang Rihm and wrote a dissertation on Georges Aperghis' “théâtre musical” in Freiburg. He works as a freelance composer.



MAHBOD SHIRVANI

**Mahbod Shirvani**, born in 1997, is an Iranian electroacoustic composer and tar player based in the United States. He earned his bachelor's degree in Persian music performance, studying under Darioush Talaei, Siamak Aghaei, Hossein Alizadeh, and Azin Movahed at the University of Tehran. Shirvani has participated in international master classes and lessons with renowned composers such as Ken Ueno, Nina C. Young, Chaya Czernowin, Katharina Rosenberger, Marco Stroppa, Joachim Heintz, and Fanis Gioles.

Throughout his career, Shirvani has delivered a number of performances as both a performer and composer, including roles as a theater and film composer in Iran. He collaborated with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 2024 and has published works, including the *Vision of Darkness* compilation album by Unexplained Sound Group Record in 2023, the *YARAVA* CD compilation (highlighting the winners of the festival in 2022), and the *21.4* compilation album by Noise a Noise Record in 2022. He has recently completed a Master of Music in composition at the University of Missouri, under the mentorship of Stefan Freund and Utku Asuroglu.



DAVOR VINCZE

**Davor Vincze** is a composer of contemporary music whose artistic focus lies on meta-reality and musical mosaicking. Inspired by technology and science fiction, he searches for hidden acoustic spaces or ways to blur the real and the imaginary, often using electronics and AI tools. Working with mosaics (multiple copies of fragmented sound gestures), using technique he calls ‘microllage’, Vincze searches for fluid sounds that allow for non-binary, ambiguous, or “androgynous” interpretations. After completing his composition studies in Graz and Stuttgart, Vincze specialized in electronic music at the Ircam and finally completed his doctorate at Stanford University.

His compositions have been performed by renowned international musicians like Ensembles Decoder, Modern, Mosaik, and Intercontemporain, Klangforum Wien, Talea and Slagwerk den Haag, JACK Quartet, Secession, and No Borders Orchestra. In 2014, Vincze founded an international festival for contemporary music - Novalis. He has won several prizes, including the Alain Louvier Prize at the Stuttgart Composition Competition. Since 2023 he serves as co-director of the Music Biennale Zagreb. Vincze’s works are published by Maison ONA in Paris.



ESS WHITELEY

**ess whiteley** is a San Diego-based composer, multimedia artist, and performer working primarily with electronics and intermedia. They are interested in cyborg consciousness, computer hallucinations, haunted technologies, ecology and more-than-human worlds in the context of virtually entangled, post-internet life and the Cthulucene. They have had works performed at the MATA Festival (NYC), Int-Act Festival (Bangkok, TH), Dublin Music Current Festival (Dublin, Ireland), WOCMAT (Hschinchu, TW), and the MANTIS Festival (Manchester, UK) amongst others, and were the winner of the Riot Ensemble CFS (Liverpool, UK) and Honorary Mention Award recipient at the MA/IN Matera Intermedia Festival (Matera, IT).

Their music has been featured on Pitchfork and The Wire and released on labels like Not Not Fun, Touchtheplants, and 99Chants records. They received their bachelor’s degree in composition from McGill University in Montréal and are currently a PhD candidate in Composition at the University of California San Diego (UCSD). Their mentors have included Roger Reynolds, Marcos Balter, and Michelle Lou.



## ENSEMBLE-IN-RESIDENCE

# ALARM WILL SOUND

Alarm Will Sound is a 20-member band committed to innovative performances and recordings of today's music. They have established a reputation for performing demanding music with energetic skill. Their performances have been described as “equal parts exuberance, nonchalance, and virtuosity” by the *Financial Times* of London and as “a triumph of ensemble playing” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The *New York Times* says that Alarm Will Sound is “one of the most vital and original ensembles on the American music scene.”

With classical skill and unlimited curiosity, Alarm Will Sound takes on music from a wide variety of styles. Its repertoire ranges from European to American works, from the arch-modernist to the pop-influenced. Alarm Will Sound has been associated since its inception with composers at the forefront of contemporary music, premiering pieces by Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, Tyshawn Sorey, David Lang, John Adams, Mary Kouyoumdjian, John Luther Adams, Marcos Balter, and Augusta Read Thomas among others. The group itself includes many composer-performers, which allows for an unusual degree of insight into the creation and performance of new work.

Alarm Will Sound collaborates with artists who work beyond the bounds of classical music. Alarm System, and the Matt Marks Impact Fund are initiatives that have created cross-genre music with electronica artists Eartheater, Jlin, King Britt, and Rashad Becker; jazz composer-performer Dave Douglas; multimedia artists Mira Calix, Bakudi Scream, and Damon Davis; soundtrack composers Brian Reitzell and JG Thirlwell; producer Valgeir Sigurðsson, and singer-songwriter Alyssa Pyper. Alarm Will Sound may be heard on eighteen recordings, including *For George Lewis | Autoshchediasms*, their most recent release featuring music of Tyshawn Sorey; *Omnisphere*, with jazz trio Medeski Martin & Wood; a collaboration with Peabody Award-winning podcast Meet the Composer titled *Splitting Adams*; and the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Radio Rewrite*. Their genre-bending, critically acclaimed *Acoustica* features live-performance arrangements of music by electronica guru Aphex Twin. This unique project taps the diverse talents within the group, from the many composers who made arrangements of the original tracks, to the experimental approaches developed by the performers.

In 2016, Alarm Will Sound in a co-production with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, presented the world premiere of the staged version of Donnacha Dennehy's *The Hunger* at the BAM Next Wave Festival and the Touhill Performing Arts Center. Featuring Iarla O'Lionárd (traditional Irish singer) and Katherine Manley (soprano) with direction by Tom Creed, *The Hunger* is punctuated by video commentary and profound early recordings of traditional Irish folk ballads mined from various archives including those of Alan Lomax.

In 2013-14, Alarm Will Sound served as artists-in-residence at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. During that season, the ensemble presented four large ensemble performances at the Met, including two site-specific productions staged in museum galleries (*Twinned*, a collaboration with Dance Heginbotham and *I Was Here I Was I*, a new theatrical work by Kate Soper and Nigel Maister), as well as several smaller events in collaboration with the Museum's educational programs.

In 2011, at Carnegie Hall, the group presented *1969*, a multimedia event that uses music, images, text, and staging to tell the compelling story of great musicians—John Lennon, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Paul McCartney, Luciano Berio, Yoko Ono, and Leonard Bernstein—striving for a new music and a new world amidst the turmoil of the late 1960s. *1969's* unconventional approach combining music, history, and ideas has been critically praised by the *New York Times* (“...a swirling, heady meditation on the intersection of experimental and commercial spheres, and of social and aesthetic agendas.”)

Alarm Will Sound has been presented by Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Miller Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Bang on a Can's Long Play Festival, Disney Hall, Kimmel Center, Library of Congress, Annenberg Center, the Clarice, CAP UCLA, Caramoor, and the Warhol Museum. International tours include the Beijing Modern Festival, the Holland Festival, Sacrum Profanum, Moscow's Art November, St. Petersburg's Pro Arte Festival, and the Barbican. The members of the ensemble have also demonstrated our commitment to the education of young performers and composers through residency performances and activities at Princeton University, the University of Michigan, University of Maryland, Shenandoah University, the Community Music School of Webster University, Cleveland State University, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Missouri, Eastman School of Music, Dickinson College, Duke University, the Manhattan School of Music, Harvard University, New York University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.





**ALAN PIERSON,**  
Artistic Director  
and Conductor

**Alan Pierson** has been praised as “a dynamic conductor and musical visionary” by the *New York Times*, a “conductor of monstrous skill” by *Newsday*, “gifted and electrifying” by the *Boston Globe*, and “one of the most exciting figures in new music today” by *Fanfare*. In addition to his work as artistic director of Alarm Will Sound, he has served as Artistic Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, L.A. Opera, Nationaltheater Mannheim, the London Sinfonietta, the Steve Reich Ensemble, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the New World Symphony, and the Silk Road Project, among others. He is co-director of the Northwestern University Contemporary Music Ensemble and has been a visiting faculty conductor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and at the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity.

Passionate about using storytelling to bring listeners inside of contemporary music, he has led the creation of innovative musical experiences, like Alarm Will Sound’s *1969* and *Soundbites* video series, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic’s *Brooklyn Village project*. Mr. Pierson has collaborated with major composers and performers, including Yo Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Dawn Upshaw, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, John Luther Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon, La Monte Young, and choreographers Mark Morris, Christopher Wheeldon, Akram Khan, and Elliot Feld. Mr. Pierson received bachelor’s degrees in physics and music from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a doctorate in conducting from the Eastman School of Music. He has recorded for Nonesuch Records, Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, Oehms Classics, and Sweetspot DVD.

# Personnel

Erin Lesser, flutes  
Christa Robinson, oboe and English horn  
Bill Kalinkos, clarinets  
Elisabeth Stimpert, clarinets  
Michael Harley, bassoons  
Nicolee Kuester, horn  
Tim Leopold, trumpet  
Michael Clayville, trombones  
Matt Smallcomb, percussion  
Chris P. Thompson, percussion  
John Orfe, piano, keyboards  
Joseph Rebman, harp  
Courtney Orlando, violin  
Theo Ramsey, violin  
Gillian Gallagher, viola  
Stefan Freund, cello  
Miles Brown, contrabass  
Daniel Neumann, audio engineer  
Alan Pierson, conductor

Alan Pierson, Artistic Director  
Gavin Chuck, Executive Director  
Peter Ferry, Assistant Director of Artistic Planning  
Jason Varvaro, Production Manager  
Annie Toth, General Manager  
Tracy Mendez, Development Manager  
Michael Clayville, Director of Marketing  
Bill Kalinkos, Librarian  
Uday Singh, Program Coordinator

# Acknowledgements

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*Paper Pianos* was commissioned by Alarm Will Sound. Mary Kouyoumdjian received the Charles S. Miller Award of Columbia University Music Department and a New York State Council on the Arts Individual Artists Composer Commission Award with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature in support of her creation of the score for *Paper Pianos*. The development of *Paper Pianos* was supported by a Pacific Harmony Foundation Commission Grant; the Cheswatyr Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and a project grant from The MAP Fund. The MAP Fund is primarily supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional funds come from the Mellon Foundation.

Special thanks to the interviewees and refugee resettlement organizations for so generously sharing their personal experiences, for their immense contributions to the work, and for their tireless efforts to support displaced communities and offer brightness in the darkest of circumstances: Milad Yousufi, Getachew Bashir, Hani Ali, Akil Aljaysh, Catholic Family Center, and Mary's Place Refugee Outreach.

# DISMAL NICHE & LANDLOCKED OPERA

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 • 7:30 PM  
Locust Expressive Arts Elementary, Black Box Theatre

## ZEENA PARKINS

*Electro-acoustic harp improvisations*

*\*brief intermission\**

## POMPADOUR PORCELAIN

*world premiere*



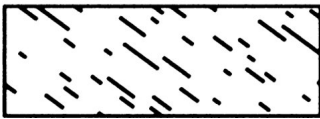


ZEENA PARKINS

New York-based electro-acoustic composer, improviser and educator Zeena Parkins is a pioneer of contemporary harp performance and practices. Through the use of expanded playing techniques, object preparations and electronic processing she has helped to redefine the instrument as a “machine of limitless capacities.” Leaning into the harp’s physical limitations, Parkins pushes past boundaries well into the realm of seeming impossibilities. In her compositions, Parkins utilizes collections, lists, recombination, historic proximities, geography, tactility, and movement. Sonic presence, history, and personality are revealed in feedback, overtones, timbral shifts, gestural intervals, perception, and residues.

Over the course of a career beginning in the early 80’s, Parkins has recorded six solo records and has recorded and performed as a collaborator alongside a wide range of artists including Bjork, John Zorn, Yoko Ono, Ikue Mori, Pauline Oliveros and many, many more. Parkins’ honors include a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Composition, a Foundation of Contemporary Arts Fellowship to Artists, a Doris Duke Artist Award and three New York Performance Awards for her work with dance (*The Bessie*). As a distinguished educator, Parkins has served as professor in the Sound Arts Department at SMFA in Boston and currently holds the Darius Milhaud Chair in Composition, at Mills College.

## ***DISMAL NICHE***



Founded in 2013 in Columbia, Dismal Niche began as a DIY, artist-operated record label and community arts network committed to promoting and archiving the expression of the more independent, esoteric, and experimental accents of the local and regional music and arts community.

Since incorporating as a non-profit in 2015, the activities of the organization have largely revolved around the programming of the annual Columbia Experimental Music Festival and intermittent seasonal concerts. Our programming welcomes artists from across the US and from around the world to Columbia offering local residents rare opportunities to experience world class presentations of innovative and non-conventional music, art and performances that would likely otherwise not occur in Columbia.

Through programming, Dismal Niche aims to facilitate immersive, interactive experiences that are both cognitively and viscerally challenging while also restorative and conducive to the non-didactic freedom of subjective interpretation and enjoyment. We believe that community experiences with adventurous music and art can help stimulate critical and creative thought not only about the ways in which music and art can be seen, heard, felt or performed, but also the ways in which public spaces can be used, transformed or subverted and social relationships expanded and re-imagined.

the world premiere of Felix Jarrar's  
**POMPADOUR PORCELAIN**  
 an opera presented by Landlocked Opera

Madame Lebon. . . . . Kate Bishop  
 Madame de Pompadour . . . . . Jonathan Crader  
 Princess Adelaïde . . . . . Maya Anand  
 Porcelain Dancers . . . . . KayCee Adams, Liz Anya, Lorilie, Artemis Grey

Composer/Librettist . . . . . Felix Jarrar  
 Producers . . . . . Christina and Jonathan Ray  
 Stage Director . . . . . Dani Major  
 Choreographer. . . . . David Hall  
 Lighting Designer . . . . . Babs Randazzo

Rachel Aubuchon, conductor  
 Lisa Thill Franck, flute  
 Erik Hassell, violin  
 Bomi Kim, piano



**FELIX JARRAR**



**LANDLOCKED OPERA**

Felix Jarrar is a composer/coach/pianist whose 255 works includes 225 art songs, 13 operas, 2 string quartets, and a symphony. An in-demand collaborative artist, Jarrar has worked with The New School, Opera Naples, University of Memphis, Opera Ithaca, Penn Square Opera, Hogfish, and Santa Fe Opera (in collaboration with Mannes). In 2022, he debuted The Jarrar and Brea Duo with soprano Maria Brea. Jarrar's song "Sun of the Sleepless" was featured on the 2024 GRAMMY-nominated album *40@40* by Laura Strickling and Daniel Schlosberg. This summer, he is the Resident Artist Pianist/Coach and study cover conductor for *Rigoletto* at Opera North.

Christina and Jonathan Ray are the dynamic co-founders of Landlocked Opera, established in 2018. This dynamic opera power couple have dedicated their careers to bringing opera to new audiences. Under their leadership, Landlocked Opera has flourished, now entering its sixth season. This year will feature the world premiere of Felix Jarrar's *Pompadour Porcelain*, showcasing their commitment to contemporary works, alongside a reimaged, down-home production of Donizetti's classic *Elixir of Love*, stage directed by Steven Tharp. Their innovative approach and passion for opera have made Landlocked Opera a vibrant cultural beacon, enriching the community and expanding the reach of this timeless art form.

# ALARM WILL SOUND

Thursday, July 25, 2024 • 7:30 PM • Missouri Theatre

Stream this event live at the University of Missouri School of Music's YouTube

*Try* ..... Andrew Norman  
(2011) (b. 1979)

*Paper Pianos* (excerpt) ..... Mary Kouyoumdjian  
(2023) (b. 1983)

*The Deformation of Mastery* ..... George Lewis  
(2022) (b. 1952)

~intermission~

*Instrumentation Variations* ..... Stefan Freund  
(2024) (b. 1974)

1. Flute
2. Oboe
3. Clarinet and Bass Clarinet
4. Bassoon
5. Horn *attacca*
6. Trumpet and Trombone
7. Piano
8. Violins
9. Viola
10. Cello and Bass *attacca*
11. Percussion and Drum Set

*Arcades* ..... George Lewis  
(2018) (b. 1952)

**ANDREW NORMAN** is a Los Angeles-based composer and educator. Recently praised as “the leading American composer of his generation” by the *Los Angeles Times*, and “one of the most gifted and respected composers of his generation” by the *New York Times*, Andrew has established himself as a significant voice in American classical music.

Andrew’s work draws on an eclectic mix of sounds and performance practices. By turns experimental and traditional, lyrical and thorny, intimate and epic, rigorously structured and freely intuitive, Andrew’s music casts a wide sonic and conceptual net to explore, reflect, and challenge the experiences of our own time. He believes in the transformative energy of live performance, and he is often drawn to music-making that harnesses the beauty, power, and fragility of risk. Andrew has collaborated with leading ensembles worldwide and has received numerous honors and accolades.

Andrew is a committed educator who enjoys helping people of all ages explore and create music. He has written pieces to be performed by and for the young and has held educational residencies with various institutions across the country. Andrew teaches at the Juilliard School and the University of Southern California, and he is thrilled to serve as the director of the LA Phil’s Composer Fellowship Program for high school composers.

## Try

I never get things right on the first try. I am a trial-and-error composer, an incurable reviser. And this is a problem when it comes to high profile commissions from world-class ensembles in spectacular concert halls, because in these rare cases one gets exactly one try to get it right, and one really, really wants to get it right. Disney Hall and the LA Philharmonic have meant so much to me over the years that the overwhelming desire to write for them the perfect piece was enough to stop me dead in my creative tracks. It took me many months to realize the obvious: my piece was never going to be perfect no matter how hard I tried, and perfection was not even the right target on which to set my sights. The best thing I could do to honor the adventurous spirit of the Philharmonic and Disney Hall was to try as many new things as I could, to embrace the risk and failure and serendipitous discovery implicit in the word “try.” The piece I ended up writing is a lot like me. It’s messy, and fragmented, and it certainly doesn’t get things on the first try. It does things over and over, trying them out in as many different ways as it can. It circles back on itself again and again in search of any idea that will stick, that will lead it forward to something new. And, at long last, after ten minutes of increasingly frantic trying, it finds one small, unlikely bit of musical material it likes enough to repeat and polish and hone until it finally (fingers crossed) gets it right.

*Try* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and premiered in Disney Hall in May 2011, conducted by John Adams.

— Andrew Norman



## *Paper Pianos*

*Paper Pianos* is an evening-length multimedia work exploring the dislocation, longing, and optimism of refugees. The piece combines narratives from four refugees and resettlement workers: the Afghan pianist Milad Yousufi, Getachew Bashir (Ethiopia), Hani Ali (Somalia), and Akil Aljaysh (Iraq). Recordings of the protagonists from interviews conducted by creators Mary Kouyoumdjian (composer) and Nigel Maister (text and staging) are incorporated with the intricate hand-drawn animations of visual artist Kervork Mourad to vividly depict the dramatic emotional landscape of displacement and resettlement experienced by refugees throughout the world.

Milad Yousufi fled to New York from Kabul, where he lived under the Taliban’s threat for pursuing music. His story of painting piano keys on paper to teach himself to play in silence, thus avoiding life-threatening censure from the authorities, gives the piece its name. Getachew Bashir, a high-ranking judge in Ethiopia, left his country when the judiciary and his independence threatened to become co-opted by the regime. Hani Ali was a child of the refugee experience, born on the run and coming of age as a young girl negotiating the terrors of being stateless in a displacement camp. Akil Aljaysh—from a prominent family—fled Iraq after being tortured and worked his way through Syria and Lebanon to the US. The testimonies of these men and women, recounted to Kouyoumdjian and Maister in field recordings they made in New York and Rochester, form the basis of a narrative that is integrated into the live musical performance. *Paper Pianos* further incorporates the extraordinary hand drawings of Kevork Mourad which animate the narrative, evoke the journeys of the participants, and serve as a physical element with which Alarm Will Sound’s musicians interact.

Kouyoumdjian’s score uses the recorded voices as integral compositional elements and draws on folk music and contemporary music practices. She says: “I come from refugee parents forced to immigrate to the U.S. as a consequence of the Lebanese Civil War. And my parents come from refugee parents forced to escape to Lebanon from Turkey during the Armenian genocide of 1915. Experiences like Milad Yousufi’s resonate with me, and topics of wartime, genocide, and one’s relationship to ‘home’ have played a large role in my music.”

— Mary Kouyoumdjian

## The Deformation of Mastery

The terms “deformation of mastery” and “mastery of form” come from African American literary theorist Houston A. Baker Jr.’s influential 1987 book, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*. Even though Baker is largely discussing literary and historical figures and works, he writes that his identification of these two strategies is intended to produce “more accurate and culturally enriching interpretations of the sound and soundings of Afro-American modernism than do traditional methods.” In Baker’s words, while mastery of form “conceals, disguises, floats like a trickster butterfly in order to sting like a bee” (think Florence Price, or Julia Perry), deformation of mastery “distinguishes rather than conceals. It secures territorial advantage and heightens a group’s survival possibilities.” Here, I am reminded of musicologist Ryan Dohoney’s account of Julius Eastman’s notorious 1975 performance of John Cage’s *Song Books*—not only a deformation of mastery, but also, perhaps, a challenge to the master himself—a raucous, post Stonewall queer assertiveness that proved quite unsettling to Cage. Thus, the title of my new work closely tracks its sonic intent: deformation, disruption, and breakdown, having no truck whatsoever with any received notions of authenticity in Afrodiasporic sonic expression, or indeed any expression whatsoever. The aim of this music is to remind its hearers of our endemic condition of instability, fostering not only a subliminal psychological discouragement of complacency, but also a celebration of mobility. I’m allowing myself to hope that, as with Baker’s work, these values migrate beyond the sounds of the piece to the consideration of larger issues in our lives.

— George Lewis

## Instrumentation Variations

*Instrumentation Variations* is dedicated to my friends in Alarm Will Sound. Each member of the ensemble is featured through a solo or duo. The movements are both autobiographical and biographical, referring to past pieces of mine as well as bringing out the personality and character of the performers and their instruments.

*Instrumentation Variations* was written for the 15th Annual Mizzou International Composers Festival.

— Stefan Freund

## Arcades

*Arcades* is a flexible-instrumentation work that may be realized by any combination of instruments covering the appropriate pitch ranges. The title is a gloss on Walter Benjamin's unfinished "Arcades Project" (Passagenwerk), a cultural analysis of the Parisian covered pedestrian passages, the predecessor of the modern shopping mall.

A performance of *Arcades* is essentially a group improvisation in which the players deploy the written materials provided to construct a series of virtual arcades that overlap in unpredictable ways. The work may be performed by as few as four players, but really, the more, the merrier; I think the piece might well achieve critical mass with around sixteen performers, and I can even imagine a Gottschalk-like "monster concert" realization, with hundreds of players.

In English and French, musical phrases are routinely referred to as "passages," and indeed, as the musicians navigate through the written passages that make up the sonic arcades, the overall effect should be that of several different kinds of musical behaviors heard in juxtaposition, but with a certain common direction. The players feel their way through the piece from beginning to end, establishing and re-establishing consensus—an emergent sonic sociality, or perhaps a protean assemblage.

"There is no such thing as a common world," Bruno Latour has said. "The common world is to be composed." Rather, in the case of *Arcades*, and indeed in just about every case, that common world is actually improvised.

— George Lewis

# MIZZOU NEW MUSIC

## UTKU ASOROGLU, GUEST CONDUCTOR

featuring the Mizzou New Music Ensemble and Mizzou Faculty

**Friday, July 26, 2024 • 7:30 PM • Sheryl Crow Recital Hall**

*Stream this event live at the University of Missouri School of Music's YouTube*

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

*Thistledown* . . . . . George Lewis  
(2012) (b. 1952)

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

Amanda Collins^, horn

~intermission~

*Lunch* . . . . . Lila Meretzky  
(2023) (b. 1998)

Helena Hyesoo Kim^ and Curtis Pavey^, piano

*North Star Boogaloo* . . . . . George Lewis  
(1996) (b. 1952)

Megan Arns^, percussion

*Cutoff* . . . . . Utku Asuroglu^  
(2018) (b. 1986)

Megan Arns^, percussion  
Mary Emmons, percussion  
Sarah Hasekamp, percussion  
Olivia Sletteland, percussion

^current Mizzou faculty

## *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.*

## *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).

– George Lewis

**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 master's 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 SpiderVerse*. 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 provide 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 its entirety.

— Shanyse Strickland

## *Lunch*

*Lunch* is adapted from a piece I wrote for vibraphone and marimba (also called *Lunch*). Going from four mallets per player to ten fingers per player and from five octaves to seven octaves in the range opened up a world of new possibilities for this version of the piece. There are certainly a lot more notes. I was inspired by the slapstick physical comedy of silent film star Buster Keaton, who battles crazy machines that thwart their original purposes and usually self-destruct, hilarity ensuing. Many thanks to Helena Hyesoo Kim and Curtis Pavey for bringing *Lunch* to Mizzou!

— Lila Meretzky



UTKU ASUROGLU

Known for his “fiery, tempestuous, action-packed” (Ensemble Intercontemporain) ensemble writing, the music of **UTKU ASUROGLU** is “undeniably fresh” with “compelling energetics” (Kunst & Kultur Austria) and “possesses a high artistic will to express, which is never an end in itself, but always musically bound and formed.” (Beat Furrer, KulturServer Graz.)

He is the recipient of the “Outstanding Artist Award for Music” of the Austrian Ministry of Culture, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the 40th International Irino Prize, the 24th Salvatore Martirano Composition Award, the Composition Prize City of

Graz 2014, laureate of the Gaudeamus Prize 2015 and the Goethe Award 2016 (South Korea). His works have been featured at festivals including Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Donaueschinger Musiktage Next Generation, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik, Schleswig Holstein, Manifeste, MATA Festival, Royaumont, ISCM World Music Days, International Tongyeong Music Festival, and Essen European Capital Culture. His works have been performed by leading orchestras, ensembles worldwide, including Orchestra Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Ensemble Modern, Asko|Schönberg, Dal Niente, JACK Quartet, Mivos Quartet, Talea, LINEA, IEMA, Slagwerk Den Haag, Riot, Divertimento, Proton Bern, and Signum Quartett.

Asuroglu pursued his musical studies at the Rotterdam Conservatory, Kunstuniversität Graz, Hochschule für Musik Freiburg, IRCAM, and received his doctorate from Stanford University in 2023. He has studied under Brian Ferneyhough, Jonathan Berger, Clemens Gadenstätter, and Gérard Pesson. He is currently Assistant Professor of Composition at the University of Missouri School of Music where he teaches electronic music and composition.

# MIZZOU NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE

The Mizzou New Music Ensemble, under the direction of professor and Alarm Will Sound member Dr. Stefan Freund, collaborates with MU's faculty and student composers, performs frequently on and off campus, and works with some of the world's leading composers and interpreters of new music. Eight graduate assistantships are available for New Music Ensemble members. Over the last ten years, the ensemble has performed regularly in St. Louis and across the country through MNMI's Sound of Art partnerships in such venues as the Sheldon Concert Hall, the Missouri Botanical Garden, World Chess Hall of Fame, St. Louis Science Center, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. In the summer of 2023, the Ensemble toured South America, giving concerts and residencies at universities and festivals in Argentina and Colombia. The Ensemble has been coached by prestigious guest composers and performers that have visited the campus as a result of the Mizzou New Music Initiative, including JACK Quartet, Sō Percussion, Steven Stucky, Tod Machover, Matt Haimovitz, eighth blackbird, the Verdehr Trio, and others.

## Personnel

Nicholas Wu, flutes

Meghan Brown, clarinets

Andrew Stump, violin

Dean Wibe, cello

Trey Rolfes, bass

Emily Rahn, trumpet

Olivia Sletteland, percussion

Seda Balci, piano

Jinhong Yoo, piano

Stefan Freund, director

Utku Asuroglu, guest conductor





# ALARM WILL SOUND: EIGHT WORLD PREMIERES

Saturday, July 27, 2024 • 7:30 PM • Missouri Theatre

*Stream this event live at the University of Missouri School of Music's YouTube*

**GRAAL** . . . . . Lukáš Janata  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1995)

**Ashes.** . . . . . Davor Vincze  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1984)

**Kill a Cow!** . . . . . Yingting Liu  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1996)

**Dinner** . . . . . Lila Meretzky  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1998)

~intermission~

**Trittbrettfahrer** . . . . . Benjamin Scheuer  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1987)

**Machine Spectre** . . . . . ess whiteley  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1993)

**Sounds for Nothing** . . . . . Mahbod Shirvani  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1997)

**the growing pull of your softening hands** . . . . . Claire Hu  
(2024) . . . . . (b. 1986)

*All works written for the  
2024 Mizzou International Composers Festival  
and Alarm Will Sound*

## GRAAL

Chasing and losing something intangible, yet with a clear vision; with moments of clarity, muddled in the sound world of a perpetual falling and rising cycle of bright and dark.

— Lukáš Janata

## Ashes

The first idea for this piece came to me when I moved to Hong Kong for the Chinese New Year, where a Hong Kong-born friend took me to attend a wonderful New Year ceremony in a Taoist temple. In a long procession leading to the main courtyard of this marvelous Wong Tai Sin temple, immersed in a slow-moving crowd, through the dense smoke of hundreds of lit incense sticks, hearing the ritual agitation of Kau Chim sticks reading each person's good fortune, with the soothing sounds of low gongs, a distant memory came to mind. The suffocating presence of smoke took me back to my childhood during the Yugoslav war, or homeland war, as it is known in Croatia today. As I was far too young to understand what was going on, I was never traumatized by the war, but it nevertheless completely defined my life. Whether it was the sense of shame linked to my origins, the lack of opportunities and prospects in my early teens, which led me to give up music and cautiously decide to study medicine, or coming to terms with it all, changing careers and focusing my artistic expression on themes of decay and debris, chaos and ambiguity, this war has, in many ways, made me the person I am today.

After that visit to the temple, I heard in my head a low hum and a hiss of shaking, like two layers that coexist but never really mix (a bit like oil on water). I wanted to call this piece *The Smoke*, but something was missing. For weeks, I could not turn this poetic idea into concrete music, until I came across David Bowie's "Ashes to Ashes" again. When I first heard this song at the age of 5, I was captivated. The song was so special and out of the ordinary that I remember memorizing it as such, and not just as music my parents listened to. All of a sudden, things fell into place. A procession full of smoke and people praying, an association with processions of fugitives leaving behind their burning homes, praying for the end of the war, a memory of a special song from the 80s around the time I was born, which speaks of transcendence through the metaphor of ashes, a song by Bowie, whose concert in Zagreb in the '90s, just a few weeks before the start of the war, symbolized the last vestige of Yugoslav unity before the havoc began, and it all made sense.

I want you to understand that I am on the edge of tears as I write these lines, without really knowing why. I know it is not out of sadness, but rather because of my unshakeable optimism, which makes me believe that all the hardships we endure have a purpose. If there's one lesson I have learned from this war, it is that we must never despair, but rather cherish every moment of life. As tensions and mistrust continue to grow around the world, I can only hope that the ashes left by these conflicts will allow humanity to learn from its mistakes. As for the piece you are about to hear, I would like you to imagine the most beautiful landscape hidden behind a veil of ashes. At the moment, you may not see it all, but you know it is there. And so you wait... for the ashes to settle... for the soil to replenish itself... for new green shoots to emerge... and as you watch those ashes flow and disperse, you forget what created them and look ahead to what they are about to become. Therein lies the beauty of this desolate image, made up of different shades of grey. You project your hope into the silhouette of falling ashes...

— Davor Vincze

## *Kill a Cow!*

This work is inspired by an ancient fable. In ancient China, there was a chef named Ding who slaughtered an ox for King Hui of Liang. The king stood by to watch in awe. Ding's movements as he butchered the ox were as graceful as a dance; the sounds of his knife entering the flesh were in perfect harmony with the rhythm of a musical score. The King couldn't help but applaud, exclaiming, "Ah! How have you managed to reach such a level of skill?" Ding put down his knife and replied, "What I pursue goes far beyond mere technique; it is the Way. When I first began learning to slaughter cattle, I saw only the whole ox. After three years, I no longer saw the ox as a whole. Now, when I look at an ox, I perceive it with my heart rather than with my eyes. When I slaughter, it is my spirit and mind that guide my hands and feet, not a conscious intention to do so..."

In my opinion, the fable is more than just a story; It's full of philosophical insights and a profound metaphor for virtuosity. It gave me an opportunity to explore the fusion of technique, intuition, and transcendent Tao through the medium of music. I hope to transform the narrative into a sound that resonates with the spirit of the audience.

— Yingting Liu

## *Dinner*

In 2017 not long after I started composing "seriously," I wrote a voice and clarinet piece called *Breakfast* for Samantha Long and Keeheon Nam. My friend Maddy Dethloff, a wonderful percussionist, liked the piece, so I wrote her a duo for vibraphone and marimba in 2019 and called it *Lunch*. In 2023, I arranged *Lunch* for four-hands piano for Alexa Stier and Derek Hartman. That same year I also wrote a piece for three bassoons and two double basses for the Cincinnati-based new music collective, New Downbeat, *Confection I*.

Music is not food. But like food, music enters your body and does real things to you physically and mentally. Whether you take its power seriously or not, music changes you on a moment-by-moment basis. On a larger (but still relatively miniscule) scale, pursuing music has drastically shaped my life's course. Being granted the opportunity to come to Mizzou feels like closing a circle that first opened with *Breakfast*. I wish I could cook something delicious for all the musicians who have generously shared their artistry and expertise with me over the years. I hope this piece, *Dinner*, will be nourishing in a different way.

— Lila Meretzky

## Trittbrettfahrer

*Trittbrettfahrer* (German) can be translated as “copycat”. The copycat phenomenon can be found in different areas - in criminology, economics, and psychology. Whether taking responsibility for a crime which you are not responsible for or benefiting from services that others have provided, the question of authorship is always at stake. Stolen ideas are creatively processed in order to – supposedly – create something new. This technique is also well known in music in the form of collages of musical quotations. But what happens when a composer steals from sources that are not genuinely considered musical in order to create a piece?

Formally, *Trittbrettfahrer* is an ensemble piece. However, there is some kind of competition to determine who leads the group. Various candidates make claims - the woodwind section, trombone, piano, violin - all of them are featured prominently at times, but no one can ultimately establish themselves as a real soloist.

— Benjamin Scheuer

## Machine Spectre

*Machine Spectre* is a speculative meditation and aural imagining of the material vitality of technological devices. While the material nature of technology is regularly unacknowledged, computers, smartphones, etc. are made up of countless raw materials that are extracted from the earth; plastic is derived from cellulose, coal, and crude oil amongst many other things, and microprocessors are comprised of copper, cobalt, iron, and quartz, as well as dozens more elements. This piece imagines a sonic being where these earthly organic materials are animate and autonomous, containing memories, thoughts and feelings about their extraction and usage. Its spectre-like sonic body is the “illegitimate offspring” of its technological origins, origins which it is “exceedingly unfaithful to,” (D. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto”) and throughout the piece seeks to re-wild itself beyond anthropocentered conceptions and towards its earthly, material genesis. *Machine Spectre*’s polytemporal body is an unfolding of a complex assemblage of myriad pasts, presents, and futures and a collage of fragmented digital immaterial/material identities.

— ess whiteley

## *Sounds for Nothing*

*Sounds for Nothing* is a musical exploration of the existential themes and fragmented narratives found in Samuel Beckett's *Texts for Nothing*. This piece is a journey through the void, echoing the disjointed and introspective nature of Beckett's prose. Beckett's *Texts for Nothing* delves into the human condition, dealing with the concepts of identity, existence, and the relentless search for meaning in a seemingly meaningless world. In *Sounds for Nothing*, I sought to capture this essence through a soundscape that mirrors the chaotic beauty and haunting stillness of Beckett's work. The composition unfolds in a series of episodic fragments, much like Beckett's texts, where silence and sound interact to create a dynamic interplay. Sounds and spoken word, intertwining melodies and resonant silences with the rich, introspective passages from Beckett's writings. The microtonal elements evoke the intricate and expressive qualities of Persian musical traditions, offering a sonic texture that build the emotional depth of the piece. Through *Sounds for Nothing*, I have grappled with the question of what these sounds and motifs mean. Do the phrases carry meaning, or are they simply expressions of the ineffable?

— Mahbod Shirvani

## *the growing pull of your softening hands*

Pines on the left and elms right, straight lines. Strawberry cookies in one hand, and you the other, strolling back from the store after dinner. “What are you holding?” yells the neighbor boy. Sensing that I must share again, I let go of your hand and run. Plastic sandals speed up their clicking on my inner drum. Green needles brush along the blue ribbon high above. “I don’t want your cookies anymore. Just come back and play with me!” Relieved, and surprisingly, a little disappointed, I slow my pace but keep running, until the ribbon turns purple, pink, then orange. I reach a marsh of caves. The sun has not risen for months. Eyeless vultures snatch right out of my hands, without asking this time. Rain drops through my skin. Pangolins sand their drills while I try to rest. Why don’t you fend them off? How can you let the gravel fill my path? Don’t you see the red from my feet and eyes?

The breeze wakes me as the machine dragon rumbles through the lightless underground. Crystalized wind glides along steel trees and touches my chimes. Energized, I feel your pull and start running again to the night market. Lights of cotton candy sparkle up the borderless darkness. The chatting and bustling soothe like my bedside noise machine. Meandering black ink refracts and flickers. Like gravity, I always feel you, far or near. It’s so much better though when your skin breezes the summer against mine.

— Claire Hu



# School of Music

## University of Missouri

The University of Missouri School of Music prepares students to make meaningful contributions in the world as performers, composers, teachers, and scholars. Its notable alumni include Grammy award-winning singer/songwriter Sheryl Crow, Canadian Brass founder Eugene Watts, and opera stars Ryan MacPherson and Caroline Worra, as well as members of major orchestras, arts administrators, and leaders in the field of music education.

The School of Music offers professionally oriented bachelor's and master's degrees in performance (brass, percussion, piano, strings, voice, and woodwinds), composition, music education, music history, and music theory. Master's degrees are also available in conducting (choral, orchestral, and wind ensemble), collaborative piano, and piano pedagogy, and the PhD is offered in music education. Undergraduate music majors can further enrich their studies by pursuing a certificate in jazz studies, and a graduate certificate in jazz studies is available either as an add-on or freestanding credential.

The School of Music also offers the Bachelor of Arts in music: a degree program attracting numerous students who combine study in music and another field, drawing from the numerous academic options available on the Mizzou campus.

Major ensembles include the University Philharmonic, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, University Band, Marching Mizzou, Concert Jazz Band, University Singers, Concert Chorale, Women's Chorale, Men's Chorale, Choral Union, and Show-Me Opera, and these are augmented by numerous chamber and studio ensembles. The Mizzou New Music Initiative brings together a full-scholarship undergraduate composition program; a graduate-assistantship-based New Music Ensemble, serving as a laboratory for composition students; a major summer festival for composers; and the Creating Original Music Project (COMP), an outreach program directed at composers in grades K-12.

Over 250 music majors and numerous music minors enjoy extensive interaction with the School of Music's distinguished faculty, comprising 39 full-time and 10 part-time members. Hundreds of non-music majors also participate in School of Music activities—everything from courses such as “Jazz, Pop, and Rock” to Marching Mizzou. The School of Music is also home to several community programs housed within Community Music @ Mizzou: private lesson opportunities, Missouri String Project, Experiencing Piano, Esterhazy Chamber Music Seminar, and several options for community ensembles.

**“I can’t understand  
why people are  
frightened of new  
ideas. I’m frightened  
of the old ones.”**

- John Cage

# MICF

MIZZOU INTERNATIONAL  
COMPOSERS FESTIVAL

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