



School of Music
University of Missouri

2024-2025 Series | Faculty Recital

Freund at Fifty

Stefan Freund, composition

November 2, 2024 | 7:30pm
Sheryl Crow Hall

Program

Life (Still) Goes On (2016)Stefan Freund
(b. 1974)

Julie Rosenfeld, violin and Peter Miyamoto, piano

Le Tombeau de Ravel (2013)Stefan Freund

- I. Prelud
- II. Four-lane
- III. Sarabond and Schizoid
- IV. Rigadoom

Dan Willett, oboe and Natalia Bolshakova, piano

INTERMISSION

Final Descent (1998).....Stefan Freund

Siri Geenen, violin and Carol Elliott, cello

Movements from Epic (1997)Stefan Freund

- III. Retrospection
- IV. Delusion

Eli Lara, cello

Screams and Grooves (2004)Stefan Freund

Leo Saguiguit, alto saxophone and Rachel AuBuchon, piano

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for turning fifty years old.

Stefan Freund (b. 1974)

Stefan Freund received a BM with High Distinction from the Indiana University School of Music and an MM and a DMA 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 won Outstanding Faculty Research and Creative Activity Awards from MU. He was selected as Professor of the Year by the MU College of Arts and Science in 2024.

Freund has received commissions from the Barlow Endowment, the New Spectrum Foundation, the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Lincoln Center Festival, 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 St. Louis Symphony, and the Phoenix Symphony. 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 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.

Freund at Fifty

The idea for a Freund at Fifty concert came to me about a year ago when the Bingham String Quartet performed my piece *St. Louis Reds* on the Odyssey Chamber Music Series. I thought about how fun it would be to have a collection of my chamber music serve as a retrospective as I turned fifty years old. Those thoughts turned to the many pieces I've written for my colleagues on the faculty of the University of Missouri School of Music, some of whom I have served with for over twenty years.

The first of those collaborations was *Screams and Grooves*, which was a commission from the Missouri Music Teachers Association and was written for Leo Saguiguit. Leo is joined by his longtime collaborator and former Mizzou New Music Ensemble pianist Rachel AuBuchon for tonight's performance. I met Leo at the Sewanee Summer Festival, which is where *Final Descent* was written. I'm very happy that my friends Siri Geenen and Carol Elliott of the Columbia Civic Orchestra will be playing it tonight.

Of course, I had to include *Life (Still) Goes On*, which was written for Julie Rosenfeld and Peter Miyamoto, since it is about middle age. *Le tombeau de Ravel* was written for Dan Willett and Natalia Bolshakova and is still the longest piece of chamber music I've written. I asked Eli Lara to play a cello piece of mine and she chose *Epic*, the hardest one of all. Very impressive! You can read more about all these pieces in the program notes on the digital program.

I'd like to thank all the people who made this evening possible and who have supported me over the years. First, I thank the performers, who have given their time and talents to performing this evening. In several cases, this music would not exist without them, as the music was written for them. Several of them are my closest friends, and I thank all my friends, whether they're playing tonight or not, for their support. Of course, I also thank my family, some of whom have traveled from Indiana to be here. Finally, I thank Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield and the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation. Without them we would not have the amazing resources and opportunities of the Mizzou New Music Initiative, and we would not have this beautiful hall and building that's hosting this concert. As Jeanne says, to have new music you need composers, performers, and an audience. I would add that you also need a venue, and we're very fortunate to have the Sinquefield Music Center.

Program Notes

Life Still Goes On (2016)

When Julie Rosenfeld asked me to write a piece for violin and piano, I began thinking of my dad's piece, *Life Goes On*, for the same instrumentation. The title often comes to mind during the ups and downs of our personal lives, but it can also be applied to a larger level. Throughout our planet's violent history, including mass extinctions, somehow life goes on.

I'm not exactly sure what my dad was thinking when he chose that title for his piece, but the bittersweet tune that opens his work goes through my mind when I face a difficult time or I sympathetically experience someone else's, or something else's, tribulations.

The expression "life goes on" seems optimistic but has a darker side to it. We would not be thinking about the persistence of life, or our own personal well-being, unless it had been undermined. For me, this idea captures the sentiment of middle age. Writing at a similar age as my dad when he wrote his piece, there is much to be thankful for, but also a stark realization of the challenges to come.

My piece, *Life (Still) Goes On*, attempts to capture this duplicity. Similarly to the original *Life Goes On*, a bittersweet melody is introduced at the opening. A contrasting schizophrenic scherzando follows, representing life's quick ebb and flow of experiences. At times it settles into a rock groove, which quotes a popular tune about the difficulties people face in their occupations, no matter how glamorized they may be. Eventually the scherzando figure gets locked into repetition, creating an ostinato that leads to a blazing finish. The piece is over, but life (still) goes on. So much for *ars longa, vita brevis!*

Life (Still) Goes On was recorded by Julie Rosenfeld and Peter Miyamoto on *New Music for Violin and Piano*, which was released by Albany Records.

Le tombeau de Ravel (2013)

Le tombeau de Ravel was written for Dan Willett as a companion piece for his arrangement of *Le tombeau de Couperin* for oboe and piano. At his request, I based this new work on the four movements of *Le tombeau de Couperin* from the orchestral suite: Prelude, Forlane, Minuet, and Rigadoun.

The opening "Prelewd" is simply a rockier version of the original featuring secundal harmonies and modal melodic figures. Repetitions of motivic cells are used to create ostinatos and generate tension.

The second movement is the most extensive of the piece. It was inspired by a recording I heard of Bartók playing his *Allegro Barbaro*. While working on the piece, I noticed many similarities between the chromatic language in Ravel's *Forlane* and the Bartók. This movement attempts to bring out those similarities by setting the pitches from the *Forlane* in a Bartókian style. The contrasting B section features the English horn in a more chromatic version of the original.

The third movement transforms the gently flowing Minuet into a slower, darker sarabande. The outer sections are accompanied by eighth-note arpeggios that are taken from the end of Ravel's original. The middle section is set as a rollicking mixed meter dance.

The finale echoes the style of the opening, however it is more chromatic than modal. Its contrasting B section is set as a rock tune. A bombastic coda combines elements of both sections to close the piece.

Final Descent (1998)

Final Descent was written for Connie Herd and Paul York in honor of the retirement of Ann and Peter Spurbeck from the Sewanee Summer Music Festival. Peter Spurbeck was my cello teacher in Memphis throughout junior high school and high school and I followed him to Sewanee in the summers of 1989, 1990, and 1991. In 1998 I was asked by SSMF director Martha McCrory to serve on the composition faculty. It was a pleasure to join the faculty alongside my mentor and experience Sewanee from the faculty perspective. I also met my future wife during the festival. It turned out to be Ann and Pete's last summer on the mountain as they retired that year. I wrote *Final Descent* to celebrate their final journey down the mountain. The piece opens with an expressive cello solo before the violin joins, opening up with broad multiple stops. The second section features a bright mixed-meter scherzo, which celebrates all the joy that Ann and Pete brought to the mountain for 40 years. I'm very pleased that Siri Geenen and Carol Elliott of the Columbia Civic Orchestra will be playing the piece tonight.

Epic (1997)

Epic is the story of the composer's search for inspiration as told by the performer. Just as minstrels would add their own personality to the reading of a poem, so does the performer in their interpretation of a piece of music. Through its improvisatory sounding nature, *Epic* demands a great deal of input from the performer in regard to dynamics, tempi, and expression. Though these are all carefully notated by the composer, the translation of what they mean musically is left to the performer, as it is with all music.

Eli Lara will be playing the last two movements of the four-movement work:

Retrospection - The composer draws from a masterwork from the past. This movement pays

homage to the cello solo from the middle movement of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet by combining its chromatic language with a theme from the first movement. Chorale-like figures represent the string pads that set the background for the solo in the Bartók.

Delusion - The composer writes any ideas that come to mind. The movement evolves into a variation of sonata form as the original ideas are altered in a repeat of the exposition. A development with much tempo fluctuation follows leading to the recap which varies the themes again. A metric modulation moves into the coda which accelerates to the end of the piece.

Epic was written for Mark Kosower, current principal cellist of the Cleveland Orchestra.

***Screams and Grooves* (2004)**

The title *Screams and Grooves* indicates the character of the material of the two primary sections of the piece. *Screams* is a short fantasy/prelude based on dialogue between the two instruments with high, sustained figures in the saxophone and disjunct interruptions in the piano. Diminution in phrase lengths causes these gestures to contract, creating a feeling of accelerando as the material descends in a circle of fourths progression. These short and sporadic figures are contrasted with the continuous feeling of the following movement. *Grooves* features a mixed meter Dorian ostinato that is developed throughout the rest of the piece. A more relaxed section of arpeggios provides contrast before a varied recapitulation arrives. The relaxed material makes a brief reappearance before a coda layers fragments from *Screams* on top of *Grooves*. A tune is introduced as unrelenting repetitions of the ostinato push toward the finale. *Screams and Grooves* was written for Leo Saguiguit and Patrick Dell.