



Mizzou New Music Initiative
University of Missouri

University of Missouri School of Music
2024-2025 Series • Student Ensemble

Mizzou New Music Ensemble

Kyrsten Wehner, flute
Meghan Brown, clarinet
Emily Aponte, horn
Alexandre Negrao, violin
Dean Wibe, cello
Cheok Kai “Mon” leong, percussion
Daniel Noonan, percussion
Seda Balci, piano
Jinhong Yoo, piano

Stefan Freund, Director

With Guests

Bill Kalinkos, clarinet
Ryan Kee, piano
Selim Göncü, conductor
7:30 PM, Sunday, April 27, 2025
Sheryl Crow Hall

Program

Wax and Wire Viet Cuong
(2014) (b. 1990)

*At the end of a
really great day* Judd Greenstein
(2013) (b. 1979)

*This Weird Dream I Had** Ashton Schreiber
(2025) (b. 2005)

Intermission

Furias Carolina Noguera
(2011) (b. 1978)

*Homage to Remedios
Varo* Hilda Paredes
(1996) (b. 1957)

*Waves** Trent Fitzsimmons
(2025) (b. 2006)

*World Premiere

Program Notes and Composers' Biographies

Viet Cuong, described as “alluring” and “exhilarating” by leading publications such as *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, has become a dynamic force in contemporary music. His works have been commissioned and performed across six continents by prominent ensembles including the New York Philharmonic, Eighth Blackbird, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sō Percussion, and the Dallas Winds. His music has also been featured at venues like Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Library of Congress.

Cuong is known for his imaginative and eclectic style, often exploring unusual timbres and instrumentations, from tuba concertos to percussion quartets with wine glasses. His works for wind ensemble are especially celebrated, performed frequently by top academic institutions and elite military bands such as the “President’s Own” Marine Band and the U.S. Navy Band.

He currently serves as Composer-in-Residence with the Pacific Symphony and was previously the Young American Composer-in-Residence with the California Symphony (2020–23). Cuong has held fellowships and residencies at Copland House, Yaddo, and Dumbarton Oaks, and has received numerous awards, including the Barlow Prize, William D. Revelli Prize, and ASCAP Morton Gould Award.

Cuong is Assistant Professor of Music Composition and Theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He holds degrees from Princeton University (MFA/PhD), the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Peabody Conservatory. His mentors include Jennifer Higdon, Steve Mackey, and Kevin Puts.

Originally from California and raised in Georgia, Cuong was active in his high school's band program and studied piano, percussion, and clarinet. He is a member of BMI, the American Composers Forum, and the Blue Dot Collective.

Wax and Wire (2014)

About a year ago, I was introduced to the figurative wire sculptures of Michael Gard. Though his sculptures are made of metal wire, many of them are depictions of dancers in gentle poses that impart a delicate quality to their innately harsh material. Gard describes his artistic process:

“Each figure begins as a block of clay and a spool of wire. The clay is sculpted. This sculpture is reproduced in wax. Individual lengths of wire are woven and knotted stitch-by-stitch around the wax form. Finally the wax is melted away, leaving a rigid figure, both light and strong.”

The wax sculpture provides a firm foundation, but disappears from the final work, becoming at first soft and then formless. The wire, at first bent to the will of the wax, preserves the structure, but in a way that gives bounce to the remarkably intricate skeleton. *Wax and Wire* is a translation of Gard's process, using musical "smears" as an aural representation of such duality. The smears are constructed of chromatic scales in the piano that are successively destabilized by quartertone embellishments in the clarinet, and then by glissandi in the violin. By the end, these smears melt away, revealing a transformation of a rigid idea presented earlier in the piece.

This work was composed for CULTIVATE 2014, Copland House's emerging composers' institute, and was premiered by the Music from Copland House ensemble at the Merestead estate in Mount Kisco, NY on June 22, 2014. Heartfelt thanks to Michael Boriskin, Derek Bermel, and the Music from Copland House ensemble:

Hideaki Aomori, clarinet

Harumi Rhodes, violin

Nicholas Canellakis, cello

Blair McMillen, piano

Judd Greenstein is a composer and advocate for the independent new music community in the US and around the world. His works for standout groups such as Roomful of Teeth, NOW Ensemble, and yMusic have reached global audiences and received widespread critical acclaim. As a founder of New Amsterdam Records and the Ecstatic Music Festival, Judd has been a leading voice in developing a genre-fluid musical infrastructure that strives to open new channels of participation and representation in contemporary music.

He has been called "one of the bright lights among young composers" (WNYC) and "a composer who deserves our attention" (*St. Paul Pioneer Press*), with critics saying his music "felt like an epiphany" (*New York Times*) and were "tempted to call a masterpiece" (*Boston Globe*). He has been commissioned by major institutions and festivals such as Carnegie Hall, the Lucerne Festival, Ballet Sun Valley, and the TROMP Percussion Festival, orchestras including the Minnesota Orchestra, the Luxembourg Philharmonic, the Alabama Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony, and the San Diego Symphony, and artists and ensembles such as Awadagin Pratt, Alarm Will Sound, So Percussion, and the Knights.

He has been a visiting professor at Williams College, a Mentoring Artist at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and has worked with students at the Antenna Cloud Farm Experimental Institute, the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy, the New Amsterdam Composer's Lab, and numerous conservatories and music departments around the country.

At the end of a really great day (2013)

The title of this piece comes from something that my friend Eve said about our friend Emily, who was killed in a tragic accident. Emily was a talented artist with a beautiful, infectious spirit, and was an inspiration to everyone who knew her. The community that rallied around her life, once it was taken away, was incredible, and its attitude and energy wound up making its way into the piece. Eve said that she died the way you'd expect her to, "at the end of a really great day." It was true for the day itself and for her life, and is an inspiring thought to me about how I would like to live all my days, and how it becomes possible to live with the unavoidable tragedies that life presents. *At the end of a really great day* was commissioned by the Seattle Chamber Players, and is dedicated to Eve and to Josh on the happy occasion of their wedding, in memory of Emily Driscoll.

Ashton Schreiber is a violinist and composer currently pursuing his studies at the University of Missouri, where he works under the guidance of Professor Sezekly and Dr. Asuroglu. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Schreiber began composing in middle school and has since developed a deep passion for musical creation in a wide range of styles.

His compositional voice spans from contemporary to classical idioms, often exploring both melodic and spectral techniques. Drawing inspiration from a diverse array of genres, Schreiber cites influences as varied as Japanese electronic producer Kikuo and the experimental punk duo The Garden. Whether writing chamber works, electronic textures, or genre-blending compositions, he approaches each project with curiosity and artistic openness.

Dedicated to pushing creative boundaries, Schreiber continues to shape his musical identity through performance, experimentation, and collaboration.

This Weird Dream I Had (2025)

This Weird Dream I Had is about... you guessed it! Dreams. For this piece, I wanted to not only explore every aspect of dreams as I could, but also display it in a way that represented my own musical style as a composer.

There are about four distinct sections in the piece. The first represents the abstract idea of “dreaminess.” It’s those dreams that you know you had but can’t recall what happened. It’s the stage between light and deep sleep where there’s nothing but a mosh of colors and just a glimpse of a real image. Eventually, we transition from sleep to the dream world. It’s fun, exciting, new, and adventurous. The kind of dream that we wake up from wishing we could go back. Another thing about dreams is that they are unapologetically spontaneous. One moment you’re having a fun time at the amusement park, and the next Captain America appears out of nowhere telling you that the ride is actually a time machine, and you’re traveling back in time to kill Hitler before he kills himself. Dreams, as absurd as they are, still have some basis in reality. They’re a mixture of every person, place, and thing we’ve ever seen; and experience and fear we’ve ever had. But even while based in reality, there’s always something off. Something that you don’t even notice until you wake up... or when things get worse.

Carolina Noguera is a Colombian composer whose work explores the re-signification of traditional Colombian rhythms through a contemporary lens, with a particular focus on texture and timbre. Her music often migrates familiar sounds into new contexts, creating space for fresh interpretations and expressive possibilities.

Her compositions have been performed across Europe and the Americas by renowned artists and ensembles such as Quatuor Diotima, Curious Chamber Players, Duo Hellqvist/Amaral, Eva Zöllner, Mauricio Arias-Esguerra, and Taller Sonoro. Her work has been featured at major venues and festivals, including the Luis Ángel Arango Library, Teatro Mayor in Bogotá, Teatro Central in Sevilla, and the Birmingham Royal Conservatoire's Frontiers Series.

Noguera's music has been published by organizations such as Leeds Lieder, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, and Banco de la República de Colombia. She also self-published *Linos Trio – Tres Compositores* in collaboration with Ricardo Gallo and Damián Ponce de León.

Her contributions have been recognized with several awards, including the Biennial Award at the II Art and Creativity Summit (2016), the Bogotá Composition Award (2006), and a Creation Scholarship from Colombia's Ministry of Culture (2005). In 2018, her research paper *Formas de recuerdo sin territorio* received a prize from the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra.

Noguera currently serves as Head of Composition at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá. She holds a BA from the same institution and earned her Master's and PhD in Composition from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, supported by ORSAS, Colfuturo, Banco de la República, and the Conservatoire itself. Her doctoral research centers on carnivalesque expressions in Colombian composition.

Furias (2011)

I am interested in re-signifying pre-existing elements of traditional Colombian music by studying and re-elaborating them while focusing especially on both texture and timbre. Throughout the years, my aesthetic explorations – and the end – resulting compositions – have focused on migrating different sounds from their usual contexts into new ones, finding – through said journeys – a contemplation of different spirits and meanings. The contrapuntal dialogues that can be created within a duet have no parallel. I really like the flirtatiousness and mutual support that one can establish within this format, as well as the fluid nature of the role that each instrument can have throughout the piece.

For violin and piano. Premiered by Mary Dullea and Darragh Morgan on May 16, 2011 at the Birmingham Conservatoire Recital Hall (Birmingham, UK).

Hilda Paredes is one of the leading Mexican composers of her generation, known for her refined compositional voice and deep sensitivity to the instruments and artists she writes for. Based in London for nearly 40 years, her music blends influences from Mexican literature and global musical traditions, earning acclaim for its poetic intensity, dramatic force, and technical precision.

Her wide-ranging output includes chamber, orchestral, vocal, and electroacoustic works, with notable collaborations at institutions such as IRCAM, SWR Experimentalstudio, and CIRM. Her opera *Harriet: Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* received widespread praise, earning the top spot in De Volkskrant's Best Classical Music of 2018 and the Ivors Composer Award in 2019.

Paredes has been commissioned and performed by leading ensembles and orchestras worldwide, including Ensemble Intercontemporain, Arditti Quartet, ICE, Ensemble Modern, and the London Sinfonietta. Her works have been featured at international festivals and venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Wien Modern, Ultima Oslo, June in Buffalo, and the Festival Internacional Cervantino.

Her accolades include the Guggenheim Fellowship, Rockefeller Foundation support, Music Theatre Now, PRS Foundation, and Mexico's FONCA. She remains deeply engaged in Mexico's musical life as a composer, educator, and radio producer, and is in high demand as a guest lecturer at institutions including the University at Buffalo and Mills College.

Paredes studied in Mexico City with Mario Lavista and later at the Guildhall School of Music, City University London (MA), and the University of Manchester (PhD). Her works are published by the University of York Music Press and recorded on labels including AEON, Mode Records, and IBS.

Homage to Remedios Varo (1996)

Written by Mexican composer Hilda Paredes for the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, *Homage to Remedios Varo* draws vivid inspiration from the surrealist painter Remedios Varo (1908–1963). Scored for the “Pierrot-plus” ensemble, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion, the work musically reinterprets five of Varo's haunting canvases, each rich in fantastical imagery and layered textures.

In “Ciencia inútil,” the instruments unfold slowly and independently, revolving around certain harmonic centers in shimmering soundscapes.

The loose rhythmic coordination mirrors Varo's technique of blotting textures into her paintings, evoking a sense of controlled chance. Paredes frequently uses near-chromatic pitch collections (often ten-note sets), which allow moments of tonal anchoring and ambiguous consonance; sonic analogs to Varo's dreamlike palettes.

A brief second section inspired by *Los hilos del destino* bursts with fast trills and scalar fragments, whirling around fleeting melodic gestures before dissipating into tonal extremes; from the cello's low C to the violin's high A. "Premonición" follows, with ghostly textures and a stalking piano line in contrary motion. "Arquitectura vegetal" grows from a sustained violin F into winding sixteenth-note foliage, building toward a dramatic piano cadenza.

The final section, "Naturaleza muerta resucitada," channels the surreal energy of a universe spinning above a kitchen table. Rhythmic repetitions and a dance-like drive propel the piece toward a climactic burnout, capturing the vitality and mystery of Varo's domestic cosmology.

This program note is written by **Paul Griffiths**, whose poetic and insightful descriptions provide essential context for understanding the intricate dialogue between Paredes's music and Varo's surrealist visions.

Trent Fitzsimmons is a very young composer from Westfield, Indiana who began his musical journey in the 4th grade by learning to play the electric guitar. In middle school, he began playing in concert band in 6th grade, playing the alto saxophone. Later, in high school, he joined the Pride of Westfield, performing competitive marching band shows and winning multiple state championships. Graduating in May 2024, he now studies Composition at University of Missouri-Columbia under Dr. Stefan Freund and Dr. Utku Asuroglu. He plans to graduate in May 2027 and attend graduate school in the future.

Waves (2025)

Waves is a contemporary piece depicting different types of waves in any form. A short introduction gives the listener the feeling of ocean waves, creating the image that they're at sea.

The next section carries that even further with an Afro-Cuban conga line and an intimate cello bass line. Following this section creates more pop-style writing, depicting sound waves from a club or a party. It gives the piece a more heroic style.

Shortly after that, the texture thins and the writing feels more tense, creating a wave of emotions. The new complex harmonies accompany that feeling really well.

The final section circles back to the Afro-Cuban style, now depicting a heat wave. Over time, the texture thickens until the end – where all the instruments are playing – creating chaos until the final anti-climatic ending. Enjoy this fun and innovative piece!

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

Summer Composition Institute

June 22-28

Mizzou International Composers Festival

July 21-26 | With Distinguished Guest Composers Judd Greenstein and Hilda Paredes

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

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