



# Midwest Composers Symposium

## 2016

### FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 & 5

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON  
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC  
THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC



# Concert II

Saturday, 5 November  
10.00 — Concert Hall

**Cajón** — Nina SHEKHAR (UM)  
Joshua DeVries, *violoncello*

**A Brightness and a Quickening** — Nicholas LANDRUM (IU)  
David Tahere, *baritone* and Spencer Haynes, *piano*

**Expanded Shapes** — Carlos TORO-TOBÓN (UI)  
Jose Barrientos, *alto saxophone*, Leonardo Perez, *viola*  
Xuan Kuang, *piano* and Ho Yin Kwok, *conductor*

**The Burning Babe** — Jared HEDGES (UI)  
Christopher Nakielski, *tenor* and Darron Carr, *percussion*

**Interwoven** — Ábel ESBENSHADE (IU)  
Qianyi Fan, *violin I*, Alexi Whitsel, *violin II*  
Julia Vici, *viola*, Christy Oscar, *violoncello*

Interval

**Aftersuite** — Daniel ZLATKIN (UM)  
Ben Wulfman, *horn*

**Driftless Valley Variations** — Patricia WALLINGA (IU)  
Lyrica Smolenski, *viola*

**Cognatic** — Jacob P. SIMMONS (UI)  
Jeiran Hassan and Laura Canelo Cohen, *flutes*

**Six Miniatures** — Lang CHEN (IU)  
Anne Daley, *flute*, Qianyi Fan, *violin*  
Gabriel Viteri, *violoncello*, Spencer Haynes, *piano*

**Divergence** — Nicolas BIZUB (CCM)  
Maya Stockman & Zhifei Zhang, *pianos*

**Landscapes** — Mack LaMONT (CCM)  
Junhe Qiu, *violin*, Nicolas Bizub and Arturo Fernandez, *violas*  
Wei-Shuan Yu, *violoncello*, Marissa DiPronio, *piano*

## ***Cajón, for violoncello solo***

A cajón is a box-shaped Peruvian instrument that is normally played by tapping it on its sides to make percussive sounds. My original idea for this piece was for a cello to play along with a cajón, but then I wondered what if the cello were the cajón itself...



**Nina Shekhar** (b. 1995) is a senior at the University of Michigan pursuing dual degrees in Music Composition and Chemical Engineering. Her works have been featured by the National Flute Association and in the Detroit REVIVAL Project in collaboration with dance troupe ArtLab J. She is a recipient of the 2015 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. Nina is also a versatile performing artist, studying flute with Amy Porter and performing as a pianist with the Lublin Philharmonic. Nina currently studies with Michael Daugherty and has previously studied with Bright Sheng, Evan Chambers, Kristin Kuster, and James Hartway.

## ***A Brightness and a Quickening, for baritone and piano***

1. Final Curtain for the Cornfield
2. Breathing Down the House

*A Brightness and a Quickening* was written for my friend, baritone David Tahere, for his first recital on the faculty of Lee University in Cleveland, TN. The texts are by Ashley Seitz Kramer, a poet whom I've had the pleasure to work with over the years, and feature a consistent theme of brightness, introspection and poignant vernacular language. Though the language is simple, the message is potent and complex. The musical materials mirror these texts in their simplicity, potency and buoyancy in order to show the very sincere, but subtle message inherent in each poem. The first movement, Final Curtain for the Cornfield, shows the struggle of creation, and the nurturing nature of the artist at work. Breathing Down the House appears under a different title "Variations on a Theme by Sorescu" in earlier versions, and the meditative quality of the text, a subtle theme and variation into a sort of wild daydream that brings us back to the original message, is married to the repetitive nature of the accompaniment and the overall form of the work.

**Nicholas Landrum** (b. 1987) is a composer whose work focuses on the density and brevity of pitch and timbre as they relate to counterpoint and color. Recent recognitions include selection for performance at the Society of Composers Incorporated's national conference, Composition Fellow for the MusicaNova Orchestra of Phoenix, AZ, commission by the North Coast Winds, a recent performance of an opera scene by the Indiana University New Music Ensemble, and appointment to the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music's Young Composer Program. Nicholas is a current Associate instructor and doctoral candidate at Indiana University's renowned Jacobs School of Music where he teaches composition, notation and instrumentation.



## ***Expanded Shapes, for alto sax, viola and piano***

In *Expanded Shapes*, a distinctive envelope of each of the instruments served as a model to establish rhythmic, dynamic and texture parameters. These sound shapes were segmented, reversed, and rearranged, and their underlying characteristics were used in different sections of the work to create and transform the musical material.

**Carlos Toro-Tobón**, a composer born and raised in Colombia, received his MA degree in composition from the Universidad EAFIT in 2011. Since 2005, he has been a professor of music theory and composition at the Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia,



where he also coordinated the music education program. In 2014 he was granted a Fulbright scholarship to study in the U.S., and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Iowa. His composition teachers have been Andrés Posada S, Moisés Bertrán, Marco Alunno, Lawrence Fritts, Nomi Epstein, and Josh Levine.

### ***The Burning Babe, for tenor and percussion***

As a 16th century English Jesuit, the metaphysical poet Robert Southwell led a life of intense and persecuted devotion. In his sonnet "The Burning Babe," Southwell contrasts extremes of high allegory, violent imagery, and great reverence, all to create a very unusual Christmas poem. I have tried to honor these jagged contradictions in my setting for the unfamiliar pairing of tenor and percussion.

As I in hoary Winters night stooode shyveringe in the snowe  
Surpris'd I was with sodayne heat, which made my hart to glowe  
And lifting upp a fearefull eye to vewe what fire was nere  
A pretty babe all burning bright did in the ayre appeare  
Who scorched with excessive heate such floodes of teares did shedd  
As though his floodes should quench his flames, which with his tears were fedd.  
*Alas, quoth he, but newly borne in fiery heates I frye  
Yet none approach to warme their hartes or feele my fire but I.  
My faultles brest the furnace is, the fuell woundinge thornes  
Love is the fire and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scornes;  
The fewell Justice layeth on and Mercy blowes the coales,  
The metall in this furnace wrought are mens defiled soules  
For which as nowe on fire I am to worke them to their good  
So will I melt into a bathe to wash them in my bloode.*  
With this he vanisht out of sight and swiftly shronke awaye  
And straight I called unto mynde, that it was Christmas daye.



**Jared Hedges'** music has been performed throughout the United States and in Canada by musicians such as the JACK Quartet and Indiana University's contemporary vocal ensemble, NOTUS. His pieces have received awards from the Oregon Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, the Holland Symphony Orchestra, the Music Institute of Chicago and Webster University. In 2014 his song cycle *Nellie Bly at Blackwell's Island* was featured at the inaugural Source Song Festival, and in 2015 he participated in the Vancouver International Song Institute's Art Song Lab. Hedges holds bachelor degrees in music composition and English literature from Bethel University (St. Paul, Minnesota), and is currently pursuing a master's degree in composition at the University of Iowa. [www.jaredhedges.weebly.com](http://www.jaredhedges.weebly.com)

### ***Interwoven, for string quartet***

- I. Fiberoptic
- II. Interlaced

***Interwoven*** uses rhythm, pitch, timbre and other musical elements to tell a musical narrative in two movements.

**Ábel Esbenshade** is a composer of primarily instrumental and vocal music. His work in other areas, such as photography and audio and video production, often inspire him and influence the form, use of timbre, and conceptual basis of his music. His music utilizes familiar musical gestures to orient and disorient listeners.



## ***Aftersuite, for solo horn***

- I.
- II.
- III. Italiano
- IV. March
- V. Maze of Lamentation

The music is a set of concise movements, some of which have traces to dance music. But each movement is also tinged with a feeling of post-ness. As if you are a ghost, returning to a place that everybody left long ago. Or thinking about something that no longer exists. The last movement specifically deals with how one can feel lost and disoriented after any sort of rejection. How, after such an experience, walls, real and illusionary, can become labyrinthine around you.



**Daniel Zlatkin's** music has been played by the Da Capo Chamber Players, The Orchestra Now, The Brass Project, the Bard Conservatory Orchestra, and members of the New Haven Symphony. His music was recently featured at the Music from Angel Fire festival. He performs regularly as a cellist, and has played with groups including the American Symphony Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony, and Contemporaneous. He is committed to musical outreach, and brought a team of musicians to Cali, Colombia to teach youth from 2014 to 2016. He currently attends the M.M. program in composition at the University of Michigan.

## ***Driftless Valley Variations, for solo viola***

The Driftless Area of the Midwestern United States is a small patch of the continent that the glaciers forgot to flatten. Lined with rolling hills and bluffs, carved with deep river valleys, and dotted with quaint family farms, it is a uniquely beautiful corner of the country. I spent the summers of my girlhood in the heart of this region, in the tiny town of Kendall, Wisconsin (population: 472). This set of variations on the old Scandinavian hymn-tune "Jeg ser deg o Guds lam å stå" is my ode to this region. It is dedicated with love to the Michelson family, my relatives who have lived in this region since before Wisconsin achieved statehood.

Composer and mezzo-soprano **Patricia Wallinga** specializes in writing and performing English-language art song, opera, and contemporary choral music. Her music has been performed across the continental United States, as well as in Europe. Wallinga's 2014 extended song cycle for tenor and piano, *Dreams in War Time*, received a 2015 BMI Student Composer Award, and its companion choral cantata *Portraits of Wartime* won the 2013 NOTUS Student Composition Contest and was performed and recorded by IU's elite contemporary vocal ensemble NOTUS, of which she is also a member. Originally from Naperville, IL, she is currently a senior at Indiana University, where she studies composition with Aaron Travers and voice with Jóhann Schram Reed.



## ***Cognatic, for two flutes***

From similar and complimentary pitch collections, two flutes embark down closely related paths of gradual transformation. Textural metamorphosis occurs in both voices congruently, yet at differing rates. This metamorphosis explores divergences in register, rhythmic character, density, and timbre. Likewise, both pitch collections are transformed through gradual reduction proceeded by reconstruction, until finally set A becomes set B, and vice versa. Antithetical to the prominence of homogeneity in *Cognatic*, each voice is given a unique element (a motive, or a distinct type of gesture) that recurs aperiodically throughout the piece, functioning as an interruptive factor in an otherwise fluid stream of transformation.

**Jacob P. Simmons** (b. 1987) is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in music composition at the University of Iowa. He holds Masters and Bachelor degrees in composition from Belmont University and Cornerstone University respectively. Jacob's music has been performed by the JACK Quartet, and has been featured at the Midwest Composers Symposium and the Exchange of Midwest Collegiate Composers. Jacob is presently studying composition with David Gompper, and has previously studied with Josh Levine, Nomi Epstein, Lawrence Fritts, Bill Pursell, Mark Volker, and David Culross. Additionally, he has participated in masterclasses or received individual lessons with Louis Karchin, Michael Fiday, Elainie Lillios, Ofer Ben-Amots, Caroline Shaw, and David Lang.



### **Six Miniatures**, for flute, violin, violoncello and piano (premiere)

*Six Miniatures* was written in the spring of 2016. There are total of six movements with each of them characteristically unique. The first movement presents the motivic ideas of the piece. In the second movement, the music slows down, contrasting with the first. The third movement is expressive, followed by a slowing but in a different manner. The fifth movement is energetic, and the final a recapitulation of all the previously heard materials.



Born in Jiangxi, China on 16 February 1996, **Lang Chen** grew up in Shunde, a small town in Guangdong, China. In middle school, he became seriously interested in classical music. At the age of 17, he moved to the US and studied as an exchange student at Cedaredge High School, Colorado. Later, he was accepted to Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, where he studies music composition with P. Q. Phan, and electronic music with John Gibson and Jeffrey Hass. Also, music theorist and composer Andrew Mead has given him a tremendous amount of support.

Lang enjoys composing all kinds of music. He likes to use different musical parameters contrarily or at an extreme level. Currently, he is exploring to bring hardcore rock or rap music into a chamber or orchestral music setting. Besides music, Lang has great passion for visual art as well.

### **Divergence**, for two pianos

*Divergence* explores quartal/quintal harmonies complicated by half-step and tritone relations between two pianos. The two instruments utilize quartal/quintal sets that first overlap with each other but then diverge to their own harmonic language. Cross-rhythms between the pianos dominate the ebb and flow of texture. Gestures are sometimes bittersweet, and sometimes aggressive, each punctuated by subito dynamic and articulative changes. The two pianos converge on overlapping harmonic languages to close the piece as it began, which as a whole can be seen as a cycle of divergence and convergence.

**Nicolas Bizub** (b. 1992) is a composer and violist based in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in composition at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he studies with Mara Helmuth. Nicolas holds degrees in Composition and Viola Performance from Lawrence University, and an interdisciplinary certification in Innovation and Entrepreneurship from Lawrence University. His previous composition teachers include André Douw, Joanne Metcalf, and Asha Srinivasan, and his previous viola teachers include Frank Babbitt, Matthew Michelic, and Sven Tepl. His works have been performed at Bryn Mawr College, Central Connecticut University, College Light Opera Company, Conservatorium van Amsterdam, the Inter-





lochen School for the Arts, Lawrence Conservatory of Music, the University of Saint Joseph in Connecticut, the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. His compositions have received prizes from The American Prize, Lawrence University, Sewanee Summer Music Festival, and Wisconsin Cello Society.



### ***Landscapes, for piano quintet***

*Landscapes* is a piece inspired by the beautiful scenery one sees when driving long distances in the United States. There are five 'zones' in the piece, four of which end with an arrival at a 'landmark,' and the last, which fades into the distance. Technically, each 'zone' is full of randomly repeated blocks of music that lead to a cue from the cello. This cue, followed by a declamatory statement from the cello and piano, signal the arrival and departure from each 'landmark.'

**Mackenzie (Mack) Jacob LaMont** (b. 1989) is expected to complete his DMA in music composition at the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music in May of 2017. His composition teachers include John Berners, Michael Fiday, Joel Hoffman, and Douglas Knehans, and his percussion teachers include Paul Berns, James Culley, and Allen Otte. He holds prior degrees in composition and performance, and is an active music educator and owner/operator of a small music recording company.

