THE MIDWEST COMPOSERS SYMPOSIUM

The Midwest Composers Symposium is a consortium made up of the composition departments of four American Midwest Universities: The University of Cincinnati, Indiana University and the universities of Iowa and Michigan. The purpose is to allow students to have contact with other composers at nearby institutions, and to foster connections and self-identity.

The Symposium began in 1948 by Anthony Donato of Northwestern University, and included the composition departments from the Universities of Michigan, Illinois and Iowa. For a few years during the 1960s, the symposium concerts ceased due to a change in academic calendars, but resumed in the early 1970s when most schools adopted the quarter system. Oberlin College joined at this point, and a few years later, Indiana University. Northwestern dropped out in 1992, as did Illinois and Oberlin in 2007. The University of Cincinnati joined in 2008.

COMPOSITION FACULTY

The University of Cincinnati
College-Conservatory of Music
Michael Fiday*, Mara Helmuth, Joel Hoffman,
Douglas Knehans and Miguel Roig-Francoli
Carrie Magin, student assistant

Indiana University
School of Music
David Dzubay, Don Freund, John Gibson, Jeffrey Hass, Claude Baker, PQ Phan,
Aaron Travers* and Sven-David Sandstrom (visiting)

The University of Iowa
School of Music
Lawrence Fritts*, David Gompper* and Bert Van Herck
Will Huff, Jason Palamara, Brian Penkrot and Justin Comer, student committee

The University of Michigan
School of Music
Evan Chambers, Michael Doughtery*, Kristy Kuster,
Erik Santos, Paul Schoenfield and Bright Sheng
Patrick Harlin, student assistant

*—attending conference

For the latest calendar updates visit our online calendar at: uiowa.edu/~cnm
new tree from broken branches. The idea of “deformity” has always been one of my greatest fears – at times almost a phobia – the main subject of recurring nightmares.

Jason Palamara is a second year PhD student in music composition at the University of Iowa. He holds a master’s degree from the University of Louisville and a Bachelor’s degree from Butler University. He has studied composition with Michael Schelle, Frank Felice, Krzysztof Wolek, Steve Rouse, Larry Fritts and David Gompper. Jason currently works as the sound designer for the University of Iowa Department of Dance, and also composes music for many of the department’s projects.
and his setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis will be premiered by the University of Michigan Chamber Choir in October. His music has been performed by the American Symphony Orchestra, Da Capo, the Colorado String Quartet, Matisse Quartet, and the new music ensemble Contemporaneous.

Deformity — “Does ‘eternal’ springtime exist?” I asked myself when I saw the sculpture “Eternal Springtime” by Auguste Rodin (1840 – 1917). Spring comes and summer follows. All the green disappears. The warmth and freshness are covered by the burning sun. It doesn’t seem as if eternal spring exists. Yet, the sweetness and beauty of spring may exist in our hearts forever; or memories of and in spring. Eternal Springtime is the third of my four seasons: first, Winter Sketches (2008) for String Quartet; and second, autumn leaves canvas (2010) for solo harp.

Described by the New York Times as “…abrasive…outbursts…yearning…rapturous surge,” music by Elliott Bark has been performed in many venues, such as Stern Auditorium of Carnegie Hall and Aspen Music Festival. Elliott has worked with many groups, including the New York Youth Symphony, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Cleveland Orchestra members, The New York Classical Players and Juventas New Music Ensemble. Elliott, a recipient of Susan and Ford Schumann Fellowship from Aspen Music Festival and School and 2012 Mrs. Hong Pham New Music Performance Award (conducting) from Indiana University, pursues a doctoral degree, studying composition with Claude Baker, David Dzubay, Don Freund and P. Q. Phan and instrumental conducting with David Effron and Arthur Fagen. (www.elliottbark.com)

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Deformity for string quartet (2011)  Jason Palamara (UI) (b. 1977)
in May 2011 from Stetson University, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Composition at Indiana University. He has studied privately with composers Claude Baker, Aaron Travers, Don Freund, Sydney Hodkinson and Manuel De Murga. He has also participated in masterclasses with Christopher Theofanidis, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and Harvey Sollberger.

Le joujou de pasare is a short work for piano trio which I began last April when given the opportunity to have a miniature read by the Boston-based Trio Cleonice. I spent the summer expanding this material in the form of a set of themes and variations, which ebb and flow between contrapuntal and timbral explorations of the ensemble. The title pays homage to the aforementioned prose work of Charles Baudelaire.

Rachel C. Walker is a composer, clarinetist, and pianist from Cape Cod, Massachusetts. She draws inspiration from such sources as the Anglican Renaissance, literature, and Charles Ives, seeking to amalgamate traditional form and impulse with rhythmic vitality and fresh harmonic outlines. She is currently studying composition with Professor Douglas Knehans at CCM.

Déjate Caer — The title Déjate Caer translates as: let yourself fall, and is taken from the Spanish poem “Árbol de Diana” by Alejandra Pizarnik.

“Vida, mi vida, déjate caer, déjate doler, mi vida, déjate enlazar de fuego, de silencio ingenuo, de piedras verdes en la casa de la noche, déjate y doler, mi vida.”

[Life, my life, let yourself fall, let yourself hurt, my life, let yourself be engulfed by fire, of ingenuous silence, of green stones in the house of the night, let yourself fall and hurt, my life.]

Carolina Heredia, a native of Argentina, is a second year master’s student in composition at the University of Michigan. She obtained a Licenciature in Composition at the National University of Villa María (Argentina) and a Bachelor’s in Violin Performance from the Cordoba State Conservatory (Argentina). Her music has been performed in both the United States and Argentina. Her string orchestra piece Reincidencia was premiered by the Cordoba String Orchestra in June 2012. During the same month, she curated a chamber concert in Cordoba City featuring pieces by her, John Boggs, and Bret Bohman. She has studied composition with Erik Santos and is currently working with Michael Daugherty (with whom she is working on her thesis.) She also studied electronic music with Erik Santos and Evan Chambers.

Thought disorders (TD) references the psychological condition by the same name, where incomprehensible language is presumed to be the result of disordered thinking. This piece is a set of short piano studies, each musically representing a different one of these disorders, “Thought Blocking” — sudden interruption of train of speech before completion. ‘Deraliment’ — disordered speech that is a sequence of unrelated or only remotely related ideas.

Matthew Browne holds a BM music composition from the University of Colorado at Boulder. His music is largely neo-romantic, and draws upon styles of past composers such as Gustav Mahler, Dmitri Shostakovich, Samuel Barber, and John Corigliano. He has written for many diverse groups, large and small, including the symphony orchestra, string quartet, and wind ensemble. His music has been performed for, and presented in masterclasses by various renowned artists such as Otis Murphy, George Crumb, and the Kronos String Quartet.

Over the past five years, Matthew has completed many new and diverse pieces, as well as several arrangements. In 2007, he received 3rd place for his Symphony for Concert Band (rearranged as Sinfonietta for Orchestra) and an honorable mention for his Oxinato for Saxophone Quartet in the 13th annual Pikes Peak Young Composer’s Competition. In 2008, he was the recipient of the University of Colorado College of Music Dean’s Undergraduate Commission prize for his Variations on a Theme by Johannes Brahms for mixed octet. He is currently pursuing his Master’s degree in music composition from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Previous teachers include Daniel Kellogg, Carter Pann, and Kristin Kuster.

Mountain Town is a poem written by Ann Marie Thornburg, a University of Michigan Graduate Fellow in the Poetry department. Set in a rural mountain town, the poem portrays the domestication of a fox as a cruel stripping of its freedom. The text begins with a somewhat frantic debate about whether to let the fox live or be captured and domesticated. After it is decided to let the fox live, the color of the poem changes drastically and the text becomes almost elegiac, mourning the animal’s existence as a subservient animal.

John Boggs is currently in his second year as a MM in Composition at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where he studies with Michael Daugherty and Kristin Kuster. He obtained a BA from Bard College where he studied composition with Keith Fitch and Joan Tower. His orchestra piece Noctis was premiered by the American Symphony Orchestra in May 2010, conducted by Leon Botstein. In November 2010 he was named the Ohio Music Teacher’s Association’s “Composer of the Year,” and his commissioned piano trio Couloir was premiered at the state conference at Bowling Green University in October 2011. He and fellow Bard composer Conor Brown started a five-member Balkan Rock/Sun Metal band, Fifth Veil, which released its first album, Lanterns, in May 2011. He was the recipient of the 2012 Brehm Prize in Choral Composition,