



CONNECTICUT SUMMERFEST

contemporary music festival

Evening of Premieres

June 11, 2024

Program Notes

submerged mirror – Indigo Knecht

submerged mirror is a work inspired by bodies of water, from how the world sounds below the surface to the reflection and refraction of light at the surface. As I composed this piece, I couldn't help but think of Sylvia Plath's "Mirror" and the imagery of a woman staring at her reflection in the lake as she ages. I wanted to create a work that would demonstrate the unrelenting passage of time while nature remains constant.

Orbit of Breeze – Yeeun Sim

What memories do you have about gentle breeze in the spring days? It goes around you, follows you, hides away from you, then tickles you softly all of a sudden. *Orbit of Breeze* is written from reflecting on the trip to San Francisco Bay Area, where I experienced a new color of sky, new warmth of sunlight during the golden hour, and the breeze I felt while I was on the tram. Like the tram has its own route and orbits, I perceived the breeze as the air was gently talking to me. This piece contains soft windy gestures, naturalness, and unpredictability created based on the atmosphere of music.

Boxers, Bullies, and Pugs – Jaylin Vinson

I have always had the love of a pet in my life. This musical work, *Boxers, Bullies, and Pugs*, is my way of reciprocating that love. Dedicated to the special animals in my life, this piece captures the undeniable charm, chaos, and energy of my beloved pets. The first movement can be described as *Mellow, like Roxy*: my first pet, who brought immaculate and chill vibes, witnessing the carefree

joys of childhood and the awkward moments of adolescence. The second movement is incredibly *Rowdy*, like *Jax*, whose energy is like a shaken Coke bottle with Mentos. Despite his wild nature, Jax has been my steadfast companion through life's abrupt transitions. The final movement is *Zealous*, like *the Future* reflects my dreams of having a pug and the excitement of the unknown future that awaits me. Each movement not only honors a beloved animal but also the significant times in my life they represent, spreading their charm, chaos, and (imagined) rambunctiousness. This work is a heartfelt dedication to all our furry friends—past, present, and future—who have touched our lives forever.

Underwater – Spencer Gravel

Underwater is about the immense sense of peace I feel when submerged in Lake Michigan. I have had the privilege of living near the Great Lakes for my entire life, and the love I feel for them is the closest thing I have to spirituality. When my physicality disgusts me, or when the complexities of the world above the waterline become too much, I know I can always dive into the lake and be accepted without judgment. However, this relief is only temporary, as I eventually have to come up for air and return to my life on land.

Over the past few years I have been working towards writing my own text, and the text for *Underwater* is the first that I've written entirely from scratch. The piece will eventually belong to a larger cycle expressing different aspects of my personal relationship with the Great Lakes.

waiting to speak – Nicole Knorr

waiting to speak is a short collection of songs that draws upon memory and wisdom derived from the botanical world—from wild dandelions to tea time in the backyard—and celebrates what can be revealed to us through the more-than-human beings who surround us.

Chatter of a Death-Demon on a Tree-Top – Charlie Kreidler

Inspired by the color and playfulness of theater, *The Chatter of a Death-Demon on a Tree-Top* delves into a dark yet equally boisterous interpretation of Steven Crane's poetry.

This piece is divided into 4 SCENES:

1. Torn Grass
2. Grey – Green
3. News Channel 666
4. Crashing Waves

Refle(cts)x – Daniel Cui

Refle(cts)x is rooted in the concept of bodily reflexes. Consequently, it employs numerous saxophones sounds to symbolize the notions of action and reaction. Additionally, the composition delves into the idea of trained bodily reflexes, typically linked with muscle memory. Such training commonly involves the repetitive practice of activities such as playing a musical instrument or shooting a basketball. Consequently, the piece features many repetitive passages that develop and evolve into larger musical gestures.

Colliding Tones, Relentless Waves – Max Eidinoff

This piece explores microtonality as a method for producing rhythmic beating patterns through difference tones, blurring the lines between rhythm, pitch, and timbre.

leaf litter – Edward Lu

The saxophones are such colorful and flexible instruments. I was inspired by these qualities to write *leaf litter*. This piece is an homage to the colors of leaf litter—also called plant litter—and depicts my interpretation of the shifts in the colors of leaves as they decay. This piece is separated into the sections "Forest Green," "Pale Yellow," "Burnt Orange," "Bright Red," "Dark Purple," and "Brown, Black." From green to red, the sound world is primarily pitch-based, focusing on layering lines and motifs in different ways to create unique soundscapes. "Forest Green" aims to depict a pastoral image, and "Pale Yellow" depicts a wispy and whirling texture, as the leaves start to shift colors. "Burnt Orange" is colorful and reminiscent of the past, and "Bright Red" is brilliant and joyous. From purple to brown/black, the soundworld becomes more effects-based, with "Dark Purple" strongly featuring the use of multiphonics, and "Brown, Black" integrating quiet squeaks and popping sounds in an uncomfortably silent atmosphere.

Texts

Underwater

Spencer Gravel

I slid into the lake
to wash away the sweat and grease
and I wished that I could wash away my skin
layer by layer until I couldn't sweat anymore

The same pale sun
that scorches my skin
reflects coolly from the surface
and invites me to come in

No one knows how to hold me like Lake Michigan,
knows how to hold me in a way that surrounds me
infiltrating every pore

No one knows how to hold me like Lake Michigan
No one else holds me in a way that dissolves me,
disintegrates and destroys me,
rendering me into my basic elements
so I can finally float free

Just until I need to breathe

The summer heat sears my flesh
The sun and sand assault me from both sides
Something primordial in me
draws me back into my inland sea

No one knows how to hold me like Lake Michigan
No one else knows how to accept me completely
in a space I alone can fill

No one knows how to hold me like Lake Michigan
No one else holds me quite as tightly but coldly,
smothering me lovingly
threatening to drown me while giving me life

No one knows me like Lake Michigan
and no one ever will

waiting to speak

I. breath study

Chad Foret

Time is like a T. officinale—
when the wind is ready,
you know to kneel
before the dandelion
waiting like a dead lantern,
edible in its entirety,
close enough to watch
the seed head shudder.
Summer flickers in the sky.
Color doesn't care about
canvas, the choreography
of flame. A flower knows
that letting go begins
in the lungs, scatters
like sparks from a forge
strike & showers you
in parachutes, senses how
many cicada hawk
caves hum in the earth,
but this is the gift:
despite your breath, they burrow
& build with a bliss
you have no bearing on.

II. passion fruit

Katelyn Brown

We have a passion fruit plant growing in our yard.
My momma said she'd send me some fruit
once they're ripe—I'll have to share some with you

III. waiting to speak

Fred Dale

Earl is deaf. the trampled ground calls to him the things it wants him to know.
he listens up a blade of grass, cell by cell, node to node, such delicate savoring,
it draws the awning of his eye. he surveys hulled bugs, learns from black-eyed
susans the plurality of beauty. my wife says, there's nothing she believes in me
so wholeheartedly as rain. says, the eruption of flowers holds tiny monks and a
tailspin of matins. earl sniffs for the cloistered words of the arkless, each syllab-
le a petal to open, to surprise us. it's tea time—a multitude of windgrieved bees

line up according to height, their bottle-brush bodies quivering, sing sweetly for their food. azalea blooms hang like shirts off a chair, suicides if the tumult had been their idea—as if rain's last resort is falling. as if love is anything like rain.

The chatter of a death-demon from a tree-top

Steven Crane

Blood -- blood and torn grass --
Had marked the rise of his agony --
This lone hunter.
The grey-green woods impassive
Had watched the threshing of his limbs.

A canoe with flashing paddle,
A girl with soft searching eyes,
A call: "John!"

.....
Come, arise, hunter!
Can you not hear?

The chatter of a death-demon from a tree-top.