NEW MUSIC NEW HAVEN
Aaron Jay Kernis, Artistic Director

Martin Bresnick
faculty composer

Thursday, March 10, 2022 | 7:30 p.m.
Morse Recital Hall in Sprague Memorial Hall
Program

Sophia Jani  
b. 1989  
Selections from **Five pieces for violin solo** (2022)  
I. Lucid and precise  
IV. Freely  
Ilana Zaks, violin

Benjamin Webster  
b. 1997  
**Poème** (2022)  
Elvin Schlanger, flute  
Jihyun Hwang, cello

Matīss Ķudars  
b. 1991  
**String Quartet No. 1** (2022)  
I.  
II.  
III.  
IV.  
Ladusa Chang-Ou, violin  
Rebecca Weger, violin  
Emily Rekrut-Pressey, viola  
Jenny Bahk, cello

Udi Perlman  
b. 1990  
**Minori** (2022)  
Simon Karakulidi, piano
Harriet Steinke  
b. 1994

Hymnal (2022)
I. Recitation
II. Book in my hands
III. God as ocean

Molly McGuire, *alto*
Cameron Cullen, *flute*
Lloyd Van’t Hoff, *clarinet*
Erin White, *violin*
Thomas Hung, *cello*
Yiran Zhao, *piano*
Sydney Mukasa, *conductor*

PAUSE
*Audience members are asked to refrain from mingling.*

Julián Fueyo  
b. 1996

Cantica Gelidæ (2022)

Sergio Martínez Salazar, *bass*

Martin Bresnick  
b. 1946

Bitter Suite (2020)
I. Oyfn Veg
II. Mayn Rue Plats
III. Chorny Kot/Shvartse Kats
IV. Dona, Dona

Elly Toyoda, *violin*
Lisa Moore, *piano*

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.
Faculty Profile

Martin Bresnick, faculty composer

Martin Bresnick’s compositions, from opera, chamber and symphonic music to film scores and computer music, are performed throughout the world. Bresnick delights in reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, bringing together repetitive gestures derived from minimalism with a harmonic palette that encompasses both highly chromatic sounds and more open, consonant harmonies and a raw power reminiscent of rock. At times his musical ideas spring from hard-scrabble sources, often with a very real political import. But his compositions never descend into agitprop; one gains their meaning by the way the music itself unfolds, and always on its own terms.

Besides having received many prizes and commissions, the first Charles Ives Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, The Rome Prize, The Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Koussevitzky Commission, among many others, Martin Bresnick is also recognized as an influential teacher of composition. Students from every part of the globe and of virtually every musical inclination have been inspired by his critical encouragement.

Martin Bresnick’s compositions are published by Carl Fischer Music Publishers, New York; Bote & Bock, Berlin; CommonMuse Music Publishers, New Haven; and have been recorded by Cantaloupe Records, New World Records, Albany Records, Bridge Records, Composers Recordings Incorporated, Centaur, Starkland Records and Artifact Music.

» martinbresnick.com

Student Profiles

Sophia Jani ’22MM
Student of Martin Bresnick
» sophiajani.com

Benjamin Webster ’23MM
Student of Martin Bresnick
» benwebsternmusic.com

Matiss Čudars ’23MM
Student of Christopher Theofanidis
» matisscudars.com

Udi Perlman ’26DMA
Student of Christopher Theofanidis
» udiperlman.com

Harriet Steinke ’22MM
Student of Aaron Jay Kernis
» harrietsteinke.com

Julián Fueyo ’22MM
Student of Christopher Theofanidis
» julianfueyo.com

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**Program Notes by the composers**

Five pieces for violin solo  
**SOPHIA JANI**

The two movements presented here today are excerpts from a longer cycle of pieces for solo violin. In the midst of the pandemic, violinist Teresa Allgaier and I began a long-term project to learn about the violin in close collaboration from two sides, the player’s side and the composer’s side. Each piece is a unique milestone along the way and the result of an intense period of bouncing ideas back and forth, improvisation, and generally giving each other a hard time (just kidding!). The first result of this project had to be shared with the Yale community via video last year. So I’m very happy to present these two brand new additions to the cycle here in person this time, and to have found a fantastic violinist in Ilana to breathe life into this music outside of the collaborative bubble.

Poème  
**BENJAMIN WEBSTER**

*Poème* is a small piece written for two very important people in my life. Both are incredible musicians, and the music is intended to be a reflection of my admiration and gratitude for their artistry and companionship. The piece is fairly free in its construction and its material, tending to focus primarily on the interesting timbral combination of the flute and cello as well as the wonderful variety of sounds both can create.

String Quartet No. 1  
**MATISS CUDARS**

The first and third movements take their inspiration largely from visual artist Brianna Bass’ work, whose static, repetitive, and seemingly simple paintings, after a moment of observation, become alive, complex and radiant in the eye of the observer. Out of those movements emerge the second and the fourth. The former can be seen as having some relation to Ouroboros—a snake eating its own tail. A melody is trapped in itself (in a good way!) and is trying to decide whether it wants to get out. The latter feels like a memory of a melody conceived many lives ago, which, not unlike the snake with its tail, tries to remember itself.

Minori  
**UDI PERLMAN**

The minor mode can evoke a wide range of emotions: melancholy and lament; storm and stress; anger and aggression, to mention but a few. In my piece *Minori* for piano solo, I wanted to explore this bewildering array ad absurdum. Juxtaposing short ‘clips’ derived from a single minor sonority, I sought to create a temperamental collage of musical emotions in which gestures alternate so rapidly until they eventually lose their affective impact and become empty placeholders for emotion.

Hymnal  
**HARRIET STEINKE**

*Hymnal* is a work-in-progress of several movements, based on the poem “Hymnal” by the American poet Alessandra Lynch. This performance will feature the first three movements, with the first movement featuring my own text, and the latter two introducing Lynch’s “Hymnal” text. Lynch’s poem inspired me in its intense musicality. While her text immediately and openly explores themes of religion and spirituality,
Lynch carefully folds the text’s biblical symbols into her own poetic liturgy, gradually redirecting the language until it begins to generate a spirituality that operates entirely in the world of the poem. Lynch’s long poem is divided into several sections, which I interpreted as “hymns,” separated by a repeated “chorus” text. This structure allowed me to deeply focus on each section of the text as its own movement, while having several threads of continuity (both musical and textual) throughout the work.

EXCERPT FROM ALESSANDRA LYNCH’S “HYMNAL” © 2021, Published in Pretty Tripwire (Alice James Books)

Book in my hands—thin & sleek.

Something watchful
outside my window, poised
to snatch it away

word floating up
from the white sea of the page—
[tiny horse,
inky hook from its mouth and tail]

[& the undersea blossoms trumpeting—
their vines
unfurling…]  

Whelk of syllable,
silk against my cheek, [the book is ballast. Grace & Bless:]  

something to do with someone
knowing me without me
having to speak

Once I loved
my father when he said God was

air & flowers

god

not heavy above me—

[not for the taking…]

-

God as ocean, god as net—god as negotiation between them—

my family

foundered

Tabernacle-gulls gone tuneless

My father & I not looking
at each other, [stricken
at our stations, fish teeming, streaking through us.]  

What called us to float up,
[disoriented bobbers?] What pulled us back to the wreck?

Cantica Gelidæ

Julián Fueyo

Cantica Gelidæ explores the ephemeral nature of the voice and the human desire to memorialize/perpetuate it in time, as do the lyrics. The lyrics are a series of stitched-up phrases from Lucretius’ De Rerum Nature (On the nature of things) describing the voice. The music investigates our relationship to time as we hear the singer’s voice live, echoed by the electronics (half a second later), multiplied by the vocoder, fragmented by a granulator, and even frozen as it is sustained indefinitely via a reverb. All the electronics are generated by processing the singer’s voice in real time.
Bitter Suite

MARTIN BRESNICK

I. Oyfn Veg (On the Road)
This story was told to Itsik Manger, composer of the original “Oyfn Veg,” by Marek Edelman. Marek Edelman was one of the great Bundists of Poland, a surviving commander of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (the armed resistance by the Jews that lasted three weeks and kept the S.S. from continuing their evacuation of the Ghetto): “The Warsaw Ghetto was in its death throes. In order to subdue the remaining Ghetto fighters, the Germans began throwing incendiary bombs into the buildings. The heat became unbearable. Thousands burned to death. We had little ammunition left. Only one choice: to abandon our bunkers and try to make our way outside, to the tunnels that led to the Aryan side. Coming out of our bunker, we were stunned. The whole Ghetto was in flames. This must have been what Jerusalem looked like when the Romans destroyed it, what Rome must have looked like when Nero burned it. Then suddenly a girl in our band began to recite, or better, to mutter: Oyfn veg shteyt a boym / shteyt er ayngeboygn / Ale feygl funem boym / zenen zich tzeboygn... (On the road stands a tree, all bent over. All the birds in the tree have flown away...) She barely muttered it, but we all heard it. And we felt that not only had the birds departed, but everyone – fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters...” Manger added: “I wrote that song in the ’30s, in tribute to my mother, a simple woman who couldn’t read or write but had an ocean of love, love that could become too heavy for even the strongest wings. But the song itself now belongs to that unknown girl in the Warsaw Ghetto. She hallowed it in the last seconds of her life in the glare of the Ghetto flames.”

II. Mayn Rue Plats (My Resting Place)
Morris Rosenfeld (1862–1923), one of the “Sweat Shop Poets,” described the brutal conditions of the garment industry, where he himself had worked for years. In his poem “Mayn Rue Plats” (My Resting Place) Rosenfeld captured the dismal world of the modern industrial worker. If we seek the poet among of the pleasures of youth, flowers, and singing birds, we are told, “you will not find me there.” He asks his beloved, if she loves him with a true love, “to make sweet” his resting place.

III. Chorny Kot/Shvartze Kats (Black Cat)
“Chorny Kot” or “Shvartze Kats” is a song about a black cat that is heard as often in Russian as in Yiddish. A black cat is harassed and reviled for no other reason than people’s superstitions about the shade of her fur. The cruelty done to her is due only to human ignorance. No black cat has been shunned by another cat because of her color...

IV. Dona, Dona
“Dona, Dona” is a song about the fate of a bird, a calf, and the driver who must deliver the bound calf to market while the bird flies freely in the sky. All the while the wind laughs in the corn, laughs the whole day through and half the night. Why wasn’t the calf born a bird, free to fly away, asks the driver? Why? Why? “Dona, Dona” is dedicated to my dear friend Elly Toyoda, violinist, who gave the first performance of this final song in my Bitter Suite.
Upcoming Events at YSM

MAR 30  Lunchtime Chamber Music  
12:30 P.M. | Morse Recital Hall

APR 6  Lunchtime Chamber Music  
12:30 P.M. | Morse Recital Hall

APR 8  Yale Philharmonia  
Miguel Harth-Bedoya, guest conductor  
7:30 P.M. | Woolsey Hall

APR 13  Lunchtime Chamber Music  
12:30 P.M. | Morse Recital Hall

APR 20  Yale Cellos  
7:30 P.M. | Morse Recital Hall

APR 21  New Music New Haven  
7:30 P.M. | Morse Recital Hall

APR 27  Lunchtime Chamber Music  
12:30 P.M. | Morse Recital Hall

YSM AUDIENCE POLICY SPRING 2022  
Concerts presented by the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music are open to members of the public who are asymptomatic and up-to-date on COVID vaccinations—meaning they have received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines for their age range, including any booster dose(s) when eligible. [Unvaccinated children and individuals with any type of exemption are not permitted to attend Yale events at this time.]  
Online reservations required. Read full policies and reserve tickets at music-tickets.yale.edu.

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