

Yale SCHOOL OF MUSIC

José García-León, Dean

NEW MUSIC NEW HAVEN

Aaron Jay Kernis, *artistic director*

Liliya Ugay, *guest composer*

Thursday, March 6, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.
Morse Recital Hall in Sprague Memorial Hall

Program

Brittney Benton
b. 1999

Moving Mountains

Will Rich, *trumpet*
Jacob Rose, *trumpet*
Braydon Ross, *french horn*
Will Roberts, *trombone*
Junming Wen, *tuba*

Ben Rieke
b. 2000

Lexapro Dreams

I. Hypnagogia
II. REM Cycle 1
III. Cortisol Spike

Jeong Min An, *violin*
Caroline Durham, *violin*
Mathew Lee, *viola*
Charles Zandieh, *cello*

Jaebong Rho
b. 1995

agitpropiece

Oliver Leitner, *violin*
Miyu Kubo, *violin*
Miranda Werner, *viola*
Wanxinyi Huang, *viola*
Kyeong Eun Kim, *cello*
Hyun Ji Kim, *cello*
Maya Miro Johnson, *conductor*

Luke Haaksma
b. 1997

Mosquitopia

Grace O'Connell, *trumpet*
Will Rich, *trumpet*
Jeremy Mojado, *trombone*
Will Roberts, *trombone*
Han Xia, *percussion*
Lily Koslow, *soprano*

INTERMISSION

Zihan Wu
b. 2001

A Search for Tessitura

Matt Boyle, *vibraphone*
Chad Beebe, *marimba*

Benjamin Webster
b. 1997

perdendosi

Lyndon Ji, *piano*

Liliya Ugay
b. 1990

Spread Flowers (2020)

Emma Meinrenken, *violin*
Austin Fisher, *cello*
Forrest Eimold, *piano*

Hammers Over the Moon (2024)

Clara Yang, *piano*
Liliya Ugay, *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.

Guest Artists

Liliya Ugay, *guest composer & pianist*

Liliya Ugay (1990; Tashkent, Uzbekistan) is a composer and pianist whose work focuses on exploration of immigrant experience, female physicality, and motherhood routine, often through storytelling and drawing inspiration from material tools, such as folk instruments and children's toys, capturing "curiosity, awkwardness, and wonder to play" (*Modern Notebook*). Her music has been described as "evocative" (*Washington Post*), "assertive, steely... [then] lovely and supple writing" (*Wall Street Journal*), "fluid and theatrical, with lancing atonal gestures brushing up against folk-sounding materials... creative decisions all serve clear, expressive purposes — the music makes its case with immediacy" (*The Art Fuse*), as well as "vivid, yet ultimately enigmatic" (*South Florida Classical Review*); praised as "exquisite and heartwarming" (*Navona*) music that "tugs at our heart strings" (*OperaGene*), and her orchestration skills labeled as "strong" (*DC Theatre Scene*) and "with range of colors and textures [that] is really striking" (*Boston Classical Radio*). Among performers of her works were Yale Philharmonia, Nashville and Albany Symphonies, American Composers Orchestra, New England Philharmonic, Raleigh Civic Symphony, The Next Festival of Emerging Artists; ensembles such as Aspen Contemporary Music Ensemble, Borealis Wind Quintet, icarus Quartet, Victory Players, Unheard-Of//Ensemble, Music from Copland House, Molinari Quartet, Ensemble Flageolet, Ensemble Vim,

Antico Moderno, Omnibus, Convergence; soloists such as Paul Neubauer, Andrea Lam, Noël Wan, Sunmi Chang, Clara Yang, Melvin Chen, Robert Fleitz, Min Kwon. Her works were featured at Aspen, Norfolk, Chelsea, Darmstadt, New York Electroacoustic and Chicago Electroacoustic festivals, American Composers Festival, MIFA, Boston New Music Initiative, CAMPGround, Convergence, and Venice Biennale, at the venues including John Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, Merkin Hall, Steinway Hall New York, Pablo Casals Symphony Hall, and in the places such as Mission Concepción (UNESCO World Heritage site) and Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn.

Ms. Ugay's operatic collaborations include Washington National Opera and American Lyric Theater, for which she was a commissioned composer-in-residence; most recently, she has worked with activist opera company White Snake Projects on the virtual opera "Fractured Mosaics" uncovering the experiences of Asian-Americans, and the series "Let's Celebrate" creating an opera about Nowruz - Persian New Year. Recordings of Ms. Ugay's music were featured and produced by NPR, New England Public Media, Parma/Navona, and many classical music stations such as WGBH, PBS, WSMR. Named "2024 Distinguished Composer of the Year" by the Music Teachers National Association, Ms. Ugay has received recognitions from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, ASCAP, Yale University, International Alliance of Women in

Music, as well as grants from Opera America and National Endowment of the Arts.

Since 2019, Ms. Ugay serves on the composition faculty at Florida State University, where she directs FSU New Music Ensemble Polymorphia, which, to this date, presented 18 programs featuring over 100 compositions by living composers, in addition to special concerts such as Music by Asian-American Composers and Silenced Voices - music by composers of oppressed regimes - series. Ms. Ugay holds master and doctorate degrees from the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Aaron Kernis, Martin Bresnick, Boris Berman, Christopher Theofanidis, and David Lang. Above all, Ms. Ugay is a dedicated mother of a 6-year-old Julian who loves making sounds and practicing violin, inspiring his mother every day.

<https://lilyaugay.com>

Clara Yang, *pianist*

Praised by Fanfare as “a first-rate pianist who isn’t afraid of challenges,” Chinese American Pianist Clara Yang has performed in notable venues such as Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall (New York City), the Forbidden City Concert Hall (Beijing), Auditorio Nacional de Musica (Madrid), Kodak Hall at the Eastman Theater (Rochester, NY), the Sunset Center (California), and on series such as Carolina Performing Arts and Dame Myra Hess (Chicago Cultural Center).

She is currently Head of Piano Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill.

As a soloist, she has performed with renowned conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Long Yu, Josep Caballe Domenech, Jeff Tyzik, and Carl St. Clair. She has soloed with the European Union Youth Orchestra, the China Philharmonic Orchestra, the Sichuan Symphony Orchestra, Banda Sinfonica Municipal de Madrid, the Eastman Philharmonia, the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, the North Carolina Symphony, among others. Her solo album *Folding Time* (Albany Records) won Global Music Awards Gold Medal. Besides performing the traditional repertoire, Yang is also an innovative new music interpreter. A Baryshnikov Arts residency recipient in 2024, she collaborated with acclaimed new media artist Xuan on *Ex Machina*, a multimedia and cross-genre project with works by Christopher Cerrone, Reena Esmail, rock guitarist Yvette Young, hip hop artist Suzi Analogue, and many others. She performed Philip Glass etudes alongside Mr. Glass, and she performed a world premiere of renowned composer Chen Yi’s piano concerto with the China Philharmonic Orchestra in the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. She studied with Nelita True at Eastman (DMA), Claude Frank at Yale School of Music (MM, Artist Diploma), and John Perry at USC Thornton School of Music (BM).

Student Profiles

Brittney Benton, '25MM
Student of David Lang
brittneybentonmusic.wixsite.com/composer

Ben Rieke, '30DMA
Student of Christopher Theofanidis
www.benrieke.com

Jaebong Rho, '26MM
Student of Christopher Theofanidis
www.jaebongrho.com/

Luke Haaksma, '25MMA
Student of Katherine Balch
www.lukehaaksma.com

Zihan Wu, '25MM
Student of Aaron Jay Kernis
www.zihanwumusic.com/

Benjamin Webster, '25DMA
Student of Aaron Jay Kernis
benwebstermusic.com

Staff

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Program Notes

by the composers

Moving Mountains

Brittney Benton

This piece was inspired by a hiking trip with friends up Mount Charleston in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Lexapro Dreams

Ben Rieke

Since I began taking the SSRI medication Lexapro during the previous summer, my dreams have become more vivid and less rational. Besides attempting to nail down some of the more elusive qualities of these dreams, this piece attempts to make audible my headspace in the more (less?) lucid moments surrounding sleep, particularly the disorientation and frustration that flank it on either side.

agitpropiece

Jaebong Rho

On the night of December 3, 2024, the day I arrived in S. Korea, the president declared martial law in an attempt to revert the nation to the military dictatorship of the 1970s and 80s. Citizens rallied to help parliament members assemble at the National Assembly by blocking soldiers and armored vehicles, prompting the lifting of martial law within six hours—a seemingly miraculous outcome later corroborated by investigations. However, his propaganda aimed at justifying the takeover unleashed a wave of violence, chaos, and division. The ensuing phenomenon remains increasingly incomprehensible to me, and its unpredictable spread fills me with fear.

MOSQUITOPIA

Luke Haaksma

In the near future, Earth has warmed well past two degrees centigrade. Six optimistic mosquitoes gather to celebrate the birth of their new utopia.

A Search for Tessitura

Zihan Wu

A Search for Tessitura is a percussion duo for vibraphone and marimba that delves into the rich timbral possibilities of these two instruments. Through intricate interplay and dynamic contrasts, the piece explores how resonance, articulation, and register shape a continuously evolving dialogue.

perdendosi

Benjamin Webster

The Italian musical term “perdendosi” is typically translated in English as “dying away.” The word usually accompanies music that is soft and delicate, often occurring at the end of a passage or an entire piece that fades slowly into nothing. It therefore may seem odd to use the term as a title for as loud, virtuosic, and relentless a showpiece as this one, but a more literal translation of the original Italian is closer to something like “getting lost” or “losing sight of something” or even “losing oneself,” and those to me feel entirely appropriate as descriptions of this music.

Spread Flowers

Liliya Ugay

Spread Flowers was commissioned by the former Dean of FSU College of Music Patricia Flowers for her retirement.

As I was working on this piece, COVID-19 caused the cancellation of live arts and in-person education. Many of my friends who worked as freelance musicians faced painful struggles to make ends meet. My family and I could have been in the same situation, but I was fortunate to have a wonderful full-time job, and, despite the cancellation of performances, to be in a safe position. The structure of the piece is derived from the sketch I drew while imagining how the virus is spreading, and how its spikes are flattening into our hopes and flowers as we honor the ones we lost.

Hammers Over the Moon

Commissioned by Clara Yang for her multimedia project “*Ex Machina*”, *Hammers Over the Moon* is the exploration of emotional whirl of excitement, bubbling delight, gleeful radiance inspired by child’s genuine joy, through the conventional action of piano playing and exuberance of equal temperament. In this piece I deliberately picked and exploited pianistic patterns best suited for smaller hands, which often becomes a limitation in standard piano repertoire, using the advantage of their agility and versatility. *Hammers Over the Moon* exists in two versions - as a two-piano piece or as a piano solo with a modified loop playback, creating a juxtaposition of acoustic sound and its electronic analog, as a way for a soloist to become a self-partner, which is how Clara will premiere it in two weeks in University of North Carolina. I am excited to be Clara’s partner for tonight’s world premiere of this work.



Upcoming Events at YSM

- MAR 25 **Terra String Quartet**
Oneppo Chamber Music Series
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Single tickets start at \$31, Yale faculty/staff start at \$23, students \$14
- MAR 29 **Willie Ruff Memorial Concert**
Ellington Jazz
2:00 p.m. | Woolsey Hall
Tickets start at \$26, Yale faculty/staff start at \$19, Students start at \$11
- MAR 30 **Tai Murray, violin**
Faculty Artist Series
3:00 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission
- APR 1 **Martin Fröst, clarinet, Antoine Tamestit, viola, and Shai Vosner, piano**
Oneppo Chamber Music Series
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Single tickets start at \$31, Yale faculty/staff start at \$23, students \$14
- APR 2 **Lunchtime Chamber Music**
12:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

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