

Lamont School of Music

Modern Music Ensemble

Martin Kuuskmann
Director

Saturday, November 8, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Frederic C. Hamilton Family Recital Hall



**Robert & Judi Newman Center
for the Performing Arts**

Program

Overture in E Major

Bradley de Lucia
(b. 2001)

Discussions

Ryan Kilgroe
(b. 2005)

Forza de Lucia:

Daniel Rosson, bassoon

Ryan Kilgroe, trumpet

Keefe Ismael, trombone

Bradley de Lucia, piano

Vacant Shadows

Christian Reesman
(b. 2006)

Velvet Dusk (Vesperne)

Bradley de Lucia
(b. 2001)

Fragments

Ronan Caci-Kukelka
(b. 2007)

Timothy Coffey, clarinet(s)

Christian Reesman, viola

Ronan Caci-Kukelka, cello

Mia Butler, harp

Bradley de Lucia, piano

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Improvisation

Traditional Martian Ensemble:

Timothy Coffey, clarinet(s)

Mia Butler, harp

Alex Uhrlaub, electric guitar

Karalina Marae Coates, piano/keys

Rachel Hayward, piano/keys

INTERMISSION

Double Canon in F

Bradley de Lucia

(b. 2001)

Nathan Smith, trombone

Christian Baeck, trombone

Antonio Ricafort, trombone

Gianni Milano, bass trombone

Dithyramb

Bradley de Lucia

(b. 2001)

Luca Dovalina, bassoon

Philip Aleshire, bassoon

Daniel Rosson, bassoon

Bradley de Lucia, piano

Selections to be Announced from the Stage

Rose Cold:

Maggie Colie, vocals, accordion

Emil Tellefsen, electric guitar, vocals

Karalina Marae Coates, piano/keys

Tim Crean, electric bass

Matthew Sousa, drum kit

Program Notes

Overture in E Major

Born out of this ensemble's very existence, this movement came about as a result of the unique combination of performers who I was lucky enough to have on-board for the first term of this new composer-oriented ensemble. Rather than combine, say, harp and trombone in a sizable chamber group, we endeavored to split the section in two, and I thus had the privilege of writing for two distinct and highly contrasting ensembles. For these two pieces I wished to play into the character and strengths of each instrument unabashedly, producing two antipodal pieces of music as a result. Thus, this quartet with brass, piano, and a brave bassoon pushed to its limits has a bright, maestoso quality for this movement.

An alternate title could easily be 'Exaltation.' This overture begins with a marked theme of fragmented scales and a constant, insistent rhythm which grows in intensity as the winds enter one-by-one. At the moment of arrival, the winds take over, produce an ever-rising sequence of motion and elation and color that again grows in intensity until the piano returns, slamming that same insistent, marked pulse in the theme until it 'traps' itself, oscillating between two dissonant chords until finally closing off the opening section with a reprieve into a new, relaxed theme. To reveal my hand somewhat: the opening theme is homorhythmic, entirely of quarter notes. The second theme is primarily triplets, then the tertiary theme centers on duplets. The retransition and recapitulation unites these all, taking that 'marked' quality of the opening and having won for itself the full-on freedom of elation throughout all the lines and all their diverse rhythms. Melodically, on the other hand, the piece is unified by a central motif: an accented beat, and then a three-step scale (ascending or descending). The attentive listener will notice how each and every theme emerges out of that core motif.

Discussions

Aiming for an emotionally atmospheric presentation, Discussions explores sonic colors and a flowing form to allow the instrumentalists to hold a conversation through the context of music. In this piece, the performers are encouraged to use free expression of the musical writing to make their own statements. It is my sincerest hope that you, the audience, allow yourself the same freedom to interpret Discussions in your own right, as the instrumental characters are developed through the piece.

Vacant Shadows

What could be more peaceful than a walk through the park? Flowers paint the fields in every imaginable hue, while a gentle breeze slowly sways the trees. Ah, the trees; their grand immensity is rivaled only by the shadows they cast. What could be in those shadows? What a silly question that is; they're just shadows. Though, if anything were there, it's not likely that it could be seen. Or that it would want to be seen. Just keep walking forward.

What could be more peaceful than being alone in the park? Completely and utterly alone. So then, what is causing that strange feeling of being watched? Surely it's just a trick of the mind. The rustling of the leaves is probably just the wind. It has to be; that's the only logical explanation. It's too bad that nobody else is here to see the flowers. Though their colors seem to be fading a bit, as the sun begins to set. It's probably time to head back home. Just keep walking forward.

What could be more peaceful than a walk through— actually, where is this? The park's path is nowhere to be found, and the trees have gotten so dense that it's becoming hard to see. Or could it be that the sun has fully set? The good news is that the shadows are gone... but only because there's no more light for them to swallow. It's quite hard to see now. Why is it then, that the strange feeling of being watched is still there? The trees are no longer swaying in the wind, which makes it all the more interesting that the quiet rustling from before has returned. Now, which way was home? Unfortunately no one else is here to give directions. Just keep walking forward.

Velvet Dusk (Vesperne)

Like the overture, this piece was created out of a desire to utilize the strengths of two contrasting chamber instrumentations, and thus to be (somewhat) opposite in affects and composition.

This vesperne (a neologism of mine) is a very lyrical, free-floating piece which seems to move about in a reverie, with a more 'nocturnal' opening section, which evolves into a lilting melody in the clarinet, and a more 'wistful' middle section that seems at once brighter and more subdued, perhaps autumnal. The lilting and the reverie are hiding a deeper unity to the movement, however, as nearly every aspect of the work is held together by a hidden germinating motive among the notes, one which I will neglect to disclose so as to preserve the audience's ear from any over-analysis which may detract from this soft movement's gestalt.

Double Canon in F

This is a double-canon I composed on-and-off during my senior year of high school, making it the earliest work of mine thus far I've had the fortune of hearing premiered at Lamont. Beginning with a brisk, animated melody in

(continued)

the Bass Trombone, it is followed two measures later by an exact repetition an octave above in Trombone 2. A few seconds later, Trombone 3 enters with an entirely new countermelody, which is in turn followed, this time three measures later, by its exact repetition an octave above by Trombone 1 — thus, a double canon.

Beyond that, there is added to this complexity an exact repeat to the opening 'themes,' and within that repeated section there is a modulation from F Major to B-flat Major, followed, after the repeat, by variants on the opening material before the theme returns triumphantly in the end, making this into not just a double canon but a double canon in Sonata-Allegro form.

Dithyramb

A dithyramb is an ancient Greek form of poetry which was a hymn to the god Dionysus. I do not have the space nor capability to express all the nuances here, but at a superficial level: Dionysus was the god of wine, but as one looks further into his mythos, they see that he is the most enigmatic figure of the whole pantheon. Far from some token of hedonistic drunkenness, he was the god of illusions, theatre, ecstasy, madness, ineffable mystery, as well as a symbol of androgyny, rebirth, fearless abandon, equality, communication with the divine, ... I could go on. The philosopher Frederick Nietzsche famously examined the history of all art as being between 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' forces. A huge part of my inspiration came from Robert A. Johnson's book *Ecstasy* which articulates the psychological aspect and relevance of this incredibly dynamic and important god / cultural force.

Related context is to be found in the word 'Dithyramb' itself. 'Dithyramb's etymological origin is unknown, but we know it is related to two other words: *Thriambus*, which was a processional hymn to—who else—Dionysus, and is a doublet of the word 'triumph,' and the other word is *iamb*, a metrical foot in poetry that follows the two-syllable pattern of unstressed -> stressed.

This dithyramb for a trio of bassoons and piano begins with a slow opening as an "incantation," full of the staggered, run-on, asymmetrical lines, as well as drones and grace notes meant to imitate the ancient Greek *aulos*, which traditionally played during dithyrambs. The bassoons 'sing' and the piano responds in a chaotic monody, which is then taken up by the chorus of bassoons in an even more ornate fashion. After this passage abates, it is followed by a loud, menacing crash from the piano which launches the main section, comprising other asymmetrical themes featuring a march-like, incessant use of the iamb rhythm and repetitive calls. The bulk of the work bounces between a handful of tiny, energetic motifs and themes which are continuously recycled, altered, and conjoined in elusive ways. The climax comes in an ecstatic passage of tremolos which contrast with the darker atmosphere of all that came before in the work, before it ends subsiding back into the quiet mystique of the opening.

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