



Western
Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

FALL COMPOSERS CONCERT

Tuesday, October 21, 2025
7:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall

Wonderland Prelude

David Archibald, *piano*

David Archibald

"Hope is the thing with feathers"

Ian Balana, *countertenor*, Pauline Boers, *piano*

Pauline Boers

Lighthouse

Helen Faucher, *violin*, Owen Gariepy, *piano*

Owen Gariepy

y2k fruitiger aero core and the yearning to be 10 again

Mercedes Nebesnuik, *alto sax*, Owen Gariepy, *piano*

Mercedes Nebesnuik

Flight of the Canadian Goose

TBD, *alto sax*, Kelsey Lenti, *piano*

Christel Oguchi

Genesis for two Pianos

Colin Spencer, *piano 1*, Finn Meldrum, *piano 2*

Colin Spencer

The Secret of Creation

Seyed Mohammad Tonkaboni
Dr. Menelaos Menelaou, *violin*, Isaac Lee, *cello*, Catalina Teican, *piano*

Ester

Hijun Lee, *violin I*, Helen Faucher, *violin II*, Stella Shin, *viola*, Ji Li, *cello*

Kevin Tran

Blossom Song: Once upon a melody in ancient Peking

Dr. Menelaos Menelaou, *violin*, Catalina Teican, *piano*

Yilin Wang

Music changes lives. So do our donors.

Philanthropic gifts from music lovers, like you, provide essential support for the Don Wright Faculty of Music and its students. To help us continue to enrich our community through the power of music, please [consider making a donation online](#) or call Carole Metron to discuss giving options at 519-661-2111 ext. 85695.

PROGRAM NOTES

Wonderland Prelude

David Archibald

Wonderland Prelude is a short piano work inspired by the Tim Burton Alice and Wonderland movies. The work doesn't follow the story of the movies directly, instead it focuses on evoking the imagery of the film for the listener. One way this is achieved is through the extensive use of augmented chords and harmonies. The tonally ambiguous sound world created by these chords gives the feeling of being very far from home.

"Hope is the thing with feathers"

Pauline Boers

"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
That sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all. "

It is these opening lines from Emily Dickinson's poem, "Hope is the thing with feathers", that inspired this piece for countertenor and piano. Dickinson likens hope to a fragile bird, seemingly silent amidst a storm, yet hiding and singing in plain sight.

In times of uncertainty, struggle, and grief, the storm can be deafening. But it is when we look and *listen* for hope that we realise that it never really left - it's been within us along.

Lighthouse

Owen Gariepy

Lighthouse sets the scene of a diligent ship making its way through fog and weather to the mainland. Utilizing the whole-tone scale, the piece brings out the aimlessness of the open seas, but attempts to bring a strong tonal center through pitch relationships and careful use of notes within the scale; The lighthouse casting its unyielding beam across the water to bring the ship to safety. Each tremolo in the piano notated with whole notes should increase and decrease its speed improvisationally for the duration of each measure. Players should follow the direction of the dynamics (crescendos and decrescendos) to get a better idea of pacing for each Tremolo.

y2k fruitiger aero core and the yearning to be 10 again

Mercedes Nebesnuik

This piece was inspired by the low-quality MIDI sounds of my notation software, and how they are reminiscent of 2000s video game music. The opening of the piece is inspired by the fruitiger aero aesthetic, and how it was dominant in online spaces in the 2000s, making it a huge part of my childhood. The bright futuristic imagery, and a blend of nature and technology of fruitiger aero, is represented by the hopeful and upbeat theme. The piece then takes a melancholy turn, as a reminder that time moves on, and all we can do about the past, is remember it.

Flight of the Canadian Goose

Christel Oguchi

"Flight of the Canadian Goose" encapsulates the tension that all walkers on Canadian soil have felt walking side by side with a goose during the bird's mating season. The protagonist, played by the right hand of the piano, with the narration illustrated by the left hand, is walking home on the first afternoon where the snow has melted. The goose, played by the alto saxophone, saunters along unexpectedly right up next to the protagonist. Wary of each other, both creatures continue to walk in the same direction, animosity growing with each step.

Genesis for two Pianos

Colin Spencer

Genesis marks my first exploration of minimalist writing. The piece takes inspiration from a simple scribble drawing I made—two lines weaving around each other, occasionally joining, then diverging again. This visual idea became the foundation for the musical structure: one piano embodies stability and constancy, while the other moves fluidly in and out of its orbit.

Structured in ternary form, *Genesis* unfolds gradually, allowing subtle rhythmic and harmonic changes to emerge from repetition. The opening section establishes a calm, pulsing texture; the middle section being a pensive solo section before the return restores balance and clarity. The work reflects on beginnings—not as a single event, but as a process of intertwining, evolving, and finding coherence through motion.

The Secret of Creation

Seyed Mohammad Tonkaboni

Based on quatrains by Omar Khayyam, classified and interpreted by Sadeq Hedayat and translated from Persian (Farsi) by Dr. Reza Parchizadeh

The Secret of Creation explores Khayyam's timeless question: Why were we born, and what is the mystery behind existence?

Four quatrains serve as the poetic foundation, each reflecting a stage of inquiry, from wonder and doubt to disillusionment and calm acceptance. The music traces this philosophical journey as if the instruments were voices in a dialogue: the violin as the questioning mind, the cello as its earthly reflection, and the piano as the echo of cosmic design.

The textures alternate between symmetry and fragmentation. Rhythmic patterns, particularly the piano ostinato, emerge from the prosody of Khayyam's verse. By the end, the music dissolves into quiet ambiguity, neither resolving nor denying, by focusing on the intervals of the augmented fourth and major seventh, suggesting Khayyam's final serenity before the unknowable.

The Secret of Creation is both a meditation and an homage: a sound portrait of a poet-mathematician who found beauty in uncertainty and order within the mystery of being."

Ester

Kevin Tran

An introduction and Capriccio inspired by Wieniawski and Kailyn Mao from Queens.

Blossom Song: Once upon a melody in ancient Peking

Yilin Wang

As someone born in China, my generation no longer grows up in an environment where Peking Opera is part of daily life. Instead, it has become something we look at as cultural heritage. Many of its famous excerpts are now rearranged or recomposed into other musical genres rather than performed as complete operas.

The Blossom Song is inspired by the Peking Opera *Mai Shui* (《卖水》, *Selling Water*), which tells the story of Li Yangui, the son of a loyal minister in the Song Dynasty who loses everything after being framed by corrupt officials. His fiancée, Huang Guiying, stays faithful and secretly meets him while he sells water, expressing her love in the aria "*Reporting the Flower Names*."

In this piece, I use fragments of the original melody and reinterpret them through a contemporary musical language. Traditional Chinese instrumental gestures are translated into the piano and violin. The soprano's expressive role from the opera is given to the violin, while the piano acts both as accompaniment and as a complementary voice—forming a dialogue between tradition and the present.