Western Music
Don Wright Faculty of Music

FRIDAYS AT 12:30 SERIES
Friday, November 6, 2026
12:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall and via livestream
Mike McGuinness, *clarinet*
Ashley Vandiver, *violin*
Michael Bates, *bass*
Nick Fraser, *drums*
Jean Sophie Kim, *voice and piano*

Melancholie, Op. 13, No. 3: *Dunkler Tropfe* — Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)
Ashley Vandiver, *violin,* Michael McGinnis, *clarinet,* Nick Fraser, *drums*
Michael Bates, *bass,* Jean Sophie Kim, *voice and piano*

Nacht (Night), from *Sieben frühe Lieder* — Alban Berg (1885–1935)
Ashley Vandiver, *violin,* Michael McGinnis, *clarinet,* Nick Fraser, *drums*
Michael Bates, *bass,* Jean Sophie Kim, *voice and piano*

Polka: Allegretto, from *The Golden Age*, Op. 2 — Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)
Ashley Vandiver, *violin,* Michael McGinnis, *clarinet,* Nick Fraser, *drums*
Michael Bates, *bass,* Jean Sophie Kim, *piano*

Breathe (2026) — Michael Bates
Lyrics by Jean Sophie Kim
Ashley Vandiver, *violin,* Michael McGinnis, *clarinet,* Nick Fraser, *drums*
Michael Bates, *bass,* Jean Sophie Kim, *voice and piano*

Feast of Life (1975) — Jack Behrens (1935–2024)
Nick Fraser, *drums,* Michael Bates, *bass,* Jean Sophie Kim, *piano*

Poets and Monsters (2026) — Jean Sophie Kim
Lyrics by David Kozatch
Ashley Vandiver, *violin,* Michael McGinnis, *clarinet,* Nick Fraser, *drums*
Michael Bates, *bass,* Jean Sophie Kim, *voice and piano*

This concert is made possible by the Sonja Peterson Behrens Visiting Artist Fund.

Thanks to Jean Sophie Kim for donating music from Jack Behrens' personal library.

PROGRAM NOTES

Dunkler Tropfe — Paul Hindemith (1917)
"A fascinating piece of music that foreshadows so much of what would later emerge in American jazz. I hear echoes of Delta blues, modal expression, and the Coltrane of the 1960s. The music grooves in so many unexpected ways, and this arrangement seeks to bring those qualities into sharper focus."

— Michael Bates

Nacht (Night) — Alban Berg (1905–1907)
The opening song of Berg's *Seven Early Songs*, *Nacht* evokes a mysterious, dreamlike landscape through shifting harmonies, whole tone scale use and delicate textures. Rooted in late Romanticism while anticipating the harmonic freedom of the twentieth century, the work blurs the boundaries between nature, memory, and imagination. This arrangement reimagines the work's rhythmic structure and formal expectations, introducing new tensions while preserving its haunting lyricism through a fresh instrumental palette.

Polka, from *The Golden Age* — Dmitri Shostakovich (1930)
Shostakovich's celebrated *Golden Age Polka*, with its madcap twists and turns, is a delightful example of the wit, irony, and satire that permeate his music. At once hilariously lighthearted and subtly sinister, the piece dances between playful absurdity and biting humor. This arrangement highlights the work's improvisatory character, bringing a fresh spontaneity to its meticulously notated musical antics.

Breathe — Michael Bates (2026) *Lyrics by Jean Sophie Kim*
Breathe explores the many meanings and dimensions of breath—both as a physical necessity and as a metaphor for the human experience.
Breath sustains and calms us. In music, phrases breathe, voices take on breathy timbres, and silence becomes as expressive as sound. We encounter breathtaking beauty, moments that take our breath away, and experiences that leave us struggling to catch it. Yet breath also carries profound social and political resonance: the devastating words "I can't breathe" have become an indelible expression of anguish, injustice, and resistance in contemporary American life.
These contrasting dimensions—intimate, musical, visceral, and collective—converge in a work that considers breath as both the simplest and most consequential act of being alive.
Musical note: The first note of each measure represents an inhalation, while the emphasis on the third beat evokes an exhalation.

Feast of Life — Jack Behrens (1975)
Composed in 1975, Jack Behrens' *Feast of Life* is a rhapsodic celebration, brimming with expansive, freely unfolding musical ideas built around the interval of a seventh. The work explores a broad spectrum of pianistic possibilities—from dense clusters to sweeping arpeggios—united by an intensely expressive musical language.
Michael Bates' arrangement retains Behrens' complete original composition while illuminating its rhythmic playfulness and the harmonic serenity of its central section. Here, the performers briefly step beyond the written score into improvisation, allowing the music to unfold spontaneously before returning to the work's exuberant spirit.

Poets and Monsters — Jean Sophie Kim (2026) *Lyrics by David Kozatch*
Poets and Monsters is a darkly whimsical nautical fable of love, betrayal, and the dangerous power of imagination. A poet, a pirate, and a monster become entangled in a surreal triangle of desire and deception, where identities shift, loyalties unravel, and the boundaries between creator and creation grow increasingly blurred. Equal parts romantic fantasy and psychological misadventure, the song navigates the treacherous waters between devotion and destruction, with a mischievous sense of humor lurking beneath its darker currents.

THE ARTISTS



Nick Fraser has been an active and engaging presence in the Toronto new jazz and improvised music community since he moved there from Ottawa in 1995. He has worked with a veritable "who's who" of Canadian jazz and improvised music and with such international artists as Tony Malaby, Kris Davis, Marilyn Crispell, Anthony Braxton, and William Parker. Nick's recorded works as a leader include *Owls in Daylight* (1997), *Towns and Villages* (2013), *If There Were No Opposites* (2021), *Farahser* (2024), and *Areas* (2026). For 10 years, he co-led the co-operative group Drumheller, who released four critically acclaimed CDs between 2005 and 2013. Other projects that occupy Nick regularly are the Florian Hoefner Trio, his duo with John Kameel Farah, Ugly Beauties, Peripheral Vision, the Lina Allemano Four, and Titanium Riot.

"Fraser not so much plays the drums as hurls himself whole body and soul against skin and metal... truly talented." Bill Stunt, CBC Radio.

"The Toronto drummer is perhaps a little too progressive for the hidebound Canadian scene... Fraser is a deft and sensitive percussionist with a hint of an enigmatic streak, a feeling for economical gestures, and an innate sense of form." Mark Miller, The Globe & Mail



Saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer Mike McGinnis has been a distinctive voice on the New York music scene for nearly three decades. A genre-defying artist with seven critically acclaimed albums as a leader, he has been named a Rising Star Clarinetist in every *DownBeat* Critics Poll since 2014.

His work spans chamber jazz, experimental music, and large ensembles, including collaborations with jazz luminaries Steve Swallow, Art Lande, Anthony Braxton, and Alice and Ravi Coltrane. In 2024, he led his Seneca Sextet at Carnegie Hall. His acclaimed album *Road*Trip* was named one of *The Village Voice's* 10 Best Jazz Albums of 2013.

Founder of the adventurous Open Stream recording label, McGinnis is also an accomplished arranger and musical director for the Davalois Fearon Dance Company. His diverse credits include Broadway's Tony-winning *Fela!*, collaborations with Yo La Tengo, and performances with Iggy Pop, Jane Birkin, and The Roots.



As a composer and musician, Michael Bates "serves up melodic modernism and contrapuntal elegance" ("Time Out, New York") and his influences range from Shostakovich, Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman to Bad Brains, Wayne Shorter and Joni Mitchell. Known as a both a leader and double bassist in several collectives, he has performed with Quinsin Nachoff, Russ Johnson, Michael Blake, Gerald Cleaver, Dan Weiss, Tyshawn Sorey, Greg Osby, Jeff Davis, Peter Van Huffel, Scott Dubois, Ohad Talmor, Michael Attias, Mike Murley, Shane Endsley, Michael Sarin, Reuben Radding and several others.



Ashley Vandiver joined the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as Fourth Chair Viola in 2018. Acclaimed by the Denver Post as "wonderfully expressive...polished and carefree", the American-born violinist & violist has performed in over 30 countries on five continents.

Prior to joining the TSO, she was a violinist in the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. Since 2014, Ms. Vandiver has enjoyed her summer months as a member of the violin section in The Santa Fe Opera Company Orchestra.

Ashley has performed regularly with the Saint-Paul Chamber Orchestra, Knights NYC, the orchestras of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra, and theNational Ballet of Canada. Before immigrating to Canada in 2012, Ashley was a founding member and rotating Concertmaster of A Far Cry—a Grammy-nominated chamber orchestra. internationally recognized for its performances across the globe and seven albums.

Ms. Vandiver has performed at major chamber music and orchestral festivals across North America and Europe, including, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Yellow Barn, and the Verbier Festival Orchestra where she held the position of Principal Second Violin.

Ashley has served on the String Faculties of the University of Ottawa, Wellesley College (MA), and the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Project STEP, a comprehensive training program for talented children from underrepresented Boston communities. Ms. Vandiver has also been an adjudicator for Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America.
A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music with Distinction in violin performance, she then went on to receive her Master of Music Degree from the Royal Conservatory in the Netherlands. Her principal teachers include Vera Beths, James Buswell, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Laura Bossert.



Pianist and conductor Jean Sophie Kim has performed as a concerto soloist, recitalist and chamber player throughout North America, Europe and East Asia. She has performed at the Alcazar Palace in Seville, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Seoul National Arts Center, and the Banff Centre in Canada, among others.

Her piano teachers include James Tocco, Constance Keene and Sonja Behrens at the Manhattan School of Music and the University of Western Ontario. In 2013, she studied conducting with Simon Carrington at his summer workshop. She has worked with singers from The Metropolitan Opera Guild and the Juilliard Opera Center. Ms. Kim has also performed as a summer resident singer and pianist at the Montparnasse Piano Bar in Mykonos, Greece. In diversifying her skills as a musician, she has pursued song-writing and arranging, and had her original composition and vocal arrangements performed at the Roulette Theater in May of 2016. Jean has also recently worked with award-winning composers from the U.K. Songwriting Academy in London and Spain with performances of original works scheduled for 2017.

Ms. Kim teaches at CUNY's Borough of Manhattan Community College where she teaches theory and piano. She also maintains a private studio of piano, voice and theory students in Manhattan.

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