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New England
Conservatory



Concert Program

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Kroma Quartet

Honors Ensemble

Arun Asthagiri and Clayton Hancock, violin
Nathan Emans, viola
Sophia Knappe, cello

Mai Motobuchi and Ayano Ninomiya, coaches

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Alfred Schnittke
(1934–1998)

String Quartet No. 3
Andante
Agitato
Pesante

Yangfan Xu '25 DMA

Luo Jiang Yuan – A Bit Blue (2019)

Intermission

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

String Quartet in C Major, op. 76 no. 3
"Emperor"
Allegro
Poco adagio – Cantabile
Menuetto: Allegro
Finale: Presto

Final Honors Ensemble Concert

redbird
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Xu Luo Jiang Yuan – A Bit Blue

"Yangfan Xu's 2019 *Luo Jiang Yuan - A Bit Blue*, an episodic single movement work, suggested a tableau of jazzy syncopations and riffs, contrasted with pizzicato pentatonic themes, probably not an unexpected combination from a Chinese-American composer, a protege of Mason Bates." – *San Diego Story*.

Luo Jiang Yuan - A Bit Blue was premiered by the Friction Quartet in San Francisco in 2019, and it won the first prize in the 2020 Hausmann Quartet Composition Competition. Luo Jiang Yuan is the title of a Chinese traditional folk tune and is also the title of a famous “词” (“Ci,” which is a type of poem). In traditional Ci, diverse poems by different poets share the same title and poetic structure. Just like in the jazz tradition, the same tune can be played with infinite interpretations and improvisations.

“Yuan” usually stands for “hatred, blame,” but the meaning in the context of this piece is more akin to unspoken sadness, oppression, and melancholy. The music is lyrical and blue, inspired by Blues music.

– *Yangfan Xu*

The Boston-based **Kroma Quartet** hails from the New England Conservatory and is composed of violinists Clayton Hancock and Arun Asthagiri, violist Nathan Emans, and cellist Sophia Knappe. Together, the four have embarked on a pursuit to realize timeless music with creativity, candor, curiosity, risk-taking, and humor.

Clay takes the stage across the United States and internationally, performing as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician, and he looks at music from new perspectives, reimagining classical beauty. For Arun, music is a form of self-expression that provokes. While being recognized for his chamber and solo performing, he combines his art with a passion for science and technology. Nathan has pursued chamber music intensively with mentorship from the Verona, Borromeo, Omer, and Parker string quartets and attended Tanglewood last summer. Sophia has been praised for her outstanding musicianship, working closely with members of the Borromeo Quartet and performing in Carnegie Hall as a member of the Tre Voce Piano Trio.

The Kroma Quartet won NEC's Honors Ensemble competition in the fall of 2023, which opened the door to many exciting professional and community engagements on their horizons. Notably, they had a residency with the Virginia Arts Festival in April. Tonight's recital is the culmination of their work over the past year.

Outside of performing and rehearsing, the Kroma Quartet enjoys making ice cream floats, playing Nintendo Switch, and laughing with one another.

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