

Welcome

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

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Tuesday Night
New Music

Tuesday, April 11, 2023
8:00 p.m.
Brown Hall

PROGRAM

Ian Wiese

Dorothy Parker Songs (2022)

Theory
The Dramatists
Bohemia
The Last Question
Fair Weather

Madeleine Wiegers, soprano
Qi Liang, piano

Yi Yao

Acnode (2022)

Chihiro Asano, mezzo-soprano
Aleksis Martin, bass clarinet
Diego Martinez, double bass

Quinn Rosenberg

False Spring (2023)

Winter's Bite (Ecodormancy)
Budburst
New Frost/Aftermath

Ronnie Zhang, Abby Reed, violin
Philip Rawlinson, viola
Austin Topper, cello

Stellan Connelly Bettany

Piano Quartet No. 1 (2022)

Shalun Li, piano
Caroline Smoak, Michael Fisher, violin
Sarah Campbell, viola
Jonathan Fuller, cello

李韵琪 Yunqi Li

Dragon Dance 龙舞 (2023)

Zeyi Tian, saxophone

Owen Johnson

Poems by H. D., additional text
by El Johnson

Banded One (2022)

Lethe
Garden
The Pool
Storm
Flute Song

Lucas Hernandez, tenor
Asher Kalfus, cello
Andrew Chen, piano
Rafe Schaberg, celesta

Peter Butler

With Expiring Breath (2022)

Kearston Gonzales, violin

Coco Chapman

Suite for Solo Tenor Saxophone (2023)

Strollin' Along
In the Graveyard
Restless Whisper
May the Forte be With You
The Skedaddle

Shota Renwick, saxophone

Jaden Fogel

The Mayfly (2022)

Tuesday Night New Music was founded in the early 90s by Lee Hyla.

It is a student-run, faculty-supervised concert series that offers the opportunity to hear music by the next generation of composers: current New England Conservatory composition students.

This year, the series is directed by Minoo Dixon and Changjin Ha, under the supervision of composition chair Michael Gandolfi.

Upcoming Tuesday Night New Music Concerts

Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Wiese *Dorothy Parker Songs*

Dorothy Parker Songs engages with the witty and sensual poetry of Dorothy Parker, founding member of the Algonquin Round Table in New York City. Each of her poems focus on some aspect of spurned or hurt love, tinged with self-deprecating humor and palatable sarcasm that allow her words to speak directly to our own experiences in a funny and not melodramatic way.

– Ian Wiese

Theory

Into love and out again,
Thus I went, and thus I go.
Spare your voice, and hold your pen-
Well and bitterly I know
All the songs were ever sung,
All the words were ever said;
Could it be, when I was young,
Some one dropped me on my head?

The Dramatists

A string of shiny days we had,
A spotless sky, a yellow sun;
And neither you nor I was sad
When that was through and done.

But when, one day, a boy comes by
And pleads me with your happiest vow,

“There was a lad I knew —” I’ll sigh;
“I do not know him now.”

And when another girl shall pass
And speak a little name I said,
Then you will say “There was a lass —
I wonder is she dead.”

And each of us will sigh, and start
A-talking of a faded year,
And lay a hand above a heart,
And dry a pretty tear.

Bohemia

Authors and actors and artists and such
Never know nothing, and never know much.
Sculptors and singers and those of their kidney
Tell their affairs from Seattle to Sydney.
Playwrights and poets and such horses’ necks
Start off from anywhere, end up at sex.
Diarists, critics, and similar roe
Never say nothing, and never say no.
People Who Do Things exceed my endurance;
God, for a man that solicits insurance!

The Last Question

New love, new love, where are you to lead me?
All along a narrow way that marks a crooked line.
How are you to slake me, and how are you to feed me?
With bitter yellow berries, and a sharp new wine.

New love, new love, shall I be forsaken?
One shall go a-wandering, and one of us must sigh.
Sweet it is to slumber, but how shall we awaken-
Whose will be the broken heart, when dawn comes by?

Fair Weather

This level reach of blue is not my sea;
Here are sweet waters, pretty in the sun,
Whose quiet ripples meet obediently
A marked and measured line, one after one.
This is no sea of mine. that humbly laves
Untroubled sands, spread glittering and warm.
I have a need of wilder, crueler waves;
They sicken of the calm, who knew the storm.

So let a love beat over me again,
Loosing its million desperate breakers wide;
Sudden and terrible to rise and wane;
Roaring the heavens apart; a reckless tide
That casts upon the heart, as it recedes,
Splinters and spars and dripping, salty weeds.

Dorothy Parker

Yao *Acnode* (2022)

江天一色无纤尘，
皎皎空中孤月轮。
江畔何人初见月？
江月何年初照人？
斜月沉沉藏海秀，
碣石满湘无限路。
不知乘月几人归，
落月摇情满江树。

节选自《春江花月夜》，张若虚 [唐]

No dust has stained the water blending with
the skies.
A lonely wheel-like moon shines brilliant far
and wide.
Who by the riverside did first see the moon
rise?
When did the moon first see a man by
riverside?
In the mist on the sea the slanting moon will
hide.
It's a long way from northern hills to southern
streams.
How many can go home by moonlight on the
tide?
The setting moon sheds o'er riverside trees
but dreams.

*Excerpt from A Moonlit Night On The Spring
River, Zhang Ruoxu, Tang Dynasty, translated
by Xu Yuanchong*

Rosenberg *False Spring*

The term "false spring" refers to an unseasonably warm period in late winter where plants prematurely blossom. They believe spring has come; however, when the cold inevitably returns, the newly flowered plants die out. Anthropogenic carbon emissions have exacerbated the extremity of these fluctuations and pronounced the false spring phenomenon. The three movements sketch this arc: I. Winter's Bite (Ecodormancy) establishes the harsh cold plants endure with their defense tactics. When the winter storm begins to dissipate, they enter II. Budburst, where flowers emerge from their previous dormancy. Finally, in III. New Frost/Aftermath, the winter winds return, killing the newly defenseless blooms and leaving behind an empty landscape, devoid of life.

– Quinn Rosenberg

Li *Dragon Dance*

金龙游九天，
阖家笑开颜。
风舞箫声起，
鼓落盛世安。

Golden dragon swims on blue sky,
Families gather and talk cheerfully.
Wind dances, Xiao sings,
The sounds of drum show
the peace of the world.

Johnson *Banded One*

I found H.D.'s (Hilda Doolittle) poems when looking to compose this song cycle and was struck by their delicate imagery, consistent tone, and dreamlike, distantly allegorical quality. The portrayal of nature in her poems as an emotional entity captured my imagination completely. H.D.'s nature is tender, violent, mischievous, elemental, and hypnotizing all at once. I truly loved these poems, though, at first, they seemed too ephemeral and fleeting without much concrete material to hold on to while setting them.

To remedy this, I enlisted the help of El Johnson, my twin sibling. El is a wonderful writer and person, and one of the few people I trust to talk to about my music with when I am in the first stages of composition. I asked El to react to five of H.D.'s poems in whatever way they saw fit, the only caveat being that I could fragment the reactions and fit them within H.D.'s framework in a way that made sense musically. I then ordered the five poems to create an emotional arc throughout the course of the cycle. In the program, *El's text is in italics* and H.D.'s is in regular typeface.

Words that describe the arc of the piece are: release to compression to release, inaction to action to inaction, emptiness to density to emptiness, distance to closeness to distance, separated to integrated to separated. The exception to this arc is the poem *The Pool*, which centers the work as a moment of stillness, inquiry, and reflection within the denser center. It is also the only poem I asked El not to react to, and the title *Banded One* draws from here as well. I see *The Banded One* as the object of inquiry,

the mercurial character that permeates the text.

The musical language in this cycle deals with the tension of opposites present in the arc of the piece, and explores the extremes of dense and sparse textures, as well as the areas that intersperse and meld the two. In the vocal writing, there is a push-and-pull between more speech-like, rhythmic setting and a more lyrical approach. The cycle is 15 minutes in length.

– Owen Johnson

Lethe

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
 Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
 Nor the fir-tree
 Nor the pine.
Nor sight of whin nor gorse
 Nor river-yew,
Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you,
 Nor of linnet,
 Nor of thrush.
Nor word nor touch nor sight
 Of lover, you
Shall long through the night but for this:
The roll of the full tide to cover you
 Without question,
 Without kiss.

*Covered as I once was by the midday light
Treading gently down a path of skin-soft needles
Plush in their raw forgiveness*

*Blind as I once was to quell your shakes and sooth your needle-sharp skin
Unseeing eyes crying out for lack of understanding*

*Deaf as I once was to bear your darkening cries
Praying for words of absolution without a thought of forgiveness*

Garden

I.
You are clear
O rose, cut in rock,
hard as the descent of hail.

*Clear as the inconsolable depths of the ocean
Clear in nature but never practice*

*Tarnished by that which you cannot control
Turbid but not for lack of trying*

I could scrape the colour
from the petals
like spilt dye from a rock.
If I could break you
I could break a tree.

If I could stir
I could break a tree—
I could break you.

*I could scrape those cool dry bones clean and hollow
I could blow you to pieces.*

II.
O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.
Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat—
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

*I could crush you like a flesh-ridden plum
Ripe with the memories of your fleeting springtime
I could break you in theory, but never in practice*

The Pool

Are you alive?
I touch you.
You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you—banded one?

Storm

You crash over the trees,
brashly, blindly
you crack the live branch—
echoes that stir even the earth-bound pebble
the branch is white,
yet muddled by your shadow
the green crushed,
yet life will teem once again
each leaf is rent like split wood
aching for understanding.

You burden the trees
with black drops,
a confused facade of decay
you swirl and crash—
yet some of you lies still
waiting for a recognition.
you have broken off a weighted leaf
in the wind,
it notices you as it falls, as
it is hurled out,
it understands,
whirls up and sinks,
becoming once again
a green stone
of the callous earth.

Flute Song

Little scavenger away,
touch not the door,
beat not the portal down,
cross not the sill,
silent until
my song, bright and shrill,
breathes out its lay.

Little scavenger stay your hand
Tempt me not with golden lands
a sprightly tune,
a mother's hands

Little scavenger avaunt,
tempt me with jeer and taunt,
yet you will wait to-day;
for it were surely ill

to mock and shout and revel;
it were more fit to tell
with flutes and calathes,
your mother's praise.

*So sing the songs of losing time
What's yours is never truly mine
Just love and loss and dying rhyme.*

Hilda Doolittle

Butler *With Expiring Breath* (2022)

Written for Kearston Gonzales, *With Expiring Breath* is scored for solo violin. Delicate yet haunting in tone, the work draws its name from William Faulkner's seminal novel, *As I Lay Dying*. Beginning with a series of sharp pizzicato notes punctuated by long, shuddering breaths of phrases, the piece evokes a disconcerting scene in *As I Lay Dying* in which a mother lies in her deathbed listening to her son, just outside her window, chopping away, building something that is eventually revealed to be a coffin. The piece slowly expands and contracts before eventually reaching a sort of death rattle in which a final breath is cut short.

– Peter Butler

Chapman *Suite for Solo Tenor Saxophone*

The seed for this set was planted at my first ever studio lesson with Dr. Agócs, when she requested that I find a classmate who plays an instrument with which I am not very familiar and write a piece for them to read. I found a saxophone major in my theory class who was happy to workshop my piece, which at the time was just "Strollin' Along." Dr. Agócs encouraged me to notate the work by hand, which, while time-consuming, was rewarding as I got to walk in the shoes of composers and editors who lived before notation software was prevalent. When Dr. Agócs suggested that I make this piece into a set, I jumped at the opportunity, given that I had enjoyed the process of writing and reading "Strollin' Along." Having attended Berklee's Film, TV, and Video Game Scoring Program in LA last summer, I was inspired to incorporate classic cinematic material into my own work, and over the course of the set, you might notice references from the soundtracks of *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. As I continued to compose short pieces of varying tempos and meters, I greatly enjoyed my collaboration with the talented and charismatic Shota Renwick to realize my artistic vision, which you will hear tonight!

– Coco Chapman

Fogel *The Mayfly*

The Mayfly is a species of fly with a lifespan shorter than 24 hours. As human beings, we experience time through moments but, having worked in the medical field, I

know that there are the unfortunate few who don't make it through a full day. This work explores the experience of those individuals as well as the ones surrounding them. Starting off with a simple melody that is similar to a lullaby, the music grows as each instrument joins. While still gentle, the music reaches a high point, symbolizing the hope of the health care workers, but that music begins dying away as the original lullaby comes back in to conclude the work. Hushed strings resolve a final major chord as the memory and survivors live on.

- Jaden Fogel

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