Concert Program

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Tuesday Night
New Music

Tuesday, May 7, 2024
7:30 p.m.
NEC’s Jordan Hall
PROGRAM

Changjin Ha

Welcome to — (2024)

Changjin Ha, Rotem Eylam, Ian Yoo Kim,
Ai Jian, Mason Ishida, Ian Wiese,
Shawn Lian, Lingbo Ma, Linxi Chen,
Trygve Lebakken, composers

Rotem Eylam

INA (2023)

Chihiro Asano, voice
Honor Hickman, bass flute, piccolo
Dillon Acey, bass clarinet
Njord Kårason Fossnes, viola
Miruna Eynon, cello
Ariel Mo, piano

Ian Yoo Kim

Fall of a Dynasty (2024)

The East Kingdom
Song of the Wise
The Inner Streets
War
Requiem – Fall

Ashley Tsai, Jeremiah Jung, violin
Amelia Kazazian, flute
Sherry Chang, oboe
Herbert Bi, viola
Nahar Eliaz, cello
Dennis McIntyre, double bass
Abel Zhou, Elfi Shi, Ian Yoo Kim,
percussion
Changjin Ha, conductor
Mason Ishida

*Duet Minuet* (2023)

William Kinney, violin
Alex Aranzabal, cello

Frank Sang

*Burnt by the Sun* (2023)

Alex Russell, trombone

Ai Jian

*Eyre* (2024)

Honor Hickman, flute
Yilei Yin, violin
Yuheng Wang, viola

Linxi Chen

*Chatoyant of Somberness* (2023)

Chihiro Asano, soprano
Honor Hickman, alto flute
Isaac Dubow, horn
Philip Rawlinson, viola
Rotem Eylam, electric guitar
Stratis Minakakis, conductor

Changjin Ha

*Romance IX* (2024)

Song Without Words
Romance IX

Songhyeon Kim, piano
Shawn Lian
_Twelve Illusions_ (2024)
Echoes
Spark
Lament
Dance of Mephistopheles
Twelve Stone Statues in an Ancient Temple
Human-faced Snake
Gate of Death
Footsteps in the Empty Valley
Headless Clown
Black Lake
Mirror in Dream
Gate of Life

Jiaqing Luo, piano

Ian Wiese
_Four Short Pieces for Piano_ (2022)
Inversions
Tremolos Rewrite
Ascending and Descending
Chorale

Changjin Ha, piano

Zining Wu
_Sarula_ (2024)
Silver Autumn Morning
Naadam
Sarula’s Eyes

Juchen Wang, saxophone
Ziang Yu, piano

Lingbo Ma
_Quickstep_ (2024)

Chuze Sun, alto saxophone
Yutong Sun, piano
Qingyang Yu  
*I wish* (2024)

Xinyi Yang, guitar  
Qingyang Yu, piano  
Changrong Yan, voice

Lemuel Marc  
*transidiomatic gun-machine for two pianos*  
(2023)

Ariel Mo and Shalun Li, piano

Austin Conrad Smith  
*that being said…* (2024)

Chuze Sun, alto saxophone  
Miruna Eynon, cello  
Austin Conrad Smith, piano

Claire Stephenson  
*I dream of you to wake* (2024)

Isabel Evernham, flute  
Corinne Foley, oboe  
Sarah Cho, clarinet  
Adam Chen, bassoon  
Shaylen Joos, harp  
Corinne Luebke-Brown, Aislin Alancheril,  
    Hannah Miller, soprano  
Anna Poltronieri-Tang, Daniela Pyne,  
    Sianna Monti, alto  
Caroline Smoak, Tara Hagle, violin  
Philip Rawlinson, viola  
Amelia Allen, cello  
Dan Slatch, double bass  
Maggie Storm, conductor
Trygve Lebakken  

*Gradient* (2021)

Jakob Schoenfeld, Liam McMahon,  
Abel Zhou, Danial Kukuk, percussion

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 Changjin Ha and Stellan Connelly Bettany, under the supervision of composition chair Michael Gandolfi.

**Ha  Welcome to — (2024)**
Welcome to — is a five-minute fixed media piece inspired by the Jordan Hall announcement. Initially composed for my own recital, which featured a collage of my works, I have replaced that section with a collage of pieces by the composers in this concert as a preview of the entire event. The voice track is provided by Provost Sosland.

— Changjin Ha

**Eylam  INA (2023)**

INA is here.

— Rotem Eylam

**Kim  Fall of a Dynasty (2024)**

*The East Kingdom*
The traveler’s tale begins! The piece starts with a flute entrance followed by an oboe with the same melody. The melody of the two woodwinds shapes the atmosphere and reminds the traveler where they are. The remaining instruments join the woodwinds to create a grander sound, signaling the discovery of the grand East Kingdom. Finally, after a long journey, the traveler makes it to the East Kingdom.

*Song of the Wise*
The traveler enters the kingdom, when suddenly, a wise old man approaches the traveler. He starts to sing the tales of the East Kingdom. The strings let out an improvisation-like melody one by one. This section of the piece was inspired by my
own grandfather, who used to sing sijo as a hobby (Sijo, an old form of Korean poetry, once popular amongst the nobility during the Joseon Dynasty). Once the old man ends his tales, he leads the traveler to the streets of the kingdom.

The Inner Streets
The traveler is surprised by the inner streets of the kingdom. Unlike the outer walls of the kingdom, the streets are full of lively people enjoying their lives. It is here where the traveler is struck with the cultural colors of the Eastern Kingdom. In this section, the strings in pizzicato try to replicate both the rhythmic and melodic nature of the Gayageum. Because there are occasions where the Gayaguem plucks repeated notes at a fast pace, the strings in this section are instructed to use two fingers rather than one finger when doing pizzicato.

War
The Gong hits and the traveler is confused. Suddenly, the people began singing, the animals started dancing, and the sound of the marching soldiers were getting closer. The type of music in this section is called Samul nori (Samul nori, a traditional rhythmic music combined with folk dances). An intense battle between the East Kingdom and the nomadic tribes of the North commences. The traveler is knocked unconscious during the battle.

Requiem – Fall
Waking up, the traveler heads towards the East Kingdom hoping for its survival. But against his hopes, the kingdom had fallen and only rubble remained. The music played here tries to replicate the sound of Jongmyo Jeryeak (Korean ritual music performed at the Jongmyo shrine for the past rulers of the Joseon Dynasty). It is slow paced and showcases a monophonic melody. The traveler, with nowhere to stay, begins his travels elsewhere. The final melody of the piece is played, signaling the ending of the journey.  

– Ian Yoo Kim

Ishida Duet Minuet (2023)
I wrote this piece as a project for the class composition and tonality in the 18th and 19th centuries.  

– Mason Ishida

Sang Burnt by the Sun (2023)
I still remember when I was living in the dorm on campus at NEC. When I would wake up in the morning with my bed oriented towards the window, the sunlight coming in was like a sword stabbing through my eyes. It hurt a lot. This piece is a reflection of what my eyeballs were suffering, but translated into musical textures. Just like how one sometimes sees narratives playing out with one’s eyes closed, here we have a procession of fantastical events.  

– Frank Sang

Jian Eyre (2024)
Shakespeare said that “love is a madness most discreet, a choking gall and a
preserving sweet.” Eyre is taken from the British novel, Jane Eyre, for my name 简爱 is the Chinese name of this book. It will be a romantic title for my own piece about love. – Ai Jian

Ha  Romance IX (2024)

Romance IX is the last piece in my Romance series that explores unusual aspects of love. It comprises two piano solo pieces inspired by the Schumannian idiom, reflecting on his final moments. The first piece, Song without Words, is a three-minute work sketched in early 2023. It serves as a prelude within the Schumannian atmosphere: it eschews a dramatic climax, focusing instead on subtle yet exquisite details without direct quotations from Schumann.

The second and main piece, Romance IX, delves into the period from when Schumann composed his last work, Geistervariationen WoO 24 (Ghost Variation), to his life’s end. The piece is through-composed based on rough variation design, without any clear cadence to illustrate endless thoughts that emerge and disappear without form. Beginning with my original Romance motif, G-flat—E-flat—D, its variations are layered with the held pedal with the tempo instruction poco a poco pensando - little by little thinking. Soon the individual lines gradually lose their substance, merging into a cluster of directionless thoughts. Then the main melody emerges from diminished sonority and wanders without a definitive cadence. As the piece reaches its climactic point, it abruptly transitions into two direct quotations from Schumann’s Davidsbündlertänze: no. 14. Zart und singend and no. 17. Wie aus Der Ferne. Additional chromatic lines are added to the latter quotation to evoke the impression of his Geistervariationen. The music then returns to the main wandering melody that suddenly ascends to G Major, symbolizing a transcendent end for Schumann. The piece culminates with starlight-like notes that stitch together moments of time, leading to a profound inner confession in the extreme register.

I chose Schumann as the final topic of my Romance series because his music exhibits the truest love for himself. I attempted to look very closely into my own ‘innersten’, instead of focusing on meticulous structural design as usual in my other pieces. This piece would not have come into the world without the help of Songhyeon Kim, the pianist. I thank him for providing his deepest yet brightest musical insight and dedicate this piece to him, my friend. – Changjin Ha

Lian  Twelve Illusions (2024)
The Twelve Illusions features 12 short pieces, each piece represents the illusion that a man experienced before he was tortured to death in a dungeon. – Shawn Lian

Wiese   Four Short Pieces for Piano (2022)

Four Short Pieces for Piano is both an homage to and modelled after the 1961 Four Short Pieces by my late studio teacher, John Heiss. I had the idea to follow his pieces after I had taken the time to orchestrate his 1961 and 2014 anthologies for wind quintet as a gift to him. The first movement, ”Inversions,” is based on inverting the same set of
intervals that appear repeatedly (based on a very short improvisation that I did at the piano). It is also the shortest and most compact of the four, clocking in at only six measures. The second, "Tremolo Rewrite," as the title suggests, is a rewritten version of the tremolos concept that I had for the second movement; the first version of this piece was meandering and dull, so I cannibalized it and created this rewrite. The movement utilizes roughly the same pitch collection written as a vertical (the chords that tremolo) and a horizontal (the descending line that emerges from the chords). The third, "Ascending and Descending," mirrors the first piece in the manner of inverting the same intervals over each other, however, in this case, the intervals of a fourth and a fifth are mapped out between the white and black keys of the piano, staying mostly exclusively to one set of keys or the other. The last movement, "Chorale," imitates the chorale that forms the last of the Heiss 1961 pieces. – Ian Wiese

Wu Sarula (2024)
The name of this work, Sarula in Mongolian, is a female name symbolizing a bright future. I chose this title for two reasons. Firstly, this title can be seen as an expression of my social beliefs: "women" represent the colorful spectrum of life, the gentle force of society, and the symbol of endless possibilities. Their future, like a bright light, illuminates the path ahead, filled with hope and potential. Secondly, this work was commissioned by Juchen Wang and was ultimately created. I also hope that Juchen, who is about to graduate, will have a bright future.

This piece is divided into three movements.

The inspiration for the first movement comes from two lines of poetry by Mongolian poet Bie Yawohulang: "The cracks in the skylight are filled with light, and dawn is imminent." Therefore, traditional Mongolian long tunes were used to compose this movement, expressing a sense of anticipation for dawn. This emotion can be vividly conveyed through the traditional Mongolian long tunes, which often carry profound and distant characteristics, suitable for expressing the waiting and anticipation inherent in the poetry.

The inspiration for the second movement is drawn from the traditional festival and sports competitions of the Mongolian—Naadam. It's a vibrant and enthusiastic scene. The Shaman drum, as a significant instrument during the Naadam festival, carries the atmosphere of the celebration and the emotions of the ethnic group. Its rhythm resembles the heartbeat of the grassland, igniting people's passion and vitality. The structure of this movement is designed to be rhythmic and compact, reflecting the dynamic energy of the Naadam festival. It aims to immerse the audience in the ambiance of the Naadam festival, allowing them to experience the unique charm and lively spirit of the Mongolian ethnic group.

The third movement, Sarula's Eyes, carries a profound symbolism and emotion within the music. The title embodies themes of feminine strength, wisdom, and aspirations. In this movement, the use of air-tone and its unique development in tone
color creates an atmosphere reminiscent of distant winds, imbued with mystery and depth. The progression of the music, from afar to nearby, symbolizes the gradual recognition and understanding of women's inner strength and wisdom and in the third movement of this piece, may every woman's eyes shine with clarity, infusing their lives and futures with strength and hope, and may they all realize their dreams, showcasing their infinite charm and wisdom.

– Zining Wu

Ma  Quickstep (2024)
This short encore piece, a scherzo-dance in nature, was written for saxophonist Chuze Sun. The piece is developed entirely on the opening 3-note motive and has an upbeat and playful character.

– Lingbo Ma

Yu  I wish (2024)
I took a lyric from pop song, and Chinese folk song, I wish to say thanks to NEC and my all my fellows and teachers.

– Qingyang Yu

Stephenson  I dream of you to wake (2024)
This piece is a setting of the Christina Rossetti poem I dream of you to wake from Monna Inominata.

– Claire Stephenson

I dream of you, to wake: would that I might
Dream of you and not wake but slumber on;
Nor find with dreams the dear companion gone,
As, Summer ended, Summer birds take flight.
In happy dreams I hold you full in night.
I blush again who waking look so wan;
Brighter than sunniest day that ever shone,
In happy dreams your smile makes day of night.
Thus only in a dream we are at one,
Thus only in a dream we give and take
The faith that maketh rich who take or give;
If thus to sleep is sweeter than to wake,
To die were surely sweeter than to live,
Though there be nothing new beneath the sun.

Christina Rossetti

Lebakken  Gradient (2021)
Gradient (2021) is a piece for percussion quartet that was created in collaboration with the UW - Madison Chamber Percussion Ensemble. The concept of a “gradient” abstractly refers to a “change in” some quantity, typically elevation or height. This piece is unique due to the fact that all of its musical elements are constructed from the title alone. The idea of a “gradient” produces two main motives: a crescendo of consecutive notes and a crescendo of consecutive notes followed by a decrescendo of consecutive notes. Each player, only having a wood block, a metal keyboard
instrument, and a drum, is assigned one of the common SATB roles for all their instruments, creating a pitch gradient across the ensemble. As the two motives develop and all players gradually switch from woods to metals to membranes, the piece reveals that its macroscopic elements of structure and narrative exactly reflect the microscopic motives they are built with. Additionally, the idea to have timbre define form in the piece came from Mark Rothko’s paintings in which he uses large swaths of a homogeneous color to define form. The haziness of the colors’ boundaries and the perceptibility of individual brush strokes in his paintings also inspired how the timbral sections of this piece blend together at the edges with individual crescendi and decrescendi mirroring Rothko’s individual brushstrokes that make up his works.

– Trygve Lebakken
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