

Cleveland Composers Guild

presents

An Afternoon of Chamber Music

Sunday, February 16, 2025 | 3pm

West Shore Unitarian Church
20401 Hilliard Blvd | Rocky River

Works by

MARGI GRIEBLING-HAIGH

CARA HAXO | CHRIS NEINER

INNA ONOFREI | NICHOLAS PUIN

RYAN CHARLES RAMER

MATTHEW SAUNDERS

STEPHEN STANZIANO

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Performances by

MARIA BEYENS | MEGAN DENMAN | SEAN GABRIEL | LAUREN GILES

SCOTT HAIGH | NATHAN HILL | MAGGIE JOHNS | KHARI JOYNER

KYRA KESTER | SUNGEUN KIM | CHRIS NEINER | JAZMIN PASCUAL

BRENDON PHELPS | LOREN REASH-HENZ | BARTON SAMUEL ROTBERG

MATTHEW SAUNDERS | LINDA WHITE



Cleveland Composers Guild
2024-2025 Season
Concert 2: An Afternoon of Chamber Music

Sunday, February 16, 2025 | 3:00pm
West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church
Rocky River, Ohio

Program

Le Coeur a Ses Raisons Que la Raison Ne Connaît Point

Ryan Charles Ramer

Linda White, piccolo

Verbs of Perception

Cara Haxo

Matthew Saunders, trombone Megan Denman, piano

Sieben Zungenbrecher Lieder

Margi Griebeling-Haigh

Loren Reash-Henz, baritone Scott Haigh, bass
Megan Denman, piano

A Different Perspective

Nicholas Puin

Nathan Hill, piano

Intermission

Lullabies

Inna Onofrei

Tiny One
Night Has Come
Land of Dreams
Lullaby
Sweet Dreams
Magic Moss

Lauren E. Giles, soprano Maggie Johns, piano

Among the living

Stephen Stanziano

Sean Gabriel, Kyra Kester , and Linda White, flutes

Piano Trio

Matthew C. Saunders

Barton Samuel Rotberg, violin Khari Joyner, violoncello
Sungeun Kim, piano

Tales of Euclid Beach Park

Chris Neiner

IV. Hills, Thrills, and Flying Turns

Jazmin Pascual, clarinet Maria Beyens, violin
Brendon Phelps, violoncello Chris Neiner, piano

Composers—Music—Performers

RYAN CHARLES RAMER has been an active member of the Cleveland Composers Guild since 2012. He composes for chamber ensemble, choir, orchestra, stage productions, solo voice, and many works for keyboard. He has a special interest in writing nostalgic videogame music (VGM). YouTube has two full-length albums of his VGM, as well as complete run-through videos of *King's Quest I, II, and III* for which Ramer provided a VGM score (the game originally had no music.). He continues to explore new ways of combining VGM with live performers.

LE CŒUR A SES RAISONS QUE LA RAISON NE CONNAÎT POINT is a quote from Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*. Translated, “The heart has its reasons that Reason knows nothing of.” This title conveys the romantic, expressive nature of the piccolo part, while the electronic accompaniment seems to know nothing of Love or Reason, with its cool, detached, timbres associated with signal processing and old-school videogames. Yet together, this duet (of-sorts) can truly express something from the heart.

Flutist **LINDA WHITE** excels in an array of musical styles and plays the entire spectrum of flutes from the piccolo to contrabass flute. She is an avid chamber musician and champion of contemporary music. Linda regularly collaborates with the composers of The Cleveland Composers Guild, performs on the annual Local 4 Musician’s Union She Scores series, and is a member of the Cleveland Chamber Collective. She regularly performs with classical guitarist Robert Gruca as part of the Gruca White Ensemble. Linda holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Wyoming and a master’s degree from The Cleveland Institute of Music.

DR. CARA HAXO’s music juxtaposes delicate, sparkly textures with the gritty and the grotesque. She has received commissions from the May Festival Youth Chorus, Hub New Music, Quince Ensemble, and Splinter Reeds. A native of Massachusetts, Haxo earned a doctorate in composition at the University of Oregon and also holds degrees from Butler University and The College of Wooster. Haxo is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Music at The College of Wooster and an Academic Dean and faculty member for The Walden School Young Musicians Program.

When Matt and I first discussed **VERBS OF PERCEPTION**, our conversations included talks of the opera *Carmen*—the piece that introduced Matt to classical music—and his father’s love of the French language. Much of our conversation reminded me of my own grandfather, a physical chemist with a lifetime love for opera and French, who pursued classes in both areas during his retirement. Shortly after, I came across a set of flashcards in my grandfather’s handwriting. One card labeled *Verbs of perception* immediately caught my attention. While the piece eventually drifted away from this initial concept, certain motifs remained.

DR. MATTHEW C. SAUNDERS is a Northeast Ohio composer, conductor, trombonist, husband, and father. He draws inspiration from the vastness of space, the waterways and forests, mountains and prairies of America, the motion of atoms, and the mysteries of existence, but most importantly from collaboration with other musicians and his students. Dr. Saunders is a lover of both solitude and camaraderie, Cincinnati-style chili, road trips, movies, and random facts. He lives in Willowick with his wife Becky and their two children.

MEGAN DENMAN is a freelance musician from Lakewood, Ohio. She holds a bachelor’s degree from in piano performance from Baldwin Wallace University, and master’s degree in piano performance from University of Akron. Ms. Denman is a seasoned piano accompanist and maintains a thriving private piano studio based in Cleveland. Her working knowledge of jazz and improvisation permeates her teaching and playing. Megan has served as pianist for Windsong Feminist Chorus since 2023.

MARGI GRIEBLING-HAIGH’S music has been characterized as haunting, charismatic, yearning, lyrical, and insouciant. She has been Composer-in-Residence at the Kent/Blossom Music Festival since 2011 and has recently been commissioned by the International Double Reed Society, Stetson University, and the International Society of Bassists. A recording of repertoire for soprano and eight cellos, *Voices from the Other Side*, featuring two of her works, was released in September 2024, and Ms. Griebing-Haigh is self-producing the world premiere of her opera *The Higgler* in June 2025.

SIEBEN ZUNGENBRECHER LIEDER (Seven Tongue Twister Songs)

- I. Klitzekleine Kinder können keinen Kirschkern knacken!
Little tiny children cannot crack cherry stones.
- II. Wir Wiener Waschweiber würden weiße Wäsche waschen, wenn wir wüssten, wo warmes Wasser wäre.
We Viennese washerwomen would wash white laundry, if we knew where warm water was.
- III. Zwei zottelige Ziegen zogen Zement zum Zoo.
Two shaggy goats dragged cement to the zoo.
- IV. Graben Grabengräber Gruben? Graben Grubergräber Gräben? Grabengräber graben Gräben. Grubengräber graben Gruben.
Do gravediggers dig ditches? Do ditchdiggers dig graves? No! Gravediggers dig graves. Ditchdiggers dig ditches.
- V. Nickende Nichten dösen unter blichten wippende Fichten. Nickende Nichten niesen! Die Nichten haben keine Pflichten.
Nodding nieces doze under the sparse, bobbing spruce trees. Nodding nieces sneeze! The nieces have no responsibilities.
- VI. Er seiner Liebe kleine Lieder sang. Er sang leider lauter laute Lieder zur Laute.
He sang little songs to his love. Unfortunately, he sang loud songs to the lute.
- VII. Jede gesunde Katze frißt frisch Fisch.
Every healthy cat eats fresh fish.

LOREN REASH-HENZ, baritone, is a captivating performer with an expressive voice and commanding stage presence. Loren has most recently performed as Karl Marx in *Elizabeth Cree*, John Styx in *Orphée aux enfers*, both at the University of Michigan, and as Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Festival of International Opera Italia. A Cleveland native, Loren has performed with Apollo’s Fire as Papageno in scenes of *Die Zauberflöte*, and as an ensemble member in the touring production *O Jerusalem!*

SCOTT HAIGH, double bass, joined the Cleveland Orchestra in 1978 and served in the position of First Assistant Principal from 1980 until his retirement in 2022. Mr. Haigh received a bachelor of music degree from Northwestern University and has held teaching positions with Baldwin Wallace University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, Kent State University, Oberlin College, and the University of Akron. He continues to teach and coach chamber music at the Kent/Blossom Music Festival. He enjoys spending time visiting his daughter, son-in-law, and grandson in Chicago.

A native Clevelander, **NICHOLAS PUIN** holds a Bachelor’s of Music Composition Degree from The Berklee College of Music, a Master’s of Music Composition Degree and an Ohio Teaching Certificate from Cleveland State University. His compositions and arrangements have been performed by members of The Cleveland Orchestra, The Cleveland Chamber Symphony, The Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, The Singing Angels, The Bop Stop Jazz Unit and most recently The Baldwin-Wallace University and The Case-Western University Jazz Ensembles.

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE begins with an introduction comprised of a recurring eighth-note motive. This motive is prevalent throughout the work, contributing to a large part of its identity and serving as a segue connecting one section to another. Alternating between sections in E minor and F minor, a variety of themes appear and finally combine before yielding to the connecting eighth-note motive. This unusual format explains the title.

NATHAN HILL is in the 11th grade at St. Edward High School in Lakewood. He has performed in the OMEA Junior Festival at Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory for the past five years, accumulating top ratings and earning him two gold cups for the Piano Solo event. He has been playing the piano for over ten years and plans to make a career of it. He has been looking at conservatories such as Juilliard, Indiana University, Oberlin and Northwestern. Mr. Hill is a student of Coren Estrin Mino.

INNA ONOFREI (Saakova) is an Armenian-American composer and educator living in the Cleveland area. Among the awards and prizes Onofrei has received are Stavropol State Competition for Young Composers, KatePublishing Composition Competition, and HerVoice Composition Competition. One of Onofrei's compositions, written in 1997 about her hometown, Nevinnomyssk, was adopted as the town's anthem. She holds a bachelor's degree from Stavropol State College of Arts, and masters degrees in piano performance and composition from Cleveland State University.

LULLABIES

I. Tiny One
Softly, gently, night has come;
Lay your head down, tiny one;
See the stars as they wink goodnight;
See the moon sending you some light;

Close your little eyes and dream;
Soon you'll see the sun;
Rest in peaceful slumber, dear,
oh sweet tiny one.
—Cheryl Williams

II. Night has come
Night has come
Tiny one
It's time to close your eyes.
Sun is sleeping
Stars are twinkling
And moon is shining bright.

Night has come
Little one
Sweet dreams will come your way
Stars are winking
Sun is sleeping
Til a brand new day
—Cheryl Williams

III. Land of Dreams
May the land of dreams find you, my child.
May your slumber be peaceful and mild.
May the stars shine bright through the night.

May the sun wake you with her light.
Dream, my angel, sweet dreams.
Dream, my darling, sweet dreams.
—Cheryl Williams

IV. Lullaby
Sweet dreams will come your way
The sun brings a brand new day
For now just close your eyes
As I sing this lullaby

The moon shines down on you
The stars are twinkling too
May God in Heaven above
Bless you with His love.
—Cheryl Williams

V. Sweet Dreams
Sweet dreams my darling, the day is done.
The moon is here to say goodnight to the sun.
Gather your blankets and climb into bed.
Close your eyes and lay down your head.

Rest for now with peaceful dreams,
Of twinkling stars and shining moon beams.
Sweet dreams my darling, sweet dreams my love,
Sweet dreams my precious gift from above.
—Kimberly L. Brennan-Smith

VI. Сонная Трава
Дальний лес стоит стеной.
А в лесу, в глуши лесной,
На суку сидит сова.
Там растёт усни-трава.

Говорят, усни-трава
Знает сонные слова.
Как шепнёт свои слова,
Сразу никнет голова.

Я сегодня у совы
Попрошу такой травы.
Пусть тебе усни-трава
Скажет сонные слова.
—Irina Tokmakova

VI. Magic Moss
In the Forest thick as wall.
In the peaceful darkness,
Owl is resting on a branch.
Watching over magic moss.

They say, sleepy, magic moss
Knows a lot of sleepy spells
You will close your eyes at last
As it speaks its magic spells

I will ask an owl that rests
Just a pinch of magic moss
Just a pinch of sleepy moss
That speaks magic, sleepy spells.
—trans. Inna Onofrei

MAGGIE JOHNS is a doctoral student in piano performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music and hold a bachelor's degree in piano performance from the University of Maryland. Her career as a pianist has taken her through New York, Florida, the District of Columbia, and beyond. Maggie recently won 2nd prize in the 2023 American Virtuoso International Music Competition as well as 2nd Prize in the 1st International Music Competition in 2022.

Soprano **LAUREN E. GILES** has been performing since she was a teen, and she primarily teaches voice in Cleveland Heights. She graduated magna cum laude from Marietta College in 2023 with a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and a Certificate of Vocal Pedagogy. She was the twice-consecutive winner of Marietta College's Vocal Jury Prize, a member of the Mu Psi Kappa, and completed her training under dramatic soprano Dr. Amy Yekel.

DR. STEPHEN STANZIANO is an active composer, educator, and bassist in Northeast Ohio, and holds a doctorate in music theory and composition from Kent State University. His works have been performed by the Cleveland Chamber Collective, guitarist Jason Vieaux, baritone Andrew White, violist Lisa Boyko, flautist Peter Bloom, and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. He is and on the music faculty at Cleveland State University, Hiram College, and Lakeland Community College.

AMONG THE LIVING is scored for C flute, alto flute, and bass flute, and is a post-pandemic homage to survivors. This work offers hope, positivity, and resiliency to all of us moving forward. The opening motive is consonant and layered in counterpoint. The following section contains a more urgency as an upward modulation of the opening section, continuing the contrapuntal texture. The contrasting B section is dissonant and emphasizes a descending augmented triad, adding to the instability. The C section features an up-tempo swing feel, employing homorhythmic texture. The opening music returns as the piece comes to a reflective close.

SEAN GABRIEL earned performance degrees from the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music and the Indiana University School of Music. Sean is currently the principal flutist of the Blue Water Chamber Orchestra and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. He is also a member of the Erie Philharmonic and is solo flutist of the No Exit new music ensemble. Sean serves on the music faculties of Baldwin Wallace University and Cleveland State University.

KYRA KESTER is a member of the Akron Symphony and has performed with The Cleveland Orchestra, the Pittsburgh, Detroit and Nashville Symphonies, and the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra. Ms. Kester has taught at Hiram College, Kent State University and the Cleveland Institute of Music Preparatory Department. She is a member of the flute quartet Idle Twittering and holds a bachelor's degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

DR. MATTHEW SAUNDERS: SEE BIO ABOVE

PIANO TRIO was commissioned by violinist Orieta Dado in 2009. In my compositional development, it was one of a series of pieces intended to strengthen my ability to compose musical structures of longer duration with limited material. I attempted to construct the piece so that no single section could be construed to stand on its own. I was inspired by proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem, but there is no explicit connection to be found in the music.

DR. BARTON SAMUEL ROTBERG has been a featured soloist with numerous orchestras including the Erie Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh Philharmonic, Amherst Chamber Orchestra and Warren Philharmonic. He currently serves as concertmaster for the Ashland Symphony Orchestra. He teaches at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Performing Arts, the Baldwin Wallace Community Arts School Conservatory Summer Institute, and Oberlin College's Community Music School.

DR. KHARI JOYNER has a following both nationally and abroad as a versatile concert cellist, chamber musician and ambassador for the arts. He has made numerous guest appearances with orchestras and ensembles across the world, including two recent performances of Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No. 1 and Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Joyner is assistant professor of cello at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Performing Arts.

DR. SUNGEUN KIM is professor of piano at the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Performing Arts. A winner of the Virginia Waring International Piano Competition, she has appeared as soloist with the Russian Federal Orchestra in the Moscow Conservatory's Bolshoi Hall, and Banff Festival Orchestra. She has given master classes at Sook Myung Women's University, the Cleveland International Piano Competition Young Artists Institute, and Summer Sonata at Cleveland Institute of Music. Dr. Kim also teaches piano at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory Summer Institute.

CHRIS NEINER is a Cleveland-based composer, performer, and educator. His commissions include *Time Machine Hyperboles* for NO EXIT New Music Ensemble, *Tales of Euclid Beach Park* for Stars in the Classics, and *4 X 4* for the Ohio Music Teachers Association. Neiner's work has been praised. Currently, Neiner is the Artist-in-Residence for Solich Piano, Associate Director for the Sunday Studio Series, and Composition Faculty for the Aurora School of Music. Neiner has also gained a reputation as a highly sought-out arranger and music editor.

HILLS, THRILLS AND FLYING TURNS depicts the three most important roller coasters at Euclid Beach Park. The Racing Coaster (1913) featured a pair of adjacent tracks where trains raced alongside each other. The Thriller (1924) was the fastest, tallest, and most popular coaster. The most innovative roller coaster was the Flying Turns (1930). Its two-seater cars became especially popular with couples earning it a mention in the 1965 Beach Boys song "Amusement Parks U.S.A." Buckle up and enjoy the ride!

Clarinetist **JAZMIN PASCUAL** was born in Aguascalientes, Mexico and is currently an undergraduate student at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Jazmin made her debut as soloist with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Aguascalientes in 2016 and has participated in a number of competitions earning prizes and awards such as second and first prizes at Tuesday Musical Scholarship Competition 2022, Cleveland Institute of Music Concerto Competition (2023) and Artist Presentation Society top prize in 2023

MARIA BEYENS, from Seoul, South Korea, holds a bachelor's degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University. Maria plays with Firelands Symphony, Erie Philharmonic, Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Mansfield Symphony, and Stars in the Classics. In addition to music, she is also a professional chef and has worked with a James Beard-awarded chef. Maria also enjoys playing piano and dancing.

BRENDON PHELPS' credits include a chamber music recital in Weill Recital Hall, a world music concert at Princeton University, and chamber music recitals in both Casa de la Musica in Quito, Ecuador and the International Mendelssohn Festival. He is a core musician with the salon chamber music series M.U.S.i.C. Stars in the Classics, cellist for Singers Company VoxMix Ensemble, and has performed events for Tuesday Musical and Apollo's Fire. Brendon holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, Montclair State, and the University of Akron.



Upcoming Performances

Our 2024-2025 Season

Join us during our 67th season for music for organ, strings, voices, and much more, in exciting venues across Northeast Ohio!

New Music for Organ | October 20, 2024 | 3pm

Morley Memorial Hall | Lake Erie College | Painesville

Guild members in collaboration with members of the American Guild of Organists

Chamber Music | February 16, 2025 | 3pm

West Shore Unitarian Church | Rocky River

Duos, trios, and quartets by Guild members, and our Collegiate Composition Contest winner.

Poiesis Quartet | March 16, 2025 | 3pm

Drinko Hall | Cleveland State University

The Graduate Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music presents works by Guild members.

Chamber Music and Sestina Choir | April 13, 2025 | 3pm

Holy Rosary Church | Little Italy

A program of chamber and choral works presented in collaboration with Sestina Choir of Cleveland's soaring voices.

Creativity: Learning Through Experience XXXIII | May 18, 2025 | 3pm

The Music Settlement | University Circle

Latest edition of our annual Junior Concert! Works written specially for young musicians by Cleveland Composers Guild members.

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