



department of music
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

STUDENT RECITAL SERIES

presents the

Composers' Forum

December 11, 2025, 7:30 pm
Doudna Fine Arts Center
Recital Hall

Program

Piano Suite
II. "Wandering"

Jake Reeley, piano

Jake Reeley

Song Of Sorrow
Re-Scored from Grave of the Fireflies

Fixed Stereo Media, Video

Alene Maxstadt

Sleeping In The Forest

Makayla McPhedran

Makayla McPhedran, mezzo soprano
Caden VanSwol, tuba
Jake Reeley, piano

Dance in Gb Major Op. 1 No. 2 "Calypso"

Ben Schwarberg

Kyle Rennier, soprano saxophone
MJ Jarrell, alto saxophone
Wes Stabler, tenor saxophone
Carter Davis, baritone saxophone

Infohazardous

Brielle Dukovac

Grace Warszalek, flute
Addison Willis, clarinet
Jackson Mortland, snare drum
Merris McDuffie, piano

Field Mice Do Not Belong in the House

Alene Maxstadt

Kate Aldridge, clarinet
Kyle Rennier, alto saxophone
Merris McDuffie, piano

Embarras

Jake Reeley

Elizabeth Rickfelder, flute
Ethan Schobernd, oboe
Addison Willis, clarinet
Karina Herrera Zambrano, horn
Jay Dawson, bassoon
Jake Reeley, piano

Flowstones

Jackson Mortland

Cora Tutterow, vibraphone

Megan Garcia, marimba

Jackson Mortland, handpan/timpani/kalimba

Claire Kersh, crotales/claves

Xavier Brown, bass drum/bell chain

TJ Hansen, tam-tam

Kayleah Colvin, wood blocks/cymbals/rain stick/wind chimes/frog guiro

PROGRAM NOTES:

The second movement of the **Piano Suite** was written using a twelve tone row. The row was split in half, representing the left and right hands. Each hexachord of the row was then transposed based on the intervallic relationship of each note to the next. This created the harmonic and melodic framework of the piece. It is sectioned into six pieces, the prime row, and five transpositions. The work is an adventure in harmony, representing the feeling of wandering without home.

-JR

Song of Sorrow

Grave of the Fireflies is a 1988 film by Isao Takata, based off of the short story of the same name by author Akiyuki Nosaka. The book is a semi-autobiographical story based on Nosaka's experiences before, during, and after the firebombing of Kobe, Japan in 1945, during the Pacific War. The film adaptation follows two war-orphaned siblings, Seita and his sister Setsuko, living through the end of this war, and later, the journey their spirits take as they revisit their lives and the moments that lead to their deaths.

The scene presented today is from the movie chapter entitled "**Song of Sorrow**", showing the end of the sibling spirits' journey. These final two minutes of the film were muted and imported into Logic Pro, and the music you hear accompanying the scenes today was composed entirely in the DAW. I sorted through the moments of these two minutes, putting them into sections and giving them each a distinctive theme. Seita's mourning has its own, in the mid- to low- range piano, and Setsuko's is characterized by a higher-pitched violin. The imagery of fireflies is constant throughout the entire chapter, as part of the film's title, and that constant is heard from beginning to end by using bell chimes. The chimes are processed in a variety of ways, to keep them randomized but consistent, almost as observers of the two siblings. A part of their past, but also in abundance in the present, the sound of a firefly is the very last voice to be heard. As the journey comes to an end, the war-torn siblings are able to look out over a view of the present-day city of Kobe – the fireflies accompanying them for a view of what their future could have been.

-AM

Sleeping in the Forest is an art song for voice, tuba and piano. I lucked out that these are the three instruments I most know how to play, but they also make the most sense for the piece- voice and piano are integral to an art song set to a poem, but tuba works for a low, dark forest sound.

For those who know pitch classes, notice the first tuba melody is spelled <3, 2,4, 2, 0,00-my birthday, March 24th, 2000! The art song is through-composed, split into five sections based on the five sentences in the poem. Many different techniques I learned in Intro to Music Composition (such as polychords, imitation and use of the whole-tone scale) are included to invoke the actual sensory experience that I imagine one would have sleeping in the forest.

The words are taken from the beautiful poem of the same name by Mary Oliver, which is here:

Sleeping in the Forest

*I thought the earth remembered me, she
took me back so tenderly, arranging
her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds. I slept
as never before, a stone
on the riverbed, nothing
between me and the white fire of the stars
but my thoughts, and they floated
light as moths among the branches
of the perfect trees. All night
I heard the small kingdoms breathing
around me, the insects, and the birds
who do their work in the darkness. All night
I rose and fell, as if in water, grappling
with a luminous doom. By morning
I had vanished at least a dozen times
into something better.*

-MM

"**Calypso**" is a single-movement piece for saxophone quartet meant to capture the image of a sunny day on the islands of the Caribbean. As a music and dance genre, calypso hails from Trinidad and Tobago and is typically light-hearted, playful, and celebratory in tone. In accordance with its namesake, "Calypso" features both this unworried, fun-loving demeanor and several complex interlocking rhythms – another element typical of the calypso. New melodies and rhythms take over after every appearance of the main theme heard at the beginning of the piece.

-BS

Infohazardous

When a person dies, according to the theory of "quantum immortality," their consciousness will be instantly transported to a reality where they miraculously survive. Relief follows; that is, until the realization hits that there is no way out of living once it has begun. A person survives every medical emergency, attempts on their life, and defies old age. All that is left is to live forever in an empty universe for infinite eternities in a decaying body.

In those last twenty seconds of brain activity once a person dies, I believe you will experience what you expect your afterlife to be--heaven, hell, nirvana, or nothing--for what

could feel like forever. Any idea that is a plausible depiction of the afterlife to an individual has the potential to be infohazardous: it may cause harm just from a person knowing it.

This individual has just learned of the concept of quantum immortality and is thoroughly convinced that this will be their afterlife. They now must grapple with the new fate they have sealed for themselves. The piece leads the listener through the realization, panic, dread, and ultimate fate of the individual.

-BAD

Field Mice Do Not Belong In The House

As someone who spends a great deal of time in an old farmhouse, I've seen my fair share of field mice. Tiny, fluffy, very cute – but also very, very good at getting into the house rather than staying in their namesake burrows and homes. This piece is intended to tell the story of the journey of these field mice as they make their way into (and out of) the old house. The two woodwind voices are the “mice” of the piece, while the piano dances around them to add depth, texture, and fun dynamic character to tie everything together. The harmonic and melodic content is based around pitches that are derived from the same numerical series, putting this series into a variety of different orders, intervals, and lengths throughout the piece. "Field Mice Do Not Belong In The House" is organized into four different sections; the introductory two sections portray the journey of the mice into the house, followed by a short, dance-like moment where they explore the plentiful cabinets of food and excellent nesting materials. To end their journey, the mice's small victory is interrupted by another rapid, hectic closing section as the mice are chased from the house, presumably by the cat, back into the safety of the fields they reside in. And a word of advice, in case the musical journey of these field mice heads to your house next: mice tend to prefer peanut butter over cheese.

-AM

Embarras was inspired directly by Ravel and Liszt's "Jeux D'eaux", pieces about water.

Taking other inspirations by composers like Francis Poulenc, Qigang Chen, Takashi Yoshimatsu, and Julia Wolfe, the piece flows from section to section, like a river flows through the land. Embarras uses extended techniques to emulate the sound of water and other natural soundscapes.

-JR

Flowstones

Inspired by the "Great Stalacpipe Organ" in the Luray Caverns in Virginia, this piece aims to capture the different rooms and spaces found in a cave, bringing forward large levels of resonance and reverb to achieve the space of these caverns.

Each movement of this piece captures a different part of the cave each. “Cavernous” looks to mimic the sound of the "Stalacpipe Organ" as much as possible, along with the wood block aiming to mimic the sounds of water dripping off of different stalactites within the cave itself. "Grandiose" looks to evoke the feelings of an extremely large cave room that has

fallen in on itself and made a cathedral of sorts. This movement is extremely slow to match these extreme and large spaces found in these kind of rooms. "Subterranean River" is the fastest of all of the movements, evoking the fast and hectic environment found within underground rivers and streams. These kinds of water features can often be dangerous as well, as you can end up in complete darkness with little to no sign of what direction is up or where you came from. "Crystalline" is a much more delicate movement, pulling from the sounds and visuals of geode-like rooms and spaces found within caves. These crystal "ballrooms" of sort can be seen as a very delicate, yet very immense structure to be found within these caves. "Light", finally, is meant to represent the final exiting of the cave, looking back into it and reflecting on what has happened, yet being drawn out from the cave with the sounds of the mountains and outside world. The darkness is to be left behind, but not forgotten.

-JM