



# Crowden

*Music changes everything*

CROWDEN MUSIC CENTER PRESENTS

## *John Adams Young Composers Program Spring Concert*

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2021 | 7PM

Piano Quintet in D Minor.....Kai Matera

Hi everyone, my name is Kai Matera! I've been a part of the program for 3 years now, and my composition, titled *Piano Quintet in D Minor* is (who could've guessed) a piano quintet: a pianist, two violinists, a violist and a cellist. The long piano solo at the end of the beginning section is intended to sound powerful and fierce, almost in a Rachmaninoff-style manner. I remember improvising this part on the piano to get it to my liking, and I ended up revising it at least 50 times. The chord progressions are structured in a way where it almost feels like the music is suppressing intense anger up until the very end of the solo.

My original intention was to have the piano quintet I myself am part of play the piece, but I was discouraged by Crowden to pursue this. Luckily since I was in John Adams Young Composers Program, I could get it played anyways! I'm nervous but excited to hear it played live today, and my hope is that you enjoy it as well.

Reflections .....Francisco Xavier Hurtado

Hi, my name is Cisco and this is the piece that I composed over this semester's program.

I wrote this piece for guzheng and piano. I really enjoy these two instruments, as they are both very interesting and expressive instruments. I find the sound of the guzheng is particularly special. It's a plucked zither - which means the strings of the instrument are exposed and the instrumentalist must interact with the strings directly. The strings can be picked, plucked, strummed, pushed, and so forth to create sound. The softness of the piano and the acuteness of the guzheng pair together to make what I think is a very beautiful combination.

This piece is titled *Reflections*. I wanted to portray the feeling of ricochets, reflections, refractions, and other echoing motions in my piece. I did things like write certain passages with repeating rhythms, only changing the notes. I incorporated softness and spaciousness to mimic the ripples of water in a lake. Overall, whatever came to mind in accordance to “reflections” I incorporated to some degree within my piece in a way that I found fitting.

Warmth .....Steven Lee

My name is Steven Lee and I’ve been composing with the John Adams Young Composers Program for 4 years. This piece is for violin, viola, cello, and piano, and is titled *Warmth*, in order to describe emotional warmth. The piece is narrative in a sense, with how the strings are meant to contrast the piano sections, and it was composed in a generally much looser way than my previous compositions with this program. In that sense, I’m not sure if it can be considered as ‘good.’ I think that nervousness is part of what makes this composition meaningful to me, though. Being with it has been comforting to me, and I hope it can be for you, too.

The Bonsai Tree.....Lukas Moy

*The Bonsai Tree* is for an irregular quartet of piano, trombone, cello, and oboe. I did some research on Bonsai trees before beginning the writing process, and the fascinating thing is that Bonsai trees are just normal trees that are cared for in very specific ways to make them small. If someone were to take a Bonsai and plant it in the ground, it would proceed to just grow into a normal tree. So I made that the focal point of my piece—a Bonsai growing from something tiny and frail, sending out tendrils in every direction, slowly engulfing the room around it while gathering more and more strength—and eventually, bursting through the roof to drink direct sunlight for the first time. That is a lot of drama to try to evoke in a work, and I think I bit off a bit more than I could chew this semester, planning (and executing) a 7-minute piece, double of what I usually try to write. Still, I am very pleased with *The Bonsai Tree*, and I hope you enjoy!

A Conversation Between the Young and Elderly..... Benjamin Burleson

Written for violin and cello, this piece is about a child and his grandpa who are arguing with each other over a topic they had long since forgotten. As the grandfather attempts to reason with the child, he slowly loses patience as the child refuses to listen, always wanting the last word.

Parting Ways .....Christian Jones

My piece is a string quartet titled *Parting Ways*. It is meant to tell the story of a friendship being born, that is then broken apart. The viola and the cello start the piece by playing a duet, representing the two friends meeting for the first time. After a faster, more lively section, the excitement dies down and the violins play a very melancholic melody, seeming to suggest that something is not quite right. From there, the music gradually becomes more discordant and ends with a viola solo depicting a time of confusion and losing one’s self after the friendship is lost.

Spring Wind and Rain ..... Ava Angeles

*Spring Wind and Rain* is a piece written for oboe, viola, and guzheng, a Chinese zither with a 2,500-year-old-history. This piece is divided into several sections that are separated by guzheng glissandi representing wind. Inside these sections, there are elements of rain that are conveyed by quick sixteenth notes in all parts. Additionally, glissandi on the left side of the guzheng are used to represent thunder and a general ominous state due to their dissonance. Throughout the piece, but most notably near the end, there are several instances of inter-instrumental dialogue, in which two or more of the instruments are having a conversation with each other.

When I began writing this piece, I started with a theme in D major and expanded outward from there. *Spring Wind and Rain* uses glissandi played on the left side of the guzheng, which is generally not used at all in traditional Chinese music as it clashes with the D major pentatonic scale. I was curious about this sound as I had never heard it played in any guzheng piece before, so I decided to incorporate it into my own composition. As a guzheng player, writing this piece was convenient for me because I could test things that I had composed on my own instrument to see what they would sound like, which gave me a clearer picture of what exactly I was composing. This piece was challenging for me to write because I was writing for guzheng, which can only play notes in the D pentatonic scale. I also tried to venture outside of the D pentatonic scale by bending notes on the guzheng and creating new harmonies with the other instruments. *Spring Wind and Rain* is intended to be a fusion of traditional Chinese music, Western harmonies, and non-traditional guzheng techniques.

The Chess Game ..... Benjamin Burleson

*The Chess Game* is an oboe, trombone and drum set trio. The story is of two elderly folk who are battling it out in a game of chess, each trying to show up the other with their jazzy solos until finally coming to an agreement.

If On Hearing This Oneself .....JP Hicks

*If On Hearing This Oneself* is a piece for cello, percussion, and narrator, the title itself derived from a line in the narration. This piece is centered around recontextualization, leaning into a lack of clarity in structure and cohesion early on, so that the puzzle pieces might fit into place toward the end. I used dadaist techniques a way to reconstruct prewritten text—in this case, a paragraph from Heidegger’s *The Fundamental Question of Metaphysics*—through a surrealist lens, only to then present the unaltered quotation in the latter movement in hopes that the subconscious mind creates a link between the scrambled and original quotation. The musical accompaniment is treated in a similar manner to the narration: fragmented gestures are derived from a single point of origin, the Prelude from Bach’s *Cello Suite No. 1*, only to be distorted or detuned in some fashion. The arc of the composition comes not from the musical tension, but from an act of discovery as the piece progresses. I have never pushed my comfort zone musically as much as I did in this piece, and while I placed an emphasis on my own self-growth throughout the process, I eagerly await to hear the success of various elements of my work.

Embryonic Miniatures ..... Violet Battaglia

- I. Cleavage
- II. Blastulation
- III. Gastrulation
- IV. Neurulation
- V. Embryo
- Vi. Fluxus Fetus

This piece is divided into six miniatures, each representing a moment of time in embryonic development.

I Cleavage: a microscopic being of glowing potential ○ zygote ° my little nebula

II Blastulation: zone pellucida disintegrates ○ the granular beginnings of feeling and tactile little wiggles ° we all started with discordance you know

III Gastrulation: formation of trilaminar disk ° it loves and she loves this lush acidic embrace

IV Neurulation: notochord and shifting of the trilaminar disk ° a continuation of tenderness

V Embryo: fetal membrane mothers protect the embryo with amniotic belle  
° Think in motion.....

VI Fluxus fetus: death has so much to do with this

It's simpler than we think,

This matriarchal nurturing of you ○ science art is nature.

Nature is art is science is science is science  
° ° ° ° ° Flourishing micro-living is not escapist but transcending

What we perceive our purpose to be ○

To peel back the sticky atoms glued to the eye and witness the natural truth of things! Grainy and growing,

° swirling fetus has batted its eyes into the

final stage °

***Join us for more world premieres at our Spring Concert II to be announced soon!***

# Performers

Tony Gennaro, *percussion*  
Otis Harriel, *violin*  
Sophie Huet, *clarinet*  
Brendan Lai-Tong, *trombone*  
Jon Lee, *piano*  
Kari Lee, *guzheng*  
Lora Libby, *soprano*  
Douglas Machiz, *cello*  
Jessica Pearlman, *oboe/english horn*  
Rebecca Reed-Lunn, *viola*  
Kevin Rogers, *violin*  
Eugène Thériault, *bass*

## John Adams Young Composers Program

*Matthew Cmiel, Program Director*

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