



UArkMusic

2022-2023 SEASON

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ABOUT MUSIC

The University of Arkansas is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and the Department of Music is housed within the Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences.

Home to over 300 music students and fifty faculty members, we offer a variety of degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Department faculty and students perform over 400 concerts per year, on and off campus. Large concerts are performed at the 600-seat Faulkner Performing Arts Center that opened in 2015. Chamber and solo recitals are primarily presented at the 200-seat Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, which is slated for a full renovation starting December 2022.

For more information, find us on social media or contact us at (479) 575-4701, email us at [**music@uark.edu**](mailto:music@uark.edu), or visit [**music.uark.edu**](http://music.uark.edu).



GUEST ARTIST CONCERT
David Potvin, piano

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GUEST ARTIST CONCERT

David Potvin, piano

7:30pm, Wednesday, February 1, 2023

University of Arkansas

PROGRAM

L'Éclosion (1954)

Otto Joachim

A Growing Forgiveness (2022)

Cris Derksen

Preludes for Piano (1952–1972)

Jean Coulthard

I. Leggiero

II. Torment

VIII. Song

X. Fury

Murmuration (2016)

Keiko Devaux

Reflections in the Water (1999)

Vincent Ho

take a deep breath. (2020)

Edward Enman

PROGRAM FILES

Otto Joachim: L'Écllosion (1954)

Otto Joachim, originally from Germany, settled in Canada almost by accident. After moving to Singapore and then Shanghai to escape the Nazis, he obtained an immigrant's visa to Brazil in 1949, which allowed him to visit Canada. He subsequently decided to settle in Montreal. Joachim led a rich musical career, which included his position as principal viola of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, and teaching posts at the McGill Conservatory and the Conservatoire de Montreal. His compositions were representative of the avant-garde style popular in Europe, and included serialist, aleatoric, and electroacoustic elements. He wrote only a handful of pieces for piano, among which L'Écllosion is his best example. Joachim presents the principle tone row of this serialist composition as a lyrical melody, though the piece quickly descends into disarray. Sudden outbursts, wandering arabesques, and pensive interludes are held together by the serial framework. The tension between this tightly controlled process of composition and its chaotic results in sound are obvious. Finally, the piece meanders, exhausted, into the depths of the piano to end with the second lowest note of the instrument. L'Écllosion literally means "the hatching" in French, and it serves to warm up the ears and whet the appetite for our tour of the eclectic world of Canadian piano music.

Cris Derksen: Growing Forgiveness (2022)

Juno nominated Cris Derksen is an internationally respected Indigenous cellist and Composer. Her website describes her music as braiding "the traditional and contemporary, weaving her classical background and her Indigenous ancestry together with new school electronics to create genre-defying music." While Derksen is no stranger to writing for the piano, Growing forgiveness is Derksen's first work for the pianist as a soloist. It was commissioned for the 45th Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition. The title is in response to the divisiveness in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. She explained she wanted to write a piece that explores "how we move forward and how we plant the seeds that keep our relationships going in a good way even though we don't always agree on topics and politics and vaccinations..." Growing forgiveness is a study of contrasts. It opens with ponderous chords that build to an exciting rhythmic passage. While there are no electronics in this piece, Derksen describes some of the passage work as "synthesizer-esque." The heart of the piece is the lyrical middle section, and its rising melody pleads for understanding. Another fast section follows, this one more substantial than the first, and it reworks the "synthesizer-esque" theme from the beginning, building to a whirling climax before it runs out of steam and gently unravels. The melody of the middle section returns, soft and reflective, but it is unclear whether the tension worked out over its structure is ever truly resolved.

Jean Coulthard: Preludes for piano (1952-1972)

Jean Coulthard was the first composer from Canada's West Coast to receive wide recognition. Her works experiment with elements of serialism, impressionism, and romanticism, though they are always deeply emotional. Her Preludes for piano were written over the span of over a decade while she was teaching at the University of British Columbia. In them, Coulthard demonstrates a mastery of the compact form. They are tightly composed, and over the course of only two or three pages each, Coulthard succeeds in exploring the depths of a single emotion – indicated as an accompanying title over each prelude. They also provide biographical interest, as each one is dedicated to someone important in her life. These works continue the tradition of prelude writing established by Chopin, and like the Chopin preludes, the scope of Coulthard's preludes is vast, from the vulnerable Song, to the technically demanding tour de force Fury. They constitute a remarkable Canadian contribution to the genre.

Keiko Devaux: Murmuration (2016)

Montréal based Keiko Devaux has won numerous awards for her compositions. 2022 was a particularly successful year that included the Juno Award for Classical composition of the year (Arras) and the Prix Opus for Composer of the year. Her unique approach to composition involves manipulating and distorting acoustic sounds with digital tools, and then transcribing them back into musical notation. The resulting combination of acoustic and digital elements creates a genre defying sound completely her own. Her output consists mostly of compositions written for ensembles, but Murmuration is a fine example of this process, condensed for one performer, the pianist, accompanied by tape. She describes the piece as follows: "I took inspiration from the natural phenomenon of flocks of birds observed famously in starlings. These flocks are sometimes made up of thousands of birds each responding individually to its environment and neighbouring birds thus creating dense and complex global movements. They also often move in counterpoint, pitting the direction or speed of certain subgroups and individuals against the general movement of the larger flock. The overall result of this detailed and complex set of movements generates broad unique movements moving as a whole. This duality between detailed and global view provides both microscopic micro textures, as well as cleaner and slow arching gestures in their sonic forms. I aimed to emphasize this in the piano with the electronic element in the role of expanding and extending on the pianistic gestures rather than simply being in dialogue with them. The electronics therefore prolong certain attacked piano notes, amplify and extend upon the soft and inaudible partials of the piano, and imitates, as the piano does, the nature of these flight behaviours and patterns both sonically and visually."

Vincent Ho: Reflections in the Water (1999)

Vincent Ho's website describes him as a "multi-award winning composer of orchestral, chamber, vocal, and theatre music. His works have been described as 'brilliant and compelling' by The New York Times and hailed for their profound expressiveness and textural beauty, leaving audiences talking about them with great enthusiasm." He has been nominated for three Juno Awards, served as the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's composer-in-residence, and is currently the New Music Advisor at the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Originally trained as a pianist, Ho is no doubt aware of the allusion to Debussy elicited by the title of Reflections in the Water. Like Debussy's piece, Ho uses a brief chordal motif to tie the piece together. In contrast to Debussy, Ho uses repeated notes to evoke the refraction of light through water, weaving brief melodic ideas in and out of the shimmering texture. Ho provided his own program note which is as follows: "Reflections in the Water was written as a test piece for the 2000 Markham Music Festival. It was composed specifically to showcase the pianist's range of colour, sensitivity, and imagination. "Swelling" textures and enveloping scales are predominantly featured throughout the work. They not only serve to express color changes but also function as tactile ideas that develop and unfold. Thus, the gestural nature of these materials contributes to music's physical eloquence. Consequently, any interpretation of this piece will differ with each performer. One of the main inspirations of the work was the concept of musical minimalism. Though I was not interested in the hypnotic (and sometimes emotionally sterile) qualities of minimalism, I was eager to discover what expressive qualities that could be drawn from it."

Edward Enman: take a deep breath. (2020)

Edward Enman, originally from Nova Scotia, is based in Montreal. He leads a multi-faceted career as a pianist, musical theatre director and composer. Both his background as a chorister and his training in piano performance have influenced his output, which includes pieces published for choir, and a large number of pieces that feature the piano. His music explores improvisatory and minimalist musical ideas, and, like many of the composers of the piano's canon repertoire, his musical ideas stem from free improvisation. Take a deep breath is based on the chord progression in another piece by Enman for piano and loop pedal called Savasana, named after the "corpse pose" in yoga, where one lies flat on the back, completely relaxed. Fundamental to the practice of Yoga is a conscious awareness of the breath, hence the name of the piece. He describes it as follows: "This piece came into being from a need for space and the dissipation of energy. Structurally, two contrasting musical ideas battle and build, then finally melt into each other for a calming, settling conclusion."

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