



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

**Faculty Composition Recital
Till MacIvor Meyn**

April 1st, 2021

7:00 pm

Program

Balderdash (2020)

Mehrdad Gholami, flute

Flights of Fancy (2019)

Michael Shih and Molly Baer, violins
Dan Sigale, viola
Keira Fullerton, cello

ATEM (2017, rev. 2020)

Nick Bontrager and Adam Fung, Drone Beuys

Auld lang syne (2016)

Soprano

Grace Anderson
Vanessa Becerra
Amber Davis
Melody Knight
Deanna Rupp

Alto

Briana Berk
Sarah Bryson
Natalie Guess
Emily Hoskins
Jessi Maynard
Monica Suarez

Tenor

Nico Gutiérrez
Jonathan Hatley
Bo Wang
Tanner Wilemon

Bass

Collin Boothby
Randall Capshaw
Caleb Fritz
Ryan Lathan
Will Wood

Vanessa Becerra, soprano soloist

Special thanks to Dr. Richard Gipson, Dean of the TCU College of Fine Arts; to Dr. Kristen Queen, Interim Director of the TCU School of Music; to Tommy Mitoraj for his professional assistance with audio recording; to Dr. Elizabeth Kirkendoll for social media promotion, and to my wife Laura Meyn for always being there for me.

Program Notes

Balderdash is a word that means ‘nonsense’ or ‘senseless talk.’ In this solo flute composition, the main musical ideas derive from Scottish reels, or dance music. Those tunes, however, are introduced in fragments, and once established, they eventually dissolve into more chromatic passages. The title also implies quickness, which aptly describes the spirit and tempo of the tunes. The dance music is lively and engaging—but *balderdash* surrounds the more sensible reels. Enjoy the mischief and mayhem!

Flights of Fancy for string quartet is a title that gave me license to use material more freely than I might otherwise have done. There are five main sections, or “flights” in the piece, though it is written in one long movement. The first section, *Preflight*, is an introduction to the piece, with a jazzy beginning and then an additive, almost minimalistic segment that builds. *Flight 1* features the cello as a soloist, and then in combination with the other instruments; its jagged edges are fast and frantic. *Flight 2* has violin 2 playing more lyrical music, accompanied by chords and counterpoint from the other strings. For *Flight 3*, I borrowed a well-known Jewish folk tune called “Az Ich Vil Zingen,” arranging it with the viola as the featured instrument. This section eventually ends in a transitional area that represents the clamor of sirens, a warning reminiscent of WWII alarms that alerts us to the danger of becoming too complacent. The final section, *Flight 4*, moves through various segments, and has the violin 1 playing virtuosic lines, imitated by the other strings. The piece ends with exuberant chords punctuated by the virtuosic melodies.

ATEM derives its title from the German word for “breath,” which is a word that appears in the sung portions of the work. The piece was originally written as a collaborative project with Suki John, my good choreographer friend from across campus, and premiered as a stage work. I passed the music along to the two artists who make up the group Drone Beuys, Nick Bontrager and Adam Fung, and they ran with it, creating a film that utilizes drone footage they took in Iceland and in West Texas. The music is divided into four sections, each with different moods and compositional techniques. The fact that *ATEM* is also *META* spelled backwards points to the layers of complexity that pervade the piece.

I arranged *Auld lang syne* for a cappella SATB chorus at the suggestion of my wife, Laura; the piece is a tender setting of the well-known Scottish tune, with lyrics by Robbie Burns. The song is most often heard on New Year’s Eve, but is quite appropriate at many other occasions. The lyrics are a reminiscence of days gone by spent with a close friend or lover, and are also a celebration, a suggestion, to lift a glass to that friendship. The video performance is a virtual choir that I put together, made up primarily of TCU Concert Chorale alumni who performed my arrangement of *Auld lang syne* a few years back. Those students have since graduated and gone on to do great things, but they were happy for the opportunity to come together once again, virtually, to sing this arrangement.

Bios

Molly Baer joined the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in 2012. Before moving to Texas, Molly was a violin fellow at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach. She graduated from the New England Conservatory in Boston as a student of Miriam Fried, and received her Master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University's School of Music, where she studied with Andrés Cárdenes.

Since moving to Fort Worth, Molly has participated in frequent chamber music performances with local ensembles and festivals. She has performed with Spectrum Chamber Music Society, Hall Ensemble, the Basically Beethoven Festival, Opus Nova, and Sedici Strings, a string quartet made up of colleagues in the Fort Worth Symphony. She also teaches a private studio of violin students and has enjoyed coaching young chamber musicians for the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra.

Molly grew up in a suburb of Baltimore and returns often to spend time with her family.

Soprano **Vanessa Becerra** is a graduate of LA Opera's illustrious Young Artist Program, praised for her "bold and bright" singing (Opera News), "full, beautifully focused" instrument (Wall Street Journal), and "charismatic and eloquent" stage presence (San Francisco Chronicle). In recent seasons Vanessa has performed with Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Atlanta Opera, Opera Omaha, Opera San Jose, Glimmerglass Opera, and joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for their productions of *Die Zauberflöte* and *Iolanta*. She has had the great privilege of singing under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel with the LA Phil, Michael Tilson Thomas with the San Francisco Symphony, Mozart specialist Jane Glover, and James Conlon as a featured soloist on the GRAMMY Award-winning recording of *The Ghosts of Versailles* with LA Opera. Training programs include Wolf Trap Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Seagle Festival. Particularly noted for her portrayal of Maria in Bernstein's *West Side Story*, Vanessa had her international debut in the iconic role with the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra in Cēsis, Latvia. Her professional debut took place with her home company, Fort Worth Opera, in the 2014 world premiere of *With Blood, With Ink*. Shortly following her debut, Ms. Becerra received her master's degree from The Boston Conservatory, which invited her as a featured alumna to perform in their 150th Anniversary Gala at Boston's renowned Symphony Hall. She is also a proud graduate of Texas Christian University where she won the prestigious Nordan Award. Future seasons include debuts with Arizona Opera, Austin Opera, Amarillo Opera, Virginia Opera, and St. Croix Valley Opera.

Nick Bontrager is an interdisciplinary artist whose work and research explores the physical and conceptual nature of the moving image, game-based interactions and exchanges, and the idea of replicas or facsimiles as tools of preservation or understanding.

Nick received his MFA from The Ohio State University for studies in Art & Technology and his BFA at the University of Houston in Photography & Digital Media. His artwork has been exhibited internationally in film festivals, museums, and galleries with a recent focus on interactive electronics workshops for underrepresented and under-served groups.

Nick is currently an Associate Professor of New Media Art at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas where he resides with partner, Jessica, and their two cats, three chickens, one human daughter, and one turtle.

Keira Fullerton has been assistant principal cello of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra since 2008, and served as acting associate principal during the 2012-14 and 2020-21 seasons. She has been an adjunct professor of cello at the University of Texas at Arlington since 2015. Before joining the FWSO, Keira held the position of assistant principal with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra in Winnipeg, Manitoba for three seasons. She has also performed as an extra musician with the Houston, Pittsburgh, and Seattle Symphonies. She was a participant in the Crested Butte Music Festival as well as the Colorado Music Festival for three summers each. Most recently, she enjoyed performing as part of the Music in the Mountains Festival in Durango, Colorado in 2019 and is thrilled to be returning again this summer after the world came to a halt in 2020. A native of Ohio, Keira moved to Toronto, Ontario at age eleven, where she studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music. She then earned her Bachelor of Music degree at Rice University studying with Desmond Hoebig, and received her Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of Stephen Geber. Keira and her husband Colin, a violist in the Dallas Opera, live in North Arlington with their two children, Morgan (7) and Liana (4).

Adam Fung is currently an Associate Professor of Art at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A. He received his Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree from University of Notre Dame and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree from Western Washington University. Fung also attended Virginia Commonwealth University for Art Foundations.

Fung works primarily as a Painter and has a dynamic range of research interests that touch upon issues such as climate change, landscape, patterns and the make-up of the universe. Fung's work often arises from direct experience and primary sources. Recent examples of this practice include the 2016 Arctic Circle Artist Residency and Expedition around the archipelago of Svalbard and a road trip around west Texas and New Mexico that allowed the artist to visit sites of interest including Observatories, Dark Sky Parks, Marfa, and Spaceport America. His paintings can be found in public art collections at Microsoft, South Bend Museum of Art, and the US Department of Energy's Fermilab, as well as numerous private collections. Fung recently completed his first film project, titled *the uncommon*. The 3-channel film was shot primarily using a drone in the Arctic Circle.

Iranian flutist **Mehrdad Gholami**, the first-place winner of Iran's National Concours, received presidential award and Iran's National Elites Foundation scholarship to continue his training at the University of Tehran, where he studied with Dr. Azin Movahed. During his time in Tehran, Mehrdad won numerous solo and chamber music competitions in Iran such as Fadjr International Music Festival, Iran Young Artists Competition, and Tehran Flute Competition. In the U.S., He has won concerto competitions as well as being a finalist in Texas Flute Society's Myrna Brown Young Artist Competition.

At an early age, inspired by Tehran Music Group under the direction of Iranian prominent composer, Alireza Mashayekhi, Mehrdad started working with different composers and devoted his time to commission, premiere and record new sounds for flute with various ensembles. These collaborations with Iranian composers led to the creation of more than 60 new pieces for flute with different ensembles and electronic sounds. His first solo album was published by his alma mater, University of Tehran, in a joint project with Iran Flute Society. He has appeared in recordings in various genres ranging from contemporary classical music to world music and pop music. Some of these pieces have received acclamation around the world such as Italy, United States, Germany, and France. Mehrdad's efforts in presenting, performing and publishing new Iranian music has led to a growth of compositions for flute by Iranian composers. A recipient of Susan and Ford Schumann fellowship in 2017, Mehrdad attended Aspen Music Festival, where he served as Aspen Contemporary Ensemble (ACE) flute fellow and studied with Nadine Asin, Mark Sparks and Demarre McGill for three consecutive summers (2017-19). In August 2019, Mehrdad made his solo debut with Aspen Contemporary Ensemble performing Judith Shatin's Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (Ruah).

Mehrdad's DMA dissertation was on the subject of "Iranian contemporary music for flute" where he included an expansive chapter on the history of Western music in Iran. As an advocate of his "Iran Flute Project", Mehrdad has premiered works by Iranian composers at the National Flute Association and Mid-Atlantic Conventions. He received his MM and DMA in flute performance under the guidance of Dr. Shauna Thompson at Texas Christian University. Mehrdad has had the opportunity to perform in masterclasses or work with artists such as Marina Piccinini, Erik Gratton, Lisa Garner Santa, Ransom Wilson, Aralee Dorough, Demarre McGill, Bart Feller, Jim Walker, Alexa Still and Jake Fridkis. Currently, Mehrdad is based in DFW Metroplex, where he is serving as Adjunct Professor of Flute at Texas A&M - Commerce and runs his private studio in addition to freelancing with local ensembles and orchestras.

Till MacIvor Meyn is Professor of Theory and Composition at Texas Christian University. He earned degrees from U.C. San Diego, Indiana University, and USC's Thornton School of Music. Till's music has had international performances in Switzerland, France, Italy, Cuba, China, Spain, Ukraine, and Slovenia. Performances of his music in the United States include those at Carnegie Hall, Bass Performance Hall, Clarinet Fest, the Biennial Saxophone Congress, The Florida State University Festival of New Music, the Society for Composers, Inc. National and Regional Conventions, National Flute Association Conventions, the College Music Society National Convention, at the Manhattan School of Music, and at the Intercollegiate Men's Choruses National Seminar at Harvard, among others.

Till is often commissioned to compose new works, most recently to open the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra's 2019 – 2020 season. He was a featured composer at the Cliburn at the Modern series, a finalist in the NFA Newly Published Music Competition for 'Urban Ragas,' and earned first prize in the NACUSA Texas Composition Contest for 'Celestial Mechanics.' Till's music is published by Muse Worthy Music, Alliance Music Publications, GIA Publications, ECS Publishing, C. Alan Publications, and ALRY Publications. For further information about Till's music, please visit tillmeyn.squarespace.com.

Violinist **Michael Shih**, concertmaster of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (FWSO) since 2001, has performed throughout the United States and his native of Taiwan, as well as on tours of Canada, France, Germany, Costa Rica, Honduras, Peru, China, Japan, and Korea. A United States Presidential Scholar in the Arts, he was a winner in the Naumburg International Violin Competition and Artists International's Auditions, which led to his New York recital debut at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in 1992. He has appeared as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the Little Orchestra Society at Avery Fisher Hall, the Williamsburg Symphonia, the Abilene Philharmonic, the New York Youth Symphony, the San Pedro Sula Symphony in Honduras, the Taipei City Symphony at Taiwan's National Concert Hall, and with the symphony orchestras of Dallas, Fort Worth, Hartford, and New Amsterdam. In 2007, he gave the world premiere of the Kevin Puts Violin Concerto with the FWSO conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya, and this critically acclaimed performance was released by FWSO Live in recordings titled *The Composer's Voice* and *Take Six*.

An avid performer of chamber music, he has collaborated with such artists as Leon Fleisher, Augustin Hadelich, Sharon Isbin, Jaime Laredo, Cho-Liang Lin, Yo-Yo Ma, Michael Tree, and Charles Wadsworth. From 1992 to 2002, he was first violinist of the Whitman Quartet, formerly graduate quartet-in-residence at the Juilliard School and winner of the Naumburg Chamber Music and Catherine Filene Shouse Debut Artists awards. Music festival appearances include Aspen, Bard, Chamber Music Northwest, Chautauqua, Kansai Science City (Japan), La Jolla, Lincoln Center, Ravinia, Spoleto USA, Stuttgart (Germany), and Mostly Mozart. He has also appeared at the Chiehshou Hall Concert at the Office of the President of Taiwan, at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Chamber Music International in Dallas, and the Cliburn's "Cliburn at the Bass" and "Cliburn at the Modern" series with composers Mark Adamo, John Corigliano, Sebastian Currier, Osvaldo Golijov, Jennifer Higdon, Lowell Liebermann, Kevin Puts, Christopher Theofanidis, and Joan Tower.

Media credits include NPR's *Performance Today*, NBC's *Today Show*, Japan's NHK Television, and Taiwan's Public Television. He holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Dorothy DeLay and Hyo Kang. Other teachers include Chiu-Sen Chen, Masao Kawasaki, Shue-Tee Lee, and Margaret Pardee. He was on the violin faculty at the Lucy Moses School for Music and Dance in New York City from 1995 to 2001. In 2013, he was a Visiting Professor of Music at the East China Normal University. He was also on the violin faculty of National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra's 2015 International Youth Orchestra Camp. Currently, he is a Distinguished Guest Professor of Violin at the Texas Christian University, a position he has held since 2011.

Mr. Shih plays a 1710 Antonio Stradivari violin, generously on loan to the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra Association by Mr. and Mrs. William S. Davis of Fort Worth, Texas.

Violist **Dan Sigale** has played with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra since 1998. Before coming to Texas, he played with The Phoenix Symphony for two seasons.

Dan is the executive director of the Spectrum Chamber Music Society, a chamber music series featuring musicians of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and friends, in which he is also a frequent performer. He was a founding member of the chamber music group, Hall Ensemble, and has been a featured artist for Basically Beethoven, the University of Texas at Arlington Guest Violist series and the Dallas Public Library recital series.

Born and raised in the Chicagoland area, Dan earned his Bachelor of Music Performance from DePaul University, his Master of Music Performance from Northwestern University, and did post-graduate work at the University of Notre Dame, where he also got to fulfill his dream of being a classical music radio announcer.