



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

## Unfettered Artistry: Student Composers Concert

November 3, 2022

7:00 pm

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

### Program

Unfettered (2021)

John David Cope  
(b. 1997)

John Cope, piano

Emerald (2022)

Justino Eustacio Pérez  
(b. 1990)

Lydia Sander, piano

Rondo for Trumpet (2022)

Alfredo Ortiz  
(b. 2001)

Hayden Simms, trumpet

Digame Dulcamenté (2022)

Justino Eustacio Pérez  
(b. 1990)

Joseph Snipes, piano

Song Without Words (2022)

Jace Mankins  
(b. 1998)

Jacob Burk, viola  
Jace Mankins, piano

I Heard A Fly Buzz (2022)

Charles Nelson  
(b. 2003)

Catherine Digrazia, soprano  
Jace Mankins, piano

Ancient, Modern Sounds (2022)

Felicity Constance Mazur-Park  
(b. 1988)

**Q365 Quartet**

Max Borah, soprano saxophone  
Mike Nguyen, alto saxophone  
Mike Korson, tenor saxophone  
Jason Lewin, baritone saxophone

John Cope and Charles Nelson are students of Dr. Martin Blessinger.

Justino Pérez is a student of Dr. Till Meyn.

Alfredo Ortiz is a student of Dr. Neil Anderson-Himmelspach.

Jace Mankins and Felicity Mazur-Park are students of Dr. Blaise Ferrandino.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.

Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

## Program Notes

### Unfettered (2021)

*Unfettered* is a composition for solo piano that plunges into the world of minimalism. When I wrote this piece last summer, I wanted to test out my piano skills and see if I could write something that was simple while also being complex. In other words, I wanted to utilize the simplicity of minimalism coupled with the complexity of my personal composition style, which is rooted in syncopation and extended harmonies. The piece is based on just a few short motives, generally played in the right-hand, while the left-hand plays more melodic lines. This is a composition that I wrote exclusively on the piano, and I hope that my true feelings shine through the performance.

### Emerald (2022)

We often use the gifting of jewels as a declaration of appreciation. It isn't uncommon to describe someone as a "diamond;" comparing their worth to something as rare as a precious jewel. This work was written as a gift to the pianist Lydia Sander, not with the intention of identifying her value through comparison to an object, but by creating this jewel that will forever be a representation of the beauty that is her soul.

### Digame Dulcamenté (2022)

Digame Dulcamenté, or "Speak Sweetly" was written as a gift for the mother of an artist that I work closely with. The work is a tender reminder of comfort and beauty with hints of innocent desire.

### I Heard a Fly Buzz (2022)

This piece is from a song cycle I recently had the idea for called "The Death of Emily Dickinson". Emily Dickinson, one of the greatest poets of her and all time despite being almost entirely unpublished during her life, wrote roughly 1,800 poems, many of which were about death and mortality. While reading some of these poems I was struck by the beauty, expressiveness, and mind-blowing inventiveness of her style and in me a great desire was inspired to collect my favorites and set them to music.

Because all but 11 of Emily Dickinson's poems were unpublished during her life, there are disagreements about what form they should be published in. I chose to use the version that I understand to be closest to Emily Dickinson's final version (though I am no scholar) as it is the version in which I find the most beauty, expression, and invention. For the sake of clarity and so the poem can be experienced at least once on its own before attaching it to music, I have included the text below:

*I heard a Fly buzz - when I died - The Stillness in the Room  
Was like the Stillness in the Air - Between the Heaves of Storm -*

*The Eyes around - had wrung them dry - And Breaths were gathering firm  
For that last Onset - when the King  
Be witnessed - in the Room -*

*I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away What portion of me be  
Assignable - and then it was  
There interposed a Fly -*

*With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz - Between the light - and me -  
And then the Windows failed - and then I could not see to see -*

### **Ancient, Modern Sounds (2022)**

*Ancient, Modern Sounds* was written specifically for The Estrella Consort for the 2022 Alba Composition Festival. In this piece, I realize neoclassical elements within a post-modern aesthetic. Chorale melodies are interweaved with contemporary countermelodies to produce a modern sound world with familiar undertones. One of the highlights of the quartet is the alto saxophone cadenza in the middle. The alto saxophonist is at liberty to improvise or follow what is on the page. As you listen, imagine the piece through two different lenses, a contrapuntal lens, and a timbral lens. Through the contrapuntal lens you will see the piece gradually depart from its traditional chorale focused language. Through the timbral lens multiple sound worlds can be heard.