

Upcoming Events

October 2018

Contemporary Music Festival Concert II Tues., Oct. 23 @ 8pm Concert Hall*

JMU Jazz Combos Tues., Oct. 23 @ 8pm Artful Dodger

Contemporary Music Festival Composers Concert Wed., Oct. 24 @ 8pm Recital Hall*

*These concerts provide student credit for MUS 195.

For tickets and further information, visit www.jmuforbescenter.com or call the Forbes Center Box Office at (540) 568-7000. For more on the School of Music, go to www.jmu.edu/music or call (540) 568-6714.

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FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

38th Contemporary Music Festival

Guest Artists

Libby Larsen, composer • Joseph Klein, composer •
Anna Webber Simple Trio • Redi Llupa, piano •
Jessica Spafford, soprano

Concert I

Monday, October 22, 2018

8 pm

Concert Hall



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Program

The Falling Star (2015) Amanda Bono (b. 1987)
Carrie Stevens, *mezzo-soprano*

Deep Time and Ceaseless Motion (1982) Joseph Klein (b. 1962)

JMU Percussion Ensemble

Casey Cangelosi, *director*

Cradle Song (2005) Eric Guinivan (b. 1984)
Jessica Spafford, *soprano* | Eric Guinivan, *percussion*
Lori Piitz, *piano*

Sorrow Song and Jubilee (2014) Libby Larsen (b. 1950)
Jianda Bai, Zachary Windsor, *violins*
Diane Phoenix-Neal, *viola* | Carl Donakowski, *cello*

15-Minute Intermission

Baby Book (2017) Lauren Spavelko (b. 1989)
I. Objects
II. Children's Pool Game
III. Quickening
IV. Great Aunt Dora
V. Looking Out
VI. Searching
Jessica Spafford, *soprano* | Lori Piitz, *piano*

About the Festival

Special Thanks

Contemporary Music Festival Committee
Casey Cangelosi, Gabriel Dobner, Eric Guinivan, Jason Haney,
Diane Phoenix-Neal, Sam Suggs
School of Music Faculty, Staff and Students
Jeff Bush, *Director of the School of Music*
George Sparks, *Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts*
Regan Byrne, *Executive Director of the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts*
Shawn Tucker, Bradley Monahan, Tom Carr, Nicole Allin, Jesse Hernon,
Forbes Center Production and Technical Staff
JMU Visiting Scholars Program
Dr. Heather Coltman, *JMU Provost*

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The first JMU Contemporary Music Festival was held in 1981, initiated by then-director of the School of Music Joe Estock and faculty composer John Hilliard. In the years since, the festival has hosted many of the most prominent composers and performers of new music in the world today. Recent guest artists include:

Kelly-Marie Murphy
Augusta Read Thomas
Stephen Hartke
The Virginia Sinfonietta
Roger Reynolds
JACK Quartet
American Modern Ensemble
Sir Peter Maxwell Davies
Alarm Will Sound
Steven Stucky
Steve Reich
New Millennium Ensemble
George Tsontakis
Samuel Adler
George Crumb
Donald Erb
Adolphus Hailstork
John Harbison
Karel Husa
Libby Larsen
David Maslanka
Thea Musgrave
The New Music Consort
Joseph Schwantner
Joan Tower
Chinary Ung
Chen Yi

Guest Composer Biographies

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. Constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles and orchestras around the world, Libby Larsen has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.

Libby Larsen has received numerous awards and accolades, including a 1993 Grammy as producer of the CD: *The Art of Arlene Augér*, an acclaimed recording that features Larsen's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Her opera *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* was selected as one of the eight best classical music events of 1990 by USA Today. The first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra, she has held residencies with the California Institute of the Arts, the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the Philadelphia School of the Arts, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony.

Larsen's many commissions and recordings are a testament to her fruitful collaborations with a long list of world-renowned artists, including The King's Singers, Benita Valente, and Frederica von Stade, among others. Her works are widely recorded on such labels as Angel/EMI, Nonesuch, Decca, and Koch International.

Born in Los Angeles in 1962, **Joseph Klein** is a composer of solo, chamber, and large ensemble works, including instrumental, vocal, electroacoustic, and intermedia compositions. His music—which has been described as “a dizzying euphoria... like a sonic tickling with counterpoint gone awry” (*NewMusicBox*) and exhibiting a “confident polyvalence [that] heightens its very real excitement” (*The Wire*)—reflects an ongoing interest in processes drawn from such sources as fractal geometry, chaos, and systems theory, often inspired by natural phenomena. His works frequently incorporate theatrical elements, whether as a component of the extra-musical references or as an organic outgrowth of the musical narrative itself. Literature is another important influence on Klein's work, with recent compositions based on the writings of Franz Kafka, Elias Canetti, Alice Fulton, W.S. Merwin, Milan Kundera, and John Ashbery.

Klein holds degrees in composition from Indiana University (DM, 1991), University of California, San Diego (MA, 1986), and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (BA, 1984). His composition teachers have included Harvey Sollberger, Claude Baker, Robert Erickson, and Roger Reynolds. He is currently Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of North Texas College of Music, where he has served as Chair of Composition Studies since 1999.

Program continued

Stunned (2017)

Diane Phoenix-Neal, *viola*

Libby Larsen

Jack's Valentine (2001)
Refuge (1988)

Libby Larsen

JMU Treble Chamber Choir

Bryce Hayes, *director*

Timor et Tremor (2001)
Alma Redemptoris Mater (2010)

György Orbán (b. 1947)

from A Lover's Journey
III. Will You Marry Me
IV. Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?

Libby Larsen

The Madison Singers

Jo-Anne Van der Vat-Chromy, *director*

Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones, personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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Program Notes

Falling Star - This piece is based on the text, *The Falling Star*, by Sara Teasdale:

I saw a star slide down the sky,
Blinding the north as it went by,
Too burning and too quick to hold,
Too lovely to be bought or sold,
Good only to make wishes on
And then forever to be gone.

Composed in 1982, **Deep Time and Ceaseless Motion** is an indeterminate work for percussion ensemble, comprised of six contrasting sections that are cued by a recurring 4-note motive in the chimes. The score incorporates graphic notation, allowing the performers to freely interpret the images and symbols in a series of short group improvisations. The title of the work is derived from a phrase in John McPhee's book *Basin and Range* (1981), used to characterize the dual phenomena of plate tectonics—"the two great revolutions of geology," according to scientist Stephen Jay Gould—and serves as an intriguing metaphor for this work.

Cradle Song is a setting of William Blake's 1789 poem from his book *Songs of Innocence*. Scored for soprano (playing three crystal glasses), vibraphone, and piano, the music wraps a soothing lullaby in a haunting, eerie ostinato meant to resemble a child's music box. *Cradle Song* was premiered in 2005 and was a winner of the 2009 ASCAP/Lotte Lehmann Art Song Competition.

Sorrow Song and Jubilee - During Czech composer Antonin Dvorak's years in America (1892-1895) as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City, composer Henry Thacker Burleigh, who was enrolled in the school at the time, introduced Dvorak to African American spirituals and dances, deeply influencing Dvorak's American works. Just as Dvorak used "Going Home" as the basis for the largo theme in his symphony *From the New World*, in my composition, *Sorrow Song and Jubilee*, I've based the music on the "sorrow song" (now known as spiritual) "Swing Low Sweet Chariot." It's a short piece, a miniature *dumka* and *furiant* or introduction and dance, composed as an homage to the creative partnership of Burleigh and Dvorak. -L. Larsen

Baby Book is a cycle of six songs on miscarriage, pregnancy, and motherhood, with poetry by Chloe Yelena Miller. The music was written for soprano Natasha Lynn Foley, who premiered three of the songs in March 2016. Winner of the Spoleto Festival's 2017 Young Composer's Competition, the complete cycle was premiered by Lucie Chartin and Luba Podgayskaya in Spoleto on August 10, 2017 as part of *Incontri Musicali*.

Stunned for viola solo imagines what transpires emotionally in a moment following a shocking realization- a moment when a person is stunned by the truth of what has just happened. For instance, the moment immediately after being told of a loved one's death. Or a moment just following a witnessed accident- or instance watching the plane fly into the world trade center on 9-11. Or any number of moments that happen in people's lives... It's a moment time itself is suspended in time, and in this moment time itself is suspended in eternity. *Stunned* exists in this moment as pure emotion, rapidly running a gamut of feelings- deep loss, fierceness, intensity,

Program Notes (continued)

depletion, ferventness, gentleness, etc. until the moment passes and real time, life if you will, resumes. -L. Larsen

Jack's Valentine - One might think of this piece as an "I wish I had said this instead" story. It is the brash inside echo of what so many of us stumble to put into words in the outside world. The "Jack" referred to in the title of this brief, no-holds-barred love song is American beat poet Jack Kerouac (1922-1969). Kerouac's style of poetry, sprung full-blown from post WWII early American languages, is hip, rhythmic, and directly to the point of its subject. Aldeen Humphrey's poem is a tribute to Jack Kerouac and a little packet of courage for shy lovers. Hey, You! -L. Larsen

Refuge - This work is an extended setting of Sara Teasdale's poem, and was commissioned by the Peninsula Women's Chorus (California). *Refuge* aptly expresses the noble sentiment "If I can sing, I am free." -L. Larsen

Timor et Tremor and Alma Redemptoris Mater - Romania-born Hungarian composer and teacher György Orbán is a professor of theory and composition at the Liszt Academy of Music and is editor of the prestigious publishing firm Editio Musica Budapest. Noted musicologist Dennis Schrock describes Orbán, along with several other early twentieth-century eastern European composers, as emulating the textures and forms of Renaissance and Baroque genres while writing in modern, pantonal harmonies. We have chosen to set together two such contrasting sacred motets. *Timor et Tremor*, an a cappella setting of the ancient text, sets the idea of 'fear and trembling' through striking harmonies and expressive rhythmic devices. *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, written in Latin hexameter and scored for divisi SATB choir and piano, is a Marian antiphon from the service of Compline that is a glorious example of late eastern European Romanticism. It is characterized by mixed meters, a dense and complex harmonic structure, and a soloistic feeling of rubato from both the choir and pianist.

Four Valentines: A Lover's Journey is a set of four pieces, which chronicle the extraordinarily commonplace yet supremely elegant story of love and valentining. They are settings of three texts by William Shakespeare and one text by James Joyce, published by William Shakespeare and Company in 1915. In reading about the origins of Ophelia's song from *Hamlet* "Good morrow! 'Tis St. Valentine's Day," I came upon a curious custom practiced in some parts of Great Britain and Italy, whereby before sunrise on St. Valentine's Day, unmarried women stand by their window, sometimes for hours, watching for a man to pass by. It's said that the first man they see (or more wisely someone who looks like him) will marry them within a year. I decided to play with the theme in *Four Valentines: A Lover's Journey*. I created four pieces beginning with the poem "Simples" by James Joyce. Set in a moonlit Garden, the lover is bedazzled by a young woman, his "bella bionda." The lover repeats these words to himself over and over again, silently summoning her. The second, quiet piece "Good Morro! 'Tis Saint Valentine's Day" takes place at sunrise. In it the lovers meet and undo each other. The third piece is a brief, insistent rhythmic outcry, set in words from *Taming of the Shrew* "Will you, nill you, I will marry you." And finally, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day" completes *Four Valentines: A Lover's Journey*. This piece is my Valentine to the King's Singers. -L. Larsen