



Composition Showcase

Sunday, March 6th

Part I - 3:00 pm

Part II - 7:00 pm

Newman Recital Hall

University of Southern California

Donald Crockett, *director*

Program

PART I

David Hernandez

Armaturamater

Tali Duckworth, *trumpet*
Cameron Davison, *trumpet*
Caleb Durante, *french horn*
Denali Kauffman, *trombone*
Patrick Zhang, *tuba*

Denali Kauffman

Who Can I Trust?

Maya Masaoka, *violin*
Semaj Murphy, *violin*
Sophia Valenti, *viola*
Ella Kaale, *cello*

Oliviana Marie

Ever After

Cole Davis, *violin*
Chloe Elise Villamayor, *violin*
Sophia Inès Valenti, *viola*
Ella Kaale, *cello*
Denali Kauffman, *piano*

Mic Ferrante

Starry Dreams for Strings

Sofia Chamberlain, *violin*
Emily Hsu, *violin*
Anna Renton, *viola*
Quenton Blache, *cello*

Chloe Villamayor

it's not the sun's fault for shining

Charlie Richardson, *piano*
Chloe Villamayor, *voice*
Sofia Chamberlain, *violin*

Theodore Strich

Four Miniatures

Sofia Chamberlain, *violin*
Emily Hsu, *violin*
Anna Renton, *viola*
Matias Pachalian, *cello*

PART II

Daniel Montes de Oca Téllez

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Daniel Montes de Oca Téllez, *piano*

Tamzin Elliott

Very Small Set

I. High School Sweetheart

II. Yeah, it's about social anxiety while stargazing

Tamzin Elliot, *voice and guitar*

Quenton Blache

afloat

Evan Llafet, *violin*

Quenton Blache, *cello*

Kiko Velasco, *piano*

Grace Miedziak

Trout and the Hatch

Quenton Blache, *cello*

Charlie Richardson

Three Colors of Preemptive Processing

Chloe Descher, *flute*

Jackson Irvine, *vibraphone*

Ella Kaale

état d'âme: a self-portrait

Chloe Descher, *flute*

Jackson Irvine, *vibraphone*

Composer Notes & Biographies

David Hernandez

Armaturamater

Armaturamater is a brass quintet written as an homage to the contemporary Russian painter Vsevolod Shvayba. The piece is given the name *Armaturamater* after Shvayba's set of fine art paintings entitled *Armaturamater I*, *Armaturamater II* and *Armaturamater III*.

David Hernandez is a classical guitarist and composer based in Los Angeles. He currently studies both classical guitar with Scott Tennant and composition with Christopher Trapani as a double major at the USC Thornton School of Music. A 2020-2021 fellow in the LA Phil's Nancy and Barry Sanders Composer Fellowship Program, his music has been performed by members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Lyris Quartet and Sandbox Percussion, and he often performs his own work on the concert stage.

Denali Kauffman

Who Can I Trust?

Who Can I Trust? came from an unsettling feeling that lingered with me the first few weeks of the semester. I was feeling lonely. Some friends who I trusted began to ghost me and seem distant for no apparent reason. This made me reconsider my options and intentions. I know that I wanted to spend my semester creating relationships and connections with people who will be there for me no matter what and cut ties with those who I thought were close but now push me away. Coincidentally, the title of the piece and the cinematic nature of it have actually made me think it works well with the *Scream* franchise, where the premise of the movie is to find who you can't and can trust.

Kauffman is a first-year jazz studies major with both a piano and trombone emphasis. He began his musical journey with classical piano at age 5 and began jazz in seventh grade. While he is primarily a jazz composer, he has dabbled with classical and contemporary classical music in the past. This is his first full-length piece for string quartet.

Oliviana Marie

Ever After

As a child, I attended the Pasadena Waldorf School, a magical place located in an old Craftsman house underneath deodar cedar trees and a massive wisteria vine. In kindergarten, we children lived in the land of fairy tales. Stories were told of valiant knights, fire-breathing dragons, loyal townsfolk, wise kings, mischievous gnomes and beautiful fairies. I loved hearing the stories, and through my imagination, I dreamed that I was actually living in those magical lands. Every tale that our teacher shared with us would end with this phrase: "And if things haven't changed, they are still the same today." I'd like to think that's true. Ever after.

Oliviana Marie is a singer, dancer, actress, composer, lyricist, librettist, trumpeter, pianist and conductor currently studying composition at the USC Thornton School of Music. She's a 2021 YoungArts and Grammy Camp winner in the singer-songwriter category, a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts finalist and a proud member of ASCAP. She has written the book, music and lyrics, to four award-winning musicals. Her most recent musical, *Corona's Cabaret: An Act of Destruction*, won the Audience Choice Award for Playbill's first Virtual Theatre Festival Live.

Mic Ferrante

Starry Dreams for Strings

Entering my last semester as a sophomore undergraduate student, I feel as though I am at a turning point in my musical journey, finally approaching and accelerating toward the brink of my lifelong Hollywood ambitions. As I realize my overconfidence, I exclaim, "Whatever!" and continue to envision the overwhelming romance and mystery of the entertainment industry - with all its fame, fortune, failure, pain and infinite musical opportunities - in my *Starry Dreams*, condensed into four string instruments.

Micangelo Ferrante is a composer, pianist, songwriter, arranger and music producer of both the jazz and classical realms, as well as a world music enthusiast. Ferrante was a 2019-2020 fellow of the LA Phil's Nancy and Barry Sanders Composer Fellowship Program under the direction of Andrew Norman and the LA Phil. He has scored multiple film sequences for composer Hayden Clement, exploring electro-acoustic, R&B, hip-hop and pop writing. His piano playing has allowed him to travel throughout Vietnam and coordinate numerous charity events there as well as at home, organizing and leading a benefits concert and currently volunteering for Education Through Music-LA with Victoria Lanier. Aside from music, he coaches for his Burbank little league football team and enjoys spending time with his family and friends. Ferrante is a sophomore at the USC Thornton School of Music studying classical composition.

Chloe Villamayor

it's not the sun's fault for shining

sometimes you don't want to get out of bed. and that's not the sun's fault.

Villamayor is a composer who believes that music is not only a reflection of the world but a tool to heal those within it. A violinist since 2012, Villamayor's musical journey began in youth orchestras such as the Santa Clarita Valley Youth Orchestras and California All-State ensembles. Her musical studies expanded to songwriting, where she explored pop and rock sounds. In 2020, Villamayor participated in the Luna Lab with LACO fellowship program, the Curtis Youth Arts Summer Program and the LA Phil's Nancy and Barry Sanders Composer Fellowship Program.

Daniel Montes de Oca Téllez

S

S as in secret, one I really wanted to tell you. I was a little shy about it, but you know what I mean, don't you? I know you knew ;) Were you keeping such a playful little secret from me too? Oh mystery!

Born in Mexico City, Daniel Montes de Oca Téllez is a LA-based composer, recorder player, singer, choral conductor and multi-instrumentalist. With a practice spanning diverse disciplinary frameworks from the acoustic to the digital and the interactive, his work is multifaceted and reluctant to fit into a genre, drawing from various musical traditions and reimagining the societal possibilities of music. He has studied with Nina Young, Camae Ayewa, Salvador Rodríguez, Katherine Balch and Nate May. His works have been commissioned and performed by musicians and ensembles such as Eric Wubbles, Katherine Schoepflin, Dana Jessen, Laura Cocks, Osnat Netzer, Tawnya Popoff, Michael Kropf, Sebastián Espinosa, Alejandro Serna, Coro de Flautas de la FaM UNAM, the Aizuri Quartet, Ensemble dal Niente (to be premiered in 2022) and Ashley Jackson. As a recorder player, he was awarded the 2019 Walden School Players Award in recognition for his performance of contemporary music. He is currently studying composition at the USC Thornton School of Music.

Tamzin Elliott

Very Small Set

Sad gay songs for table 5.

Tamzin Elliott is a composer and singer-songwriter from San Diego, now based in Los Angeles. They are working on their Doctoral Dissertation at the USC Thornton School of Music.

Quenton Blache

afloat

afloat is about keeping one's head up and "above water" during hardship, which I think many can relate to during these challenging times. The piece comprises three main underlying motifs, which transform throughout, undergoing constant harmonic and rhythmic changes. This is a representation of focus and determination, even through the surrounding chaos.

Quenton Xavier Blache is a cellist and composer based in Los Angeles, where he is a junior at the USC Thornton School of Music. He is a double major in cello performance and music composition with a minor in Chinese. He has performed in Europe, Asia and at Carnegie Hall as a member of the National Youth Orchestra USA, and he has toured nationally with the Sphinx Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra in October 2021. In 2019, his composition for string quartet, *Hunted*, was performed in a masterclass with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw. He has scored for the Vanuatu documentary, *No Part Too Small* (2020). Blache is also the composer for the Resilience Project, a climate change "art-ivist" performance series that is a part of the inaugural USC Arts and Climate Collective. He currently studies composition under Frank Ticheli and cello under Andrew Shulman.

Grace Miedziak

Trout and the Hatch

This piece written for solo cello captures the dramatic and magical phenomenon known as "The Hatch," which occurs at lakes and streams all across my home state of Oregon. Every evening at sunset, adult insects emerge from a nymph or pupa and fly away, which draws trout toward the water's surface. This results in a feeding frenzy, where hundreds of trout eagerly leap from the lake to devour these insects. Growing up in central Oregon, I have witnessed the excitement of the hatch numerous times and wanted to capture the experience in this piece.

Grace Miedziak is a composer, pianist, vocalist, songwriter and producer raised in the high desert of central Oregon. As a teenager, Miedziak was recognized as an Honored Composer twice by the Oregon Music Teachers' Association (OMTA) for her solo piano pieces *From Raindrop to River* (2016) and *Breaking the Silence* (2018). At 16 years old, her chamber piece *For Little Grace* (2018) won first place in Oregon in the Music Teachers' National Association National Composition Competition. These opportunities led to the Metropolitan Youth Symphony of Portland commissioning her to compose *Seereise* (2019) for full orchestra. This piece premiered March 8, 2020 at Arlene Schnitzer Hall and earned national recognition by the New York Emerging Composers Competition. Since then, Miedziak has sung for multiple movie and television soundtracks, including *Don't Look Back*, a film featured at the Cannes Film Festival in 2020. Miedziak has also composed music for National Public Radio (NPR) Pandemic Postcards, scored multiple short films through the USC School of Cinematic Arts and self-produced multiple singles and a full-length album to be released this winter under her artist name ANOTHER. Miedziak is currently pursuing a bachelor's of music in composition and a minor in music production from the USC Thornton School of Music, and she plans to earn her master's degree with USC's Screen Scoring program.

Charlie Richardson

Three Colors of Preemptive Processing

My first experience with loss launched me into a previously unknown world. Confusion and regret developed into self-deprecation and feelings of inadequacy, which in turn led to a persistent fear that I would somehow ruin all of the relationships I cared most about. Each small mistake or misunderstanding made me feel as though I was on the brink of losing those close to me. When there weren't any easily identifiable mistakes, I would begin searching for them, finding any excuse to blame myself and shut down. At a certain point, I felt as though my social functioning had evaporated. For the past several months, I've been trying to come to terms with the fact that I'm inevitably going to experience more and more loss as I get older and that each loss will spark feelings of sadness, despondency and fear. I hope to learn how to experience these feelings without losing myself in the process. Mark Rothko often stated that he was only interested in conveying universal human emotions such as "tragedy, ecstasy and doom." I'm drawn to Rothko's art because he expresses the inexpressible through simplicity, attempting to eliminate the boundaries between the art and the observer. The three concluding tonalities, or "colors", of this piece serve as my blueprint for coping with loss. I hope these blocks of color can serve as a shared space for listeners, performers and myself as the composer to exist in three distinct emotional states related to loss, finding solace in their universality. "You've got sadness in you, I've got sadness in me, and my works of art are places where the two sadnesses can meet, and therefore both of us need to feel less sad," said Mark Rothko. This piece was written in conjunction with Ella Kaale's piece *état d'âme*. Both pieces share the same instrumentation and were inspired by different visual artists.

Charlie Richardson is a composer from New York currently studying with Christopher Trapani.

Ella Kaale

état d'âme: a self-portrait

état d'âme is one half of a project created in conjunction with Charlie Richardson, with his portion entitled *Three Colors of Preemptive Processing*. He suggested we write two separate pieces that respond to the same prompt - we each select a visual artist we admire and examine their process, which we would attempt to replicate in a composition. The first artist that came to mind was Frantisek Kupka, an early abstract and cubist painter from Czechia. The first painting of his I saw was *The Yellow Scale* (1907), which is housed in the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. In this self-portrait, Kupka sensually gazes toward the viewer, reclined in a lounge chair and holding a half-smoked cigarette. Although the subject's visual personality is fascinating, the true intoxication of this work is the use of a single color: yellow. Kupka's legacy is defined by his philosophical exploration of the nature of color and how it affects perception of art. In works such as *The Yellow Scale*, Kupka uses a singular artistic tool and expresses its entire range. In *état d'âme*, I have used Kupka's approach to a self-portrait to create my own. The piece comprises very few materials, with the pitches rarely extending past a whole step in relation to each other. Pure air noise from the flute is the only sound for the first minute or so, and my portrait grows from there, highlighting my prides, insecurities and wishes. "Atmosphere in a painting is achieved through bathing the canvas in a single scale of colors, thus one achieves an *état d'âme* (state of being) exteriorized in luminous form," said Frantisek Kupka.

Composer Ella Kaale is an alumna of Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America's Composer Apprenticeship, the New York Youth Symphony Composition Program, Dolce Suono Ensemble's ComposerLab: Young American Composers, the MATA Jr. Festival and the Curtis Institute of Music Young Artist Summer Program. She is also a two-time alumna of the American Festival for the Arts (AFA) Summer Composers Institute, where she participated in the Houston Ballet Academy Composer-Choreographer Collaboration. Some of her honors include a YoungArts Merit Award, a Luna Composition Lab Honorable Mention and the Parent-Teacher Association Reflections Fine Arts Competition National Award of Excellence. Kaale is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in composition at the USC Thornton School of Music, where she studies with Christopher Trapani.

Acknowledgements

Donald Crockett

Chair, Composition

Tori Nagle

Production Coordinator

Tyler Eschendal

Recording Engineer

Upcoming Events

Mar. 26 at 4:00 p.m.

Polish Music Spring: California Dreamin'

Mar. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Electro-Acoustic Composition Showcase

Apr. 1 at 7:30 p.m.

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