

## PROGRAM NOTES

**the air is heavier here** (2016) Benjamin J. Penwell (b. 1989)

the air is heavier here is an exploration in musical space, time, and timbre. Instead of using traditional metric notation, the score employs spatial notation: the music takes place along a timeline, with the proportionate physical space representing the number of seconds each note or event happens for, as well as the amount of time between events. The purpose for this notation is to guide the performers into experiencing the internal time of the piece differently than they would with traditional notation. The notation allows them to experience time as a physical, tangible object, and time is represented on the page as physical space for them to traverse.

As with many of my pieces, the title is free word association derived from the sound of the music. With this piece, my primary goal is to create an atmospheric soundworld for the listener to temporarily inhabit. The music itself, with its prolonged, low, dissonant drones in the cellos; dark, quiet chords in the piano; and slowly evolving melodies in the alto flute is rich with possibilities for abstract imagery. Each listener may decide the meaning of the words the air is heavier here for themselves: the palpably eerie stillness of thick fog as the sun rises, an alien and possibly hostile landscape, a delicate and unexplained sense of dread, or whatever imagery the combination of the music and the title brings to mind.

**Piano Suite** (2015) Pedram Diba (b. 1993)

The first movement of this suite is based on triads. There are at least two triads at each given time creating a cluster. The triads move away from each other note by note, going to other triads, throughout the movement. The harmonic progression is accompanied with a distinct melody. The melody does not fully reveal itself until the very end when the harmony lands on A and is out of the cluster harmonic progression world. The second movement is based on a folk tune from Azerbaijan called Sari gellin. In this movement I present the melody in an obscure way with harmonies that are similar sounding to Azeri harmonies. The third movement of this suite is based on the idea on polytonality and poly meter. The fourth movement is a twelve-tone movement in a quasi canonic structure. Finally, the last movement is a very active and involved movement based on a melody that is taken out of the tones of multiple chords

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**Season 115, Program 48**



UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

# Oregon Composers Forum

**Beall Concert Hall**  
Tuesday, Feb, 23, 2016 | 7:30 p.m.



**Sylph** (2015) Daniel Daly (b. 1990)  
 Ulysses Loken, piano  
 Crystal Wing In Chu, percussion

**Through Twilight** (2013) Rebecca Larkin (b. 1992)  
 Christine Senavsky and Camille Barnisin, violins  
 Michael Kaveney viola  
 Makenna Carrico, cello

**Sifting Forces** (2015) Nathan Engelmann (b. 1993)  
 Sam Golter, flute  
 Chelsea Oden, clarinet  
 Makenna Carrico, cello

**Fantasy, Logically Created** Nikolai Valov (b. 1993)  
 Nikolai Valov, piano

**Like Glass** (2015) Makenna Carrico (b. 1994)  
 Miya Saito-Beckman, violin  
 Christine Senavsky, viola  
 Makenna Carrico, cello  
 Linda Jenkins, flute  
 Brynn Powell, clarinet  
 Shae Wirth, horn  
 Benjamin J. Penwell, conductor

**the air is heavier here** (2016) Benjamin J. Penwell (b. 1989)  
 Linda Jenkins, flute  
 Makenna Carrico, cello  
 Ramsey Sadaka, cello  
 Bryce Miller, piano

**Piano Suite** (2015) Pedram Diba (b. 1993)  
 I.  
 II.  
 III.  
 IV.  
 V.  
 Alessandro Andrade da Fonseca and Julianne Shepard, piano

**Sylph** (2015) Daniel Daly (b. 1990)

The 16<sup>th</sup>-century alchemist Paracelsus coined the term Sylph to describe spirits of the air. The most famous airy spirit is Shakespeare's Ariel, who was insubstantial enough to lie in the bell of a flower or ride a bat, yet powerful enough to intrude upon the world of humans and spread confusion. According to the renowned Renaissance magician, Agrippa, such spirits were the natural conduits of magic.

This piece attempts to imagine 'airyness' – the sensation of light, speed, weightlessness. It is a dream of flying accompanied by droplets of moisture, rushing winds and dizzying vistas below. The music is dedicated to brilliant pianist and close friend Matt Goodrich, whose spirit has never touched earth.

**Through Twilight** (2013) Rebecca Larkin (b. 1992)

As the sun begins to gently set, the light fades into the sky. Shimmers of light cling to daytime as they slowly evaporate, eventually succumbing to nightfall. In the sky's rebirth, the vibrant colors of civil twilight paint the atmosphere, and quickly changing hues fill the sky before they begin to descend in shades of color. Nautical twilight evokes blues and purples as the guiding light of day still hovers on the horizon. The vast space is filled with deep tones that fade into the dark of astronomical twilight. Now void of color, the stars shine their brightest. As twilight closes, the sky is softly illuminated by the resulting night.

**Sifting Forces** (2015) Nathan Engelmann (b. 1993)

Sifting Forces was originally composed to accompany the work of visual artist Krista Heinitz. The piece focuses on cyclic repetition and the imperfections that arise from variation.

**Fantasy, Logically Created** Nikolai Valov (b. 1993)

The tempi, dynamics, articulations and colors are left to the discretion of the performer to apply in a way that makes sense with the various performance instructions evoking images of a cold and bleak landscape that are given above passages throughout the score. In doing this, it ensures no two performances of this piece will ever sound close to the exact same, while still being similar enough that the piece would be recognizable to those who knew it.