

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

The Department of Music presents
The Faculty & Friends Concert Series

Dr. Ben Still, saxophones

assisted by

Avery Bumgarner, saxophone

Dr. Elizabeth Sullivan, oboe

Dr. Claudio Olivera, piano

Rowe Recital Hall
Rowe Arts Building
Tuesday January 16, 2024 | 7:30 pm
coaa.charlotte.edu

Program

Star Bits

Corey Dundee
(b. 1990)

Yellow Jersey

Libby Larsen
(b. 1950)

Avery Bumgarner, saxophone

Dawn to Dusk

Felipe Leitão
(b. 1984)

Dr. Elizabeth Sullivan, oboe

From the Skyline

Mischa Zupko
(b. 1971)

- I. Crystal
- II. Chasing Moonlight
- III. Brick and Steel

Dr. Claudio Olivera, piano

“Filtering” and “Epilogue” from Adjusting Parameters Jenni Watson
(b. 1985)

Program Notes

Los Angeles-based composer and saxophonist **Corey Dundee** (b. 1990) composes music he describes as “rhythmic ridiculousness written in a quasi-tonal yet esoterically functional harmonic language.” As a composer, he was recently awarded a fellowship to attend the Susan and Ford Schumann Center for Compositional Studies at the 2022 Aspen Music Festival and is a recipient of Chamber Music America’s coveted Classical Commissioning Grant. Dundee holds degrees from Indiana University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Southern California. *Star Bits* for solo alto saxophone was composed in 2011 and was inspired by the “tiny crystalline objects of the same name found throughout the video game ‘Super Mario Galaxy’”. Dundee writes: “The star bits are a collectible item that can be seen falling from the sky, bursting out of hidden locations, bouncing around the stage, or floating in groups forming various geometric patterns.” This work for saxophone attempts to personify the quirkiness of these star bits using varied rhythms, textures, and large dynamic shifts.

Grammy-award winning **Libby Larsen** (b. 1950) is one of America’s most-performed living composers, having a catalogue of over 500 pieces that span nearly every genre. She is the co-founder of the American Composer’s Forum, the former Papamarkou Chair at the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, and has previously held residencies at the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony. She holds degrees from the University of Minnesota. Originally for clarinet duo, *Yellow Jersey* was composed in 2004 with inspiration from the Tour de France. With Larsen’s permission, saxophonist Diane Hunger adapted the work for two alto saxophones in 2014. A work from Larsen’s compositional “Energy” collection, *Yellow Jersey* moves through the ups and downs of the famous cycling competition with notations and descriptions given to the performers, such as “massed start”, “cadence”, “breakaway”, and “bonk.” The title *Yellow Jersey* reflects the jersey worn by the current leader during the race.

Felipe Leitão (b. 1984) is an award-winning Brazilian-born composer, music producer, and educator who currently is on the faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University. Many of his compositions and sound designs

are used in films and video games, but he also creates electronic works and concert pieces for varied ensembles. Leitão holds degrees from the University of Alabama, the Academy of Art University (San Francisco, CA), and the University of The State of Pará (Belém, Brazil). His music has been featured at numerous music festivals and conferences, such as the New York Electroacoustic Music Festival, Electronic Music Midwest, Cannes Short Film Corner, Toronto Film Week, Anima Mundi, and WorldFest Houston. *Dawn to Dusk* is a duo for oboe and saxophone that draws inspiration from French composer, Claude Debussy due to its use of “fluid tonal centers, liquid rhythms, and exotic scales.” The piece is ternary in texture, featuring an energetic middle section sandwiched between two lyrical and rhythmically fluid sections.

Chicago-based composer and pianist **Mischa Zupko** (b. 1971) currently serves on the faculty at DePaul University and is composer-in-residence at the Music Institute of Chicago. His compositions span many genres, as he has been commissioned by a variety of performing groups such as the Minnesota Orchestra, the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, the American Modern Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, and the Kronos Quartet. *From the Skyline* is a new work for tenor saxophone and piano that “recounts the observations of the composer from a high loft in Chicago.” The first movement, “Crystal”, represents the reflective sunlight on the cityscape’s many buildings while the second movement, “Chasing Moonlight”, evokes the image of moonlight shimmering on the water of Lake Michigan. The third and final movement, “Brick and Steel”, represents the composers downward look to the streets, where the hustle and bustle of walking, the noise of vehicles, and the sounds of street performers can be felt and heard. This piece was brought to fruition through the Contemporary Tenor Repertoire Initiative, a consortium of saxophone performers of which Dr. Still was a member.

Jenni Watson (b. 1985) grew to prominence within the saxophone community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based in the United Kingdom and holding degrees from the Royal Northern College of Music, her music seeks “to tell emotive stories ... [through the use of] her own acoustic multi-instrumental recordings with an exploration into electronic manipulation and found sound.” As a saxophonist herself, much of her music is composed for the instrument; however, Watson has also composed for

various brass, choral, and wind ensembles as well. *Adjusting Parameters* is a large suite composed for saxophone and backing track that interprets “shifts in society through the lens of shifts in audio.” Watson notes that this suite explores both “acoustic and electronic in a symbiotic relationship representative of personal reflections on aspects of society.” “Filtering” represents our social media age, “playfully choosing how to interact with the expanding digital age and social technology” while “Epilogue” concludes the suite with “hope for the future, through growing movements and collaborative action.” This piece was commissioned by a consortium of saxophone performers of which Dr. Still was a member.

Program notes draw information and quotes from each composer’s personal website and scores.

About the Performers

Originally from Raleigh, NC, **Ben Still** is an active solo and chamber musician throughout the United States. Currently he is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Music and Lenoir-Rhyne University (Hickory, NC), where he teaches saxophone and music theory, as well as Instructor of Saxophone at UNC Charlotte.

As a soloist, Dr. Still was a national finalist in the Music Teachers National Association Young Artist Solo Competition and the winner of the Texas Tech University Concerto Competition. Additionally, he has performed at the Asia Pacific Saxophone Academy, North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial and Regional Conferences, the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic (Chicago, IL), and has presented and performed at the International Saxophone Symposium (Fairfax, VA) and Texas Music Educators Association Conference (San Antonio, TX). He has performed with the Piedmont Wind Symphony, Lubbock Symphony Orchestra, and the Midland-Odessa Symphony Orchestra. As a jazz and commercial musician, Ben has performed in ensembles featuring artists such as Rodney Booth, Steve Lippia, John Riley, Bob McChesney, Rich Perry, Jim Riggs, and Bill Watrous.

An avid chamber music advocate, Dr. Still is a founding member of Mirasol Quartet, which has been a prizewinner and finalist in numerous national chamber music competitions, including Gold Medal at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, 1st place in the American Prize Chamber Music Competition, and Grand Prize in the ENKOR Chamber Music Competition. An outgrowth of the quartet is Mirasol Duo with saxophonist Dr. James Barger. Mirasol Duo performs across the country at universities and public schools, presenting clinics and engaging chamber music recitals. Passionate about new music, Dr. Still has been helped to commission new works for saxophone by composers such as Carlos Simon, Guillermo Lago, Gabriela Ortiz, Joel Love, Beljinder Sekhon, and Martin Bresnick.

Dr. Still holds the DMA and MM in Performance from Texas Tech University, studying concert saxophone with David Dees and jazz improvisation and arranging with Stephen Jones. Prior to moving to Texas, he received his

BM in Performance from UNC Charlotte, where he studied with Dr. Will Campbell and graduated summa cum laude. Dr. Still was also an inaugural member of UNC Charlotte's College of Arts + Architecture Honors Program.

Professionally, Dr. Still holds affiliations with Pi Kappa Lambda, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, the College Music Society, and the North American Saxophone Alliance. He is a Conn-Selmer Artist/Clinician and performs on Selmer Paris saxophones exclusively.

Dr. Still lives in Charlotte, N.C. with his wife and three pets.

Elizabeth Sullivan is the Associate Professor of Oboe and Musicianship at UNC Charlotte. She is a passionate educator and performer dedicated to elevating others in all areas of music.

As a professor at Charlotte, Dr. Sullivan instructs at all levels, from advance oboe classes to the rudiments of music. Her college students go on to pursue further graduate music studies, teach in middle and high schools as music educators, serve in leadership positions at non-profit arts organizations, and freelance as teachers and performers. She additionally sees private students who regularly make all-district and all-state auditioned ensembles at the middle and high school level and go on to attend prestigious university-level music programs around the country.

Dr. Sullivan supports public school music teachers and is engaged in schools throughout the Southeast U.S. as a clinician. She has adjudicated for both the Southeastern woodwind solo high school division at the MTNA Regional Competition and the Florida All-State Competition. Outside of the applied music field, Dr. Sullivan invests in first-generation college students. As a first-generation college student herself, she understands some of the unique challenges for this demographic. Her research in this area led to numerous conference presentations suggesting best practices for supporting first-generation college students in the applied studio on college campuses.

When she isn't teaching, Dr. Sullivan is a devoted performer. She frequently performs at national and international music conferences such as the Music by Women International Festival, College Music Society conferences and

SEAMUS National Conference. Regionally, she frequently performs with Opera Carolina and the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra.

She is a founding member of Trio Village, a chamber music ensemble that champions the works of women and historically excluded composers by commissioning and performing new works and rediscovering older works. Trio Village has performed at national conferences around the U.S., including the National Flute Association Annual Convention, the International Double Reed Society Annual Conference, and the College Music Society National Conference. As an ensemble, they work to educate audiences on the history of and importance of equity in the field of music. Trio Village received the distinction of third place in the American Prize Competition, Professional Chamber Music division and was a finalist for the Ernst Bacon Award for American music, chamber ensemble division in 2021.

Dr. Sullivan's debut album, *A Dramatic Journey: 60 years of Thea Musgrave's Music for Oboe*, was released on Albany Records in 2020. This recording explores the composer's ability to create effusive, moving music for any medium, and reviewers found Dr. Sullivan to display "a great range of expression, control of color, dynamics and technical prowess throughout the CD."

Dr. Sullivan studied under Ann Adams at Stetson University where she achieved her Bachelor of Music in Oboe performance. She continued her studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she completed her masters and doctorate studies in Oboe Performance, Pedagogy and Literature. While there, she was a student of oboist John Dee and recipient of the Bill A. Nugent Fellowship. Previous academic appointments include Eastern Illinois University and Daytona State College.

Dr. Sullivan lives in Concord, N.C. with her husband and two children. In her free time, she can be found tending her garden, caring for her chickens, or hiking in the mountains.

Avery Bumgarner (he/him) is an arts administrator, educator, and saxophonist from Hickory, North Carolina. His personal mission is to strive for the utmost authenticity in all he does. He is deeply passionate about

performing and promoting the music of living and diverse composers in the classical and jazz/Black American Music idioms. An educator at heart, Avery enjoys teaching private lessons to saxophone, flute, and clarinet students as well as lessons on improvisation to all instrumentalists.

He has an undergraduate degree in Music Education from UNC Charlotte and both a Master of Saxophone Performance and Master of Arts Administration degree from Ohio University. Currently, he is the Operations and Education Manager for the Western Piedmont Symphony. In addition to his role with the Symphony, Avery is also an adjunct professor at UNC Charlotte where he teaches a jazz ensemble pedagogy course to music education majors. His wife is a high school band director in the NC foothills, and they share their love of music and education with everyone they meet.

Venezuelan pianist **Claudio Olivera** received his first piano classes when he was 8 years old. At the age of 12 he had his debut as a soloist, interpreting the Little Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra by Alexander Slobodianik. In 1996 he attended the Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan, USA, where he received the Van Cliburn Award for his outstanding piano performance. Since 1994 he also has participated in several national and international competitions obtaining numerous prizes, including gold medals in the Yamaha Piano Competition 2002 and the “I Salón Nacional de Pianistas de Venezuela” 2006-07.

Dr. Olivera has played with nearly every major orchestra in his country. In 2005 he interpreted Sergei Rachmaninoff’s Third Piano Concerto with the RIAS Berlin International Youth Orchestra and Tomasz Bugaj in the Rachmaninoff Festival in Catania, Italy. He has also performed numerous recitals in the most important cities in Venezuela and Germany, as well as Chile, USA, Spain and France. He studied with Alexander Slobodianik until 2002, receiving a Pianist Certificate from the National Conservatorium of Music “Juan José Landaeta” in Caracas, Venezuela. He also attended the Simon Bolivar University, where he graduated in 2003 as *cum laude* Industrial Engineer.

The following year he received a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to pursue his Masters in Piano and Pedagogy

at the Martin Luther Universität Halle – Wittenberg, Germany, where he studied under the tutelage of Prof. Dr. Marco Antonio de Almeida until 2008. In 2009 he came to the United States to work on a Graduate Performing Artist Certificate with Dr. Marin Lomazov at the University of South Carolina, and the same year he received the Yamaha In-Residency Fellowship, an award given by the College Music Society to graduate students with innovative and exemplary programs on community engagement and outreach through classical music. In 2015 he presented at the National Music Teachers Association Conference in Las Vegas as part of USC's chapter of that organization.

In 2016, under the guidance of Dr. Lomazov, he obtained the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance at the University of South Carolina, where he began working the same year as Adjunct Piano Faculty and Staff Accompanist. Thanks to a nomination by Rice Music House, he received the 2018, 2019 and 2021 Steinway & Sons Top Teacher Award. Since 2020, he has been working as audio/video editor for the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival, as well as Livestream Technical Director for the Seattle Chamber Music Society and the Vivace Music Foundation.

In July 2021 he moved to Charlotte, where he started accompanying at UNC Charlotte, Opera Carolina, and as the main accompanist for the Gay Men Chorus of Charlotte and Women Chorus of Charlotte.

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Upcoming Events

JANUARY

Faculty Dance Concert Fri Jan 26 & Sat Jan 27 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Hunter Kopczynski Tue Jan 30 | 7:30 pm
Faculty & Friends Concert Series Rowe Recital Hall

FEBRUARY

Student Spotlight Concert Fri Feb 2 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

The Magic Flute Fri Feb 9 & Sat Feb 10 | 7:30 pm
Opera Workshop Rowe Recital Hall

The New South: Part 1- How We Got Here Thu Feb 15- Sat Feb 17 | 7:30 pm
by Margarette Joyner Sat Feb 17 & Sun Feb 18 | 2:00 pm
Black Box Theater

Jazz Combos & Ensemble Tue Feb 20 | 7:30 pm
Rowe Recital Hall

Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band Wed Feb 21 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Orchestra Thu Feb 22 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater