

THE 47th ANNUAL
FESTIVAL OF NEW AMERICAN MUSIC

LOCAL VOICES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 7:00 P.M.

Blackberries (2024) Steven Coolidge

Jia-mo Chen, cello - Kirsten Smith, piano

Pierre et Luce (2015) Masatoshi Mitsumoto

- I. Prologue
- II. Dans le Metro
- III. Les jeunes amoureux
- IV. Tête-à-tête
- V. Pause
- VI. Epilogue: la Place Saint-Gervais

Jia-mo Chen, cello - Aida Elkhazade, piano

Lux aeterna (2024) *world premiere* Richard Cionco

Lino Rivera, piano

Caténaires (2006) Elliott Carter

Michael Parks, piano

Quintet in B-flat Minor "Rain and Roses" (2024) A.C. Sullivan

Prelude

Paolo Reyes and A.C. Sullivan, violins
Mia Kawakami, clarinet - Emily Svendsen, viola
William Masters, cello

Suite for Prepared Vibraphone (2010) Von Hansen

- I. Oblique
- III. Incessant

Evan French, vibraphone

Blackberries is based on a three-note rhythmic cell of long-short-short. If you say the word “blackberries” it tends to fall into this pattern. It happens first about 30 seconds into the piece, as an interruption.

It makes a good starting point as well as stopping point. After it stops there is a sort of vacuum, which invites new activity. It is like when crickets are chirping and you make a loud noise and they stop suddenly, then resume after a bit. I tried to see to what extremes I could take this motif in different settings, and also to experiment with the cello and piano being dependent and independent of each other.

John Halicki pointed out this rhythm and talked to me about it. Mr. Halicki was an epic and virtuosic rock drummer. I would pick blackberries at his place when we played music there in the summer. He is no longer with us. This piece is dedicated to him.

Steven Coolidge began studying piano at age 12. He has a bachelor’s degree in composition from New England Conservatory. He plays classical, jazz and rock piano. He is a piano technician and long-standing member of the Piano Technician’s Guild. He teaches piano and composition at his home. He plays keyboards with various pop ensembles. Steven has written for orchestra, piano, synthesizer, and rock band. His rock band Water Bear is currently recording an album. Recordings and videos may be regarded at waterbearband.com and youtube.com/stevencoolidge.

Thanks to Jia-mo Chen and Kirsten Smith for performing *Blackberries*. This is the second year Ms. Smith has performed Steven’s work at FeNAM.

“*Lux aeterna*” finds its origins within the Catholic Mass, meaning “eternal light”. Richard Cionco’s *Lux aeterna* suggests a broader secular message wherein our world, as we experience it historically and currently, holds forces both evil and good - a timeless narrative. This 12-minute solo piano composition portrays less this human struggle and more the triumph of reason. Somehow, enlightenment always prevails. Compositionally, the music unfolds episodically, utilizing thematic transformation techniques throughout. Two emotionally opposing themes are juxtaposed and transformed texturally and rhythmically, finding resolution in the end. Dedicated to Lino Rivera, tonight marks the world premiere performance by Dr. Rivera himself.

Symphony D’Oro, ARC Orchestra, Solano Symphony, and more. Since 2022, Emily has served as the principal violist of Auburn Symphony. Emily deeply enjoys playing chamber music and has been in a trio and quartet that earned first prize in the Watson Chamber Music Competition in 2021 and 2022.

Mia Kawakami is a recent transfer student at Sacramento State, studying clarinet performance. She has been playing for over ten years and has been a part of music ensembles at Sacramento State, Cosumnes River College, and the University of Hawai’i at Manoa. This year, she has performed in Sacramento State’s Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, and Clarinet Ensemble, as well as several small chamber groups. Mia is currently working towards a bachelor’s degree in clarinet performance, intending to learn professional skills and to continue her studies as an instrumentalist. She is currently studying with professional performer and professor, Sandra McPherson, and she looks forward to continuing to learn a variety of repertoire pieces and expanding her musical knowledge.

Evan French is a Sacramento-based composer and percussionist and was the winner of this year’s Student Performers Competition at the Festival of New American Music. Evan is an active performer in and around the greater Sacramento area. He is the principal percussionist of the Sac State Symphony Orchestra and has performed with groups such as the Sacramento Symphonic Winds and the Camellia Symphony Orchestra. Outside of music, French enjoys cooking/baking, watercolor painting, photography, and playing video games. He is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in music theory & composition at Sac State.

Camellia Symphony. Paolo has also served as music director with Fairfield's Missouri Street Theatre in their productions of Gypsy, Mama Mia!, Man of La Mancha, and Beauty and the Beast.

A committed music educator at Jesuit High School, Paolo is also conductor for the Auburn Symphony's "Symphony Goes to the Schools" program that brings classical music performances to several schools in Placer County. When he is not teaching a classroom the wonderful intricacies of playing or music theory, he also runs a private studio of violin students.

Paolo is also an active violinist, performing in numerous orchestras and ensembles including the Auburn Symphony, inConcert Sierra orchestra, the Folsom Lake Symphony, Camerata California, Placer Pops Chorale, Sacramento Choral Society, the Vallejo Symphony, and Symphony of the Redwoods. Paolo is also a founding member of the PaCaRe trio. He is currently pursuing a Performance Certificate in Violin with Anna Presler at California State University, Sacramento. Paolo considers himself very fortunate to live a life immersed in music, but on the off chance he is not performing or teaching, he is playing tabletop and board games with friends, or taking care of his cat Genji.

William Masters is currently pursuing his degree in cello performance at the Sac State School of Music under Andrew Luchansky. Most recently, William had the honor of being the featured concerto soloist with the Sac State Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, he was an Honors Award Recipient at the 2023 MTAC Baroque to the Future Festival, 2nd Prize Winner in the Folsom Lake Symphony's 2024 Young Artists Competition, and the Cello Division Winner/State Finalist in CAPMT's 2023 North State Concerto Competition. William was also a founding member in 2022 of the Sacramento branch of the Back to Bach Project, a student-run arts outreach program to elementary schools. Outside of music, William enjoys reading, fiction writing, his yellow Labrador Sam, and dabbling interests in baking and surfing.

Emily Svendsen is a violist and violinist based in Northern California. She is an alumna of Sacramento State and works as a private music instructor and freelance musician. She currently plays in Romanza String Quartet and is frequently hired by local quartets and orchestras, including

A Steinway Artist, **Richard Cionco** is a graduate of the University of Maryland and The Juilliard School. Important solo and chamber music performances include those at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, the Festival of New American Music in Sacramento, the Samsø Piano Festival in Denmark, the Orfeo Music Festival in Italy, the Sulzbach-Rosenburg Festival in Germany, and the Music and More, Summersfest! in Bosnia. Mr. Cionco was a Teaching Fellow for David Dubal at The Juilliard School for four years and is presently Professor of Piano at California State University, Sacramento where he teaches, performs, and composes. His original compositions and arrangements have been heard throughout the U.S., in Brazil, Denmark, Bosnia, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and recently at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

A.C. Sullivan began working on the *Quintet in B Minor* after their engagement was called off in October 2022. It is an embodiment of the joys and sorrows of romance. The namesake, "Rain and Roses" is both a figurative and literal metaphor for the tragedy and beauty of love. Throughout this Prelude, the imagery of literal rain is captured through pizzicato, recalling the rain and roses in full bloom on their first date. Love is in the air as soaring melodies shared between the clarinet and strings serenade the inner romantic.

As engraved in the score, the composer intends this piece to be cathartic and hopeful for listeners and performers too,

*"For the grieving and broken-hearted,
When things seem utterly abysmal and hopeless--
It is not the end." (2022)*

Multimedia artist **A.C. Sullivan** is a synesthete painter, poet, violinist, and composer. As a violinist, they have performed in venues such as the Los Angeles Convention Center and La Madeleine Church in the heart of Paris, France during a concert tour with the Seraphim Symphony. In 2018, they were invited to perform at Carnegie Hall with Symphony Irvine, and performed with musicians of Earth, Wind, and Fire fame for The Eddie Nash Foundation. They have appeared as a featured soloist in live mariachis, cameratas, and in recordings for local rap, alternative, and metal groups in Southern California.

A.C.'s love of music and soundscapes is a central part of their creative

process. By encapsulating their chromesthesia experiences on canvas, they have been commissioned to create art inspired by selected music for a variety of musicians and composers. "The Sound of Souls" (oil on canvas, 2018) was selected to be digitally reproduced as a mural in the lobby of Sac State's Aspen Hall, Hornet Commons in 2021. In 2022, they were one of seven selected artists to create a 7ftx30ft mural for Sac State's Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan "Believe" project. They were commissioned by the Festival of New American Music for their 45th Anniversary to create an original oil painting, "Bella Festiva" (4ft x 4ft, 2022) inspired by the music of featured composer Libby Larsen. In 2023, Shuying Li commissioned A.C. to create cover artwork for her opera *When the Purple Mountains Burn*.

A.C. is pursuing a BM in music theory/composition at California State University, Sacramento studying composition with Dr. Josiah Catalan and violin with Anna Presler. Currently, A.C. Sullivan is preparing to give their Senior Recital on November 8th at 4pm in Capistrano Hall, Room 151. It will be an immersive art experience that invites the audience to enjoy Sullivan's original visual, spoken, and aural art in unity.

Cellist **Jia-mo Chen** is an active performer in the Bay area who appears locally with the Sacramento Philharmonic, North State Symphony, Stockton Symphony, and Sacramento Choral Society. He was previously a member of the Chicago Civic Orchestra. He is currently the cello instructor at the Pacific Institute of Music in Folsom. Mr. Chen earned his Master of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

A passion for learning led American pianist **Kirsten Smith** to begin part-time studies at Arizona State University at the age of thirteen, studying sociobiology, history, mathematics, and foreign languages. She completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in piano performance at the ASU School of Music under the tutelage of Steven De Groote, Gold Medalist of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. A winner of many competitions herself, Ms. Smith has been the recipient of awards, scholarships, and invitations to music festivals including the Aspen Music Festival, Interlochen Center for the Arts, and the Van Cliburn Institute. She has been chosen to premiere numerous new works by contemporary composers and has recorded for the Centaur label.

In addition to the solo repertoire, Ms. Smith is devoted to the performance of collaborative works, and is a passionate teacher who believes deeply in the importance of discovering and sharing musical knowledge. Ms. Smith has been on the faculty of Sacramento State University since 1996, where she teaches piano, music theory, aural skills, collaborative piano and piano pedagogy. In demand as a lecturer, adjudicator and columnist, Ms. Smith was awarded a prestigious Pedagogy Enhancement Award at Sac State. Raised in a musical family, she began formal lessons with her mother at age four and began teaching piano by age thirteen. Ms. Smith resides in Sacramento, where she divides her time between university teaching, performing, and private studio instruction.

Born in the Philippines, **Lino Rivera** has performed as a solo recitalist, concerto soloist, chamber musician and accompanist on three continents. He makes it his mission to advocate and premiere contemporary works; to explore and meet the artistic, creative, and technical challenges of piano transcriptions; and to discover and perform obscure solo piano repertoire throughout the ages. Lino is a celebrated performer for Composers, Inc., an organization based in San Francisco that is dedicated to promoting works by contemporary American composers, where he has performed three World Premieres in many past seasons.

Dr. Rivera currently serves as Professor of Music at Saint Mary's College of California. He holds degrees in piano performance from the University of Santo Tomas, the University of Hawaii, and a doctorate from the University of Maryland. He maintains active concert engagements across the country, and is a regular performer, teacher, and chamber music coach at music festivals here and abroad. In the past years (2011, 2012, 2013), Lino was on faculty at Interharmony Music Festival in Germany. This past summer of 2023, he was on faculty at the Music and More Summerfest! in Trebinje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he performed both solo and chamber music repertoires.

An active conductor, violinist and educator in the Sacramento region, **Paolo Reyes** is the Orchestral Director at Jesuit High School, conductor for the Elk Grove Strauss Festival, and Principal Second Violin with the Auburn Symphony. Paolo has appeared as guest conductor for the Auburn Symphony, Camellia Symphony, Citywater, Folsom Lake Symphony, UC Davis Orchestra, and as Assistant Conductor for the