



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Student Composers

The Queen's Rising

Hosna Alacozy (b. 2002)

Kayla Nhoung & Joan Shalit, violins | Cynthia Kallemeyn & Emily Kurulenko, violas
Jordan Powell & Abigail Cooper, cellos | Manqi Liang, piano | Leslie Vazquez, percussion

The Seaside Garden

Leah Graalfs (b. 2005)

Aidan Beadles, marimba | Kyle Stachnik, cello

Lingering Residue

Justin Trujillo (b. 2004)

Evan French, Matt Amato, Vi La, & Jesse Barba, percussion

Fawn

Abby Cole (b. 2000)

Soraya Roman, flute

Changes in the Afternoon Sun

Long Cheng Vang (b. 2004)

Leah Graalfs, piano

Faint Pulse

Kyle Saly (b. 2001)

Annie Wu & Valerie Dickinson, soprano | A.C. Sullivan & Emi Bravo, alto
Armando Muse, Morgan Shadle, & Ster Montes, tenor
Seb Ibáñez-García & Ryan Fong, bass
Takahiko Hirae, keyboard | Jesse Barba, percussion
Kyle Saly, conductor

Cosmos

Armando Muse (b. 2003)

Wind Ensemble (MIDI playback)

BG Dreams

A.C. Sullivan (b. 1997)

Stephanie Ortiz & Rachel Ashlin, soprano | Abby Cole, mezzo-soprano
A.C. Sullivan, contralto | Jake Michael, tenor | Ryan Antillon, baritone
Alyssa Abbott & Reuben Rampen, alto sax
Tai Wieler, Armando Muse, & Anthony Alvarez-Chavez, trumpet
Sam Weiser & Joan Shalit, violin | Jake Fox & Naomi Baraban, double bass
Oskar Castañeda, piano | Jesse Barba, percussion
Jordyn Bonilla, conductor



MONDAY, 6:00 P.M.
NOVEMBER 17, 2025
CAPISTRANO CONCERT HALL

PROGRAM NOTES

Student Composers – Nov. 17, 2025

The Queen's Rising was inspired by the idea of a queen's rise to power. Imagine this playing in the background as a queen prepares her troops for battle, and how it induces the tension one feels before going to war.

Hosna Alacozy is 23 years old and is in her last semester of her junior year. Her primary instrument is piano, and she is pursuing a double concentration in Music Education and Theory and Composition. Hosna has been teaching since she was 18 years old. She teaches private piano lessons at Newsongs School of Music, beginning strings at Sac State's String Project, and beginning band at Mandarins Music Academy. Alongside teaching, she spends the rest of her time composing music. She has been composing since 2022 and loves to tell stories through music, with an interest in music for media/film scoring.

One foggy morning on the campus of UC Santa Barbara, I discovered a narrow, overgrown trail hidden behind the buildings overlooking the lagoon. It was roughly paved in some parts, with stairs where it was steeper, but mostly a dirt trail. In the heavy fog it was hard to see but a few feet in front of me, when suddenly the trail opened up to reveal the campus point beach. Among the mist and crashing waves, my imagination filled in the scenery hidden by the fog - a fantastical seaside garden. The marimba and cello explore this fictional landscape full of mystery, intrigue, and beauty - it is at once solemn and eerie, yet shimmering and wondrous.

Leah Graalfs (b. 2005) is a composer and performer based in California. A curious, versatile composer, she has explored many different styles and influences, ranging from minimalism to impressionism to spectralism. She is currently studying Music Theory and Composition at Sac State, where she is a percussionist in multiple ensembles. Her work consists of chamber music for many different types of ensembles, from string quartet to symphony orchestra, but she is also partly inspired by video game soundtracks. Her biggest inspirations include composers Lena Raine, Koji Kondo, Lili Boulanger, Steve Reich, John Adams, Tōru Takemitsu, and György Ligeti, from whom Graalfs has drawn many aspects of style.

On August 6, 2012, I was riding my scooter in front of the duplex my family was renting in Richmond, CA. Suddenly, my neighbor across the street began yelling, "The refinery exploded! Go inside!" I got off my scooter and turned around to see a giant cloud of black smoke approaching my neighborhood. I rushed inside and told my dad, but he was already on the phone with my mom with the TV on the local news station.

Anyone who lives in that area today can tell you their feelings about living near a refinery. You couldn't possibly be okay with it. That day was very formative, not just years later, but in beginning to understand the class divide within the United States. Wealthy people don't have to worry about a refinery exploding down the street and the damages of inhaling toxic smoke.

Lingering Residue is broken up into three sections. "Industrial" is the churning sound of machinery. "Aleatoric" is an ominous glow coming from the refinery. "Panic" is the explosion itself. The name of the piece comes from the oil-slicked frost you see on your car windshield after a cold winter night living near a refinery that has been letting off "harmless" emissions overnight.

This piece was a part of a project to commission percussion ensemble pieces to be performed in the Sac State Planetarium in the 2024–25 academic year. Special thanks to Dr. Jordan Shippy for recording and mixing the audio, Dr. Kyle Waters for creating visuals based on my descriptions, and the Sac State Percussion Studio for continuously supporting student composers and new music.

Justin Trujillo (b. 2004) is a composer and educator from California's East Bay with a background in both jazz and classical idioms. His works have been performed by world-renowned ensembles including Hub New Music, and he is the recipient of the 2025 Jeffrey Hoover Memorial Scholarship for composition. Recognized as a "natural storyteller," Justin's music is inspired by personal experiences, culture, and events, shaped by influences ranging from early 20th-century concert music and Renaissance polyphony to alternative rock and hip-hop.

He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Theory/Composition at California State University, Sacramento, where he studies under Dr. Shuying Li. He has presented guest lectures and led clinics at Bay Area high schools and community colleges, sharing his passion for music with students of all backgrounds.

In addition to composing, Justin teaches private lessons in guitar, bass, saxophone, and theory, and serves as the bass section leader at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Tiburon-Belvedere, CA. Outside of music, he enjoys hiking, photography, and scenic coastal drives, seeking inspiration from the natural landscapes around him.

Fawn is the the third movement in a larger work titled "The Four Responses" which was created to explore the natural responses the human brain has when faced with a traumatic event. Those four responses are Fight, Flight, Fawn, and Freeze and are unique to each person as they experience external threats. The Fawn response is a survival mechanism used to appease or placate an abuser to minimize harm and garner protection in a threatening situation. I enjoy using instruments that remind me of the human voice to express complex emotion; I feel the flute is able to express the fawn response where words could not.

Abby Cole is a nonbinary composer, multi-instrumentalist, and interdisciplinary performer. Originally from Washington state Abby is inspired by the human condition. Humans are very complex beings with imperfect relationships, which is a major theme in Abby's music. Abby's goal is to highlight and explore those relationships through music, using a secondary language to shed light on the full scope of human emotion and experience.

In the daily life that I (and maybe all of us) live, every moment to stop and breathe and enjoy the sounds of the world around us become the peace that we crave for. In that nostalgic feeling, the changes in the sun's light every year changes the mood of the time of day. Changing from the blistering warmth of a California summer to the crisp cold of the winter weather some of us ask for during the intense summer days. Although the fall and winter seasons seem a little more blue and pale in colors then summer's vibrant hues, there is warmth to be found.

Hello and dearest of greetings to the reader. My name is **Long Cheng Vang**. I am a music composition major at Sacramento State, transferred with an AA in music from Merced Community College. Before writing music, I wrote poetry. However, as I have gotten older, words could no longer express the feelings and thoughts and nuances of what I felt. While I still write poetry today, I now have music as one of my mediums of expression. The language with no words, but the ability to speak. I compose to express my feelings and thoughts. Making them tangible or to help give a hint of what it is like in my perception of the world and beyond.

Faint Pulse in F Minor draws inspiration from cathedral chants and is reminiscent of traditional church music. The piece is characterized by its text, melodic contours, and harmonic progressions, which together convey both majesty and tragedy. Are we fighting in vain? Are we inevitably enslaved to our dreams? Through these questions, the piece encapsulates profound concepts and the beauty of sorrow.

TEXT and TRANSLATION:

Cur corda nostra debile punimus?	Why do we give punishment to our weak hearts?
Necesse estne animas nostras sacrificare?	Is it necessary to sacrifice our souls?
Parvus, parvus pulsus	Faint, Faint pulse
Preces planetae	The pleas of the planet
Parvus, parvus pulsus	Faint, Faint pulse
Frustra pugnat	Is fighting in vain
(Pestis et dolor infiniti)	(The endless plague and pain)
Num sumus ludibria somniorum nostrorum?	Are we the playthings of our dreams?
Nox spem nostram aurorae obtexit	The night has clouded our hopes for the dawn
Cur tragoediae	Why must tragedies wrought
hunc diem fatalem attulerunt?	This fateful day?

Kyle Saly recently transferred into the Music Composition and Theory program at California State University, Sacramento. He has performed in a variety of large ensembles, including orchestras and chorales, and is currently a member of CSUS's University Chorale, directed by Dr. Judson. Kyle also studies piano under the guidance of Professor Kirsten Smith.

As a composer, Kyle uses Japanese video game music (VGM) literature as a basis and seeks to contribute to the development of a new pedagogical approach to VGM that integrates the academic traditions of classical and jazz. Through his compositions, Kyle aims to explore and share the distinct creative methods of modern Japanese music and VGM, making it more accessible to Western composers and audiences.

The writing of **Cosmos** began nearly a decade ago, as Armando first began to experiment with music composition. Left in the back of the composer's mind for years, the piece was finally fully realized in Spring of 2025. The piece details a journey through outer space, and is set in four movements, with Mvt. 1 signifying the beginning of the journey, Mvt. 2 representing conflicts along the way, Mvt. 3 portraying an unexpectedly calm crash landing on a planet full of beauty and wonder, and Mvt. 4 acting as the culmination of a satisfying journey.

As a Sacramento native composer and trumpeter, **Armando Muse** has spent years developing his compositional skills and fostering connections within the local music community. He has performed in bands such as: the Sacramento Youth Band, West Sacramento Community Orchestra, the River City Swingers, Sac State's Concert Band, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, 1:30PM and 3:00 PM Jazz Ensembles, and University Chorale. He volunteers regularly with Sacramento Youth Band, directed by CSUS alumnus Vincent Salvitti, to march in parades throughout Northern California. During his time at Cosumnes River College, he collaborated with his peers to create and perform original arrangements and compositions.

From trumpet etudes to symphonic orchestra works, Armando aims for versatility to further broaden his artistic range and expression. He is currently cultivating his compositional chops by pursuing a Bachelor of Music Theory and Composition at Sac State. Outside of school, Armando engages with a variety of creative mediums such as cooking, writing, digital art, and board game development.

BG Dreams is an experimental piece inspired by John Cage's philosophy of indeterminacy. It is A.C. Sullivan's realization of part BG from his Concert for Piano and Orchestra. With indeterminate music, each performance is intended to be unique. Sullivan achieves this indeterminacy by instructing that the conductor rolls dice to determine the order in which the musical groups enter each cell. Group 1: Vocalists, Group 2: Trumpets, Group 3: Alto Saxophone, and Group 4: Strings are determined by d1, d2, d3, and d4 rolls, respectively. The pianist and percussionist are the heart of the ensemble, faithfully keeping time and ensuring music is always playing. By navigating the multicellular structure, the conductor is the brain that coordinates the ebb and flow of the ensemble. Each musician in Groups 1—4 may be imagined as the impermanent figures, messages, and passing thoughts in a dream that make it more beautiful and complex. The piece ends with a whirling, disjunct, and non-repeated cell that simulates being awoken in the middle of a dream. Real-life comes crashing in, and distorts the dreamy melodic phrases, marking the end of the "big" musical dream.

"Each page is one system. For a single pianist to be played with, or without any or all parts written for orchestral instruments. The whole is to be taken as a body of material presentable at any point between minimum (nothing played) and maximum (everything played), both horizontally and vertically: a program made within a determined length of time (to be altered by a conductor when there is one) may involve any reading, i.e., any sequence of parts or parts thereof." —*John Cage, Concert for Piano and Orchestra, 1960.*

Multimedia artist **A.C. Sullivan** is a synesthete painter, poet, violinist, vocalist, 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. graduated summa cum laude with a BM in Music Theory/ Composition at California State University, Sacramento in Fall 2024 and has returned in Fall 2025 to study composition as a graduate student in Dr. Josiah Catalan's and Dr. Trey Makler's composition studios.