



## Student Composers Recital

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Long Night on the Ice (2022)

Alan McMurdie (b. 1996)

Track (pre-recorded software electronics)

Spiritcaller (2023)

Kunal Prasad (b. 1999)

Hannah Hall, flute

Sonata-Poemé

Kailer Bibbins (b. 1999)

1. "The Dream" (2022)

Kailer Bibbins, piano

By the Shore (2023)

Stephen Whelan (b. 2003)

Nicole Young, voice  
Stephen Whelan, piano

Of Anticipation (2022)

David Pshichenko (b. 2001)

Ryan Datar & Mathew Major, violin  
Anna Murray, viola; Bo-Lin Lee, cello

Erzések (Feelings) (2022-23)

Tanya Plescia (b. 1969)

1. Szabadság
2. Várakozás
3. Kreativitás
4. Szomorúság
5. Zavartság
6. Fáradtság

Tanya Vegvary Plescia, piano

*continued on reverse*

The Fairy Truck That Scatters Golden Leaves (2023)

Yang Yang (b. 1977)

Ethan Pham-Aguilar, oboe; Alyssa Abbott, alto sax  
Bo-Lin Lee, cello; Andrew Finley, double bass  
Yang Yang, piano

When the World Grows Quiet (2022)

Evan Wright (b. 2002)

Noah Blevins, clarinet  
Stella Moschovas & Ryan Datar, violin  
Anna Murray, viola; Makenna Mann, cello

*Composition majors are students of Dr. Shuying Li, Dr. Scott Perkins,  
Dr. Josiah Catalan, and Dr. Sarah Wald.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

*Long Night on the Ice* is one of Alan McMurdie's early attempts at composing a fully electronic piece composed using software-generated instruments. This piece holds a special place in his heart as it is also his last piece composed while studying under the late Dr. Jeffrey Hoover.

An explorer is trekking the flat, barren Antarctic landscape. The wind is howling. The snow is blowing, but the sky is clear overhead. The stars overhead and the moon on the horizon light up the otherwise black polar night, where the sun never rises. A drone can be heard underneath a long, lonesome melody that seems to tail almost endlessly. Certain sound effects that resemble a wind chime, sparkling stars, or the howling wind can also be heard throughout. At various points, the drone shifts and changes tone, while harmonic clusters rise and fall. The music changes color towards the end, signifying a clearing, and the explorer coming to a high overlook where he is able to fully appreciate his surroundings. However, shortly thereafter, he walks over a layer of ice too thin, and it cracks and breaks beneath his weight, sending him plummeting down a chasm to his inevitable doom.

McMurdie's *Long Night on the Ice* paints this story into the music, initially inspired by the Scott-Amundsen research station located at the South Pole for this piece, as well as the explorers for which the station is named, Amundsen in particular. Amundsen was the first to reach the pole in 1912. However, he mysteriously disappeared during a North Pole rescue mission in 1928 and was never found. Hence the more menacing ending to this piece after being so serene, chillingly remarkable, and even wonderfully mystical.

*Spiritcaller*: The night normally is when most things would sleep and is generally thought to be a time of peace and quiet. Whatever lurks in the dark during these hours may be attracted to the alluring whistles of the flute and carrying with them is an air of mystery as these spirits dance to the melody of the instrument. Whether they hold good intentions or not, only time will tell.

*Sonata-Poémé - "The Dream"*: This piece is my first attempt of writing a larger form piece based in my own theories of harmony that I've been experimenting with for several years now. It is in two movements, but the following movement is currently incomplete. Therefore I have omitted the transition section at the end of this movement that leads directly into the next for a more sensible performance. This first movement uses two short, four-note, themes that are transfigured throughout the piece, and in some cases are either hidden or rearranged throughout the whole sonata. While it does use some modifications of serialism, it is still a strictly tonal piece. Through this piece I am attempting to capture my philosophical views, and in a way it functions as a self-portrait.

*By the Shore* is a piece written to the text of poet Julia Whelan. Julia Whelan is my sister, and she wrote this text specifically for me to set to music. I wanted to have the piece start in a low range for the singer and then progressively grow to show this character's transcendent arrival at "something more".

I sit by the shore  
Seeking something I can't say,  
Can't see, can't spot.  
Alone by the shore  
Watching as the waves  
Show me what I've forgot.  
You rise above the water you give the silent command.

I jump up to meet you  
As you breeze across the beach.  
You smile as you see me,  
And you extend your reach.  
We two stand by the shore,  
Knowing we've found something more.

*Of Anticipation*: This piece was my first venture into writing for strings, an equally daunting and exciting task due to the wide versatility in timbre and technique that the string instrument lends itself to. In writing "Of Anticipation" I wanted to acknowledge these unique characteristics of the string family, but I primarily wanted to focus on exploring the musical element of texture. Throughout the piece you will hear a wide variety of rhythmic interplay including the use of hemiola and polyrhythm juxtaposed with thin and simple textures. In combination with the harmonic language, the result is a sense of anxious and yet joyous expectation.

*Erzések (Feelings)*: The six mood pieces presented today come from a set of twelve. The Hungarian titles reflect the inspiration, reverence, and creativity of the Hungarian language. The English translations are: 1. Free 2. Expectant 3. Creative 4. Sad 5. Anxious 6. Tired.

## COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Kailer Bibbins is a Piano Performance Major at Sacramento State and a composer and music teacher. He enjoys championing the music of Russian composers and exploring the extent that tonality can be pushed in his own music. Kailer is a Sacramento native and lives in midtown with his elderly dog.

Alan McMurdie was born in 1996 and is a native of Vacaville, California. He started playing piano at the age of seven and bass guitar at the age of ten. He has since performed in close to forty recitals as early as 5th grade, also playing cello and drums. Alan started composing in 2014. Since then, he has written for solo piano, piano and voice, percussion, strings, woodwind ensemble, and even electronic music via software. Alan often attempts to combine beautiful, powerful melodies with 20th or 21st century techniques, with the occasional Romantic inspiration. On his way to earning a BM in Theory/ Composition at Sacramento State, Alan won the 2018 FeNAM Student Composers' Competition, and the 2019 School of Music's Outstanding Senior award. He is now in the final semester of his master's degree in Composition at Sacramento State.

Tanya Vegvary Plescia is an international concert pianist and composer, with professional performances of her works at notable venues such as the Royal Albert Hall in London, National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., Hungarian Embassy in D.C., and the Hungarian Consulate in Los Angeles. Her many prizes include two-time First Prize Winner Grand Prize Virtuoso Competition, and American Protege competition winner, and the AnArt Artistry competition 1st place Prize. Her published works include two full length CD's and several singles. Reviews of Ms. Vegvary-Plescia's performances and compositions have been tremendous. "...Plescia's original compositions show a wide range of influences and a taste for pushing musical boundaries. Her set of variations (Theme and Variations for Violin and Piano) are everywhere full of color, and she's not shy about taking risks and being provocative. It came across as music that makes you think and feel, and if that isn't the point of original music, I don't know what is." (Edward Ortiz, *Sacramento Bee*) Tanya holds a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities/ Religious Studies and a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Sacramento State and is currently pursuing her master's degree in music composition. Tanya is deeply humbled and honored to be a student of Shuying Li.

Kunal Prasad is a 2nd year graduate student and is currently studying under Dr. Shuying Li. He aims to create specific moods and atmosphere with his music and aspires to work in game and film music production. The goal and purpose of his music is to entertain the audience and give them a unique and pleasant musical experience.

David Pshichenko is a fourth-year undergraduate pursuing his bachelor's degree in Music Theory and Composition at Sacramento State University. Music has been a major part of his life since he was twelve years old starting in middle school band and neighborhood piano lessons. It has been nine years since and along the way David's passion has poured into other channels of music including jazz, choir, and of course, composition. His interest in rich harmony, robust melody, and unique textures guide his craft. Now he concentrates his work on music in media and aims to be a film composer.

Stephen Whelan is a third-year theory and composition student at Sacramento State. Stephen grew up listening to music from multiple genres such as classical, jazz, rock and musical theatre and integrates those influences into his own writing. During his time at Sacramento State, he has studied composition under Dr. Scott Perkins, Dr. Josiah Catalan, and Dr. Shuying Li as well as piano with Kirsten Smith. His piece "Wandering Together" for flute and viola was his first performed piece by Earplay at the composer competition for FeNAM.

Evan Wright is a music major at Sacramento State currently double majoring in Jazz Studies with a concentration in Saxophone Performance, and Composition. Evan began studying jazz in high school, learning the idiom by transcribing his favorite saxophone players. While studying with his professors in college he became interested in composition, and began writing music for the ensembles he played in. Eventually deciding to pursue a degree in the field. Through his compositions Evan hopes to create interesting music that combines his experience studying jazz with classical forms.

Yang Yang is a graduate student in music composition at California State University, Sacramento. Since the discovery of her calling in composing music in 2019, she has composed for classical chamber music groups as well as small and large jazz ensembles. Many of her pieces were performed on stage at various campus events. She was a winner of the 2021 FeNAM Student Composition Competition, 2022 Jeffery Hoover Memorial Scholarship, 2022 Fanfare Composition Competition, and 2022 Renaissance Society Classical Music Award. Yang is also a jazz pianist who performs in the Sac State Jazz Ensemble and jazz combos.