

UNM JOHN DONALD ROBB MUSICAL TRUST
FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL JOHN DONALD ROBB COMPOSERS' SYMPOSIUM

presents



The John Donald Robb Concert

UNM Center for the Arts
Keller Hall
Wednesday, March 22, 2023
7:30pm

PROGRAM

String Quartet No. 2, Op. 38 (1932) John Donald Robb (1898-1989)
transcribed for saxophone quartet (2023) Christopher Orphal

Adobe Saxophone Quartet
Taylor Gilman *soprano saxophone*, Cade Gutierrez *alto saxophone*
Brady Charrier *tenor saxophone*, Parker Head *baritone saxophone*
Ashley Kelly *coach*

Gems Out of Darkness, Miniatures for String Quartet (1981/2014) Daniel Davis (1953-2022)

Ruxandra Marquardt and David Felberg *violin*
Laura Tait Chang *viola*, Amy Huzjak *cello*

Painting for Strings (2010) Beth Ratay (b.1989)

Ruxandra Marquardt and David Felberg *violin*
Laura Tait Chang *viola*, Amy Huzjak *cello*

Escalator (2019) Levi Raleigh Brown (b.1996)
text John Barney

Moving Lines Ensemble
Charlotte Leung *alto saxophone*, Adrian Gomez *cello**
Levi Raleigh Brown *percussion*, John Barney *spoken word*

*Adrian Gomez's cello is generously provided by Robertson & Sons Violin Shop



You are cordially invited to a reception in Keller Hall lobby following the concert.



PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet No. 2, Op. 38 : John Donald Robb (1898-1989) | transcription Chris Orphal (2023)

Because of the similarities in timbral homogeneity, (traditional) registral capabilities, and overall warmth of sound, music written well for the string quartet can be arranged easily for the saxophone quartet. Music which utilizes the string quartet's blending of its component instruments to create dynamic and dense textures finds a comfortable home with the saxophone quartet, whose rich timbres seamlessly coalesce into the same kinds of full sounds usually associated with the string quartet. Robb's second quartet is an excellent piece to demonstrate this fellowship between ensembles, as at almost every moment the music is making use of the full quartet, being driven by changes in the relationships between the individual instruments which make up those textures. The few moments of solo playing serve largely as juxtapositions to the denser textures which surround them, but in the case of this arrangement also serve as the points at which the distinction between the sounds of string and saxophone can be heard most clearly.

Gems Out of Darkness, Miniatures for String Quartet : Daniel Davis (1953-2022)

Composed February 25, 1981, as a challenge the composer set for himself to see if he could write a four movement piece in one day. He revised the work in February 2014 after a period of several years, when he was sorting through his manuscripts to determine which pieces to digitize, at which time he felt compelled to expand the quartet into its current form. The four movements are to be played without pause, and celebrate many stylistic features that he used in his music throughout his life, including driving rhythms, large intervallic leaps, and the exploration of the outer ranges of each instrument. The second movement is a tribute to the writing of Bela Bartok, whose work he greatly respected and admired.

Painting for Strings : Beth Ratay (b. 1989)

The three movements of this string quartet were each inspired by a work of art from the collection at the Phoenix Art Museum. The first movement, "Story for Strings," is inspired by "Story in Paint" by Aline Meyer Liebman. The second movement, "Tensions," is inspired by "Tensions" by Emil Bisttram and the third movement, "Strings in the Pool" is inspired by "Woman in the Pool" by William de Kooning. See the paintings by going to bit.ly/rataypaintings.

Escalator : Levi Raleigh Brown (b. 1996)

I first approached John Barney about collaborating on a piece in 2019. I was interested in exploring interactions that could be had between music and a text when collaborating with a poet from the very beginning of the compositional process. Early on in our discussions we discovered we each had family connections in Hong Kong and had our own love for the city as well. Specifically, we took an interest in the city's 800 meter Central-Mid-Levels Escalator. As the world's largest outdoor escalator system, it provides transportation through a diversity of levels, offering glimpses into the windows of many businesses, apartments, and lives. Shortly after we had begun to formulate a piece around this concept, massive protests for democracy arose in Hong Kong along with violence to suppress them. My wife, Charlotte (a Hong Kong native and the saxophonist for the piece), and I were there visiting family during part of this time and witnessed their effect on the city firsthand, as the world did through the news. This quickly became another focal point for the piece, and as Covid-19 proceeded to affect Hong Kong and then the rest of the world, this too had an impact on the work. The piece, then, is more an exploration of these times, spaces, and experiences, than it is any particular statement about them. Following five stops traveling up the Central-Mid-Levels Escalator, each movement looks from a different angle at the daily elements of place, relationship, work, conflict, and the masks we wear in our journey through them, with the unified hope of uncovering part of the role each plays in connecting us with something bigger than our individual selves. While each movement is distinct in sound, each one rests along this central narrative that carries us up and through the course of the work.

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free admission

Thursday	March 23	2:00pm	Splinter Reeds Masterclass featuring New Music New Mexico <i>Keller Hall</i>
Thursday	March 23	7:30pm	Splinter Reeds Music from the Americas Concert Series <i>Keller Hall</i>
Friday	March 24	7:30pm	UNM Student Composers Concert featuring Splinter Reeds <i>Keller Hall</i>
Monday	March 27	9:00am	Sky Macklay Composition Masterclass <i>CFA 1111</i>

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