

THE
JOHN
DONALD
ROBB

COMPOSERS'

SERIES

SYMPOSIUM

The John Donald Robb Trust and the UNM Music Department present

The Annual Robb Concert

as part of the 52nd Annual
John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium

Friday 29 March 2024

7:30pm UNM Keller Hall

Free Admission



John Donald Robb

Performances by:

Debra
Ayers

Kristin
Ditlow

Sally
Guenther

Daniel
Lippel

Jesse
Tatum

Laura
Tohe

Jacqueline
Zander-Wall



Juantio Becenti



Monica Demarco



Doug Falk



Reiko Fütting



Tania León



Chris Orphal



FINE ARTS



JOHN DONALD
ROBB TRUST



MUSIC

52nd Annual Robb Symposium Series

Robb Concert

29 March 2024 7:30 pm

The University of New Mexico

Reiko Fütting *composer in residence*

Daniel Lippel *performing artist in residence*

Sponsors

The Mr. and Mrs. Sanford N. McDonnell Foundation

UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust

UNM College of Fine Arts

UNM Department of Music

UNM Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections

UNM College of Fine Arts Administration

Harris D. Smith *Dean*

Breanne Santos *Academic Operations Officer*

Michael Hix *Department of Music Chair*

Jaime Tillotson *Administrative Assistant to the Dean*

UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust Officers

Roberto Lucero, Jr. *Chair*

Art Sheinberg *Vice Chair*

James Bonnell *Secretary*

Marc Woodward *Treasurer*

Peter Gilbert *Immediate Past Chair*

Harris D. Smith *Dean of the College of Fine Arts*

Ellen Robb *Member at Large*

Robb Symposium Series Artistic Directors

Current

Karola Obermüller

Peter Gilbert

Past

Steven Block Scott Wilkinson

Christopher Shultis William Wood

Performing Artists

Debra Ayers piano

Kristin Ditlow piano

Sally Guenther cello

Daniel Lippel guitar

Jesse Tatum flute

Laura Tohe poet

Jacqueline Zander-Wall mezzo-soprano

Composers

Juantio Becenti

Monica Demarco

Doug Falk

Reiko Fütting

Tania León

Christopher Orphal

John Donald Robb

Welcome

Welcome to the Robb Concert, signature event of the 52nd Annual John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium Series.

Karola Obermüller and Peter Gilbert | Co-Artistic Directors



Dean Robb left an enormous legacy in the music of New Mexico with an imprint in folk music, music education, and new explorations in music composition. For the 2024 Robb Concert, we are celebrating all of these parts of the Dean's life. Centering the evening are commissions of new works by Juantio Becenti and Monica Demarco, based upon materials from the archive of music recorded by Robb. As teachers, we



are also excited to present premieres of works

by UNM students side-by-side with works featuring our renowned soloist, Dan Lippel, who will also be giving a special performance of Robb's own work for guitar.

About the Robb Concert

The annual Robb Concert celebrates the life and work of **John Donald Robb** (1892-1989) and is a part of the **Robb Symposium Series**, previously the John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium, in partnership with UNM Music and the UNM College of Fine Arts.

The UNM Robb Musical Trust serves as a bridge between the UNM College of Fine Arts and the New Mexico community, regularly presenting concerts of Robb's compositions along with Hispanic folk songs, The Trust also preserves and promotes an archive of more than 3,000 field recordings Robb made, and collaborates with community partners in educational initiatives. Through its many activities, the Trust proudly carries on the vision of its namesake, John Donald Robb.

John Donald Robb



John Donald Robb (1892-1989) led a rich and varied life as a lawyer, composer, arts educator, author and folk-song collector. He began composing classical music during his years as a successful New York lawyer, writing across classical-music genres, and continued that passion when he moved to New Mexico in 1941 to join the Department of Music faculty at the University of New Mexico. His many contributions to the state's cultural heritage stretch from music education to preserving Hispanic folk music through thousands of field recordings. Later in life, he was one of the early owners of a Moog Synthesizer and composed a body of work for that ground-breaking instrument. Robb never stopped learning, he never stopped composing and he never stopped sharing his lifetime's work.

Program

In the Lobby

John Donald Robb Information Table

Learn about the extraordinary life and legacy of John Donald Robb (1892-1989).
Meet members of the UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust Board of Directors.

On Stage

<i>Paisanos Semos!</i> (1984) Daniel Lippel <i>guitar</i>	Tania León (b. 1943)
Heterogeneity (2021) Daniel Lippel <i>guitar</i>	Doug Falk (b. 1981)
Map Songs of the Sandhill Cranes Laura Tohe <i>poet</i>	Laura Tohe (b. 1952)
Map Songs (2024) ~ <i>Robb Commission world premiere</i> Jacqueline Zander-Wall <i>mezzo-soprano</i> , Jesse Tatum <i>flute</i> Sally Guenther <i>cello</i> , Debra Ayers <i>piano</i> Monica Demarco <i>electronics</i> , Margaret "Liz" Rincon <i>light design</i>	Monica Demarco (b. 1986) Laura Tohe <i>poetry</i>
The Bonnells' 60th Wedding Anniversary Recognition Diane and Jim Bonnell are longtime patrons of the Robb Trust Jim Bonnell has served on its board of directors since 1999	Ellen Robb and Robert Lucero Robb Trust board members
Fantasia on Songs from Los Pastores, Op. 40a (1964) Daniel Lippel <i>guitar</i> , Kristin Ditlow <i>piano</i>	John Donald Robb (1892-1989)
The Empty (2024) ~ <i>Robb Commission world premiere</i> Jacqueline Zander-Wall <i>mezzo-soprano</i> , Jesse Tatum <i>flute</i> Sally Guenther <i>cello</i> , Debra Ayers <i>piano</i>	Juantio Becenti (b. 1984) Renee Podunovich <i>text</i>
(Less) Simple Studies in Microtonal Scordatura, Vol. 1 - Quartertones (I - V) (2024) <i>world premiere</i> Daniel Lippel <i>guitar</i>	Christopher Orphal (b. 1999)
wand-uhr: infinite shadows (Prélude) / Hine ma Tov (2013 / 2016) Daniel Lippel <i>guitar</i>	Reiko Fütting (b. 1970)

After the Concert

Reception

The public is cordially invited to meet the composers and performing artists in the Keller Hall lobby.

Program Notes

Paisanos Semos! | Tania León

Paisanos Semos! (1984) by Pulitzer prize-winning composer Tania León, combines the rhythmic language of her native Cuba with a pitch language grounded in modernist chromaticism. Integrating dynamic percussive hits on the guitar and stomps on the stage floor, *Paisanos Semos!* introduces a series of fragmentary ideas before coalescing into a driving climax and a reflective coda.

Heterogeneity | Doug Falk

Heterogeneity (2021) was written for Dan Lippel to play as part of the quarantine Robb concert series. Falk uses a “super-arch” form, which moves from A-Z and then back from Z-A in sections of increasing, then decreasing, length. In addition to the sharp juxtapositions inherent in this form, the piece also explores the shaping of silences by performers. How can a musician shape a silence? How is a quotation from Bach different when it is embedded in the music versus when it is sonically disjunct from the material surrounding it?

Map Songs of the Sandhill Cranes | Laura Tohe

I was one of the invited poets to view the sandhill cranes at the Platte River in Nebraska. It is one of their resting places to stage and fuel up in preparation for their continued migration. Moved and inspired by them, I watched silently from the blinds while they stood by the thousands in the shallow water. Feathered dancers, they painted themselves graceful against amber-colored grasses and autumn skies. For millions of years, they have kept and passed on their maps to their progeny of their yearly trek to fly thousands of miles above the earth over land and humans. With gratitude a grandmother blessed their return with sacred corn pollen. This migration, this arrival of beauty and continuation.

Map Songs of the Sandhill Cranes

in mexico

they laid open the maps again

written for them in the 2nd world

in blue light spoken with blue voices

they learned songs that would guide them through all the worlds to come

songs they placed in the spiral of their throats and called them maps

in the blue world they danced with Wind

who liked these feathered beings

so Wind molded and formed their bodies

and taught them to ride on its breath

when the fights and quarrels broke the blue world apart

the cranes gathered their songs and dances and maps

and flew towards the stars

turned their bodies and broke
through a hole in the sky
into the glittering world
where a grandmother sprinkles corn pollen for their return each year
in the month of The Eagle's Young they find their way to the river that ribbons
past cornfields and cottonwood trees
near the highways and electric wires
they are calling me now
back to the land of the moonshell river
so I follow their tracks to the water
I stand in the cold wind
in awe and humility
because they have made this journey for me too

Map Songs | Monica Demarco

Diving into the archive, I found myself struck by the preservation of not only beautiful melodies, but New Mexican history. Detailed emotive descriptions of weddings and wars, love and funerals are all catalogued within this extraordinary collection. I chose a melody that was a recording of an old music box found in northern New Mexico. It had no lyrics and was titled "Wedding of the Winds;" it immediately captured my imagination. The recording itself was wonderfully pitch bent, reminiscent of the way wind effects the experience of sound. Direct and indirect iterations of the original melody are found throughout the piece, woven together with a reimagining of all that wind can represent. It was important to me to allow the original material to be heard intact, as it is fundamental to the scaffolding of the composition.

After deciding on the reference melody, I asked friends to share what their favorite collections of poetry exploring wind were. I read through every suggestion, enjoying the process of absorbing each work. So many of the texts used wind as an uncontrolled harbinger of change, something that destroys, brings disease or incites madness.

When I found Tohe's text, what planted itself in my mind was the idea of wind reshaping creatures to transcend a world that had been ripped apart. It does not diminish the pain of worlds collapsing, but emphasizes our resilience in transforming our future. The final section of this piece is improvised by the performers to highlight the importance of collective creativity in imagining a new reality after the devastation of everything we have faced in these last years. It is my hope that as the listener, you will hear the old world give way to our collective imagination.

It brought me so much sincere joy to work on this piece. Special thanks to my brother, Daniel Villanueva who was such a brilliant mentor through this process. Also to Karola Obermüller and Peter Gilbert for providing me with an opportunity to write again, and the performers for giving this composition life. I have so much gratitude for Liz Rincon and the beautiful network of my family and friends that support me. All my love to you!

Déél Biyiin

Nakai bikéyadi
kéyah be'elyaaígíí 'aa'anáadayiilaa
Ni' Hodootł'izhdi ba'alyaa
Dootlizh bee ndeedziin dóo bizhí dootlizh
Déél biyiin yída hołáá'dóo kéyah be'elyaaígíí dayiizhi'
Ni' Hodootł'izhdi Déél Niyol yíl daa'oolzhiizh
Niyol Déél bił nizhóní
Áko Niyol Déél bits'iis nizhónigo yá'ayiilaa
Náhodiina'go Ni' Hodootł'izhdi alhinaadiijéé'
Déél dabiyiin dóo dabi kéyah be'elyaaígíí ndeidiinił
sǫ jígo adaazt'a
Ni' Hodisǫsgó
Amásání léi' tahdidíin nayiiníł
'Atsá Biyáázh bich'ł' anáanaalzhiizhgo
Déél tooh nínigo 'aná'iidéé'
Dá'ák'eh dóo t'iis biládi
Atłín dóo béesh na'azt'í biládi
K'ad dashijoozhí
Moonshell tooh nínididéé'
Áko Deel bikéé' yishaał tohgi
Niyol k'az bii'sézí
'Íłk'ehgo
Díi shaa'alyaa
Biniinaa 'ákǫ sézí

Map Songs of the Sandhill Cranes

translated by the poet

in mexico
they laid open the maps again
written for them in the 2nd world
in blue light spoken with blue voices
they learned songs that would guide them through all the
worlds to come
songs they placed in the spiral of their throats and called
them maps
in the blue world they danced with Wind
who liked these feathered beings
so Wind molded and formed their bodies
and taught them to ride on its breath
when the fights and quarrels broke the blue world apart
the cranes gathered their songs and dances and maps
and flew towards the stars
turned their bodies and broke
through a hole in the sky
into the Glittering World
where a grandmother sprinkles corn pollen for their return
each year
in the month of The Eagle's Young they find their way to the
river that ribbons
past cornfields and cottonwood trees
near the highways and electric wires
they are calling me now

Fantasia on Songs from Los Pastores | John Donald Robb

Robb developed intense interest in the folk play, *Los Pastores*. He attended many performances in Northern New Mexico of *Las Posadas* which was often then followed by *Los Pastores*. He made arrangements of his favorites from *Los Pastores* including: *Pedimento de las posadas* (The Search for Lodgings), *Cuando por el oriente sale la aurora* (When in the East the Sun Arises), *De la real Jerusalén* (From Royal Jerusalem), *Levantada de Bartolo* (The Awakening of Bartolo), *Ofrecimiento de los pastores* (Offering of the Shepherds), *Vamos todos a Belén* (Let Us All Go to Bethlehem), and *A la ru* (Cradle Song).

The Empty | Juantio Becenti

Juantio Becenti's new song cycle "The Empty" is scored for mezzo-soprano, flute, cello, and piano in four short movements. The outer movements are based primarily on the harmonies and some melodic contours of the lullaby, "A la ru," sourced from the UNM Robb Musical Trust archive in the UNM Libraries Center for Southwest Research. The song is very popular throughout the Spanish-speaking world; however, the version used here is unique to and recorded in 1964 in New Mexico.

The text is from a collection of poems called, "If There Is A Center, No One Knows Where It Begins." The poem, "The Empty," is divided into short free-form sections labeled with roman numerals, and hints at the changing of the seasons. Likewise, the movements of the song are similarly divided, and while also semi-vague in tonalities and structure, are woven together with the added through line provided by the, "A la ru."

The first movement hints at the melody and harmonies of the song as it moves between references to the song and freer tonal sections. After a relatively long instrumental introduction the voice enters in a hushed manner in unison with the instruments and ends in a vague statement that moves upwards toward the sky in direct reference with the poem.

The second movement is the shortest of the set and perhaps the most abstract. It is a flurry of independent lines reminiscent of music from the early 20th century. The third movement continues in the spirit of the second movement; however, the pace is slowed and the harmonies lush and more fleshed out. In the second movement, the harmonies are themselves derived from the independent lines whereas in the third movement the independent lines are supported by harmonies underpinning the entire movement.

The fourth movement begins with an abstract suspended-like texture that gradually breaks down into a clear return to the song in a climactic manner. After, a fully harmonized section of the song is played by the piano with all pedals down and at a very soft dynamic to give the impression of hearing music at a distance. On top of this the voice speaks a section of the poem in a free manner. After a brief interlude closing out the poem, the music ends with a contemplative epilogue to consider all that came before it.

The music is dedicated to Deb Haaland, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, not just for her tireless work for the people of New Mexico, but for the entire country.

If There Is A Center, No One Knows Where It Begins

I.

Riding the waves of summer wind into the harbor of fall,
Our sails,
filled with sunshine on long long days,
now gone flat,
just cloth hanging against the powder sky.

II.

The red and yellow and orange burning of living coming out in the leaves,
then descending into the earth,
Somewhere,
mystery,
darkness.

III.

The knowing in the body,
to turn,
come back to the center,
make the journey again in the dark of night,
still season,

black,
silent middle of the universe,
where the pulse of stars is the pulse of veins,
expanse of the heavens settles here,
in bone,
blood a liquid sunshine infusing consciousness with the blessed light of resting.

IV.

The Center Emptiness.
All form rises up from it.
Shaping it,
embracing it,
including it.
Empty porcelain teacup—its slender contour,
it's delicacy.
The empty heart when the world wars,
could crack,
could be broken when we are away from the comfort of our unity,
When we are divided,
embattled,
with errors of the mind.
Starlit thoughts—born out of the vastness,
the unlimited possibilities,
all fall again,
in the empty hush.

Renee Podunovich ©2008 Used With Permission

(Less) Simple Studies in Microtonal Scordatura, Vol. 1 - Quartertones (I - V | Chris Orphal

Owing much in scale and form to Leo Brouwer's *Études simples*, these pieces attempt to serve as studies in various techniques and styles that the contemporary guitarist might encounter, rendered in a variety of microtonal grammars. This particular volume calls for the guitar to be tuned with its perfect fourths expanded by a quartertone into "major fourths," and its major third between the third and second strings compressed by a quartertone into a "neutral third," allowing the guitar to access the full quartertone gamut. Each study explores the different and more varied possibilities of creating tonality present within microtonal systems.

wand-uhr: infinite shadows (Prélude) / Hine ma Tov | Reiko Fütting

Reiko Fütting's *wand-uhr: infinite shadows/Hine ma Tov* demonstrates several consistent aspects of Fütting's style: use of quotation and pre-existing material as a point of departure, integration of extended percussive and vocal techniques, and scordatura to achieve a different resonant sonority on the instrument. Despite the perpetual forward motion of the pulse in the piece, it is non-metered, organized instead into individual cells of rhythmic activity that accumulate towards key arrival points.

Composers

Juantio Becenti

2024 Robb Commission



Juantio Becenti (b. 1984 Diné / Farmington, New Mexico, USA) lives in the four corners area of New Mexico close to his birthplace on the Navajo Nation. He began composing music at a young age and received his first commission from the Moab Music Festival in 1998. He has since received commissions from Dawn Avery (North American Indian Cello Project), Raven Chacon (Native American Composers Apprenticeship Program), Michael Barrett (New York Festival of Song), George Steel (Abrams Curator of Music, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum), and others. His compositions have been performed by the Phoenix Chamber Orchestra, Dawn Avery, ETHEL, America's premier postclassical string quartet, and the Claremont Trio. He has studied at the Walden School for Young Musicians, which he attended on full scholarship. He was the recipient of a grant from

the First Nations Composers Initiative, which he received in order to create original music for the film "Two Spirits," a documentary about the life and murder of Fred Martinez, a transgendered Navajo teenager.

Monica Demarco

2024 Robb Commission



Monica Demarco's (b. 1990 Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA) work is shaped by the vibrant and resilient Albuquerque arts community. She is grateful for the exchange of skills and vision that comes from living and collaborating in the Southwest. Her compositions have won numerous awards, such as the Scott Wilkinson Composition Contest at UNM in 2008 for the piece "Hijas y Mas" and again in 2009 for the piece "Fray." The composition "Hijas y Mas" has undergone revision over the last decade and was featured as a graphic score installment for **National Sawdust** in Brooklyn, New York in 2019.

Discussion of the work was also published in "**Experimentalisms in Practice**" by Dr. Ana R. Alonso-Minutti. She acquired a dual bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico in music composition/theory and piano performance in 2009 and a master's degree in social work from New Mexico Highlands University in 2020. She owns Monica Demarco Music in Albuquerque, which is dedicated to fostering creativity and passion for music in students of all abilities and ages. As a teacher, Demarco strives to provide musical skills, development informed by life course theory and family systems concepts to provide instruction that is socially conscious and uniquely tailored to the individual.

Demarco performs under the name Cthulha. The project is a synthesis of Demarco's passions, with piano at the heart and center of the ensemble. Cthulha has enjoyed collaboration with many amazing New Mexican artists who are all featured on the album, *Always Who You Were*, released in 2019 in collaboration with *Matron Records*. She is also a bassist in the local Albuquerque band *Chicharra*. The second album *Let's Paint This Town in Craters* was released through Matron Records in 2017. She has had the pleasure of organizing and performing in the music festival *Gatas y Vatas* founded by Marisa Demarco, which has brought her joy, connection and performance opportunities all over the world.

Doug Falk



Doug "Dug" Falk (b. 1981 St. Louis, Missouri, USA) is a composer and musician living in Albuquerque. He has completed degrees in music from Knox College and communication disorders from the University of Houston. He has studied and performed in many styles of music on trumpet and double bass. Dug's compositions explore stylistic juxtaposition, boundaries between emotions, and humor in music. His music has been performed by professional ensembles in the United States and internationally. He is currently completing a dual thesis/composition portfolio Theory and Composition master's degree at the University of New Mexico, studying composition with Karola Obermüller, Peter Gilbert, José-Luis Hurtado and Patrice Repar, and theory with Richard Hermann.

Reiko Fütting

Visiting Artist



Reiko Fütting (b. 1970 Königs Wusterhausen, German Democratic Republic) studied composition and piano at the Hochschule für Musik "Carl Maria von Weber" in Dresden, at Rice University in Houston, at Manhattan School of Music in New York, and at Seoul National University. Some of his most influential teachers have been the composers Jörg Herchet and Nils Vigeland, and the pianist Winfried Apel.

Reiko joined the theory faculty at the Manhattan School of Music in 2000. Five years later, he became a member of the composition faculty and was appointed Chair of the Theory Department. In 2020, he was also appointed Chair of the Composition Department and is currently serving as Dean of Academic Core and Head of Composition. He has taught vocal accompanying at the Conservatory of Music and Theater in Rostock, Germany, and appeared as guest faculty and lecturer at universities and conservatories in China, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

As a composer, Reiko has received numerous prizes, awards, scholarships, grants, and commissions. His music has been performed in several countries in Europe, the Americas, and Asia. It is published by Verlag Neue Musik in Berlin, Germany; most of his recordings have been released on the New Focus label in New York. He has collaborated with a wide range of musicians, ensembles, and orchestras, with a particular interest in vocal ensembles and ensembles performing on period instruments. His opera on the life of the mystic nun Mechthild von Magdeburg was premiered at the reopening of the concert hall in Magdeburg, Germany in 2022. Reiko is Composer-in-Residence at the Gesellschaftshaus Magdeburg for the 2023/2024 season.

“With my music, I aim to explore the psychological nature of memory, as it is projected onto the compositional device of musical quotation. By realizing this device in the entire musical spectrum of assimilation, integration, dissimilation, disintegration, and segregation, while moving freely between clear borders and gradual transitions, quotation and memory may function as a means to reflect upon contemporary artistic, cultural, social, and political phenomena.”

Tania León



Tania León (b. 1943 Havana, Cuba) is highly regarded as a composer, conductor, educator, and advisor to arts organizations. Her orchestral work *Stride*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, was awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Music. In 2022, she was named a recipient of the 45th Annual Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime artistic achievements. In 2023, she was awarded the Michael Ludwig Nemmers Prize in Music Composition from Northwestern University. Most recently, León became the London Philharmonic Orchestra’s next Composer-in-Residence—a post she will hold for two seasons, beginning in September 2023. She will also hold Carnegie Hall’s Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair for its 2023-2024 season.

Recent premieres include works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, NDR Symphony Orchestra, Grossman Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, Modern Ensemble, Jennifer Koh’s project *Alone Together*, and The Curtis Institute. Appearances as guest conductor include Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille, Gewandhausorchester, Orquesta Sinfónica de Guanajuato, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Cuba, among others. Upcoming commissions feature a work for the League of American Orchestras, and a work for Claire Chase, flute, and The Crossing Choir with text by Rita Dove.

A founding member and first Music Director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, León instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert Series, co-founded the American Composers Orchestra’s *Sonidos de las Américas* Festivals, was New Music Advisor to the New York Philharmonic, and is the founder/Artistic Director of Composers Now, a presenting, commissioning and advocacy organization for living composers.

Honors include the New York Governor’s Lifetime Achievement award, inductions into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and fellowship awards from ASCAP Victor Herbert Award and The Koussevitzky Music and Guggenheim Foundations, among others. She also received a proclamation for Composers Now by the New York City mayor, and the MadWoman Festival Award in Music (Spain).

León has received honorary doctorate degrees from Colgate University, Oberlin, SUNY Purchase College, and The Curtis Institute of Music, and served as U.S. Artistic Ambassador of American Culture in Madrid, Spain. A CUNY Professor Emerita, she was awarded a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship, Chamber Music America’s 2022 National Service Award, and Harvard University’s 2022 Luise Vosgerchian Teaching Award. In 2023, Columbia University’s Rare Book & Manuscript Library acquired Tania’s León’s archive.

Christopher Orphal



Chris Orphal (b. 1999 Belen, New Mexico, USA) is a Master of Music student at the University of New Mexico's Music department, focusing on Music Theory and Composition. He is an active composer of new music, whose compositions for a variety of instrumental combinations often include explorations of new or novel tonal colors and harmonies through extended instrumental techniques and microtones. His pieces often attempt to connect with both historical and contemporary styles, and through this synthesis aim at creating a unique yet accessible musical voice. Christopher currently holds the John Donald Robb Graduate Music Assistantship, and through this program works with the UNM Libraries' **Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections** focusing on composers of the Southwest.

John Donald Robb



John Donald Robb (b. 1892 Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA d. 1989 Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA) led a rich and varied life as an attorney, composer, arts educator, and folk-song collector and preservationist. He composed an impressive body of work including symphonies, concertos, sonatas, chamber and other instrumental music, choral works, songs, and arrangements of folk songs, two operas, including *Little Jo*, a musical comedy, *Joy Comes to Deadhorse*, and more than 65 electronic works. Robb's orchestral works have been played by many major orchestras in the United States and abroad under noted conductors, such as Hans Lange, Maurice Bonney, Maurice Abravanel, Leonard Slatkin, Gilberto Orellano, Yoshimi Takeda, Guillermo Figueroa, James Richards and Franz Vote.

Performing Artists

Debra Ayers | piano



Debra Ayers pianist, is director of **Montage Music Society**, which commissions and performs music inspired by visual art. She presents the Altazano Salon Series in Santa Fe, NM. Debra has enjoyed collaborations with Abiquiu Chamber Music Festival, Albuquerque Chamber Soloists, Aspen Music Festival Chamber Players; American, Apple Hill, La Catrina and Vega string quartets, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Ballet Pro Musica's Chamber Ballet, Breckenridge Music Festival, Chatter, Denver's JAAMM Festival, New Mexico Woodwind Quintet, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Serenata of Santa Fe, Susan Graham, Taos Chamber Music Group and Vocal Artistry Art Song Festival. A proponent of contemporary music, premieres include

works by Ofer Ben-Amots, Matthew Aucoin, William Bolcom, Nell Shaw Cohen, Paul Elwood, Jeff Harrington, Andrew List, Niles Luther, Elliot Roman, Daniel Schnyder, Ronald Strauss, Bruce Wolosoff and Yehudi Wyner. Debra and cellist Marc Moskovitz presented the North American premiere of the rediscovered Zemlinsky Cello Sonata at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Debra can be heard on a number of critically acclaimed recordings, including “Music of Ernst Krenek” with soprano Ilana Davidson, lieder and “Montage Music” by Ofer Ben-Amots, Montage Music Society’s “STARRY NIGHT Project...music based on visual art” (MSR) and the Grammy-nominated, “Music of Bruce Wolosoff.” She is featured in a series of Montage Music Society documentaries titled, “Creating Music Inspired by Visual Art.”

Kristin Ditlow | piano



Kristin Ditlow appears as a soloist, collaborative artist, coach, and conductor throughout the United States and abroad. Her conducting has been praised as presenting an “exciting overture,” (Charles Jernigan, when she led Opera Southwest’s Norma), as well as “fine and polished” (regarding her work as a conductor and chorus master). Philadelphia music critic Michael Caruso remarked that her piano performance had “an exquisite sensitivity and exhilarating thrusts of energy,” and the Bethlehem Morning Call wrote about her performance of Brahms as having “enormous passion, fine precision, and great musicality.” Dr. Ditlow holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (BM, 2001) Westminster Choir College (MM, 2005), and Eastman School of Music (DME, 2014).

Sally Guenther | violoncello



Sally Guenther received her bachelor's degree at Indiana University, where she studied with Janos Starker, and a master's degree at The Juilliard School of Music, studying with Harvey Shapiro. She also attended the Taos School of Music, Music Academy of the West and International Congress of Strings. After engagements with several U.S. orchestras, including the Cincinnati, Fort Worth and Syracuse symphonies (as principal cellist), and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, she became solo cellist of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in Norway, a position she held for 20 years. Guenther was also active in Norway as a pedagogue teaching at the Grieg Academy of Music, and was a founding member of the contemporary chamber ensemble, BIT 20, an internationally recognized group that records and travels extensively in Europe and Asia. Guenther moved full time to New Mexico in 2006 and devotes herself to chamber music, traveling widely in the Southwest and participating in chamber music festivals in Santa Fe, Taos, Abiquiu, Los Alamos, and

Breckenridge, Colorado. In addition she has played with the New Mexico Symphony, Santa Fe Pro Musica and Santa Fe Symphony orchestras. Guenther is also devoted to teaching, traveling and maintaining a private studio.

Daniel Lippel | guitar

Visiting Artist



Daniel Lippel, called an “exciting soloist” (New York Times), “precise and sensitive” (Boston Globe), and a “formidable guitarist” (Chicago Magazine), enjoys a diverse career ranging from solo and chamber performances and recordings to collaborations in diverse contexts. Highlights of his recent solo performances include the Le Poisson Rouge (New York), New York Classical Guitar Society’s Salon Series, Sinus Ton Festival in Germany, University of Texas at San Antonio, Lawrence University (Wisconsin), and the Cleveland International Guitar Festival (CIM). He has been the guitarist for the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) since 2005. As a chamber musician, Lippel has performed at the Macau Music Festival (China), Teatro Amazonas (Manaus, Brazil), Ojai Festival, Acht Brücken Festival (Cologne, Germany), the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center, and as a guest with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, New York New Music Ensemble, Either/Or Ensemble, and counter)induction, among others. Lippel is co-founder and director of New Focus Recordings, and has also recorded for Bridge, Kairos, Wergo, Innova, Albany, Starkland, and Tzadik. He

received his DMA from MSM, under David Starobin’s guidance.

Jesse Tatum | flute



Jesse Tatum is a relentless musician performing chamber music, orchestral music, operas, and solo works. They are Principal Flute of The Santa Fe Symphony, Santa Fe Pro Musica, Opera Southwest Orchestra, and is a Principal Player at Chatter, where she has performed well over a decade of adventurous chamber music with the innovative Albuquerque-based chamber ensemble. Additionally, Jesse has performed many seasons with The Santa Fe Opera and the New Mexico Philharmonic.

Recognized for their authentic, fearless performances, in 2022 Jesse performed as a concerto soloist with The Santa Fe Symphony, the New Mexico Philharmonic, Chatter, and Santa Fe Pro Musica. An enthusiast of the intersection of visual and musical performance art, they were a regularly featured performer from 2017-2020 at the trailblazing Meow Wolf in Santa Fe. In spring 2023, Tatum performed on a decommissioned rifle for Disarm Flute by Pedro Reyes at SITE Santa Fe. Jesse performed a show of contemporary works for solo flute as

FluTeBot in conjunction with the 2018 exhibition Patrick Nagatani: Excavations: Buried Cars and Other Stories.

Jesse has collaborated with many composers and participated in numerous world, US, and New Mexico premieres of solo, chamber, orchestra and opera works. In 2019 Jesse co-created the Santa Fe Symphony’s Strata series and curated chamber concerts in collaboration with various organizations in Santa Fe. Tatum was a co-curator for Santa Fe Symphony’s “Music of the Multiverse,” a highly lauded

collaboration with Meow Wolf in 2021. They have been a Featured Performer of Powell Flutes, profiled in Albuquerque The Magazine, appeared in Rolling Stone magazine, and served multiple times as a Newly Published Music judge for the National Flute Association. They are also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice.

Laura Tohe | poet



Laura Tohe Laura Tohe is Diné, Sleepy-Rock People clan and born for the Bitter Water People clan. She is the current Navajo Nation Poet Laureate. Her books include *No Parole Today*, *Making Friends with Water*, *Sister Nations*, *Tséyi*, *Deep in the Rock*, *Code Talker Stories*, and poetry that have appeared in the U.S., Canada, Chile, and Europe. Her commissioned librettos are “Enemy Slayer” and “A Navajo Oratorio.” A third, “Nahasdzáán in the Glittering World,” made its world premiere in France. Among her awards are the 2020 Academy of American Poetry Fellowship, 2019 American Indian Festival of Writers Award, Wordcraft Circle of Native American Writers and Storytellers, the Joy Harjo & the Lila Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund Award, Arizona Book Association’s Glyph Award for Best Poetry and Best Book. She was twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Many of her poems have been translated into music for piano, guitar, and trumpet.

She is Professor Emerita with Distinction at Arizona State University. Laura's poetry is used in **Monica Demarco's** 2024 **Robb Commission**, “Map Songs”, receiving its world premiere at the 2024 Robb Concert.

Jacqueline Zander-Wall | mezzo-soprano



A proponent of new music, **Jacqueline Zander-Wall** has premiered works with the Composers Forum in Moscow, L’art pour l’art in Frankfurt, the Goethe Institute in Boston, Chaosma, Hugo Wolf Akademie in Stuttgart, Scala in Hamburg and the Hamburg Opera Stabile.

She has performed with numerous music festivals, including the Aspen Music Festival, Skaneateles Music Festival, Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival, Music in the Mountains, Britten-Pears Festival, Hugo Wolf Akademie, Brooklyn Academy of Music Monteverdi Festival, and Taos Chamber Music. She has been a soloist with the Valdosta Symphony, the Asian American Symphony, the New Mexico Philharmonic, the New Haven Symphony, the Duluth Superior Symphony, Orchestra X in Houston and many orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout the United States and Germany. After earning a master’s degree from the University of California in Santa Barbara, she received a Rotary Scholarship to study in Hamburg. Additional fellowships included the Boston University Opera

Institute, the Music Academy of the West, the Ost West Musik Akademie, the Britten Pears School, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Utah Festival Opera.

Opera credits include many leading roles with the Boston Lyric Opera, the Chicago Opera Theater, Arizona Opera, Hamburg Opera, Duluth Superior Symphony, New Haven Symphony, Scala in Hamburg, Opera Southwest, and Hamburg Konzertante Oper. She has served on the voice faculty at Phillips Exeter Academy, Phillips Academy, the College of Santa Fe, and the University of New Mexico. Now in its 15th year, she founded the Vocal Artistry Art Song Festival of New Mexico, to inspire and encourage students of singing and piano in the state of New Mexico. She is currently the president of the Albuquerque Music Teachers Association.

Poet

Renee Podunovich



Renee Podunovich is a licensed professional counselor, poet, author and freelance writer living in the U.S. Four Corners region. She has three chapbooks of poems: “Illustrious for Brief Moments” (Finishing Line Press, 2021), “Let the Scaffolding Collapse” (Finalist of the New Women’s Voices Chapbook Competition by Finishing Line Press, 2012) and “If There Is a Center No One Knows Where It Begins” (Art Juice Press, 2008). She received the 2019 Cantor Award at the Telluride Literary Festival. Her poems were nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2010 and 2011.

Her most recent publications include Literary Impulse, Scrittura, Journey of the Heart, The Mindful Word, Mississippi Review, Boston Literary Magazine, FutureCycle Poetry, Caper Literary Journal, White Whale Review, The View From Here, RATTLE and SW Colorado Arts Perspective.

Her first book of poems, “If There Is a Center No One Knows Where It Begins,” was published by Art Juice Press in 2008.

Writer Cynthia West said of the book, “Podunovich’s visions are transparent panes allowing the reader the warmth and light of a larger view. She returns from journeys beyond the daily world with medicine, which explodes in us ‘with no limits, other than the filter of our hearts’. Her passionate words form conduits through which we can meet our higher selves.”

Renee believes poetry is a language that encourages us to transcend our constricted sense of self and connect to our essential nature within and the spirit of the world around us. She is interested in poetry as a linguistic bridge between the numinous and our daily grind, a healing art form that can transport us into more profound personal knowing and more extensive global awareness. Renee facilitates poetry Well Writing: Wordcraft for Discovery, Wholeness & Connection workshops that are designed to use creative writing as a tool for centering, reflecting and for personal growth. Renee's poetry is used in **Juantio Becenti's** 2024 **Robb Commission**, “The Empty,” receiving its world premiere at the 2024 Robb Concert.

Artistic Directors

Karola Obermüller

Karola Obermüller's composing, described by the New York Times as “hyperkinetic music”, is constantly in search of the unknown. After obtaining composition degrees in Nuremberg, Saarbrücken, and the



University Mozarteum Salzburg, her sense of rhythm and form was forever changed by studying Carnatic and Hindustani classical music in Chennai and Delhi, India.

She has received commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts, Fromm Music Foundation, Ensemble Modern, International Contemporary Ensemble, Theater Bielefeld, Theater Bonn, Theater und Orchester Heidelberg, Staatstheater Nürnberg, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Saarländischer Rundfunk, and the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation. She has been a visiting artist at ZKM, Deutsche Akademie Rom, Centro Tedesco di studi Veneziani, Akademie Schloss Solitude, and IRCAM.

Since receiving a doctorate from Harvard University, Obermüller has taught composition and co-directed the composition area at the University of New Mexico. Her music can be heard on CD (WERGO) and online at karolaobermueller.net.

Peter Gilbert



Peter Gilbert (Associate Professor of Music, University of New Mexico) has commissions and accolades from the Barlow Foundation, New Music USA, the Aaron Copland House, ZKM (Institut für Akustik und Musik), the Russolo Foundation, the Look & Listen Festival, the Third Practice Festival, and IMEB Bourges. He writes: “My music usually aspires to create a sonic architecture that helps us lose our sense of time completely and allows us to partake in a kind of more direct aural experience in search of passageways to transcendence.”

Gilbert’s music can be heard on numerous labels including New Focus Recordings and at petergilbert.net.

About The Robb Symposium Series



The **Robb Symposium Series**, established in the fall of 2022, is an outcropping of the celebrated annual UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium. The series features concerts of new music by guest artists and UNM faculty & students, as well as masterclasses, artist talks, and workshops.

The UNM Robb Trust promotes the exploration of new music through the Robb Symposium Series. Since 1972, the internationally renowned John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium has brought composers and musicians from around the world to UNM for a series of public concerts and unique learning opportunities for UNM students. Past guest composers have included such luminaries as Anthony Braxton, John Cage, Lukas Foss, Michael Colgrass, Gordon Mumma, Raven Chacon, and Chen Yi. The legacy of the John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium continues through the Robb Symposium Series.

The Trust sponsors the biennial **Robb Commission** in even years. The winner is awarded a cash prize and their composition is premiered at a Robb Symposium Series concert, typically the annual **Robb Concert**, which takes place in the spring.

The UNM Robb Musical Trust serves as a bridge between the UNM College of Fine Arts and the New Mexico community, regularly presenting concerts of Robb's compositions along with Hispanic folk songs, preserving and promoting the archive of 3,000+ field recordings Robb made, and collaborating with community partners in educational initiatives. Through its many activities, the Trust proudly carries on the vision of its namesake, John Donald Robb.

2023-2024 Robb Symposium Series Events

All Robb Symposium Series events are all ages family-friendly community events, unless otherwise noted. Admission is free

New Music Talks & Seminars

Friday 15 September 11am

Matthew Bertner, composer

Location: **CFA Room 1111**

Program: Artist talk and composition master class with UNM composition students

Friday 29 September 11am

Rhonda Rider, cello

Location: **CFA Room 1111**

Program: Read through and discussion of cello excerpts by UNM composition students

Friday 27 October 11am

Majel Connery, composer

Location: **CFA Room 1111**

Program: Artist talk

Thursday 22 February 11am

loadbang, new music chamber ensemble

Location: **Keller Hall**

Program: composition master class

Friday 29 March 11am

Reiko Fütting, composer

Location: **CFA Room 1111**

Program: Composer talk

Concerts

Friday 27 October 7pm

Wolf Tones '23 Concert #1

New Mexico Contemporary Ensemble *

Location: **UNM Arts Lab**

Program: tba



Friday 3 November 11am

Leo Eguchi, cello

Location: **Keller Hall**

Program: Read through, discussion student works

Thursday 28 March 2pm

Dana Wilson, composer

Location: **CFA Room B120**

Program: Composer talk

Friday 12 April 11:00am

Kurt Stallmann, composer

Location: **CFA Room 1111**

Program: Composer talk

Saturday 28 October 7pm

Wolf Tones '23 Concert #2

Manny Rettinger and The Chuppers *

Location: UNM Arts Lab

Program: tba

* featuring an AV analogue-hybrid installation by Micah Hood

Friday 23 February 7:30pm

loadbang performs music by UNM Composition students

Location: Keller Hall

Composers: Doug Falk, Elias Lang, Carlos S. Medina, Axel Retif, Lucas Stafford, Heather Stebbins

Thursday 28 March 7:30pm

UNM Symphony Orchestra

Composers: tba

Tickets: \$15 general admission, \$10 seniors and UNM employees, \$5 students

Location: Popejoy Hall

Program: tba

Friday 29 March 7:30pm

Annual Robb Concert

Location: Keller Hall

Composers: Juantio Becenti, Monica Demarco, Doug Falk, Reiko Fütting, Tania León, Christopher Orphal, John Donald Robb



Venues

Center for the Arts (CFA)

University of New Mexico

College of Fine Arts

MSC04 2570

1 University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

Directions

Paid visitor parking is available at UNM's Cornell parking structure.

CFA Map:

A. CFA entrance

B. CFA Room 1111

C. Keller Hall

D. Popejoy Hall

UNM Arts Lab

131 Pine Street NE

Albuquerque, NM 87106

(505) 277-2253

Directions



About the Robb Commission

In 2004, the Robb Trust began an ongoing sponsorship of the creation of newly composed chamber works in honor of [John Donald Robb](#) that utilize music from Robb's unique collection of [folk music recordings](#) housed in the UNM Libraries' [Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections](#). Previously called the John Donald Robb Composers' Competition, from 2004 to 2014 works were solicited that utilized music from the archive and prize winners were selected. Since 2016, the Trust has moved to commissioning works based upon music from the archive. The Trust is proud of the growing legacy of remarkable new works connected with Dean Robb's historically significant folk music collection.

Robb Commission Composers

- 2024 [Monica Demarco](#) ~ *Map Songs* (mezzo-soprano, flute, cello, piano, electronics)
- 2024 [Juanito Becenti](#) ~ *The Empty* (mezzo-soprano, flute, cello, piano)
- 2022 [Patricia Alessandrini](#) ~ *Hear* (vocal sextet, trombone)
- 2020 *postponed due to COVID*
- 2018 [Kyong Mee Choi](#) ~ *Adiós a lo conocido* (violin, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, piano, percussion)
- 2016 [Marta Gentilucci](#) ~ *Dance* (flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, piano, percussion)
- 2014 [Luke Dahn](#) ~ *Buffalo Dance* (alto saxophone, piano)
- 2012 [Paul Clift](#) ~ *1950c* (restrung classical guitar)
- 2010 [Colin Holter](#) ~ *The Recording You Will Now Hear* (piccolo, contrabass clarinet, clarinet, piano, vibraphone, violin, cello)
- 2008 [Gary Smart](#) ~ *Song of the Holy Ground* (piano, string quartet)
- 2006 *no commission awarded*
- 2004 Carl Donsbach ~ *Palomita: Canción* (violin, cello, piano)

* 2016 is the first year the competition was awarded as a commission by the UNM Robb Trust.

Learn more about the biennial [Robb Commission](#).

Robb Concert Committee

Robb Trust

Karola Obermüller *Co-Artistic Director*
Peter Gilbert *Co-Artistic Director*
Jim Bonnell
Thomas Goodrich
Robert Lucero
Christopher Orphal
Robert Tillotson

Keller Hall

Margaret Liz Rincon Sr. *Audio-Visual Technician*
Rebecca RJ Smith *Keller Hall Production Manager*
Mario Garay Barrera
Madison McGregor

The Robb Trust provides underwriting for salary and benefits of two UNM Mariachi adjunct faculty. Currently, those faculty are Monica E. Trujillo and José Carrillo.

John Donald Robb's Career Highlights



UNM Dean

During his two decades as an international lawyer in New York City, **John Donald Robb** (1892-1989) studied composition with Horatio Parker, Darius Milhaud, Roy Harris, Paul Hindemith and Nadia Boulanger. In 1941, at the age of 49, Robb left his law career to become head of the Music Department at the University of New Mexico. He served as dean of the UNM College of Fine Arts from 1942-1957.

Field Recordings

During his tenure at UNM, Robb's fascination with Hispanic folk music led to his recording of more than 3,000 traditional Hispanic folksongs and dances from the American Southwest and South America, all of which formed the nucleus of the John Donald Robb Archive of Southwestern Music at the University of New Mexico. He was the author of several books on the subject, including *Hispanic Folk Songs of New Mexico* (1954; revised edition by UNM Press, 2008) and his authoritative book, *Hispanic Folk Music of New Mexico and the Southwest: A Self Portrait of a People* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1980; republished by UNM Press, 2014), and a second volume of Hispanic Folk Songs collected by Robb, *Cancionero: Songs of Laughter & Faith in New Mexico* (UNM Press 2016). Robb received numerous honors and grants, including an honorary Doctor of Music from the University of New Mexico.

Collected Works

Robb's music has been performed by more than 16 symphony orchestras in the U.S., Central America and South America, including the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra. His compositions have been performed in many other venues, such as six recitals in Carnegie Recital Hall in New York (some of which were reviewed by the New York Times).

Compositions

The St. Louis Symphony premiered his Third Symphony in 1962, and his music is performed every spring at the renowned UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium Series. His folk opera, *Little Jo*, was conducted by Guillermo Figueroa at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in 2005, and the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra performed his *Dances from Taxco* in their 2007 season.

PBS Documentary

In June 2008, KNME-TV, New Mexico's PBS station, premiered an Emmy Award-winning documentary about Robb entitled, "The Musical Adventures of John Donald Robb in New Mexico." The documentary features folk-song recordings and photographs from the Robb archives in UNM Libraries' Center for Southwest Research.

Performances

In October 2008, the University of Missouri-St. Louis presented a John Donald Robb Tribute Concert to a standing-room-only audience, and in November 2010, Robb's *Symphony No. 1* was performed by James Richards and the St. Louis Chamber Orchestra. Robb's *Requiem*, composed in 1985 when Robb was 93, was performed by the St. Louis Bach Society conducted by A. Dennis Sparger in 2012 as a choral and

piano piece edited and arranged by James Bratcher. A newly orchestrated version of Robb's *Requiem* was performed in a 2013 Santa Fe concert presented by the New Mexico Performing Arts Society featuring conductor Franz Vote and the New Mexico Bach Society, and in 2016 Robb's setting of "Los Pastores," the traditional folk play from Spain and Mexico, arranged for SATB Chorus and 11 instruments, was performed by Franz Vote and the New Mexico Bach Society at Cristo Rey Catholic Church in Santa Fe. Robb's *Two Trios, Opus 57, I Am Very Old Tonight* and *Tears*, originally written in 1953 for Contralto, Oboe and Piano and later arranged for Women's Chorus, Oboe, and Piano were performed in 2017 during "The Granados Project" by Polyphony, Voices of New Mexico and UNM's Las Cantantes conducted by Maxine Thevenot in St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Albuquerque.

Recordings

OPUS ONE Recordings has released seven Hispanic folk songs and six art songs arranged by Roger Jannotta and performed by the world-renowned National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Oberg of Albuquerque with Leslie Umphrey of the UNM Music Department Faculty as soprano soloist. This was the fourth of the outstanding CDs of Robb's major works on the OPUS ONE label by Oberg and the NPRSO. Robb's recordings can be purchased at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Electronica

When Robb was in his 70s, he became one of the first in the country to buy a Moog synthesizer and proceeded to compose a body of work for that revolutionary instrument. He is recognized as a pioneer in that field. All genres of his works are still performed today.

Musings

In 2019, Marilyn Fletcher, Professor Emerita UNM Libraries, published a biographical booklet entitled *A Few Minutes with John and Harriet Robb* in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust. The 76-page booklet contains interviews, correspondence, diaries, and other papers in the UNM CSWR John Donald Robb Papers, Manuscript collection 497.

Learn more about [John Donald Robb](#).

Acknowledgments

The University of New Mexico Robb Musical Trust would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for support of the 2023—2024 John Donald Robb Musical Trust initiatives.

The Mr. and Mrs. Sanford N. McDonnell Foundation
The Grandchildren of John Donald Robb Endowed Fund
The Estate of John Donald Robb, Jr.

Lucero Law, PC , in memory of Robert L. Lucero, Sr.: folk musician, band director, mariachi instructor
Instituto del Embudo Undaunted Carnival Foundation

Ana Alonso-Minutti, Ph.D.
James and Diane Bonnell

James and Diane Bonnell, in memory of Jean Evers Christopher and Patricia Briggs
M.L. and Peter Donohue

Luisa Duran and David Bachelor

Jean Evers*, in memory of Darlene Evers

The Honorable Laura Fashing and Dr. Mark Unverzagt, in memory of John Donald Robb, Jr.
Thomas Goodrich
Nina Hobbs

Jan and Bruce Hosea, in honor of James and Diane Bonnell
Michael T. Kelly
Enrique Lamadrid, Ph.D.
Robert Lucero, Jr.
Robbin MacVittie

Linda Marianiello and Franz Vote in honor of James Bonnell
Valerie Martinez and Paul Resnick
Sue McAdams, in memory of Jean and Darlene Evers
Sue McAdams, in honor of Diane and James Bonnell
Randall McDonnell
Patricia and Frank McCulloch
Christopher Mead, Ph.D. and Dr. Michele Penhall, Ph.D.
Bradford Robb
Drs. L. Celeste Robb-Nicholson and Britain Nicholson
David Robb, Ellen Robb in memory of John Donald Robb, Jr.
G. Geoffrey Robb
John Robb, III and Lori Robb
Dr. Margaret E. Roberts
Ted Rush
Art and Colleen Sheinberg
Dr. Janet Simon and Mark Weber
Dr. Erica and John George Stringer, in memory of John Donald Robb, Sr.
Robert Tillotson, Ph.D.
Karen Turner*
William H. and Danislee Wiese
Barbara Witemeyer
Marc and Valerie Woodward

*Remembered

Special Thanks

The 52nd Annual Robb Concert would not have happened without the kindness and gracious assistance of these remarkable individuals

UNM College of Fine Arts

Harris D Smith
Brienne Santos
Jaime Tillotson

UNM Fiscal Shared Services

Bobby Silva-O'Neill
Maya Chavez
Gregg Gibson

UNM Department of Music

Bonita Standard
Amber Greene

UNM Foundation

Mario Lara
Kristine Purrington
Shelly Smith
Hannah Treder

Robb Concert Volunteers

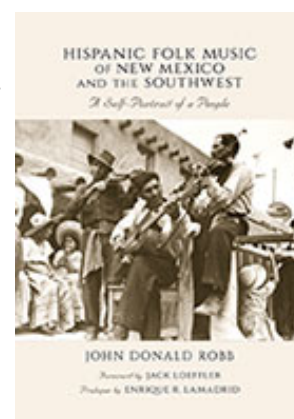
Ana Alonso-Minutti
Diane Bonnell
Jim Bonnell
Nancy Harbert
Kristine Purrington
Ellen Robb
Art Sheinberg
Bob Tillotson

Robb Trust Preserves Tradition

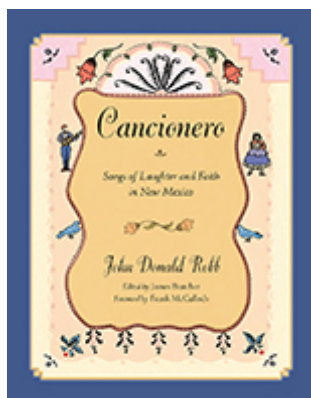
¡Música del Corazón! is just one way the UNM Robb Trust celebrates the rich tradition of New Mexico folk music. We also invite you to explore John Donald Robb's mid-20th-century **field recordings** of traditional music from New Mexico to Nepal. These recordings, now digitally restored, are available on the Internet. Among its many initiatives, the Trust sponsors the UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium Series and the Robb Commission, a biennial international commission of contemporary music. Learn more at robbtrust.org.

Hispanic Folk Music of New Mexico and the Southwest: A Self-Portrait of a People

First published in 1980 and now available again from UNM Press, this classic compilation of New Mexico folk music is based on 35 years of field research by a giant of modern music. Composer John Donald Robb, a passionate aficionado of the traditions of his adopted state, traveled New Mexico recording and transcribing music from the time he arrived in the Southwest in 1941 until his death in 1989. Prologue and Introduction by Enrique Lamadrid and Jack Loeffler.



Cancionero: Songs of Laughter and Faith in New Mexico



John Donald Robb (1892–1989) built an invaluable legacy in the preservation of New Mexico's rich musical traditions. His extensive field recordings, compositions, papers, and photographs now make up the John Donald Robb Archive in the University of New Mexico Libraries' Center for Southwest Research. *Cancionero* presents 13 Hispanic folk songs from Robb's renowned archive. Created for musicians and vocalists, *Cancionero* features arrangements for voice and piano/guitar accompaniments, as well as selected concert versions for voice, oboe, harp, and piano. Introductions include information about song forms, history, and subjects.

Robb Trust Personnel

Board

Ana Alonso-Minutti, PhD
James Bonnell *Secretary*
Peter Gilbert, PhD *Immediate Past Chair*
Nancy Harbert
Michael Hix, DM
Leo Lo, EdD, MLIS
Robert Lucero, Jr. *Chair*
Robbin MacVittie
Margie Montañez, PhD
lisa nevada
Karola Obermüller, PhD
Rosalia Pacheco, PhD
Kristine Purrington
Ellen Robb *Member-at-Large*
Art Sheinberg *Vice Chair*
Harris Smith
Robert Tillotson, PhD
Jeff Todd
Marc Woodward, CPA *Treasurer*

Staff

Christopher Orphal *Graduate Assistant*
Thomas Goodrich *Program Specialist*



Honorary Board

* James Bratcher
* Charlemaud Curtis
Tom Dodson, PhD
* Jack Douthett, PhD
* Darlene Evers
* Marilyn Fletcher
* Carmoline Grady
Nina Hobbs
Belinda Jentzen
Michael Kelly
* Dale E. Kempter, PhD
Enrique Lamadrid, PhD
James Linnell, PhD
Martin Mathisen
Michael Mauldin
Christopher Mead, PhD
Elsa Menéndez
Elsie Morosin, PhD
Carolyn Mountain
David Oberg
* Priscilla Robb McDonnell
* John D. Robb, Jr.
* William Seymour, PhD
Christopher Shultis, PhD
* Karen Turner
James (Jim) B. Wright
* Scott Wilkinson

* *Remembered*

Sponsors

College of Fine Arts | University of New Mexico



The College of Fine Arts offers 19 undergraduate degrees in art, music, theatre & dance, film & digital arts. It is ranked in the top eight in the nation in photography and is the only place in the U.S. to earn a concentration in flamenco. Fine Arts is the only college at UNM with a fund dedicated to studying abroad. Sixty-four percent of CFA graduates find jobs before or within four months of graduation. The Music Education program boasts 100 percent job placement.

Learn more at finearts.unm.edu.

Department of Music | University of New Mexico



UNM's Department of Music aims to provide the highest quality musical education, in order to make a substantial contribution to the cultural life of its region and the world by reinforcing the integral value of music in society.

The department strives to give each student a first-rate musical education under the guidance of a dynamic artist faculty, and a well-balanced program among the disciplines of **performance, music education, theory and composition, jazz studies, string pedagogy, conducting, and musicology**.

Learn more at music.unm.edu.

John Donald Robb Musical Trust | University of New Mexico



The UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust supports the musical legacy of John Donald Robb, furthers his inspiring commitment to education, and advances the music of the Southwest. The Robb Trust, in partnership with composers, performing artists, educators, students and audiences, works to enhance the legacy of Dean Robb by preserving the traditions of Southwest folk music, promoting the music of John Donald Robb, and supporting the composition of contemporary music.

What We Do

Edit, arrange, perform, and record Robb's original compositions.

Produce the annual *¡Música del Corazón!* John Donald Robb, Jr. Memorial Concert in collaboration with the National Hispanic Cultural Center. The concert is dedicated to keeping the rich traditions of Southwestern and Hispanic folk music alive and well in New Mexico.

Co-Produce the annual John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium Series in partnership with the UNM Department of Music. The symposium brings composers from around the world to Albuquerque and showcases the work of New Mexico-based composers, as well as UNM faculty and student composers. The internationally recognized symposium is one of the longest-running festivals of new music in the world. The series features concerts of new music by guest artists and UNM faculty and students, as well as masterclasses, artist talks, and workshops.

Sponsor the biennial Robb Commission. Talented composers of our time compose new works based on folk-song material from the John Donald Robb Musical Archive in the UNM Libraries' Center for Southwest Research (CSWR). New compositions are premiered at the Composers' Symposium.

Additional initiatives include: underwriting opportunities for projects that advance the trust's mission; the Robb Award for excellence in music education, contemporary music, and southwestern music; and a Robb Graduate Music Assistantship to support the John Donald Robb Archive of Southwestern Music, the Robb manuscript collection at the CSWR, and the Composers' Symposium Series.

Learn more at robptrust.org.



Join us on Facebook

A History of the John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium

Some of the Symposium's notable guests

Emanuele Arciuli
Ardi Quartet
Robert Ashley
Milton Babbitt
Anthony Braxton
Martin Bresnick
John Cage
Raven Chacon
Chen Yi
Michael Colgrass
Abbie Conant
George Crumb
Joséph Daley Trio
Halim El-Dabh
Pozzi Escot
Julio Estrada
Lukas Foss
Lou Harrison
Alan Hovhaness
Karel Husa
John Harbison
Vijay Iyer
Betsy Jolas
Ernst Krenek
Joan La Barbara
Libby Larsen
Lei Liang
George Lewis
John Lewis
Lisa Moore
Thea Musgrave
Valerie Naranjo
Susan Narucki
Pauline Oliveros
Hilda Paredes
Vincent Persiche
Roger Reynolds
Ned Rorem
Steven Schick
Maria Schneider
Gunther Schuller
Cecil Taylor
James Tenney
Joan Tower
Christian Wolff

In 1972, William Wood invited Norman Lockwood to have works of his performed at the University of New Mexico alongside UNM student composers during a late April concert program. This marked the beginning of what is now known as the UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium, an event that has occurred annually and uninterrupted since then, making it one of the longest-running festivals of new music in the world.

The next years included a cavalcade of significant composers, including Ned Rorem, Karel Husa, John Harbison, and John Cage, among others. Always, experimentation was encouraged. It didn't take long for the symposium to gain an international reputation.

One featured guest was invited to each symposium until 1989. In honor of the university's centennial that year, the symposium honored 40 UNM Music Department alumni and friends, with special tributes going to John Donald Robb, former dean of the UNM College of Fine Arts.

That year, the Robb Concert was established, beginning a tradition in which a composition of the former dean would be performed at every symposium. A decade later, the symposium was renamed the John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium to honor the former dean who had been instrumental in developing the music program at UNM.

As the Department of Music faculty became more involved, a full schedule of daytime masterclasses and lectures featuring visiting guests was introduced, providing exciting opportunities for students. The symposium is now presented jointly by the UNM Department of Music and the John Donald Robb Musical Trust.

Beginning in the 1990s, the symposium experimented with themes, such as film music and music theory and jazz. More recent themes have included music and movement, social issues in contemporary music, and the influence of Native American culture and composers on new music.

In celebration of the New Mexico Centennial in 2012, the works of more than 50 composers were featured during the symposium. In 2019 the symposium hosted the Society of Composers national conference, performing works by more than 80 composers from around the country. That year also featured three concerts by the celebrated Ardi Quartet which included nine UNM student premieres.

Through generous support of the John Donald Robb Musical Trust, The Mr. and Mrs. Sanford N. McDonnell Foundation, the UNM College of Fine Arts, and the UNM Department of Music, all events on the UNM campus are free and open to the public, which continues another long tradition: making the music available to everyone.

Upcoming Events

2024

UNM Opera Theatre presents *Le Nozze di Figaro* | 4-6 April 7:30 pm, 7 April 2:00 pm
UNM Keller Hall \$20 general admission, \$10 seniors, UNM employees, students

New Music New Mexico | Friday 26 April 7:30-9:00 pm
UNM Keller Hall *free* admission

¡Música del Corazón! | Sunday 24 November 3:00 pm
NHCC ABQ Journal Theatre *free* admission

2025

Robb Concert | Sunday 30 March 7:30 pm
The Cathedral of St. John *free* admission

Robb Trust Annual Appeal



DONATE



Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust. Your generous donation will ensure the Robb Trust continues to promote the legacy of John Donald Robb, the mission of the University of New Mexico's College of Fine Arts, and the Center for Southwest Research at UNM Libraries. Your donation supports live and online events, such as *¡Música del Corazón!* and the Robb Symposium Series, and allows us to continue presenting the finest in traditional Southwestern music, world-class contemporary classical music, and vital music education outreach initiatives to New Mexicans and beyond. Visit robbtrust.org/donate.html or scan the QR code to donate.



During his two decades as an international lawyer in New York City, John Donald Robb studied composition with Horatio Parker, Darius Milhaud, Roy Harris, Paul Hindemith, and Nadia Boulanger. In 1941, at the age of 49, Robb left his law career to become head of the Music Department at the University of New Mexico. He served as dean of the UNM College of Fine Arts from 1942 to 1957.

**Thank you for celebrating the 52nd Annual Robb Composers' Symposium Series and the Annual Robb Concert with us.
Happy 60th Anniversary Diane and Jim!**