

# Celebrating New Music

February 16, 2023

7:30pm

All Faiths Chapel, Kansas State University

## PROGRAM

"Allegro Choro"

from Three Dances in Balkan Rhythms (2008) .....Anna Ignatowicz-Glinska

Slawomir Dobrzanski and Agnieszka Lasko, piano

The ocean inside (2007) ..... Frances White  
(with digitally-created sound)

Colleen White, alto flute  
Amy Guffey, clarinet  
Madeleine Jansen, violin  
Rachel Dirks, cello  
Jacob Morgan, percussion  
Amanda Arrington, piano

Duo Displasia (2017) ..... Alyssa Morris

- I. Prelude
- II. Courante
- III. Loure
- IV. Gigue

Alyssa Morris, oboe  
Amy Guffey, clarinet

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In Search Of... (1996) ..... Barbara A. Bennett

Colleen White, flute  
Craig Parker, trumpet  
Amanda Arrington, piano

No Ordinary Woman! (2020) .....Gwyneth Walker  
Kansas Premiere

- I. Bones Be Good
- II. Homage to my Hips
- III. Turning
- IV. Homage to my Hair
- Interlude – Soliloquy (*I had not expected this loneliness...*)
- V. The Thirty-eighth Year

*Sorores Duo*

Amy Rosine, soprano  
Sandra Mosteller, clarinet  
with Amanda Arrington, piano

## Notes

Celebrating New Music presents a program of new concert music composed by women, as part of IDEall Week 2023, celebrating women in the arts. [Follow this link for more information about IDEall Week](#), a schedule of events, and/or to donate to the IDEall Fund to support ongoing events.

Would you like to see “classical” music be more inclusive? It turns out there’s something you can do: it’s easy, and you’re doing it right now! Help classical music be a little more focused on the incredibly rich and diverse music of the present, composed by the living. (Don’t worry, we can still love Bach, Mozart, et al.)

**Anna Ignatowicz-Glinska, “Allegro Choro” from *Three Dances in Balkan Rhythms*.**

Anna Ignatowicz-Glinska subtitled this piece “Tribute to Bela Bartók,” and we can certainly hear why. Bartók, the great Hungarian composer and collector of eastern European folk music, wove the folk music he explored artfully into the fabric of his compositions in elegant ways. Similarly, this elegant music beautifully weaves together the wonderfully rich and robust rhythmic vocabulary of Balkan folk music, with its frequent asymmetric (or “jagged”) meters, with more than a touch of the hypnotic repetition of minimalist music.

A prolific compositional voice in her native Poland and beyond, Anna Ignatowicz-Glinska received her advanced degrees in composition at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, where she is now a professor.

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**Frances White, *The ocean inside*.**

(Program note by the composer) I have always been interested in the technique of cantus firmus, where a pre-existing melody is used as the basis of a polyphonic composition. In early western music, this melody was traditionally a chant, and the other voices were composed in counterpoint to this melody. For the listener the cantus itself may not be clearly perceived, and yet it permeates the entire piece. I see cantus firmus as a way for a composer to engage a melody in an especially deep way.

I am a student of the shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) and particularly love *honkyoku*, the traditional meditative music for this instrument. *Honkyoku* are quite similar in intent to Gregorian chant: like chant, they exist not so much as “pieces of music” but rather for the purpose of devotion. When I was commissioned by The Third Practice Festival to write a piece that somehow engaged a non-western music, I knew that I wanted to try to use a *honkyoku* as a cantus firmus. I turned to a piece called *Choshi*. It is said to refer to the essential harmony of the universe, or a state of mind where heaven, earth, and human are perceived as one. *Choshi* is a very simple piece, but very profound, and is used to settle the mind for spiritual practice.

In *The ocean inside*, *Choshi* is the cantus firmus around which all of the other parts were written. While it is perceived for the most part only obliquely, it is the hidden melodic heart out of which the entire piece grows— “the ocean inside.”

Frances White is a composer of instrumental, vocal, and electronic music. Her work has been called “so atmospheric and sensuous it is almost fragrant” (*Musicworks*). She is particularly known for her works combining live performers and electronic sound spaces. White’s music was featured as part of the soundtrack of three of Gus Van Sant’s award-winning films: *Elephant*, *Paranoid Park*, and *Milk*.

**Alyssa Morris, *Duo Displasia*.**

*Duo Displasia* is a “displaced fantasia”: the two voices weave together baroque and jazz styles, sometimes completely cooperatively, sometimes with a little sense of push and pull against one another. Like a baroque fantasia, we hear movements in familiar dance forms of the time. The brief Prelude and the swinging Courante offer each performer ample opportunities to be heard doing their own thing as well as intricate interplay. In the elegant Loure, the pace slows down, and the emphasis is more on the haunting lines, and also on the two voices now working fully together at all times, like two halves of a whole. Here, the music is not so much noticeably baroque or jazz-like in style, but comes to us like some sort of fully mature synthesis of the two (as if, paradoxically, such a music has actually existed all along.) In the final Gigue, the music is quick and playful again, featuring elegantly athletic melodies subtly sprinkled with jazz articulations and turns of phrase.

*Duo Displasia* was commissioned by the Three Reeds Duo, in its original form for oboe and alto saxophone. The version performed tonight was adapted for oboe and clarinet.

“Alyssa Morris...brings something that we don’t always hear in the music of our time—wit. Add to this a true melodic gift, an ability to evoke a range of moods, and a strong imagination, and the result is a composer whose music is gratifying even on repeated hearings.” (*Fanfare Magazine*). Known both for her artistry as an oboist and also for her widely-performed compositions, Alyssa Morris is Assistant Professor of oboe and music theory at Kansas State University.

**Barbara A. Bennett, *In Search Of...***

The first thing the listener hears in this piece is three rich, ringing chords in the piano. The piano immediately moves on to much more melodically elaborate music. Both the non-resolution of the opening chords and the wandering nature of the melodies that follow are suggestive of the title: as if the music is "in search of" something. This character typifies the entire piece, and the sections of the piece are often marked by events repeated three times, as in the opening. Some of these gestures are strongly reminiscent of the opening chords, some a more subtle hint. The vigorous final section is announced by a particularly clear invocation of the three ringing piano chords of the opening, and swirls to an emphatic ending that may not be exactly the one we anticipated. (The music is, after all, *In Search Of...*)

Composer, pianist, educator, and textbook author Barbara A. Bennett descends from a long line of southern musicians dating back to early twentieth-century traveling tent musicians along the eastern seaboard. Her teaching career took her to the University of California-Riverside, where she taught for many years (including designing courses on women in music), received UC-Riverside's Distinguished Teaching Award, and has recently retired.

**Gwyneth Walker, *No Ordinary Woman!***

(Program note by the composer) *No Ordinary Woman!* is based on the poetry of African-American poet Lucille Clifton (1936-2010). These songs might have been subtitled "Songs of Self Reflection." For they present the poet musing about her own life, and specifically her physical appearance. One imagines the poet looking in the mirror with amusement, horror and a strong sense of her own history. Thus, the songs range from an energetic first impression ("Bones, Be Good!") to philosophical reflection ("Turning") to humor and pride in the body itself ("Homage to my Hips/Hair") to a more serious summation ("The Thirty-Eighth Year"). A strong and colorful woman emerges.

The musical adaptation of these songs (originally scored for soprano and piano, now adding clarinet) is part of a larger project commissioned by the *Sorores Duo*. The title is: *Voices of Our Land – Songs by Gwyneth Walker on Texts of American Women Poets*. This includes the *Emily!* songs (poetry of Emily Dickinson), and now these Lucille Clifton songs. In reworking *No Ordinary Woman!* with clarinet, the composer is using the variety of character possible with the Clarinet swing-style as well as the lyrical and rich tone sonority. The clarinet offers commentary, and ultimately, harmony and support.

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer Gwyneth Walker is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer—successfully managing (in the decades since) to make her living in a way that relatively few composers of concert music are able to pull off!

Program notes written by Craig Weston (except as noted).