

Yale SCHOOL OF MUSIC

José García-León, Dean

NEW MUSIC NEW HAVEN

Aaron Jay Kernis, *Artistic Director*

Kevin Puts, *guest composer*

Thursday, November 6, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.
Morse Recital Hall in Sprague Memorial Hall

Program

Maya Miro Johnson
b. 2001

The Day Turns Cool (Waiting Room Scene from Patience)

Maya Miro Johnson, *feedback instrument, film, & movement art*
Christina Herresthal, *prerecorded media mezzo-soprano*
Han Xia, *percussion*

Hirad Moradi-Lakeh
b. 2003

Three Eternal Prayers

Haram Kim & Daniel Rafimayeri, *violins*
Soyoung Cho, *viola*
Vesper Park, *cello*
Hirad Moradi-Lakeh, *piano*

Chenge Liu
b. 1997

Morphine Bubble

Rafael Mendez, *flute*
Katelyn Poetker, *clarinet*
Leona Liu, *violin*
Austin Fisher, *cello*
Edenia Maureen, *piano*
Josue Alfaro Mora, *double bass*
Thomas Nettle, *conductor*

INTERMISSION

Sebastian Zhang **with suns spoken as kin**

b. 2003

Judy Hu, Kyle Rappe, Anna Mueller, & Ethan Hall,
percussion & prepared piano

Ben Rieke

b. 2000

Upward Mobility B

Matthew Ober, *flute*

Gabriela Fry, *oboe*

Eszter Pokai, *clarinet*

Aaron Nealy, *bassoon*

Sam Hart, *horn*

Jon-Michael Taylor, *trumpet*

Will Roberts, *trombone*

Sebastian Gobbels, *harp*

Leona Liu & Maya Ito Johnson, *violins*

Nicolas Perkins, *viola*

Abigail Leady, *cello*

Skyler Lee, *double bass*

Matt Boyle, *percussion*

Ezra Calvino, *conductor*

Kevin Puts
b. 1972

Seven Seascapes

- I. “Exultation is the going of an inland soul to sea...”
–Emily Dickinson
- II. “A lone gray bird...alone in the shadows and grandeurs
and tumults of night and the sea” –Carl Sandburg
- III. “A fragrant breeze wandered up from the quiet sea”
–Douglas Adams
- IV. “Out of the darkness...jets of sparks in fountains of blue
come leaping” –D. H. Lawrence
- V. “So fine was the morning except for a streak of wind here
and there that the sea and sky looked all one fabric”
–Virginia Woolf
- VI. “I, while the gods laugh, the world’s vortex am;
maelström of passions in that hidden sea” –Mervyn Peake
- VII. “...let us find a place ‘neath ocean’s breast and bid her lie
where waves are kind.” –Benjamin Franklin Field

Ashley Yoon, *violin*

Lola Pinney, *viola*

Bethany Bobbs, *cello*

Andrew Vinther, *double bass*

Nadira Novruzov, *flute*

Esther Orlov-Mayer, *horn*

Vitaly Starikov, *piano*

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.

Artist Profile

Kevin Puts, *guest composer*

Pulitzer Prize and Grammy®-winning composer Kevin Puts has established himself as one of America's leading composers, gaining international acclaim for his "plush, propulsive" music (The New York Times), and described by Opera News as "a master polystylist." He has been commissioned and performed by leading organizations around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Philadelphia Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, and many more, and has collaborated with world-class artists such as Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, Yannick Nezet-Seguin, and Marin Alsop, among others.

Other highlights of 2022 included the west-coast premiere of *The Brightness of Light* featuring Renée Fleming and Rod Gilfry with the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra. Written for *Time for Three*, his triple concerto *Contact* had its world-premiere in March 2022 with the Florida Orchestra and continues to receive performances around the world. A recording of the piece by the Philadelphia Orchestra and Xian Zhang, conductor was released on the Deutsche Grammophon album "Letters for the Future" and was awarded "Best Contemporary Classical Composition" at the 2023 Grammy® Awards. Mr. Puts was named Musical America's Composer of the Year in 2024.

Puts' breakthrough opera *Silent Night* – for which he was awarded the 2012 Pulitzer Prize following its 2011 premiere by Minnesota Opera – has been heralded

as "remarkable" (The New York Times) and "stunning" (Twin Cities Examiner). In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Mr. Puts has received numerous honors and awards for composition. Since 2006, he has been a member of the Composition Faculty at the Peabody Institute and will serve as Distinguished Visiting Composer at the Juilliard School in the 2024-2025 academic year. He returned to his role as Director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute in 2025.

Student Profiles

Maya Miro Johnson, '26MM
Student of Katherine Balch
www.mayamirojohnson.com

Hirad Moradi-Lakeh, '27MM
Student of David Lang
www.hiradmoradi.com

Chenge Liu, '27MM
Student of Aaron Jay Kernis
www.chengeliu.com

Sebastian Zhang, '27MM
Student of Aaron Jay Kernis
www.sebastianzhang.com

Ben Rieke, '30DMA
Student of Martin Bresnick
www.benrieke.com

Staff

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Program Notes

by the composers

The Day Turns Cool (Waiting Room Scene from *Patience*)

MAYA MIRO JOHNSON

Much like the two Annas from Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, this piece presents the image of a woman fractured in two: an exterior person and an interior person. While they attempt to mirror or exert control over each other, they are forced to have divergent lives, and the exterior person often turns inward to punish or berate the interior for damage wrought uncontrollably by her supposed brokenness -- when outside forces (represented by the authoritarian remembrances of the percussion) perhaps are more likely to be at fault.

The scene should be staged in such a way that it becomes apparent that what we are witnessing is not so much an actual event as a recollection of or rumination on multiple events all tied to a complex and repetitive trauma.

Three Eternal Prayers

HIRAD MORADI-LAKEH

During the summer of 2024, I was captivated by Abigail DeVille's *In the Fullness of Time*—a three-part monochrome painting whose frayed, explosive textures instilled chaos when observed up close, but a deep sense of unity when perceived as a whole. Shades of black, white, and grey violently cut through one another, leaving deep impacts and marks into the canvas. Yet despite their intensity, the paintings felt fascinatingly still and peaceful.

Three Eternal Prayers, though not nearly as chaotic and rough, distills that same quiet power—channeling the beauty in the timelessness and stillness that I felt from these paintings.

Morphine Bubble

CHENGE LIU

Composed in the aftermath of surgery, this piece drifts through a haze where morphine and pain quietly intertwine. The morphine pump—a literal bubble of anesthetic—became a metaphorical one as well, conjuring the illusion that pain might soften, or even vanish, under its influence.

At its center lies a quiet dilemma: when pain lingers beneath the surface, does numbing it bring true relief? Is it gentler to dull sensation, or to bear it in full?

with suns spoken as kin

SEBASTIAN ZHANG

It feels odd that I've met so many musicians that I admired when I was younger.

Moving into this career, it feels like I've leapt into outer space and discovered a vibrant cosmos full of life. I'm exploring in awe of everything and everyone around me.

These people have been incredibly kind and welcoming and supportive towards my silly dreams.

At times, it feels like I'm in the presence of stars considering myself one of their own. I hope I can be the same for others, some day.

To me, this work sounds with the same ambition as that wish.

Upward Mobility B

BEN RIEKE

To me, the great similarity between contemporary music and contemporary American life is an incongruity between massive effort and potentially subverted ends. The effort is something to be celebrated, and sometimes the ends are too, but there is a danger in thinking that effort can be substituted for ends. Everything (including effort) must have a direction, and that direction must inevitably change.

Seven Seascapes

KEVIN PUTS

I have always held a deep fascination for the sea and for all things maritime: the harbor sounds and smells of shipping business, the slap of waves against anchored hulls, the elegant dance of sea plants floating beneath the docks, the distant clang of bells, the taste of salty wind. This fascination is counterbalanced by a certain degree of fear—of the ocean's vast depths and hidden perils.

The sea has been a source of inspiration for the best work of many composers, though for me, it is Benjamin Britten who found the most poignantly evocative language to capture its essence in his two biggest operas, *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*. In the case of the latter, much has been written about the sea's function as a metaphor for Grimes' subconscious, its storms a representation of his inner turmoil. Though the music in *Seven Seascapes* is often both visual and visceral, it is largely with this "inward" approach that I composed the work's seven movements, all of which are accompanied by excerpts from various poetry. These brief quotations aided me in giving voice and focus to my own fear and wonder about the ocean's mysteries, and in giving the work its shape.

Seven Seascapes was commissioned by Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival. It is dedicated with deep gratitude and admiration to Marya Martin.

Text & Translations

The Day Turns Cool (Waiting Room Scene from *Patience*)

from Edith Södergran:

Dagen svalnar... (Dikter, 1 91 6)

III.

Jag såg min herre för första gången
idag,
darrande kände jag genast igen honom.
Nu känner jag ren hans tunga hand på
min lätta arm . . .
Var är mitt klingande jungfruskrafft,
min kvinnofrihet med högburet huvud?
Nu känner jag ren hans fasta grepp
om min skälvande kropp, nu hör jag
verklighetens hårda klang
mot mina sköra, sköra drömmar.

from Frida Kahlo:

"May Second... May Fourth... May Seventh"

Frida Kahlo: The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait. Introduction by Carlos Fuentes. Translated by Sarah M. Lowe, Abrams (August 9, 2005)

The Day Turns Cool (Poems, 1 91 6, trans. K.M. Skalkenæs)

III.

I saw my master for the first time today,
trembling I recognized him immediately.
Now I already feel his heavy hand
on my light arm...
Where is my chiming maiden-laughter,
my woman-freedom with raised brow?
Now I already feel his firm grasp
around my trembling body,
now I hear the harsh sound of reality/
reality's harsh tone against my fragile,
fragile dreams.

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