

Yale SCHOOL OF MUSIC

José García-León, Dean

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS DEGREE RECITAL

Udi Perlman, *composition*

Thursday, January 29, 2026 | 7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall in Sprague Memorial Hall

Udi Perlman
b. 1990

Minori (2022)

Simon Karakulidi, *piano*

Recorder (2022)

Samuel DeCaprio, *cello*

Nostos (2022)

- I. Con moto, tempo giusto
- II. Moderato
- III. Andante
- IV. Vivace
- V. Calmo — Moderato, suddenly faster
- VI. Nostalgia (Andante moderato)

Madeline Hocking, *violin*

Samuel DeCaprio, *cello*

Simon Karakulidi, *piano*

Program *cont.*

Accompaniment (2023)

Aspen Contemporary Ensemble

Alexander “Sasha” Ishov, flute

Clayton Luckadoo, clarinet/bass clarinet

Colin McCall, percussion

Liam Kaplan, piano

Herdís M. Guðmundsdóttir, violin

Jacob Schafer, violin

Felix Veser, viola

Otavio Manzano Kavakama, cello

Timothy Weiss, conductor

*Audio recording from premiere performance, Harris Concert Hall,
Aspen Music Festival and School, Aspen, CO, August 10, 2023*

INTERMISSION

Variations on a Theme by Zvi Avni (2023)

Haifa Symphony Orchestra

Rotem Nir, *conductor*

*Video recording from Israeli premiere performance, Rappaport
Center, Israel Music Festival, Haifa, Israel, September 26, 2025*

Alphabet Cantata (2024/25)

- I. Aleph
- II. A. M. Sh.
- III. Beth
- IV. The five phonetic families I
- V. Gimel
- VI. The five phonetic families II
- VII. Daleth
- VIII. Alef im kulam (Alef with them all)
- IX. He
- X. Eshrim ushtaim otiyot yesod (Twenty-two foundation letters)
- XI. Vav
- XII. La parole
- XIII. Zain
- XIV. Pyramid
- XV. Heth
- XVI. Canon I
- XVII. Teth
- XVIII. Canon II
- XIX. Yod.
- XX. Gates I
- XXI. Caph
- XXII. Gates II
- XXIII. Lamed
- XXIV. Tetragrammaton pronunciations
- XXV. Mem
- XXVI. Nun
- XXVII. Shtei Avanim (two stones)

Jardena Gertler-Jaffe, *soprano*
Molly Yuko McGuire, *mezzo-soprano*
Madeline Hocking, *violin*
Samuel DeCaprio, *cello*
Jacqueline Farrell, *harpsichord*

*This performance is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree.
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

Udi Perlman, *composer*

Praised for his “fascinating, surprising, rich, and colorful” music (Haaretz), Udi Perlman (b. 1990) is an Israeli composer based in Berlin, Germany. His orchestral, chamber, and vocal works have been commissioned and performed by ensembles across Europe, the United States, and Israel. Perlman is a recipient of the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Pogorzelski-Yankee Award from the American Guild of Organists. He has held fellowships and residencies at MacDowell, I-Park Foundation, Herrenhaus Edenkoben, Aspen Music Festival and School, Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA, and the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music. Perlman is a DMA candidate in composition at the Yale School of Music, where his doctoral thesis won the 2022 Friedmann Thesis Prize. He holds degrees from the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin (Artist Diploma) and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance (B. Mus. & M.Mus.). His mentors include Christopher Theofanidis, Aaron Jay Kernis, David Lang, Martin Bresnick, Jörg Widmann, Wolfgang Rihm, Yinan Leef and Menachem Wissenberg.

Texts & Translations

Alphabet Cantata

Udi Perlman (after François Couperin)

Libretto compiled by Udi Perlman based on the *Book of Lamentations*, *Book of Creation* (*Sefer Yetzirah*), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*

Translation*/TransliterationOriginal Text

I. Alef	א
II. A.M.Sh	א.מ.ש
III. Bet	ב
IV. Alef Chet Heh Eyin in the throat; Gimel Yud Kaf Kuf in the palate; Dalet Tet Lamed Nun Tav in the tongue; Zayin Samekh Shin Resh Tzadi in the teeth; Bet Vav Mem Peh in the lips.	אחה"ע בגרון גיכ"ק בחיך דטלנ"ת בלשון זסשר"ץ בשינים בומ"ף בשפתיים
V. Gimel	ג
VI. A Cha Ha 'A Ge Ye Ke Ke Do To Lo No To Zi Si Shi Ri Tzi Bu Vu Mu Pu	אָחַהּעַ גִּיכְךְ דַּטְלַנְת זִסְשֶׁרֶץ בִּנְמֶפּ
VII. Dalet	ד
VIII. Alef with them all and all of them with Alef; Bet with them all and all of them with Bet. They repeat in a cycle and exist in 231 Gates.	א' עם כולם וכולם עם א' ב' עם כולם וכולם עם ב' וחזרות חלילה ונמצאות ברל"א שערים
ShoMo ShoMa ShoMe ShoMi ShoMu ShaMo ShaMa ShaMe ShaMi ShaMu SheMo SheMa SheMe SheMi SheMu ShiMo ShiMa ShiMe ShiMi ShiMu ShuMo ShuMa ShuMe ShuMi ShuMu	שֶׁמֶ שֶׁמֶ
IX. He	ה
X. Twenty-two Foundation Letters: He placed them in a circle like a wall with 231 Gates. The Circle oscillates back and	עשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד קבען בגלגל כמין חומה ברל"א שערים

Texts & Translations *cont.*

forth. A sign for this is: There is nothing in good higher than Delight; There is nothing evil lower than Plague.

והזור הגלגל פנים ואחור וזה סימן
לדבר אין בטובה למעלה מענג ואין
ברעה למטה מנגע

XI. Vav

ו

XII. Speech, being the first social institution, owes its form only to natural causes.

La parole, étant la première
institution sociale, ne doit
sa forme qu'à des causes
naturelles.

XIII. Zain

ז

XIV. ta

ת

sha ta

שת

ra sha ta

רשת

ka ra sha ta

קרשת

tza ka ra sha ta

צקרשת

pa tza ka ra sha ta

פצקרשת

'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

עפצקרשת

sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

סעפצקרשת

na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

נסעפצקרשת

ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

מנסעפצקרשת

la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

למנסעפצקרשת

ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

קלמנסעפצקרשת

ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

יקלמנסעפצקרשת

ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

תיקלמנסעפצקרשת

cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

חתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

זחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

va za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

ווחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

ha va za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

הוחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

da ha va za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

דהוחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

ga da ha va za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

גדהוחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

ba ga da ha va za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

בגדהוחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

a ba ga da ha va za cha ta ya ka la ma na sa 'a pa tza ka ra sha ta

אבגדהוחתיקלמנסעפצקרשת

XV. Chet

ח

XVI. (Instrumental)

XVII. Tet

ט

XVIII. (Instrumental)

2

אב ג ד ה ו ז ט י כל כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ש ת
א ג ה ז ט כ מ ס פ ש א ג ה ז ט כ מ ס פ ק ש
א ד ז י מ ק ת ג ו ט ל ס צ ש ב ה ח כ נ פ ר
א ה ט מ פ ש ג ז כ ק א ה ט מ פ ש ג ז כ ס ק
א ו כ ע ש ד ט נ ט ב ז ל פ ת ה י ס ר ג ח מ צ
א ז מ ק ג ט ש כ ה פ א כ ז מ ק ג ט ס ש ה כ פ
א ח ס ת ז ש ו מ ר ה ל כ ד ק צ ג י פ ב ט ע
א ט פ כ ק ה מ ש ז
א י ק ו ס ב כ ר ז ע ל ש ח פ ד מ ת ט צ ה נ
א ב ש ט ק פ ה ס ג מ א כ ש ט ק ז פ ה ס ג מ
א ח א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל א ל

2

אל אל אל אל אל אל אל אל

4

٢٠٠٠ ٢٠٠١ ٢٠٠٢ ٢٠٠٣ ٢٠٠٤
 ٢٠٠٥ ٢٠٠٦ ٢٠٠٧ ٢٠٠٨ ٢٠٠٩
 ٢٠١٠ ٢٠١١ ٢٠١٢ ٢٠١٣ ٢٠١٤
 ٢٠١٥ ٢٠١٦ ٢٠١٧ ٢٠١٨ ٢٠١٩
 ٢٠٢٠ ٢٠٢١ ٢٠٢٢ ٢٠٢٣ ٢٠٢٤

7

1

שתי אבנים בונות שני בתים, שלש
אבנים בונות ששה בתים, ארבע אבנים
בונות ארבעה ועשרים בתים, חמש
אבנים בונות מאה ועשרים בתים, שש
אבנים בונות שבע מאות ועשרים בתים,
שבע אבנים בונות חמשת אלפים
וארבעים בתים, מכאן ואילך צא וחשוב
מה שאין הפה יכול לדבר ואין האוזן
יכולה לשמוע.

* Aryeh Kaplan, *Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation in Theory and Practice*, Boston, 1997;
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings related to Music*, trans.
John T. Scott. Hanover and London, 2000.

Program Notes *by the composer*

This recital presents an overview of my music from 2022 to 2025, composed primarily during the post-residential phase of my DMA degree. In selecting the works for the program, I was struck by how much of my music from this period shares a common characteristic: a penchant for allusion. The six compositions on this program, ranging from solo to orchestral works, engage with external source material in a variety of ways, from oblique references to outright quotations.

Some state their sources plainly and upfront. This is the case in *Variations on a Theme by Zvi Avni* and *Alphabet Cantata*, in which the impetus and structural framework of the entire piece is the dialogue with pre-existing repertoire. In other works, allusion is more veiled. A reference might be an undercurrent that only fully emerges at the end of the piece (*Recorder* for solo cello), while in other cases an opening quotation returns at the close, casting a retrospective gaze over the entire work (*Nostos* for piano trio). Perhaps most allusive are *Minori* for solo piano and *Accompaniment* for sextet, which do not reference a single source but instead gesture toward musical tropes more broadly.

In retrospect, it feels appropriate to highlight my intertextual preoccupation as a common thread. Before arriving at Yale, I held a strong belief in the musical work as a self-contained unit of meaning. My compositional ideal was to create a piece whose meaning arose entirely from within, without pointing outward: an autonomous, self-sufficient musical language, developing organically like a cell culture in a Petri dish.

Over the course of my degree, this position loosened. Much of my work at Yale has involved critically reflecting on the canon by situating music within broader questions of cultural and social discourse. The constant act of contextualizing past repertoire made seeing it in isolation increasingly untenable. It is therefore unsurprising that incorporating a more referential compositional language became a central feature of my work.

There is, though, another aspect to this shift. Earlier in my training, I was hesitant to quote or reference music that might position me too explicitly as a representative of my culture or religion. I didn't want being 'Israeli' or 'Jewish' to be my calling card. I wanted to be a "capital-C" Composer. No hyphens. Over time, however, my fascination with my own roots deepened, as it so often does. My engagement with these materials has come, I believe, from an authentic desire to cultivate something personal and true. Gradually, I became less wary of allowing references to situate my music within a particular cultural context. In fact, I began actively seeking ways to do so. The ideal of purity that once preoccupied me so intensely now feels, in hindsight, like a form of self-protection, a shield against vulnerability that I have since learned to let go of.

Minori

The minor mode can evoke a wide range of emotions: melancholy and lament; storm and stress; anger and aggression, to name just a few. In my piece *Minori* for piano solo, I wanted to explore this bewildering array ad absurdum, inspired by the Baroque

Affektenlehre, or Doctrine of Affects, which posits that music can elicit specific, involuntary emotions in the listener. Juxtaposing short “clips” derived from a single minor sonority—a D minor triad with an added second, (D–E–F–A)—I sought to create a temperamental collage of musical gestures in which emotions alternate rapidly.

The piece requires the performer to shift abruptly, leaping across the keyboard, moving both physically and emotionally from one state to another. As the piece progresses, the succession of gestures spirals into a whirlwind, to the point where they eventually lose their affective impact and become empty placeholders for emotion. The work is written in ternary form, A–B–A'. Following an initial presentation of the “clips” a more restrained, static section emerges, culminating in a truncated recapitulation, like a twitchy fast-forward of the opening material.

Recorder

My first musical instrument was the recorder. One of my earliest musical memories, or memory of any kind, for that matter, is a recorder lesson. I remember a classroom swarming with unruly five-year-olds jumping wildly all over the school desks, screaming and squeaking their plastic instruments. The teacher and I, seated at the corner of the room, completely indifferent to the chaotic surroundings, played together from a music stand—I'm pretty sure it was *Mary Had a Little Lamb*—each on his own instrument, yet totally in sync. I remember knowing I played the song well.

The word *recorder* derives from the Latin *recordārī*, which means to remember, or recollect, the way one calls to mind a song learned by heart. In my piece *Recorder* for cello solo, commissioned by Samuel DeCaprio, I tried to call to mind my early musical memory and capture its emotional essence: the way it felt to be in that noisy room, the way it felt to make music for the first time. The melody of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, the first tune I learned to play by heart, plays a central role in the piece, its circular opening motive—E, D, C, D—permeating all sections. The reference brews slowly until an inevitable moment of release, when the cellist's voice enters, humming the tune against an arpeggiated accompaniment that presents the familiar melody in a new way.

Nostos

Originating in Homer's *Odyssey*, the ancient Greek word *Nostos* (νόστος) describes a literary trope of returning home after a long voyage. In many *Nostos* tales, the hero finds that home has changed and become strange and unfamiliar. The word *Nostalgia* derives from the word *Nostos*, along with the Greek root *algos*, meaning pain. The pain of longing to return home.

In my piece *Nostos* for piano trio, a short musical figure symbolizes a homeward journey. The entire piece repeatedly explores a five-note melodic shape that begins with an upward leap, followed by a stepwise descent back to its starting point. Every time this starting point is reached, however, a change in harmony, texture, or rhythm thwarts a sense of closure, thus propelling an endless cycle of failed returns. The idea of

Program Notes *cont.*

home is also represented in the piece in a more personal, biographical way, through allusions to songs and musical styles I heard growing up in Israel. This wistful tone becomes more explicit as the piece progresses and can be heard most clearly in the trio's final movement, titled *Nostalgia*.

The piece consists of six moments that flow together in an unbroken stream. It is preceded by a brief Epigraph invoking the Hebrew refrain *habayta, habayta, habayta* ("homeward, homeward, homeward"), as a wordless instrumental allusion to the 1945 song *Habayta*, with music by Yedidya Admon and lyrics by Aharon Ashman. This theme returns at the very end of the final moment in the violin. *Nostos* was written for the Lysander Piano Trio and commissioned by the Adele and John Gray Endowment Fund.

Accompaniment

When I lived in Jerusalem, there used to be an old street performer who sat at the crossroads of two busy streets at the city center and played instrumental covers of popular Israeli melodies on the electric guitar. He used a drum machine as his backing track that repeated the same chord again and again over an endless *um-pa um-pa* beat and didn't seem to mind that the melodies he played were at odds with the static harmonic accompaniment. I was studying composition at the time and was engrossed in the study of harmony, but whenever I heard him play, I would be reminded that, in some cases, harmony is way overrated. My piece *Accompaniment*, written for the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, kaleidoscopically explores the

um-pa um-pa accompaniment pattern, a ubiquitous presence in the music I absorbed growing up in Israel, and thus, whether I like it or not, part of my musical DNA. Microtonality drives the piece, bending the familiar minor triad through subtle detuning and generating new harmonic colors through resonant just-intonation sonorities. Bringing this ready-made musical object from the background to the foreground, I attempt to abstract it from its original context and find the hidden beauty that lies within it.

Variations on a Theme by Zvi Avni

Variations on a Theme by Zvi Avni for symphony orchestra is based on *Meditations on Drama* for chamber orchestra by Israeli composer Zvi Avni (b. 1927), written in 1966. The theme underlying my piece is taken from the first twelve measures of Avni's work and consists of a twelve-tone row inflected with melodic patterns characteristic of the Arabic Maqam tradition. This combination of atonal chromaticism with Middle Eastern modes reflects the aesthetic orientation of many Israeli composers of the period associated with the so-called Mediterranean School of composition. In pursuit of a distinctive modern Israeli style, these composers sought to integrate local Jewish and Arab folk musical materials into Western classical forms and techniques.

I chose Avni's theme because, to me, it encapsulates the Mediterranean School and all the complexities inherent in the idealistic attempt to fuse two fundamentally different musical worlds. My *Variations* engage in dialogue with the ethos of the

Mediterranean School, questioning its synthetic identity. By breaking down the alloy Avni created into its elemental components, I sought to examine each element on its own and thereby to explore whether, and if at all, they might be re-forged anew today.

Alphabet Cantata

Listening to François Couperin's *Leçons de ténèbres* (1714) for the first time, I was struck by an uncanny familiarity. Amid the French Baroque vocal lines, the Hebrew alphabet appeared: Alef. Beth. Gimel. Etc. As a Hebrew speaker, hearing these letters in such an unexpected musical context felt both disorienting and deeply moving. How did they end up here?

The answer lies in translation. The Book of Lamentations, mourning the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, is structured as an acrostic, each verse beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Since Greek and Latin translations could not preserve this pattern, translators added the names of the Hebrew letters at the beginning of each verse. Over time, this detail became integral to Catholic liturgy, with the letter names sung as part of the religious text.

Couperin's *Leçons* continues this tradition, setting the Lamentations to music for Holy Week's Ténèbres service. I was intrigued by the presence of my own language in this distinctly French, Catholic world, especially as Couperin's letter settings—set as long, meandering melismas—conveyed an expression that felt almost self-contained, as if communicating a message unto

themselves. This connection made me wonder: beyond their structural role, could these letters hold deeper meaning?

As it happens, this exact question lies at the heart of Jewish mystical tradition. In *Sefer Yetzirah*, an enigmatic ancient Kabbalistic text, letters are not merely symbols or sounds; they are seen as the building blocks of the universe. The book is structured around the Hebrew alphabet and links it to the very fabric of existence, proposing that before the world was created, there were letters, and that the world is the result of the various combinations of these letters.

This idea became the foundation for *Alphabet Cantata*, a piece that reimagines Couperin's Hebrew Alphabet setting while intertwining it with my musical reflections on the significance of letters, drawn from *Sefer Yetzirah* and its teachings. The piece opens by classifying the letters according to their relation to human anatomy, as heard in movements 2, 4, and 6. The focus then shifts to the combinatorial possibilities of the alphabet in various permutations—known as Gates—which generate mantra-like sequences of sound. Movements 8 and 10 introduce this concept, while movements 14 and 19 put it into practice, culminating in movement 23, in which the soprano enunciates the Tetragrammaton (the four-letter name of God) using all possible combinations of two vowel sounds. The only outlier is movement 12, based on a French quote from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, which contrasts the Kabbalistic approach with a sociological perspective on the origin of language.

More Music Awaits!

Thank you for joining us — we'd love to have you back! If you liked today's concert, here are a few more performances we think you'll enjoy:

FEB 5 New Music New Haven
Zosha di Castri, *guest composer*
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

FEB 10 Parker Quartet with Paul Watkins, *cello*
Oneppo Chamber Music Series
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Tickets start at \$31, Faculty/Staff start at \$23, Students start at \$14

MAR 5 New Music New Haven
David Lang & Katherine Balch, *faculty composers*
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

APR 16 New Music New Haven
Aaron Jay Kernis, *faculty composer*
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

YALE SCHOOL OF MUSIC BOX OFFICE

Sprague Memorial Hall, 470 College Street, New Haven, CT 06511
203 432-4158 | music.yale.edu/events

wshu | Public Radio 91.1FM | wshu.org | 89.9FM

Stay informed, inspired and endlessly curious with our thought-provoking content.

WSHU 91.1 FM is the media sponsor of the Yale School of Music

Connect with us:



[yale.music](https://www.instagram.com/yale.music)



[yalemusic](https://www.facebook.com/yalemusic)



[YaleSchoolofMusicOfficial](https://www.youtube.com/YaleSchoolofMusicOfficial)

See our full calendar:



If you do not intend to save your program, please recycle it in the baskets at the exit doors.