

The University of Virginia Music Department

presents

The 2025 Undergraduate Composers Concert

Saturday, April 19, 2025

8:00 pm

Old Cabell Hall

University of Virginia

Program

<i>A Letter to Anna</i>	<i>clarinet, viola & piano</i>	Ava Ghods
<i>Interlude</i>	<i>clarinet, violin & viola</i>	Andy Heil
<i>Delusion</i>	<i>violin & piano</i>	Ava Ghods
<i>Revenant Coywolf</i>	<i>clarinet, violin & viola</i>	Kate Sorge
<i>Horizons*</i>	Lauren Kim, <i>solo piano</i>	Hunter Colson
<i>Hydrogen's Song</i>	<i>fixed media electronics</i>	Eduardo Hinkley
<i>Caribou</i>	<i>video & fixed media electronics</i>	Jeremy Chase
<i>Wadden Sea*</i>	<i>brass quintet & speaker</i> Hannah Martin & Andrew Kim, <i>trumpets</i> ; Lara Forstner, <i>French horn</i> ; Jason Zermani, <i>trombone</i> ; Kyle Holden, <i>tuba</i> & Silvia Wardell, <i>speaker</i>	Hannah Martin

~ Intermission ~

<i>The Bird Suite</i>	Davy McConnell-Wells
I. Birdsong	
II. Dance	
III. Mourning Dove	
IV. The Robin	
V. Injured Wing	
<i>clarinet, violin & viola</i>	

<i>Waves</i>	Davy McConnell-Wells
<i>clarinet, violin & viola</i>	
<i>The Other Side of the Mountain</i>	Kate Sorge
<i>I. Allemande – Fog on the Mountain</i>	
<i>II. Courante – Karst Waterfall</i>	
<i>III. Sarabande – Forest Roots</i>	
<i>IV. Gigue – The Other Side</i>	
<i>solo viola</i>	
<i>Sullen</i>	Ava Ghods
<i>violin & piano</i>	
<i>The Peak</i>	Kate Sorge
<i>clarinet, viola & piano</i>	
<i>Song Sparrow's Refrain</i>	Elle Woodard
<i>student choir & piano</i>	
Elle Woodard, conductor	
<i>As I Recall</i>	Elle Woodard
<i>solo piano</i>	
<i>Duet for Violin & Viola</i>	Peter Ahn
<i>I. Preamble</i>	
<i>II. Obsolescence</i>	
<i>III. Stupor</i>	
<i>IV. Homestretch</i>	
<i>violin & viola</i>	
<i>Quartet in A Minor*</i>	Hunter Colson
<i>clarinet, violin, viola & piano</i>	

** Distinguished Major Project*

About the Program

The University of Virginia Department of Music proudly presents the inaugural Undergraduate Composers Concert on Saturday, April 19, at 8:00 PM in Old Cabell Hall.

This special program features an exciting collection of world premieres, showcasing original works across a diverse range of musical styles. The concert highlights compositions by students enrolled in MUSI 4581 Composition I and MUSI 4582 Composition II, as well as those completing Distinguished Major Projects.

Organized by Leah Reid and generously co-sponsored by the Music Department and the Jefferson Trust, the event celebrates the creativity and artistry of UVA's student composers.

The program presents a dynamic collection of works that explore striking contrasts—light and dark, turbulence and serenity, past and present, and the intersections of nature and emotion.

The evening's performances will feature esteemed UVA faculty members Ayn Balija (viola), Jiyeon Choi (clarinet), John Mayhood (piano), and David Sariti (violin), alongside talented student performers and ensembles. Unless otherwise noted, performances are by faculty performers.

Program Notes

A Letter to Anna by **Ava Ghods** is a piece for piano, violin, and clarinet that captures the charm and poignancy of a bygone era. With themes of passion and refinement, it evokes the sweeping emotions of a classic love story, weaving delicate, whisper-soft phrases with powerful, dramatic passages. Shifting between moments of restraint and surges of intensity, the music invites listeners to imagine scenes of tender correspondence, heartfelt revelations, and bittersweet drama. Each phrase unfolds like a chapter, filled with warmth, grace, and the emotional weight of missed connections and unspoken longing.

Interlude by **Andy Heil** is an instrumental piece originally composed for string trio but revised for violin, viola, and clarinet. Each instrument in the trio is given a voice that is set in conversation with the others. The voices initially appear uncoordinated and in disagreement, interrupting each other and competing for attention. They soon reach an understanding and find beautiful harmony through sharing and developing one another's ideas in a contrapuntal texture. The piece reaches a climax in a moment of declaratory homophony before coming to a peaceful conclusion.

Delusion by **Ava Ghods** is a duet for piano and violin that aims to capture a sense of uncertainty, as though someone is struggling to grasp the reality around them. The music moves through shifting harmonies, reflecting the tension between a desire for clarity and the haunting feeling that the beautiful moments surrounding them might be nothing more than an illusion. The violin and piano engage in a dialogue, each mirroring the other in a search for truth, yet constantly pulled between fleeting moments of serenity and the unsettling realization that what seems real may be beyond reach.

Revenant Coywolf by **Kate Sorge** The shadowy coywolf, a hybrid of the coyote and wolf, is a rare sight. About the same height as a coyote, the coywolf is stockier, with wolf-like teeth set within a narrow coyote head and mouth. Their calls echo along the ridgelines at night, beginning with a low, wolf-like bark that quickly shifts into the high-pitched howl typical of a coyote. One such coywolf visits my property almost every night, pausing in the same spot to gaze at my house. There is something otherworldly about their presence. This piece celebrates the emergence of the coywolf and its distinctive behaviors, as well as its remarkable adaptability to ever-changing environmental conditions.

Horizons by Hunter Colson is primarily inspired by music from the video game *Final Fantasy VII* and is intended to be the fourth of five pieces from a suite of solo piano works. This piece explores the tonalities of D-flat major and C-sharp minor, showing both the light and dark sides of the tonic C-sharp/D-flat note. The piece is characterized by an idyllic serenity, which is disturbed by an uneasy shift to the minor key halfway through. This shift, in paranoid fashion, casts doubt over the validity of the preceding calmness.

Hydrogen's Song by Eduardo Hinkley is the first track in *Forming Bonds*—a series inspired by the learning style of *Numberblocks* and the timeless charm of classic Disney scores. In this enchanting tale, we meet Hydrogen—an adventurous tiny hero with a huge heart. With just 1 proton and 1 electron to her name, she may be small, but her dreams are anything but! After falling from the sky into the wondrous Hex-Lands, Hydrogen embarks on a journey to make new friends and discover exciting bonds. Will this pint-sized star find a way to shine among the biggest elements? Whimsical melodies blend with playful percussion, featuring objects that symbolize “fun,” bringing Hydrogen’s vibrant personality to life. It’s not just educational—it’s brimming with character. From triumphant flourishes to quirky jingles, every verse celebrates her journey. The result is a lively, dynamic scene that makes learning chemistry feel magical.

Caribou by Jeremy Chase is a rescore of a remarkable sequence from the Netflix documentary series *Our Planet*. The music and visuals together stand as a testament to life’s magnificent perseverance amidst the harshest conditions. This rescore celebrates the striking beauty and power of our planet, offering an ode to the inhabitants of the Arctic. A suspended cymbal, bowed classical guitar, marimba, and bowed vibraphone all evoke the icy landscape captured in the imagery. The ascending violin statements conjure images of snow-capped trees, while the pizzicato swarms in the cello and basses mimic the sound of caribou hooves in the snow. The solo cello introduces the caribou theme, and the solo violin sings out for the baby caribou. The horns announce the triumph of life even in the harshest climates, while uneasy drums signal a predator searching for food.

Wadden Sea by Hannah Martin, a distinguished major project, is an eco-acoustic composition for brass quintet and speaker. The work is a sonification of the four seasons in the Wadden Sea, a crucial stopover point for the migratory birds of Europe and Africa. Five migratory species and one overwintering species of the Sea are highlighted. The speaker guides

the audience through the piece's more scientific aspects, and the brass quintet takes the listener along for a rollicking fall & spring migration, a sobering winter, and a calm yet unclear summer, representing the uncertain futures facing many avian species.

***The Birds Suite* by Davy McConnell-Wells** captures the perspective of birds. Demarcated by brief caesuras, the piece is divided into five sections: *Birdsong*, *Dance*, *Mourning Dove*, *The Robin*, and *Injured Wing*. *Birdsong* encapsulates several species of birds singing in a slow, solemn freeform style, representative of unmeasured bird calls at any given time. *Dance* takes us into a woodland forest filled with dancing birds, where you can hear the distinctive characters of birds through the instrumentation. *Mourning Dove* showcases the early, soft calls of the bird, accompanied by incredibly light harmony that evokes the mystique of the morning. *The Robin* blends regality and humor to portray the Robin, with a bustling character that appears in various forms. *Injured Wing* depicts the tragedy of a bird with unusable wings, using deeply minor tonalities to create thick, heavy emotion.

***Waves* by Davy McConnell-Wells** delves into the natural phenomena of the ocean, depicting the waxing and waning energy levels of the sea through various musical techniques. The smooth ostinato played by the violin and viola breathes in and out, representing the continuous and steady energy exchange of waves. The clarinet portrays several fascinating characters throughout the piece, either presenting itself as a siren singing its song or as a creature deep below the waves. This piece is about listening closely and immersing the listener in the vastness of the sea.

***The Other Side of the Mountain* by Kate Sorge** This partita juxtaposes flowing Appalachian-like melodic lines, punctuated by intervals of fifths and fourths, with the rigid protocols and practices of the Baroque partita. The Baroque partita is typically divided into dance movements, and in this piece, four have been selected: the Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue. Each dance movement is named after the sights and sounds of the Appalachian Mountains: 1. Allemande – *Fog on the Mountain*, 2. Courante – *Karst Waterfall*, 3. Sarabande – *Forest Roots*, and 4. Gigue – *The Other Side*. All movements are in binary form, rhythmically configured, and colored to match the emotional intention of each dance movement.

***Sullen* by Ava Ghods** is a duet for piano and violin inspired by a defining moment in *Sense and Sensibility*, where the emotional undercurrents of the Dashwood sisters, Marianne and Elinor, are ignited by the uninvited

presence of Lucy Steele. The piece begins with agitated, restless passages, capturing Marianne's immediate vexation as she seeks refuge behind the fortepiano, using her playing as both an excuse and a shield against the unwelcome intrusion. As the music unfolds, it subtly shifts, reflecting Elinor's transformation from poised restraint to the quiet unraveling of her heart as Lucy reveals her engagement to the man Elinor holds dear. This revelation, both a whispered sting and a resounding shock, concludes the piece with an explosive surge of energy.

***The Peak* by Kate Sorge.** At almost 3,000 feet, you have finally reached the summit of the peak. Exhausted from the climb, you sit at the top of the mountain, rummaging through your backpack for the carefully tucked-away peanut butter and jelly sandwich. As you peer down below, you see farms, streams, and forests. Bittersweet, they represent the patchwork quilt of your often compartmentalized life. Memories flow and the mind wanders...

Song Sparrow's Refrain, an SATB piece **by Elle Woodard**, is a short, lyrical work composed in memory of her childhood best friend, Ian Rembert, who passed away shortly after New Year's Day this year. The piece evokes the call and response of a songbird's simple melody, weaving through different sections of the ensemble. The music reflects an unbroken connection, a reminder that love and memory continue to sing long after a voice has gone quiet.

Song Sparrow's Refrain

As you stand at my urn and weep,
I'll be there, but not as you seek.
I am in the song sparrow's refrain,
And I'll sing till I see you again.
For I'm in the mountains, and I'm in the trees,
I shine in the sun with the fresh morning breeze.
And I'm in the smiles of strangers you see,
The wind in the forest, you feel in the breeze.
Though I've passed, you must not pass with me,
That's an oath I plead you to keep.
Keep rereading my history,
And I'll read to you when you sleep.
I'm thankful for all that you taught me,
And for all that you had left to teach.
I'll still reach out every New Year,
Though I know you're just out of reach.

I'll search for your presence in starlight,
I'll think of our memories with pride.
Your body may lay in an urn,
But your spirit never died.

***As I Recall* by Elle Woodard**, is a dramatic piano piece that captures the struggle of trying to return to a beautiful dream after waking. It weaves two main themes: one representing the reluctant pull of reality, the other the peaceful drift back into sleep. Through expressive harmonies and shifting textures, the piece evokes the fleeting nature of dreams, at times vivid and tangible, and at others just out of reach.

***Duet for Violin and Viola* by Peter Ahn**. During his senior year of high school, Peter Ahn performed a duet piece for his final orchestra concert. In a curious twist of fate, by his final year of college, he finds himself on the other side of the coin, now composing a duet. The duet is divided into four movements, each reflecting a different year of college. *Preamble* serves as a comical introduction to the amusement park of college life. *Obsolescence* offers the antithesis—a solemn movement where each instrument moves independently of the other. This leads into *Stupor*, an eerie beginning that gradually transforms into a period of acceptance through slow, resonant harmonies. Finally, *Homestretch* marks a leap into a fast-paced world filled with perpetual movement and virtuosic passages.

***Quartet in A Minor* by Hunter Colson** is intended to be a three movement piece for clarinet, violin, viola, and piano, akin to the trios and quartets by romantic composers such as Beethoven and Brahms. The third movement is still a work in progress and is not part of the concert program (due to the quartet's episodic nature, the third movement is not required for a satisfying listening experience). The first movement is a sonata form that frequently alternates between moments of turbulence and serenity. After exploring various distant keys and developing its themes, the music is tragically unable to escape from its A minor tonic key, concluding in a storm of rage and despair. The second movement is in the key of E minor, and is mainly inspired by the soundtrack of the video game *Klonoa 2 Lunatea's Veil*. It consists of three main sections, each featuring a different instrument playing the main melody. Listen closely for the piano's frigid interjections throughout the first section and the clarinet's lamentations during the second.

For Composer & Performer Bios visit:



Details about MUSI 4581 & MUSI 4582

MUSI 4581 and MUSI 4582 are upper-level composition courses taught by Assistant Professor Leah Reid that provide a forum for students to listen, discuss, workshop, and develop their musical ideas. Throughout the semester, students compose either a large-scale work or a series of smaller pieces in their chosen style, exploring acoustic, electronic, or electroacoustic music, as well as sound art installations.

Distinguished Major Projects in Composition

The Distinguished Major Program allows outstanding music majors to work on large-scale projects during their last two semesters at the University. The project may consist of a thesis, a composition (or set of compositions), a formal recital with program notes, another type of performance or written work, or a project combining different components, such as a thesis essay and a composition. Students may collaborate on a joint project, provided each student's contribution is equal in scale to the work for an individual Distinguished Major project.

Special Thanks To:

The Department of Music and the Jefferson Trust,
and all the students, interns, and volunteers
who made this performance possible.

