

5-23-2019

## Music That Binds Us: Development and Production of an Electroacoustic Concert

Christina Diane Ebersohl  
*Portland State University*

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorstheses>

---

### Recommended Citation

Ebersohl, Christina Diane, "Music That Binds Us: Development and Production of an Electroacoustic Concert" (2019). *University Honors Theses*. Paper 670.

[10.15760/honors.684](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorstheses/10.15760/honors.684)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. For more information, please contact [pdxscholar@pdx.edu](mailto:pdxscholar@pdx.edu).

“Music That Binds Us”:  
Development and Production of an Electroacoustic Concert

by

Christina Ebersohl

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Music

in

University Honors

and

Music Performance

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Jelena Simonovic-Schiff

Portland State University

2019

## **I. Introduction**

This thesis will follow my development of an electroacoustic classical music concert. Numerous participants are integrated into the concert's production, specifically story-authors, composers, performers, and sound producers. The project began with individuals who responded to my request for impactful stories. I interviewed the participants and audio recorded their stories. These recordings were then presented to composers, commissioned to write music around one of the chosen stories. Once completed, the new pieces were delivered to instrumentalists, who rehearsed whichever compositions utilized their instrument. The final product culminated in a live performance of the pieces written by the composers with the electronic recorded stories integrated. A CD recording of the concert produced by the Sonic Arts Music Program (SAMP) technicians was gifted to all participants and the School of Music.

This concert preparation was aimed at creating a meaningful, memorable, and attainable performance; as such, this thesis will serve as a case-study model for future performers, composers, or managers who wish to develop a concert program involving fixed media, or with regards to a community inclusion aspect. Regardless of the fixed media used, concert program, or intended underlying message, my work can be an outline to anyone seeking a firmer grasp on creating and developing an expressive concert experience, specifically with electroacoustic media.

## **II. Schedule**

Before any progress to the concert production could begin, it was imperative that a schedule was created in order to track the various components of the project. An extended timeline assures that your contributors are following their contracted responsibilities within the

time constraints and also ensures producers that their expectations are realistic and clear to all participants.<sup>1</sup>

June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, was the first deadline by which all composers for the project must have signed their contract and returned it to me. From June 30<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the website <<https://cdebersohl1288.wixsite.com/musicthatbindsus>> hosted the story submission page. By September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, all story finalists were contacted. Interviews were scheduled, conducted, and recorded through September 10<sup>th</sup>-October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, all of the recordings were sent to the composers.

Composers were required to announce their choice of instrumentation by December 1<sup>st</sup>. All performers were hired and contracted by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 and the deadline for composers to submit their final scores with the fixed audio track was March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. I distributed all scores to performers and all audio recordings to technicians on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

All promotional materials (posters and postcards) were completed by April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. These materials were made available to the performers and composers during the rehearsal period to distribute: April 1<sup>st</sup>-May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Final dress rehearsals were scheduled through the School of Music reservation liaison for May 9<sup>th</sup> from 6-8PM, May 10<sup>th</sup> from 4-6PM, and May 11<sup>th</sup> from 10AM-3PM. These rehearsals were all scheduled in the Recital Hall that the concert took place in, which allowed each composer one full hour of time with the ensemble and the audio tech in the performance hall. The culmination of the project, the final concert, premiered May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 1:30PM in Lincoln Recital Hall; a free reception followed outside the Hall. The CDs with the concert recordings were disbursed to the participants on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

---

<sup>1</sup> An example of the “Music That Binds Us” production schedule can be found in Appendix A.

### III. Literature Review

The literature on developing a modern concert with an electro-acoustic component is varied. Articles and books extend from analysis of the contemporary booking agent to philosophical dwellings of what music can be defined as in a generation fraught with excessive noise and an overabundance of gumption. I attempted to find a variety that could offer me insight into contemporary classical music audiences, the use of electronics in classical music, and the development of the concert from conception to production.

*Audio Culture* by Christopher Cox and Daniel Warner discusses the overall question of “what is music” to a contemporary world and why does it matter. This kind of thinking, while deeply philosophical, has great potential to develop into more progressive and pinpointed promotional material, and can even help mold concert themes and characteristics, if trying to attract a certain crowd. The authors believe that distinguishing music from noise in the current world is too difficult, with so many composers turning to non-musical sounds and silence to extend the parameters the music definition. John Cage is a prevalent example of how composers can blur the lines between conventional musical sounds, noise, and silence, as established (besides his many other “happenings” and indeterminate works) in his famous 4’33’’ for piano in which a pianist sits immobile and silent at the instrument while the audience perceives the ambient sounds around them. As early as 1913, painter and prominent writer of 20<sup>th</sup> century musical texts Luigi Russolo wrote that traditional orchestras were no longer capable of “capturing the imagination of a culture immersed in noise, and that the age of noise demanded new musical instruments.”<sup>2</sup> If this is, in fact, true, then it supports my thesis in which I aim to bring together a non-musical sounds—recordings of interviewees—as a form of instrumentation.

---

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Cox and Daniel Warner, *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 5.

The authors also argue that “what is called music today is all too often only a disguise .... never before have musicians tried so hard to communicate with their audience, and never before has that communication been so deceiving.”<sup>3</sup> Music is known as one of the great universal languages, crossing barriers and conveying thoughts and feelings without the need for complete comprehension. Therefore, if there is a sense of music and musicians losing the ability to communicate with their craft, then there is an urgent need to reshape how we approach music performances and concerts. But it is also written that “the laptop is the most intimate instrument that the world has ever seen...”<sup>4</sup> We cannot take for granted the use of technology, even if we wish to be classical purists and devote ourselves only to the acoustic instruments. Instead of viewing technology within the classical concert scene as an invasion, we should embrace it and use it to our advantage to connect with more people in the community.

Technology can also connect us by allowing us to understand what is working and what isn't. In the article “From Emotion Perception to Emotion Experience: Emotions Evoked by Pictures and Classical Music,” researchers analyzed interconnected neuronal activities in various parts of the brain to determine what emotions created real connections in people, and if the addition of other media to music could lead to stronger connections. While this sci-fi sounding experiment seems extraordinarily strange in regards to a concert featuring recorded interviews and acoustic instruments, it is actually extremely relevant. Understanding whether audiences relate to shared feelings of joy or despair can greatly shape how a concert would be shaped. According to the researchers, feelings of happiness created more neural connections than

---

<sup>3</sup> Cox and Warner, *Audio Culture*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

negative feelings.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, to help create a more lasting connection with audiences, a producer may consider opening the concert with a piece in a major key with an upbeat and more positive message. I used this information to help program my concert after I had collected all of the finalized compositions and could ascertain the tone and mood of each one. It was my goal to start and end the concert with a positive note so that audiences would begin the concert with the most connection and attention, and end the concert in a state of togetherness.

Additionally, the research showed that there is a strong connection between music and individual's emotions, personality, and their self-identity.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that music has the ability to not just influence a person's emotions, but shape their feelings and elicit specific moods in audience members. This is shown by the universal usage of music in movies to enhance a viewer's emotional response and investment in characters and events. "Music may be especially effective when paired with autobiographical recall..."<sup>7</sup> This research supports the entire foundation of my concert—creating connections in an audience from shared and extended communities by using real autobiographical interviews in a classical concert setting.

Another philosophically centered book, *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening*, added to the conversation "what is the function of music in human life?" Author Christopher Small focuses on the idea that "music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do. The apparent thing 'music' is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it closely."<sup>8</sup> The concept of the "function" of music in

---

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Baumgartner et al, "From Emotion Perception to Emotion Experience: Emotions Evoked by Pictures and Classical Music," *International Journal of Psychophysiology* 60, no. 1 (2006): 36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, NH, University Press of New England, 1998), 2.

human life is a complex and ever-evolving topic, not to be theorized here. Small continues by saying “the fact is that musical performance plays no part in the creative process, being only the medium through which the isolated, self-contained work has to pass in order to reach its goal, the listener.”<sup>9</sup> This means that while the performers have not created anything, they must be the vehicle for the creation to come through. Therefore, in order to achieve a goal of empathy and shared emotional experience during a concert, a producer must ensure that the performers are capable, technically and artistically, to achieve this.

Moving past the philosophical and scientific aspects of creating a concert, the article “Engineering Great Moments: The Production of Live Music” offered better insight into how to apply the theoretical and philosophical ideas brought from the first two sources (*Audio Culture* and “From Emotion Perception to Emotion Experience”). The author strongly advocates for the need and power of live music: “...live music is the future. It is not only popular, but it is one area of the music industries unaffected by the digitization of music.”<sup>10</sup> He also goes on to explain the intuitive communication that occurs during a successful live musical production: “Many popular musicians see the audience as partners in creating a live music experience ... A live music concert is about communicating ... live music is, in other words, easily viewed as a co-production between the audience and the musicians.”<sup>11</sup> This idea of co-production for a live concert means that the audience must become invested in the music that is being consumed. This can be achieved in many ways—with use of visual stimuli, dancers, and even the music itself—but it can be intensified by the use of autobiographical recordings, which lends to relatability and empathy from those listening.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Cluley, “Engineering Great Moments: The Production of Live Music,” *Consumption Markets & Culture* 12, no. 4 (2009): 374.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 376.

*This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* was another research-driven source that supported my thesis. In this book, Daniel Levitin discusses the science behind a person's musical preference. The variance of preference among each person is due to several factors, including the characteristics of the music—tone, timbre, meter—with the quality of performance, the age and personality of the listener, and the social, cultural and emotional influences of the music.<sup>12</sup> While this seems to be an insurmountable mountain of factors to consider when attempting to put together a concert that will attract a large audience, I surmised through the reading that it was best to focus in on two of three factors, such as emotional influence, shared culture, and quality of performance. These factors could easily be identified throughout the community with research into the local concert productions across all genres, and their number and demographic of attendees. Generalities, in these circumstances, are acceptable, as you want to appeal to a large section of the demographic. Shared culture is the most common thread of commonality amongst specific concert-goers. For example, the “Music That Binds Us” production had multiple veteran story-authors chosen for the final composition round; therefore, promoting the concert at local VA clinics, VFW.s, and through Veteran Resource Centers in the area schools proved to boost ticket sales significantly. This can be repeated with multiple shared cultures and the same tactic can be used for other demographic specifics.

Specifically focusing on performances with an electroacoustic element led me to Elizabeth McNutt's “Performing Electroacoustic Music: a Wider View of Interactivity.” In her article, she argues that performing with technology requires the development of new skills and flexibility that can contradict classically informed techniques. This article was most helpful in helping coach and aid the performers during rehearsals. Classical music often allows for some

---

<sup>12</sup> Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*, (New York, NY, Penguin Group, 2006), 42.

flexibility in timing, dynamics, and phrasing. But with the use of static audio tracks, a fixed tempo and dynamic is created and must be followed or else the resulting collaboration will likely be unsuccessful: “The relationship to the computer is interestingly ambiguous and paradoxical. The challenges of performing against a fixed beat are a recognized fact in the literature.”<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, McNutt brings to light the need to create an authentic and genuine performance while using an electronic component. She adds that “technology has a disruptive effect which is proportional to the performer’s lack of familiarity with the electronic system being used ... practising with the equipment is therefore every bit as important as practising with the score.”<sup>14</sup> Because of this reading, I wanted to make sure each performer not only had the audio track to practice with, but also had access to a midi track of the entire score along with audio track being performed. This would allow for the most familiarity and fluidity in performances. A number of composers—those who had worked in electroacoustic compositions previously—had thought ahead and provided a midi track before I requested it; the remaining composers were happy to provide a full track when asked.

After reading about performing an electroacoustic concert, I wanted to end my focus with listening to an electroacoustic concert to understand what is demanded of an audience. The article “The Listening Imagination: Listening in the Electroacoustic Era” by Denis Smalley shows that while our technologically-advanced world is capable of producing a whole new soundscape, “...the central element of acousmatic experience clearly privileges works which include a certain degree of recognizable, real-world sound material...”<sup>15</sup> There are some groups

---

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth McNutt, “Performing Electroacoustic Music: A Wider View of Interactivity,” *Organised Sound* 8, no. 3 (2003): 297.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>15</sup> Denis Smalley, “The Listening Imagination: Listening in the Electroacoustic Era,” *Contemporary Music Review* 13, no. 2 (1996): 86.

within concert-going audiences that are empowered by and interested in musical soundscapes created with no recognizable tone, shape, or instrument. However, in order to capture the largest audience's attention and to create something that could become a sustainable and progressive series over time, I agree that maintaining some level of audible recognition is important. Not only does it make the music more attainable for the musicians, but it can potentially nurture a more conducive emotional environment.

#### **IV. Artistic Process**

##### *Overview*

In today's trying times, we are surrounded by the harsh realities of our environment: the global turmoil that foreshadows threat around each corner, the isolating net of technology that shields us from genuine human interaction, and the endless drone of negativity that forces us into a trance of apathetic impassiveness, so not to become too invested in emotions, compassion, dreams, or aspirations. But what if we could capture the very essence of what is human connection and share it publicly? This was the idealist approach behind the "Music That Binds Us" concert. I sought to create a program utilizing classical music to bridge the divide between people who have no prior interaction with each other by essentially creating a soundtrack to recorded stories from unique participants. A recent study examined the neuropsychological effect stimuli had on participants, including visual stimuli, auditory stimuli, and a combination of the two. The research overwhelmingly indicates the power of the combined conditions versus an independent stimuli. The distributed emotional and arousal neural network comprising of the frontal, temporal, parietal and occipital neural structures activated more than seventy times stronger with the combination. These findings demonstrate that music can markedly enhance the

emotional experience evoked in independent participants, and therefore, supports my idealist concert proposal.<sup>16</sup>

### *Interviews*

The first step in the creation of any similar concert to the “Music That Binds Us” project must begin with the stories, which will not only provide the inspiration for the composers, but will also be the focal point of the concert. I began the search for story-authors to interview on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018—eleven months prior to the concert date of May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019. A year may not be necessary to develop all successful electroacoustic concerts; with smaller program booklets or a larger production staff, it may be possible to produce the same result in less time. Most importantly, it is critical to discuss any timeframe with the composers to ensure that they are able to complete their compositions within the set amount of time. The website hosting an open call for individuals to be interviewed went live on June 6<sup>th</sup> with a deadline for submissions nearly three months later. It was hosted on a free network and included a submission page for participants, concert information, composer, performer, and producer information. Prospective participants were given the following prompt to complete in order to submit a proposed story:

Stories connect us. They allow us to share our experiences and how it has shaped us with the rest of the world. Stories are full of everything that make us human: love, hate, anger, loss, hope, trials, tribulations, and achievement. If you could only tell one story that has most impacted your life, what would it be?

Participants were asked to abide by a 5,000 word limit but were otherwise given no parameters or instructions.

Interested participants submitted their written accounts through the website in order to be considered for the project. A promotional call for stories was shared publicly across two main

---

<sup>16</sup> Baumgartner, “From Emotion Perception to Emotion Experience,” 41.

social media feeds—Facebook and Instagram—as well as through email to the local universities, Veteran’s Affairs centers, retirement homes, and Vancouver School for the Blind and Deaf. By the time the call for submissions closed on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the project had received twenty-one submissions from three countries and from English and Arabic speakers.

When sorting through the submissions, the most important aspect to consider is whether or not the story has a clear and understandable underlying message. For example, one story received discussed the nostalgic joys of childhood in a Midwestern town, but was disjointed and offered no comprehensible beginning, middle, and end. While the material discussed was interesting and could have been developed further into an impactful story, the absence of organization and emotional follow-through in the written submission did not meet the requirements to move onto the interview phase. Of the twenty-one submissions received, ten were chosen to proceed. Each of the ten potential participants were contacted via the email address provided with their submission with an attached contract which discussed the details of the concert, payment, and each parties’ responsibilities.<sup>17</sup> Each participant was asked to review and sign the contract and return it by September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Along with the details of the project, each contract also included a request for three available dates from September 10<sup>th</sup>-October 10<sup>th</sup>, for the story-author to be interviewed and audio recorded, as well as the option to remain anonymous in the concert program or provide a short biography and picture. Of the ten participants contacted, eight returned the contracts completed and on time. The two remaining participants were contacted a second time, but remained unresponsive and were subsequently removed from participation.

---

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix B.

Interview dates were confirmed with participants and in-person interviews scheduled in a reserved classroom at Portland State University's School of Music. Individuals who were unable to commute to Portland or the surrounding cities for an in-person interview were recorded over the phone with the same equipment. In order to obtain like-quality and reliability in recordings, I utilized a Yeti USB Microphone in combination with the Studio One 4 recording software. Interviews lasted no longer than an hour each; it was important to ensure each participant felt comfortable talking with the microphone and the knowledge of being recorded. Often times, small talk and a few moments of generalized discussion was necessary to relax participants before asking questions regarding their story. Edits to the recordings were done through the same software and was mainly utilized to discard any of the interview questions, long pauses, and excessive verbal distractions, leaving the singular, uninterrupted voice of the participant in the audio. Following edits, all eight stories fell between three and seven minutes long. A small synopsis of each story was written and emailed to the composer who then ranked the stories from 1-8, with 1 being the story they were most interested in working with, and 8 being the one they were least interested in working with. Composers were given the option to rank a story with X as well, meaning they were unwilling to work with the story.

### *Composers*

Simultaneously, the next necessary step, was to bring together composers to participate in the project. Six composers were contacted and all six were contracted by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (in order to determine how many stories would be necessary for the project, I first had to know how many composers would be involved). Parameters for the compositions were distributed in the

composers' contracts at this time.<sup>18</sup> Duration of the pieces were limited to ten minutes each in order to maintain a reasonable concert length of 60-80 minutes. The instrumentation available to each composer was limited to a pre-chosen quintet, which allowed for a large range of collaborations and ensembles while remaining within the budget for the project. One of the most important guidelines regarded the integrity of the stories: audio files were given to composers with permission to edit in the specific following ways: add or delete pauses/silences, repeat desired parts of the track, alter volume and speed of audio recording. These limitations were set in place to ensure that integrity of the authors' stories were not compromised or altered to meet a composer's own personal opinion or agenda. Finally, composers were given a completion deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at which time, the complete score, individual parts per instrumentation, and audio recording in MP3 format were due to my email.

The following composers were contracted: Susan Alexjander, Elizabeth Dyson, Marek Harris, Damen Liebling, Lisa Marsh, and Stacey Philipps.

### *Performers*

Performers were sourced locally from the university's music program, as well as recent alumni, and chosen based on their evident professionalism, ability, and commitment to the project's rehearsals and performance. The original agreed upon performance quintet set in the composers' contract included: a clarinetist, 2 violinists, a violist, a cellist, and a pianist. Due to popular request, a percussionist and second violinist was added to the list of performers on December 1<sup>st</sup> during the composers' final instrumentation notification. The performers were contracted for the project by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix D.

The following performers were contracted: clarinetist Andy Sharma, violinist Shion Yamakawa, violinist Lauren Grant, violist Keely McMurry, violist Matt Meeks, cellist Benjamin Batten, pianist Melissa Terrall, and percussionist Taylor Long.

### *Sound Technician*

A sound technician was necessary to control the audio tracks for each composition during the final concert, as well as produce the recording of the concert. Portland State University provided the technician from their SAMP (Sonic Arts Music Production) program free of charge.

### *Promoting and Tickets*

Promoting the concert early and to a wide demographic is the key to a successful attendance outcome. With a little time and ingenuity, producers can save cost on promotional materials by using any of the multitude of websites available for free. I utilized a free, online poster template to begin my poster, and ensured that all active participants—performers and composers—were listed, as well as the date, time, location, and website to direct potential attendees to.<sup>20</sup> The poster design was complete by March 15<sup>th</sup>. I was able to use the money saved by designing the poster myself to print small postcards printed with the poster design. These were distributed in the performers and composer's packets on March 16<sup>th</sup>. These small promotionals allowed participants to be included in the advertising and greatly increased the likelihood of ticket sales. The posters were printed by April 1<sup>st</sup> and delivered through the school, community, and digitally for online promotions. The total cost for posters and postcards did not exceed \$35, which allowed \$65 for the program booklets.

---

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix E.

Program booklets were created for the event through the same printing service. The promotional design was used for the front cover, and the color theme (yellow, black and white) was continued throughout the pamphlet to give greater interest. The concert schedule and producer's biography were first in the program. Composer and performer biographies were included afterwards, along with pictures. The program booklets also included short programmatic notes, explaining the composers' thoughts about the piece or the process, as well as a page of gratitude, thanking any members involved with the production. Clean and visually appealing program booklets are imperative since these and posters will serve as a lasting and telling memento for future productions and employers.<sup>21</sup>

Tickets were available for free, but with reservations—i.e. first come, first serve. The purpose of setting up a ticket selling platform was to track the ticket availability and anticipated attendance. With a link to reserve and print free tickets through Eventbrite, an online platform that remains free as long as tickets are free, I was able to track who reserved tickets, how many, and if ticket sales were affected by certain digital advertisements that were sent to various local groups. For example, on March 18<sup>th</sup>, I created an advertisement that announced tickets were already 50% reserved with two months to go before the event. This greatly prompted ticket reservations, with another thirty tickets being reserved throughout that day as the advertisement was viewed. The venue seats 227 people, with standing room in the back. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, just three weeks until the concert date, 100% of tickets were reserved.

---

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix F.

## **V. Potential Complications**

When developing a program with numerous multiple components, individuals, and varying time-sensitive components, it is important to forecast and attempt to prepare for any possible complications. Some things, such as force majeure (uncontrollable factors like weather or “acts of God”) cannot be prevented. In these cases, it is best to make contingency plans that protect yourself, your participants, and the event as best as possible.

One of the most likely issues to arise when producing a concert that hosts a large number of people is ineptitude or absence of a participating member. This can occur in a number of ways, including missing deadlines, being unresponsive to messages, being absent during rehearsals, and failing to complete task as otherwise outlined in the initial agreement. For the “Music That Binds Us” concert, we will group individuals into three groups: composers, performers, and story-authors.

In order to attempt to prevent such issues from occurring, I created a contract that outlined important dates, deadlines, responsibilities, compensation, and expectations. Each group was given their contracts to sign, and a copy was maintained in case of a failure on their part. If a member of the composer group failed to complete their composition, for example, they would then make the contract null and void, and be required to reimburse the first payment they received. Should a performer fail to complete their contract, the same stipulations are in place, with an added addition that a member failing to complete the rehearsal and performance schedule must find another performer to substitute for them in a timely manner. This will allow the rehearsals and performance to continue uninterrupted and without any other added duties to the producer’s list. If a member of the author group failed to show up for their recording, they would be removed from the participant list and the next available story-author would replace them.

I experienced the unresponsiveness, lack of communication, and worry from multiple participants when it came time for the performers to meet for rehearsals. I had hoped that the performers would take charge of discussing their schedules and creating rehearsal times with each other as a group, but some members were immediately a concern as they didn't respond to any of the outgoing group messages. Three weeks before the concert, I began to receive worried emails from other members that they hadn't been able to meet for rehearsals because some performers were not responsive, and a phone call from one performer concerned with the time commitment he had signed up for. In this case, with so little time left before the concert, I took to the groups as the moderator, organizing, communicating, and attempting to quell the situation. In the future, I will choose a pre-formed ensemble, such as a pre-formed string quartet, to be contracted. The ensemble already meets at scheduled times, and adding an additional performer to one or two pieces would be much easier than balancing eight schedules.

Another potential complication includes the exceeding of the budget. This could happen if a performer or composer cannot complete the contract and the only available substitute requires more monetary compensation. This could also occur if promotional material costs exceeding the original estimate. In order to neutralize any possible negative ramifications of going over budget, an online fundraiser page could be started at the beginning of the project, asking for donations. Additionally, tickets for the event could be strategically priced in order to recuperate the funds. However, be aware of your audience demographic when pricing tickets, as well as the policy of the establishment you are holding the concert in so not to be in breach of your own contracts.

I maintained a clear budget from the beginning of the project, however, in order to accommodate for food for a reception and for the program booklets to be of a high quality, it was

necessary that I find another means of funding. I created an online fundraiser that was simple and effective, offering the outline of the project, my own monetary contributions to it, and what the money would specifically be used for. I added in a short video clip of performers rehearsing to add a more personal level. All donations received were channeled towards food costs, program costs, and extra payment towards the performers. We were able to mitigate program costs to stay within budget by utilizing our free printing limits at the university.

Ticket reservations/sales could also stall or predict low attendance outcomes. If tickets are available early enough in the production process, it is best to distribute promotional materials and promote the early sale or reservation of tickets. Offer ticket information to participants, who are likely to bring their own demographic of followers, and make it widely available to any community your program could potentially reach. If ticket sales are not improving closer to the event, you could set up paid advertisements through social media, distribute press releases to the local media, and release clips of rehearsals to entice potential attendees who simply haven't committed to a ticket yet. If tickets are priced, it may also be necessary to reevaluate the cost. Another boost comes from distributing promotional materials, such as posters, flyers, and postcards with the event information. Wider distribution across the community is likely to lead to higher ticket reservations. In some cases, analyzing similar local events could show that attendees tend to do their ticket reservations or sales closer to the day of the event, or even at the event itself.

Many complications can be avoided by maintaining good communication with all active participants—including any non-music personnel, such as sound technicians, venue representatives, and catering groups. By making yourself available to them regularly with check-ins, the potential for an issue to develop and derail the event decreases drastically. Not all

problems are disastrous; in some cases, complications can be dealt with in a flexible manner. For example, a composer could request extra time to complete their composition. Some complications, however, need to be dealt with finality. Determining which obstacles could potentially derail your production is best done by assuming the monetary cost, time cost, and overall most likely ramifications of the complication if it arises. In the earlier example of the composer requesting extra time, if the time allowance is short enough, the cost difference would be zero, the time cost would be a matter of days, and the overall ramification to the production would be a simple annoyance. Because of that, the snag would be dealt with using flexibility, or by allowing the composer to have a prescribed amount of extra time before finding them in breach of contract. These analyses are all individual to the complication, the production, and the working relationship between the participants and the producer.

## **VI. Budget and Expenses**

The total expense budget for the project was \$3,300. Due to the generosity of Dean Leroy E. Bynum from the Portland State University's COTA School of Music & Theater, I was granted a \$1,000 award which I allocated to pay the composers for their contributions. Each composer was paid \$100 upon signing the contract and another \$100 upon completing their composition. The venue—Lincoln Recital Hall—was reserved with no cost and all the rehearsal rooms were available with no additional cost. The promotional materials, including flyers and program booklets, were given a budget of \$100. Many of the promotional materials were electronic for wider distribution and money considerations. The eight performers were paid a \$200 fee and each of the six persons interviewed and chosen for stories were paid a \$100 award. The total cost

of the performers and storytellers equated to \$2000. Overall, \$2,300 was paid outside of scholarship aid.

## **VII. After-Concert Review**

Because of an abundance of planning, communication, organization and adaption, the day of the concert went as smoothly as one could hope for. I arrived at the performance hall by 10:30AM on May 18<sup>th</sup> so that I may unlock the doors for the sound crew and help bring the percussion instruments into the hall. While the three sound technicians began their setup, I set up the piano and the stage for the first ensemble, and set the extra music stands and chairs backstage for easy access for the volunteer stagehand. While the composers and performers ran their sound checks with the technicians, I displayed the poster for the event in the front window of the building and began setup of the reception area with the second volunteer stagehand. I ensured all program booklets were near the front door of the hall, taped up the concert order in the “green room” (the backstage area for musicians between ensembles), and continued to check in with the performers and composers as sound check wrapped up. Each ensemble was allotted fifteen minutes for sound check, with twenty minutes of cushion time before doors opened.

During sound check, the technicians had to replace one of the speakers, which pushed the schedule into the cushion time. The doors opened at 1:10PM, and we were prepared to begin at 1:30PM as planned when the sound technician informed me that the live-stream personnel had not yet arrived. We waited until 1:40PM when the technician arrived and were able to begin the concert at 1:45PM.

The concert concluded seamlessly at 2:45PM, and while I struck the stage for the next concert in the hall, the audience, performers, and composers congregated in the reception area

Christina Ebersohl

where they were able to enjoy a variety of fresh-cooked food. Displayed along the reception area were copies of the scores and posters of performers' and composers' bios and pictures. Audience members lingered well past 3:30PM. The most consistent remarks I heard from audience members regarding the concert were: "emotional," "moving," and "remarkable." Overall, I believe we were successful in achieving the goal of a higher level of community engagement and connection in a classical concert with an electroacoustic element.

### Appendix A

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>
<b>June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018</b>	Contract all composers for the project
<b>July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018</b>	First \$100 payment to composers
<b>September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018</b>	Story submission deadline
<b>September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018</b>	Submissions chosen and interviews scheduled
<b>September 10<sup>th</sup>-October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018</b>	Interviews take place
<b>October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018</b>	Interview recordings edited/distributed to composers
<b>December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018</b>	Composers select instrumentation
<b>February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019</b>	All musicians contracted
<b>March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Composers submit their compositions
<b>March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Performers receive their copies of the music
<b>April 1<sup>st</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Promotional material created and distributed
<b>April 1<sup>st</sup>-May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Rehearsals
<b>May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Dress rehearsal, 6-8PM LH75
<b>May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Dress rehearsal, 4-6PM LH75
<b>May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Dress rehearsal, 10-3PM LH75
<b>May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	Final performance, 1:30PM LH75
<b>June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b>	CD's distributed to participants and School of Music

## Appendix B

### **CONTRACT FOR INTERVIEW**

This contract (the “Agreement”) is made on this day of \_\_\_\_\_, between **Christina Ebersohl** (the “Operator”) and \_\_\_\_\_ (the “Interviewee”) for the hiring of Interviewee as an independent contractor for the Operator to record for the “Music That Binds Us” concert (the “Event”) at **Portland State University** (the “Venue”), located at the address **1620 SW Park Ave, Portland OR 97201**.

It is agreed as follows:

1. **Place, date and time of Event.** The parties agree that the time and place of Event will be at the Venue, located at the address **1620 SW Park Ave, Portland OR, 97201, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019** at **1PM**. If Interviewee wishes to attend the Event, Operator will secure tickets in Interviewee’s name.

2. **Description of Event.** Event will be a musical performance at the Venue of pieces that combine composer’s compositions with Interviewee’s recorded audio. The Event will have promotional material available for distribution by **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. Operator will make available promotional materials to the Interviewee when they become available. Interviewee is free to promote and advertise the event at his/her will. Materials for the Event will also include program booklets to be distributed to audience members. Interviewee has the right to anonymity in the program booklets and promotional materials if s/he wishes. If Interviewee wishes to be a public participant, then Interviewee agrees to submit a **biography between 150-350 words and a photo** to Operator by **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. The Interviewee releases this information freely, with knowledge that it is a) their original content to release and b) will be used for the program and promotional materials of the Event. A reception will follow the Event.

3. **Payment.** Compensation for participation will be **\$100** dollars, payable by **personal check** (together being the “Fee”). 100% of Fee is due to Interviewee upon the completion of the interview. If Fee is not tendered during this time, no further obligation for either party comes due.

4. **Obligations of Interviewee.** Interviewee must consent to an interview with Operator, to be audio recorded, at a location to be determined by Operator. Operator will make every effort to schedule the interview around Interviewee’s schedule. During the interview, Interviewee agrees to retell the story submitted and chosen by Operator. Interviewee agrees that the content of their story is authentic and original content that they are free to share. Interviewee releases the rights to the audio recording of the interview to be used in the composition for the Event and for any

recording of the Event.

6. **Force Majeure.** If it happens that Event cannot reasonably be put on because of unpredictable occurrences such as an act of nature, government, or illness/disability of the Operator, the parties may negotiate a substitute Event on the same terms as this Agreement save for the time of Event, with no further deposit of Fee due, in which case a new Agreement reflecting this will be signed by the parties. No further damages may be sought for failure to perform because of force majeure.

6. **Musician Guest Tickets.** Operator will make available to Interviewee 2 complimentary tickets to Event for Interviewee to use at Interviewee’s sole discretion.

7. **Security, Health and Safety.** Operator warrants that Venue will be of sufficient size to safely conduct Event and that Venue is of stable construction and sufficiently protected from weather.

8. **Arbitration settles disputes.** All claims or disputes by either party from or under this Agreement will be submitted to arbitration (the “Arbitration Service”). Any court that would otherwise have had jurisdiction over the dispute will enforce both settlement by the Arbitration Service and any arbitration award. Parties will be their own costs, save that any fee, charged by Arbitration Service to submit the case to Arbitration Service may be recovered from the other party in an arbitration award.

9. **Interpretation.** Agreement will be interpreted according to the laws of Oregon.

10. **Interview.** Please indicate your preferred interview times in the table below.

We request you list 3 different days/times of availability to accommodate varying schedules.

We ask that you indicate whether you will be available for an IN-PERSON interview at Portland State University in Portland Oregon, or whether the interview will be conducted via phone.

Finally, we will make every attempt to schedule an interview during your preferred time.

<b>DATES</b>	<b>TIME BETWEEN 8AM-9PM(PST)</b>	<b>LOCATION (via Portland or Phone)</b>

Christina Ebersohl

The below-signed Interviewee warrants s/he has authority to enforceable sign this agreement for him/her-self. The below signed Operator warrants s/he has authority to bind Operator and Venue (above).

Signature of Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee's printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Operator/Representative Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Operator/Representative printed name **Christina Ebersohl**

Date of Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### CONTRACT FOR COMPOSITION

This contract (the “Agreement”) is made on this day of \_\_\_\_\_, between \_\_\_\_\_ (the “Composer”) and **Christina Ebersohl** (the “Operator”) for the hiring of Composer as an independent contractor to compose for the concert “Music That Binds Us” (the “Event”) for Operator at **Portland State University** (the “Venue”), located at the address **1620 SW Park Ave, Portland OR, 97201**.

It is agreed as follows:

1. **Place, date and time of Event.** The parties agree that the time and place of Event will be at the Venue, located at the address **1620 SW Park Ave, Portland OR, 97201**, on **May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019** at **1PM**. Composer agrees to attend the Event. Operator will notify the Composer of the official date and time of the Event no later than **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018**. If a second performance of the Event is scheduled, it is not required to be attended by the Composer, but will still be announced by the Operator.

2. **Description of Event.** Event will be a musical performance at the Venue of the Composer’s piece, along with other contracted Composers by performers to be hired by Operator. The Event will have promotional material available for distribution by **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. Operator will make available promotional materials to the Composer when they become available. Composer is free to promote and advertise the event at his/her will. Materials for the Event will also include program booklets to be distributed to audience members. Composer agrees to submit a **biography between 250-350 words, a photo of Composer, and any program notes regarding the composition** to Operator by **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. The Composer releases this information freely, with knowledge that it is a) their original content to release and b) will be used for the program and promotional materials of the Event. A reception will follow the Event.

3. **Compositional parameters.** The Composer will be provided with access to the recorded audio of interviewees by the Operator by **October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018**. Composer will pick the audio they wish to work with and Operator will provide the file to the Composer. Composer must submit their **final score, individual parts and audio** to the Operator by **March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019** to be distributed to the audio tech crew and the performers. The compositions must meet the parameters laid forth by the Operator. The composition can utilize the following instrumentation from a solo instrument to the full ensemble: **1 piano, 2 violins, 1 viola, 1 cello, and 1 clarinet**. Composer can request an exception to the instrumentation to be hired, subject to approval by the Operator. The composition must include the **recorded audio** provided to the Composer. Composer has the right to cut, repeat, or otherwise alter the recorded audio as long as the

**integrity of the story is not manipulated.** The composition has no minimum time constraints, but should not exceed **15 minutes** in length.

4. **Rehearsal agreement.** The Composer will be given a **1 hour long dress rehearsal time** during **May 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2019** at which time they will have sole occupancy in the performance hall with their performers and audio technicians. The following times are now reserved for dress rehearsals:

**Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019: 6-8PM**

**Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019: 4-6PM**

**Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019: 10-3PM**

The Operator will make every effort to schedule these dress rehearsal times at the convenience of the Composer. The Composer can request to participate in earlier rehearsals with the ensemble between **April 1<sup>st</sup>-May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019** at the consent of the ensemble. Such requests can be directed through the Operator.

4. **Payment.** Compensation for the Event will be **\$200** dollars, payable by **personal check** (together being the “Fee”). The Operator and Composer agrees that 50% deposit of Fee is due on **June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018** upon signing the Agreement. This is a required condition for the Agreement to proceed; if 50% deposit of Fee is not tendered upon the signing of this Agreement, no further obligation for either party comes due. The remaining 50% of fee is due upon receipt of the composition and no later than **March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

5. **Cancellation.** If Composer does not comply with the terms and deadlines in this Agreement, Event may be cancelled by Operator, and Composer may not seek any damages. If Composer withdraws from the Agreement, he/she must return the 50% deposit and will not be held liable for any future business of the Event.

6. **Force Majeure.** If it happens that Event cannot reasonably be put on because of unpredictable occurrences such as an act of nature, government, or illness/disability of Composer or Operator, the 50% deposit of Fee is non-refundable, but no other portion of Fee is due, and the parties may negotiate a substitute Event on the same terms as this Agreement save for the time of Event, with no further deposit of Fee due, in which case a new Agreement reflecting this will be signed by the parties. No further damages may be sought for failure to perform because of force majeure.

7. **Musician Guest Tickets.** Operator will make available to Composer **4** complimentary tickets to Event for Composer to use at Composer’s sole discretion.

8. **Security, Health and Safety.** Operator warrants that Venue will be of sufficient size to safely conduct Event, that Venue is of stable construction and sufficiently protected from weather, or if outdoors, that Operator will provide adequate protection from weather.

9. **Arbitration settles disputes.** All claims or disputes by either party from or under this Agreement will be submitted to arbitration (the “Arbitration Service”). Any court that would otherwise have had jurisdiction over the dispute will enforce both settlement by the Arbitration Service and any arbitration award. Parties will be their own costs, save that any fee, charged by Arbitration Service to submit the case to Arbitration Service may be recovered from the other party in an arbitration award.

10. **Interpretation.** Agreement will be interpreted according to the laws of **Oregon**.

The below-signed Composer warrants s/he has authority to enforceable sign this Agreement for him/her-self. The below signed Operator warrants s/he has authority to bind Operator and Venue (above).

Signature of Composer \_\_\_\_\_

Composer’s typed name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Operator/Representative Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Operator/Representative typed name **Christina Ebersohl**

Date of Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### **CONTRACT FOR PERFORMANCE**

This contract (the “Agreement”) is made on this day of \_\_\_\_\_, between **Christina Ebersohl** (the “Operator”) and \_\_\_\_\_ (the “Performer”) for the hiring of Performer as an independent contractor to perform (the “Event”) for Operator at **Portland State University** (the “Venue”), located at the address **1620 SW Park Ave, Portland OR 97201**.

It is agreed as follows:

1. **Place, date and time of Event.** The parties agree that the time and place of Event will be at the Venue, located at the address **1620 SW Park Ave, Portland OR, 97201**, on **May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019** at **1PM**. Performer agrees to attend all dress rehearsals s/he is performing in, and all scheduled rehearsals set up by ensemble. Performer also agrees to arrive to the Venue 30 minutes prior to Event.

2. **Description of Event.** Event will be a musical performance at the Venue of pieces commissioned by Operator on **May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 1PM**. The Event will have promotional material available for distribution by **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. Operator will make available promotional materials to the Performer when they become available. Performer is free to promote and advertise the event at his/her will. Materials for the Event will also include program booklets to be distributed to audience members. Performer agrees to submit a **biography between 150-350 words and a photo** to Operator by **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. The Performer releases this information freely, with knowledge that it is a) their original content to release and b) will be used for the program and promotional materials of the Event. A reception will follow the Event.

3. **Payment.** Compensation for the Event will be **\$200** dollars, payable by **personal check** (together being the “Fee”). 100% of Fee is due upon the completion of Event. This is a required condition for the contract to proceed.

4. **Rehearsal obligations of Performer.** Operator will provide Performer with music by **March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. Rehearsals will be scheduled from **April 1<sup>st</sup>-May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. Operator will secure rehearsal rooms at the Venue prior to rehearsals beginning. Performer agrees to notify Operator of any and all schedule conflicts during this time period; Operator will make every effort to schedule rehearsals around conflicts. Each composer is given a 1 hour dress rehearsal slot between **May 9<sup>th</sup>-May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. Performer agrees to be present at each dress rehearsal. The following times are reserved for dress rehearsals in Venue:

**Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019: 6-8PM**

**Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019: 6--6PM**

**Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019: 10-3PM**

5. **Force Majeure.** If it happens that Event cannot reasonably be put on because of unpredictable occurrences such as an act of nature, government, or illness/disability, the parties may negotiate a substitute Event on the same terms as this Agreement save for the time of Event, with no further deposit of Fee due, in which case a new Agreement reflecting this will be signed by the parties. No further damages may be sought for failure to perform because of force majeure.

6. **Performer Guest Tickets.** Operator will make available to Performer 2 complimentary tickets to Event for Performer to use at Performer's sole discretion.

7. **Security, Health and Safety.** Operator warrants that Venue will be of sufficient size to safely conduct Event, that Venue is of stable construction, and that it is sufficiently protected from weather. Operator agrees that Performer is entitled to a 10 minute break for every hour of performance. During this time, the Operator agrees that Performer is free to move about the Venue as long as s/he remains on the property and returns to his/her designated performance area subsequently. Operator will provide chairs and music stands for Performer.

8. **Indemnification.** Performer indemnifies and holds Operator harmless for any claims of property damage or bodily harm caused by Event attendees.

9. **Arbitration settles disputes.** All claims or disputes by either party from or under this Agreement will be submitted to arbitration (the "Arbitration Service"). Any court that would otherwise have had jurisdiction over the dispute will enforce both settlement by the Arbitration Service and any arbitration award. Parties will be their own costs, save that any fee, charged by Arbitration Service to submit the case to Arbitration Service may be recovered from the other party in an arbitration award.

10. **Interpretation.** Agreement will be interpreted according to the laws of Oregon.

The below-signed Performer warrants s/he has authority to enforceable sign this agreement for his/her-self. The below signed Operator warrants s/he has authority to bind Operator and Venue (above).

Signature of Performer \_\_\_\_\_

Christina Ebersohl

Performer's printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Performer's instrument \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Operator/Representative Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Operator/Representative printed name **Christina Ebersohl**

Date of Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E



**MUSIC  
THAT BINDS  
US**

**MAY 18TH, 1:30PM**  
LINCOLN HALL || RM 75

**MUSIC BY:**  
Susan Alexjander  
Elizabeth Dyson  
Marek Harris  
Damen Liebling  
Lisa Ann Marsh  
Stacey Philipps

**FEATURING:**  
Benjamin Batten  
Lauren Grant  
Taylor Long  
Keely McMurry  
Matt Meeks  
Andy Sharma  
Melissa Terrall  
Shion Yamakawa

**BE PRESENT || BE MOVED || BE HUMAN**  
<https://cdebersohl1288.wixsite.com/musicthatbindsus>

## Appendix F



**PROGRAM**

**Overwhelmed With the Lights**      **Stacey Philipps**  
*Ben Batten, Lauren Grant, Keely McMurry, Shion Yamakawa*

**Holding On to What I Can**      **Damen Liebbling**  
*Ben Batten, Lauren Grant, Taylor Long, Matt Meeks, Shion Yamakawa*

**Nearby**      **Susan Alexjander**  
*Andy Sharma, Melissa Terrall*

**Surfacing**      **Lisa Ann Marsh**  
*Ben Batten, Taylor Long, Melissa Terrall, Shion Yamakawa*

**Lenny's Story-A Modern Soldier's Tale**      **Marck Harris**  
*Ben Batten, Lauren Grant, Taylor Long, Keely McMurry, Andy Sharma, Melissa Terrall, Shion Yamakawa*

**Russell**      **Elizabeth Dyson**  
*Ben Batten, Lauren Grant, Matt Meeks, Andy Sharma, Melissa Terrall*

*Please join us for refreshments after this afternoon's concert and a chance to meet the composers and performers.*

BE PRESENT || BE MOVED || BE HUMAN

### PROGRAM NOTES

#### Overwhelmed With The Lights

I never met the storyteller of this piece before I wrote this music, but I was immediately struck by his matter-of-fact recounting of childhood memories of his family escaping their war-torn hometown during the Gulf War: bombings, the palpable fear of his parents, and the descriptions of being refugees trying to find a permanent home are conveyed in a documentary manner and tone of voice, belying what must have been an intense experience. It made me think of the movie, "Life is Beautiful," in which a Jewish father shields his son from the emotional horrors of internment in a Nazi concentration camp. While the storyteller's happy ending of finding a home in the US may have lifted much of the burden of emotion from the original experience, I can't help but think that the parents must have worked hard to protect their son from overwhelming worry.

This piece opens and closes with each instrument playing an equal-tempered Western approximation of four traditional Persian scales and borrows throughout from modes and intervals that share similar sounds between cultures. At times, a meandering, rootless musical searching echoes the story of a family's search for a place to settle. The steady heartbeat of a single tempo beats for the duration of the piece, and rhythmic motives derive from patterns of the storyteller's speech to explore emotional content musically. The story of leaving one home and landing in another is told in the arch form of musical content that journeys through unknown territory to return to solid ground.

-Stacey Philipps

#### Holding On to What I Can

I met Christina when I worked as a classroom assistant for her. She was incredibly industrious, enthusiastic, and easy to work with. Despite the extra challenges she faced, as a blind music student, Christina managed to be at the top of her class: a model student and musician.

I was incredibly honored to be called on for this project. Not only do I get a piece on the program, but it's the one which tells her story! Knowing her virtues and her challenges first hand, I felt tremendous responsibility to properly honor her with this piece. The

music also needed to be true to her words and storytelling voice. She didn't tell a story of optimism and triumph, but of daunting hardship. It confesses her struggle and fear. I found this to be very brave.

Holding On To Whatever I Can doesn't need to offer hope. That part is implicit in the fact that Christina still does everything she does in the face of all that is shared in this piece. I'd like to thank her for this artistic opportunity, for being the example she is, for creating this concert experience for us, and for telling her story.

-Damen Liebling

#### Nearby

What most struck me when I read Omar Noman's story was the gentle, haunting way he described his dual dilemma of both losing his mother, and being caught in a cross-cultural conflict between two parents...one Christian/American and the other Muslim/Arabic. As an adult, his perspective now is still like that of a wandering child. Because he carries the sweet memories of his lost mother it seemed right to create the music almost like a lullaby...simple and understated. She is still "nearby" although her fate may never be known. In the original Arabic translation Omar is now estranged from his father, but he is also more hopeful and happy to have grown closer to his "American" family. In a sense, he has found what he was missing.

-Susan Alexander

#### Surfacing

Surfacing is the story of a courageous young woman who overcame addiction to reunite with her family and regain her spirit. Her struggle for sobriety is revealed with honesty and invites us all to look inward to find our own addictions and see their impact on our lives. The music was composed to follow and highlight her journey from the depths of despair into a hopeful future. Coming from the bass register, the music moves up as the narrator finds her way out of the darkness. Taylor Long, percussionist, introduced me to many unique metal instruments that underscore dramatic elements of the piece. Instrument maker Joe Johnson created the resonating sand blocks that have a prominent role in conveying conflict. As I wrote this piece for violin, cello, piano and percussion, I felt a deep connection with the narrator

whose story is told over the music.

-Lisa Ann Marsh

#### **Lenny's Story- A Modern Soldier's Tale**

Lenny's Story - A Modern Soldier's Tale is likely one of the most emotionally challenging projects upon which I have ever embarked since creating New Angels for solo violin and orchestra, a work dedicated to the memory of those we lost on September 11th, 2001. Trying more earnestly than ever before to walk in someone else's combat boots, boots I could never fill, working on Lenny's Story taught me an incredible lesson about my connection with this world.

Halfway through composing A Modern Soldier's Tale, when the work began to take shape, to make musical sense in my mind, is also when I began to get a grasp on the importance of what I intended to express.

The work consists of a set of rondo variations, interspersed with contrasting material, and tells the story of one soldier amongst many, rising to the challenges posed by a military life, from childhood through wartime service, and the alienation he experiences afterwards.

It was incredibly compelling for me to set Lenny's tale to music, for I am grateful, beyond words, for the sacrifice of our heroes who serve, and our heroes who make the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom.

-Marek Harris

#### **Russell**

I felt that sweet nostalgic music would be appropriate for this story about a little boy learning to speak. The musical motives are based on the rhythm and contours of phrases from the narrative. The first theme is the narrator's theme. The second theme is Russell's theme. Russell's mother's theme and the love theme are derived from Russell's theme. The piano solo at the beginning is reminiscent of someone playing the piano alone in their living room. When Russell is brought into the story, the entire ensemble joins in.

-Elizabeth Blachly-Dyson

#### **Lenny's Story- A Modern Soldier's Tale**

Lenny's Story - A Modern Soldier's Tale is likely one of the most emotionally challenging projects upon which I have ever embarked since creating New Angels for solo violin and orchestra, a work dedicated to the memory of those we lost on September 11th, 2001. Trying more earnestly than ever before to walk in someone else's combat boots, boots I could never fill, working on Lenny's Story taught me an incredible lesson about my connection with this world.

Halfway through composing A Modern Soldier's Tale, when the work began to take shape, to make musical sense in my mind, is also when I began to get a grasp on the importance of what I intended to express.

The work consists of a set of rondo variations, interspersed with contrasting material, and tells the story of one soldier amongst many, rising to the challenges posed by a military life, from childhood through wartime service, and the alienation he experiences afterwards.

It was incredibly compelling for me to set Lenny's tale to music, for I am grateful, beyond words, for the sacrifice of our heroes who serve, and our heroes who make the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom.

-Marek Harris

#### **Russell**

I felt that sweet nostalgic music would be appropriate for this story about a little boy learning to speak. The musical motives are based on the rhythm and contours of phrases from the narrative. The first theme is the narrator's theme. The second theme is Russell's theme. Russell's mother's theme and the love theme are derived from Russell's theme. The piano solo at the beginning is reminiscent of someone playing the piano alone in their living room. When Russell is brought into the story, the entire ensemble joins in.

-Elizabeth Blachly-Dyson

**If you enjoyed today's performances, look out for these exciting upcoming events:**

***VIOL-OCITY:*** Christina Ebersohl's senior recital. Admission and reception are free and open to the public.  
Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> 7PM  
Portland State University, Lincoln Hall 75.

***Stacey Phillips:*** premiere of her new commission for Choral Arts Initiative in Newport Beach, California.  
Friday, June 14th, 7:00 pm.  
Tickets and info: <https://www.choralartsinitiative.org/june-14-premiereproject-festival.html>

***The Dark Corners:*** Damen Liebling's Indie Pop album release. Singles from the album can be heard on Spotify or Bandcamp.com, under the artist name "DAMYN".  
To pre-order or donate to the album release, or for more information, email [dameneaston@gmail.com](mailto:dameneaston@gmail.com)

***Marek Harris:*** premieres his low brass quartet for four members of the San Francisco Symphony later this year.  
His *Trio Sonata for 3 Violas* will premiere at Christina Ebersohl's senior recital on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

***Concert Mosaic:*** Cascadia women composers join forces with local women visual artists for a concert of new music and art featuring the Delgami String Quartet.  
Saturday February 15, 2020 7:30pm  
Portland State University, Lincoln Hall 75

**A HEARTFELT THANKS TO...**

The phenomenal composers.

The extraordinary performers.

The inspiring people who bravely shared their stories.

My advisor, mentor, and friend, Jelena Simonovic-Schiff.

The College of the Arts School of Music.

The Honors Department.

Dean Bynum and the Andries Deinum jurors.

Coffee.

## Bibliography

- Baumgartner, Thomas, et al. "From Emotion Perception to Emotion Experience: Emotions Evoked by Pictures and Classical Music." *International Journal of Psychophysiology* 60, no. 1 (2006): 34-43.
- Cluley, Robert. "Engineering Great Moments: The Production of Live Music." *Consumption Markets & Culture* 12, no. 4 (2009): 373-88.
- Cox, Christopher, and Daniel Warner. *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004.
- Levitin, Daniel J. *This Is Your Brain On Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2006.
- McNutt, Elizabeth. "Performing Electroacoustic Music: a Wider View of Interactivity." *Organised Sound* 8, no. 3 (2003): 297-304.
- Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998.
- Smalley, Denis. "The Listening Imagination: Listening in the Electroacoustic Era." *Contemporary Music Review* 13, no. 2 (1996): 77-107.