

Peter Opie and Yu-Fang Chen duet recital
Wednesday, November 17, 2021 | 5:30 p.m.
Ball State University | Sursa Performance Hall
Composer biographies and program notes

Eliza Brown's music is motivated by sound and its potential for meaning, an engagement with the broader arts and humanities, and a fascination with unanswerable existential questions. Eliza's compositions have been performed by leading interpreters of new music, including Ensemble Dal Niente, Spektral Quartet, ensemble recherche, International Contemporary Ensemble, Network for New Music, Ensemble SurPlus, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, and Wild Rumpus New Music Collective. Her works have been heard on stages throughout the USA and in Mexico, Colombia, Germany, Hungary, Spain, Canada, and the UAE, and have been recorded on multiple labels.

Eliza's work is frequently intertextual, opening dialogues with existing pieces of music, historical styles, and other cultural artifacts. Her work is also frequently interdisciplinary, with a particular focus on music-theater and opera. These traits are exemplified in her 2015 music-theater work *Prospect and Refuge*, which explores how public spaces shape social experience. Created in collaboration with architect Hannah Marzynski, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, and stage director Emmi Hilger, the piece is designed to be re-staged at each new performance site and incorporates re-composed quotations from Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* that speak to how deeply humans can be affected by place.

Eliza's artistic interests give rise to questions about the interpretation and meaning of music that drive her scholarship. Her dissertation, *A Narratological Analysis of 'Prima...ins innere'* by Chaya Czernowin, uses methods drawn from the interdisciplinary field of narratology (the study of narrative) to examine how Czernowin's opera tells its story by means of music alone, as the singers in *Prima* sing phonemes and vocal sounds rather than words.

Eliza is a dedicated teacher who enjoys helping students strengthen their creative voices and engage complex ideas with rigor and enthusiasm. She is currently Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at DePauw University and in the summers she serves as faculty member and Assistant Academic Dean at the Walden School Young Musicians Program in Dublin, NH. Eliza holds a B.Mus. summa cum laude in composition from the University of Michigan and a D.M.A. in composition from Northwestern University.

Shaked Graces (2009) is based on a set of historical musical materials that I find both beautiful and fascinating: the memes of Baroque ornamentation, more specifically, those set forth in Christopher Simpson's 1659 treatise "The Division-Viol." Taking three of Simpson's ornaments, or "graces," as its basis, *Shaked Graces* expands and contracts the elemental forms of those ornaments in time and register, applies them to multiple musical parameters, and layers their varied manifestations upon a simple underlying form of slowly changing pitches, timbres, and dynamics. Through its many levels of variation and ornamentation, *Shaked Graces* investigates the boundaries of each ornament's identity and explores what happens when historically decorative musical objects are asked to play structural roles.

Lily Chen, born in Taiwan, is a composer exploring sonic and theatrical potentials in both acoustic and electronic music. Her music shapes evocative atmospheres that point towards subtle poetic

commentary on her observations about literary, emotional, or social aspects of the contemporary situation.

Lily's music has been performed at several international festivals, including Underwood New Music Readings, June in Buffalo, Mise-en Festival, International Computer Music Conference, SEAMUS National Conference, New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and Asian Composers League Conference and Festival. She has also collaborated with St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Taiwan Philharmonic (National Symphony Orchestra), National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, Taipei Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Signal, Mivos Quartet, Ensemble Cairn, Eco Ensemble, Splinter Reeds, E-MEX Ensemble, among others.

She received her Ph.D. in music composition from the University of California at Berkeley, where she studied with Ken Ueno, Edmund Campion, Franck Bedrossian, and Cindy Cox. She also received her master's and bachelor's degrees from Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan, under the instruction of Chung-Kun Hung. She is currently an Assistant Professor of composition at Taipei National University of the Arts. For more information, please visit - <http://chenlily.com>

Defocused / Microscopic (2021)* is inspired by images seen in two different visual perspectives. When we see things from different angles of view, we find different landscapes and fresh visual experiences. As the title indicates, this piece focuses on two scenarios: a defocused (vague and fuzzy) view in the eyes of nearsighted people without the glasses and a microscopic (augmented, distorted, and subtly detailed) view under the microscope. By using variations of harmonics and granular gestures, as well as by using air noise and over-pressure noise, I intend to turn the visually defocused/microscopic landscapes into "soundscapes."

The piece consists of nine uninterrupted sections, like snapshots taken from different perspectives: (I) Prelude: in-between – (II) Defocused I – (III) Intermezzo I – (IV) Microscopic I – (V) Intermezzo II – (VI) Microscopic II – (VII) Intermezzo III – (VIII) Defocused II – (IX) Finale: in-between. Each section represents a defocused view, a microscopic view, a normal view, or dramatic combinations shifting gradually or rapidly between different views.

The music of composer **Marilyn Shrude** is characterized by its warmth and lyricism, rich timbre, multi-layered constructions, and complex blend of tonality and atonality. The result is a bright, shimmering and delicately wrought sound world that is at once both powerful and fragile (Natvig – New Grove).

Shrude earned degrees from Alverno College and Northwestern University. Among her honors are those from the Guggenheim Foundation, American Academy of Arts and Letters, Rockefeller Foundation, Chamber Music America/ASCAP, Meet the Composer, Sorel Foundation (Medallion Winner for Choral Music 2011), and the National Endowment for the Arts. She was the first woman to receive the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award for Orchestral Music and the Cleveland Arts Prize for Music. In 2014 she was given Bowling Green State University's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Active as a composer, pianist, teacher, and contemporary music advocate, Shrude has consistently promoted American music through her many years as a Distinguished Artist Professor on the faculty of BGSU. She is the founder and past director of the MidAmerican

Center for Contemporary Music (1987-99), was chair of the Department of Musicology/Composition/Theory at BGSU (1998-2011) and currently serves as coordinator of the doctoral program in contemporary music (2006-present). Together with saxophonist, John Sampen, she has premiered, recorded and presented hundreds of works by living composers both in the US and abroad.

"Lost in My Garden" (2021)* is a duo for violin and cello that was commissioned and premiered by Drs. Yu-Fang Chen and Peter Opie of Ball State University on November 17, 2021. The work captures the antics in my garden which I began observing more closely during the onset of COVID in March 2020. This quiet time give me an opportunity to see things differently—nature was undisturbed and the seasons transformed seamlessly one into the other. Most immediately while working on the duo I tried to focus on the flora and fauna in spring and summer 2021—the flowers (poppies, columbine, daisies); hostas; grape vines; trees (walnut, redbud, Japanese maple) —and the creatures (gentle but invasive deer, pesky mosquitos, resolute but annoying bees, neighborhood cats in their curious prowls, insane squirrels, melodius birds). You need not know the secrets therein, but they help me immerse myself in the private sound world that puts a piece to paper.

Rome Prize winner and Guggenheim Fellow **James Mobberley**'s works span many media, from orchestra and electro-acoustic music to music for dance, film, and video. Commissions have come from the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, Koussevitzky Foundation/Library of Congress, Barlow Endowment, Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, National Endowment for the Arts, and numerous ensembles and individual performers. He is currently Curators' Professor of Composition at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and has also been a Resident Composer with the Kansas City Symphony (1992-1999), and a Visiting Composer with both the Taiwan National Symphony (1999) and the Fort Smith Symphony (2000). He has also received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, League-ISCM, Meet the Composer, the Van Cliburn Foundation, the Shanghai Spring Festival, and numerous other organizations. Many of his works are available for listening on <http://www.soundcloud.com/jim-mobberley>.

The writing of **"Fire Into Our Bones"** began in January, 2021* during the highest peak of American hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19. In my searching for textual inspiration for both a title and a sentiment to somehow inspire me during such a dark and desperate time, I came across a passage in the book of Lamentations: "From above He sent fire into my bones." At the time it felt as though our earth was sending fire into all of us. The overwhelming sense of unpredictability, intensity, disruption and collective loss of the pandemic played a significant role in the shaping of this work, as did the many attempts to keep ourselves safe, some of which in retrospect seem to be almost comical, such as wiping down doorknobs and groceries. The loss of millions of souls, however, is simply and lastingly elegiac. "Fire Into Our Bones" is dedicated to Yu-Fang Chen and Peter Opie, with greatest appreciation for their extraordinary musicianship.

**world premiere*