Composers Concert
Cook Recital Hall, Michigan State University
March 28, 2015, 4:30 p.m.

Kirk O’Riordan from *Twenty-Six Preludes for Solo Piano* (2014)
LaFayette College Holly Roadfeldt, piano

XIII. presto feroce, with intensity
IV. molto legatissimo; brooding
XXII. with longing
XXIII. molto rubato; fluid expressive
XVII. hypnotic, distant
XXV. frenetic, with energy
XXVI. gently, with sadness

David S. Carter *Settling In*
Northwestern University Juan Carlos Ortega (violin) and David S. Carter (piano)

Murray Gross *Breathing Lessons*
Alma College Echo Saxophone Quartet: Casey Grev, tenor sax; Matthew Tracy, soprano sax; Eric Troiano, baritone sax; and Kyle Landry, alto sax

Teddy Niedermaier *Fanfare Fantasy*, Teddy Niedermaier, piano
Chicago College of Performing Arts

Paul Salerni *Bad Pets* (2007)
Lehigh University Christopher Mitchell, baritone; Stephanie Rea, flute;
Ryan Thornton, guitar

I. Golden Retrievals (*Mark Doty*)
II. The Cow in Apple Time (*Robert Frost*)
III. Alley Cat Love Song (*Dana Gioia*)

Baljinder S. Sekhon, II *Gradient*
University of South Florida Heisler/Yeh Duo: Jeffrey Heisler, saxophone; I-Chen Yeh, piano
O’Riordan, Kirk
from Twenty Six Preludes for Solo Piano (2014)
Twenty-six Preludes was composed for Holly Roadfeldt between September 2013 and April 2014.

Unlike the famous preludes by composers like Bach, Chopin, and Debussy, mine are not organized by key. Instead, they are organized by “threads:” compositional ideas that are developed over the course of the entire set. Composing the set in this manner allowed me to develop several ideas concurrently with the idea that they would in some way merge together by the end of the set, giving the several disparate ideas a real reason to exist together in the same set. In addition, because I was not using key as a resource, I was not constrained by the number 24.

The end result is a cycle of preludes that is in some ways more closely related to a Schubertian song cycle than to the Preludes of Chopin, Bach, or Debussy. That is not to say that there is not a close conceptual connection with the Preludes of those masters (there are subtle references to each of those composers in the score), but my intention was to treat the Preludes in a cyclical fashion rather than, as is the case with Bach and Chopin, an exploration of the nuances of the 24 keys.

The preludes were not composed in the order that they are presented. Some of them came in quick bunches: two or three in a day; others took longer. In addition to developing the compositional threads, I was interested in creating a wide range of moods that also held together as a set. Overall, the moods become more intense as the set unfolds.

Biography:
Kirk O’Riordan’s music has been referred to as “unapologetically beautiful” and is often praised for its uniquely “visual” qualities that depict a wide range of striking moods. His new compact disk, Strange Flowers, was released by Ravello Records in November, 2013 and was praised by Audiophile Audition as “one of the most impressive and beautiful collections of chamber music I have heard in awhile. This is all just so lovely and invokes exactly the emotions that good music should be able to induce in all of us.” Gramophone Magazine praised O’Riordan as “a composer for whom imagery is a defining inspiration. ... [he] is a deeply sensitive composer who savours going gently into the night.” (April 2014)

O’Riordan (b. 1968) is an active composer, conductor, saxophonist, and teacher. His music has been performed in Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Finland, Italy, and Russia; and in thirty of the fifty United States. Recordings of his works appear on the Ravello, Centaur, ERM-Media and EnF labels, and feature performances by Lawrence Stomberg, Marianne Gythfeldt, Holly Roadfeldt, and Frederick L. Hemke. He has recently received commissions from AVIDduo, Saxton Rose, and Holly Roadfeldt.

In 2009 Dr. O’Riordan joined the faculty of Lafayette College where he serves as Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands, teaching courses in music theory, and composition. Kirk studied composition with Rodney Rogers, Randall Shinn, James De Mars, Glenn Hackbarth, Burton Beerman, and Marilyn Shrude. He has studied saxophone with Frederick L. Hemke, John Sampen, and Eugene Rousseau.

Carter, David
Settling In
In composing this piece, I worked with long rhythmic and pitch series, using them to create both placid, static textures as well as more expressive, even agitated ones. The violin and piano in this work have their own identities, at times seeming to cross paths without noticing each other but at other moments clearly influenced by the other’s presence.

Biography:
David S. Carter is a composer and teacher based in Chicago, where he is a Lecturer at North Park University. His works have been performed or recorded by the JACK Quartet, the International
Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Ensemble Dal Niente, Ensemble Court-Circuit, and Ensemble Signal, among others. Composition prizes he has been awarded include first place in the 2012 Iron Composer competition at Baldwin Wallace University and Northwestern University’s William T. Faricy Award. He earned his doctorate in music composition at Northwestern, where his principal teacher was Lee Hyla, and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at Yale University.

Gross, Murray
Breathing Lessons

_Breathing Lessons_ takes its name from the Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Anne Tyler. The music, which ranges from driving and upbeat to languid and subdued, was inspired by the book’s main characters, the long-married Maggie and Ira Moran. Together for 28 years, yet often worlds apart, this ordinary couple delightfully illuminates universal truths about the human condition.

While composing this quartet I considered the interaction of the four “characters,” the roles they play, and the subtle influences each exerts upon the others. Chamber music, whether an ensemble of strings or saxophones, is a web of intricate relationships, perhaps more complex than the marriage so richly described in Anne Tyler’s novel.

Biography:
An award-winning composer and conductor, Murray Gross studied at the New England Conservatory, Oberlin College, Michigan State University, and the Hochschule für Musik in Munich. Chosen by Antal Dorati to serve as Assistant Conductor of the Detroit Symphony, he was also Music Director of Michigan’s West Shore Symphony from 1982 through 2001, and a frequent guest conductor in Europe, South America, and throughout the United States. Dr. Gross is currently on the faculty at Alma College, where he teaches composition, theory, and film music, and conducts the Alma Symphony Orchestra.

Compositions by Murray Gross have been heard in venues around the world played by numerous professional and collegiate ensembles including the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Nobilis Trio, the Peninsula Festival Orchestra, and the Wisconsin Winds. His music has been broadcast over National Public Radio and received many honors including a Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) Award. _Urban Myth_, recorded by the North Texas Wind Symphony on the GIA Windworks series, is featured in volume 8 of “Teaching Music Through Performance in Band.” Other recent cd releases include _Irrational Exuberance_ for sax and piano, _The Wild, Wild West_ by the h2 Sax Quartet, and a new compilation of chamber music, _Talking in my Sleep_, out on the Blue Griffin label.

Niedermaier, Teddy
Fanfare Fantasy

_Fanfare Fantasy_ was composed in May 2013. This restive 7-minute work for solo piano opens with a brief yet emphatic fanfare. The fanfare quickly disintegrates into a fluid, darker texture, and subsequently undergoes a series of short variations. Much of the body of the work is an _Allegro_ highlighting the lower registers of the piano. Fragments of the fanfare are tossed between hands until rhythmic acceleration takes over in the form of bright passagework in the high register. After a climax in which the fanfare tries to assert itself, the texture again dissipates into the darker, fluid music of the opening. The work ends as it began, with the fanfare alone descending to the depths of the instrument.

Biography:
Edward Teddy Niedermaier, educator, composer and pianist, is an Assistant Professor of Core Music Studies at Roosevelt University in Chicago. He previously taught music theory at Oberlin Conservatory and currently serves on the faculty of the European American Musical Alliance summer program in Paris.
Teddy completed a Doctor of Music degree in Music Composition in 2010 from Indiana University, where he studied with Claude Baker and David Dzubay. He earned two degrees in Music Composition (Master of Music and Bachelor of Music) from The Juilliard School as a student of John Corigliano, Samuel Adler, and Robert Beaser.

He has received commissions from the Indiana University New Music Ensemble, Minnesota Youth Symphonies, EAMA Chorale, Hidden Valley Music Seminars, New Juilliard Ensemble, the Minnesota Symphonic Winds, and the Philomusica Chamber Orchestra of Minneapolis. His compositions have been performed throughout the United States and in France, Germany, Kosovo, Moldova, South Korea, and Japan. Honors include the 2009 Dean's Prize in Composition from Indiana University, two national awards from the National Federation of Music Clubs in 2007, and Honorable Mentions from the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards in 2007 and 2003. In 2011 he was nominated for an annual composition award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Salerni, Paul

**Bad Pets**

When presented with the enviable task of writing a song cycle, my first impulse is to read Dana Gioia’s poetry, poetry that has been the mainstay of my vocal music since the late 1980’s. In Dana’s award-winning collection, “Interrogations at Noon,” I discovered “Alley Cat Love Song,” a poem obviously meant for musical setting. Instead of following my usual habit of grouping thematically connected poems by the same poet, I looked to other great writers for poems about pets. In each of the three poems in the cycle, pets behave naughtily or unexpectedly: Mark Doty’s dog, in kind but somewhat temeritous fashion, prods his human friend to live in the moment; Robert Frost’s cow makes herself sick by eating forbidden apples; and Dana Gioia’s cat seeks to seduce Fred with just her flea collar on. At least two of these pets are clearly female, so to add to the fun, I decided the singer should be male.

**Biography:**

Paul Salerni’s music “pulses with life, witty musical ideas and instrumental color” (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*), and has been described by the *New York Times* as “impressive” and “playful.”

Salerni’s music has been performed throughout the US, Canada, Europe and China. Recent commissions include Philadelphia Brass, Gabriel Chamber Ensemble, Cape Cod Symphony, San Diego Chamber Orchestra, and New Haven Symphony. Salerni’s one-act opera Tony Caruso’s Final Broadcast won the NOA’s Chamber Opera competition in 2007, and a definitive recording of the opera was recently released on Naxos. His second one-act, The Life and Love of Joe Coogan, an adaptation of a Dick Van Dyke TV Show episode, had its premiere in September 2010. Both one-acts are published by Theodore Presser. Salerni’s most recent large-scale project was a ballet (FABLES) commissioned and premiered by Rioult New York. A CD of Salerni’s chamber music will be released by Albany Records in January 2015.

Salerni is the NEH Distinguished Chair in the Humanities and Professor of Music at Lehigh University. He received his Ph.D. in composition from Harvard University, where he studied with Earl Kim. As the leading expert on Kim, Salerni has performed and lectured about his music in Korea, at the Kennedy Center, the 92nd St. Y, and the Aspen Music Festival.

A dedicated educator, Salerni was the recipient of the Stabler Award, Lehigh’s acknowledgement of excellence in teaching. He served for seven years on the Board of Directors of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, including two years as its Chair.

Sekhon, Baljinder

**Gradient**

*Gradient* is scored for saxophone and piano and these instruments play an equal role throughout the work. This work is primarily focused on the spectrum of sound created by the two of these instruments together.
Extended techniques are employed in order to explore a common ground between the saxophone and piano. *Gradient* explores two different spectra: one that has the saxophone and piano on opposite ends with characteristics of both instruments intersecting in the middle, and another spectrum that contains all of the sounds from both of these instruments with similar sounds from each instrument occupying the same area of the spectrum. While this piece is an exploration of sound, the compositional approach is a process-oriented one that deals with the evolution of, and relationship between, pitch and rhythmic material.

Biography:
“Clearly knowing the power of sonority” (Philadelphia Inquirer), the award-winning music of Baljinder Sekhon is frequently presented around the world. Performances of Sekhon’s music have included those in fifteen countries at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Seoul Arts Center. Several commercial recordings of his works have been released, and his compositions have received performances at countless festivals and institutions by prominent ensembles and performers, such as the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble. Additional platforms for the performance of Sekhon’s music have included the National Orchestra Institute, The Jerome L. Greene Performance Space, the Paris Conservatory, MATA’s Interval Series, New World Symphony’s Musician Forum Series, the World Saxophone Congress, International Viola Congress, Juventas New Music Ensemble, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Bang On a Can Festival, Root Signals Electronic Music Festival, Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival, and a full concert of his works at John Zorn’s contemporary art space The Stone. Sekhon serves as Assistant Professor of Composition at the University of South Florida and holds the PhD and MA from the Eastman School of Music where he is a three-time recipient of the Howard Hanson Orchestral prize.