

important in large scale compositions; indeed, coherence is at the heart of what makes a symphony a symphony. Motives, themes and even long passages may recur in varied contexts, reflecting their core identities yet becoming transformed, as though seen “through a glass, darkly,” “glass” referring to an ancient mirror, likely of polished metal - a mirror that does not reflect a perfect image but rather through which one sees “darkly.” Musical mirrors appear in everything from melody and harmony to rhythm and form, at both small scale and large. Composers have long been fond of using mirroring techniques, including repetition, palindromes, retrogrades and inversions; sculpting forms that recall ideas in a new light; or creating tonal plans with balanced architecture. Further, a performance by a conducted ensemble might be thought of as the functioning of a series of mirrors, reflecting musical ideas from composer to score to conductor to musicians to audience. But like a game of telephone, the music is altered and shaped in subtle ways along the journey from composer to listener, with a multitude of interpretations factoring into the resultant sound.

While my first symphony was programmatic in nature, being dedicated to three influential teachers all of whom died early, this symphony is more in the tradition of absolute music, that is, without programmatic narrative. However, having stated that, I will also suggest that the music is expressive, and a listener is of course free to conjure their own interpretive narrative. Like many symphonies, there is a degree of struggle and resolution, which might lead to associations with the quoted text from Corinthians.

Cast in a three movement fast-slow-fast structure, the symphony focuses on a few central musical ideas - motives, melodies, chords, rhythms - and for some reason the number five, all of which are used throughout the work, transforming into ever new reflections of the initial musical impulses. Mirrors, small and large, abound.

Personnel for the Wind Symphony and New Music Ensemble are listed in the Festival program book.

Audience members are reminded to silence alarm watches, pagers and cellular phones before the performance.

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THE MIDAMERICAN CENTER
FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PRESENTS

The 38th Annual Bowling Green New Music Festival Concert 2

New Music Ensemble with special guest Shara Nova

BGSU Wind Symphony

Conor Nelson, flute - Thomas Rosenkranz, piano

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017, 7:30PM

KOBACKER HALL

MOORE MUSICAL ARTS CENTER

BGSU | COLLEGE OF
Musical Arts
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM

Chimera (2017+).....**Mikel Kuehn**

Conor Nelson, flute – Thomas Rosenkranz, piano
Made possible by a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation

Unremembered (2012-13, rev. 2016).....**Sarah Kirkland Snider**

I. Prelude
IV. The Guest
V. The Slaughterhouse
VII. The Swan
VIII. The Witch

Shara Nova, soprano
BGSU New Music Ensemble, Christopher Dietz, director

-BRIEF PAUSE-

BGSU Wind Symphony
Kenneth Thompson, director

Never Forget, Never Remember (2017*).....**Jennifer Jolley**

BGSU/MACCM Commission

Ohm (2015).....**Steven Mackey**

Symphony no. 2 - Through a Glass, Darkly (2016).....**David Dzubay**

I. Objects in Mirror are closer than they appear
II. Reflections in Mirror may be distorted -
III. by socially constructed ideas of beauty

+ U.S. premiere
* world premiere

PROGRAM NOTES

The term *Chimera* comes from ancient Greece and refers to a mythological fire-breathing female monster composed from the head of a lion, body of a goat, and tail of a serpent. It more generally describes a monster made from various animal parts, an organism consisting of different genetic compositions, or a fanciful mental illusion or fabrication. My flute and piano piece *Chimera*, composed in 2017, was inspired by all of these concepts. Its general dramatic narrative can be viewed as a textural traversal of this “monster” beginning with the sinewy tail through the disparate animal parts of the body, and ending with the fire breathing head of the lion. As a musical analog to the monster, *Chimera* is constructed from thirty-six episodic sections, each based on a combination of six distinct musical character-types: *scorrevole* (flowing), *pulsare* (pulsing), *misterioso* (mysteriously), *grazioso* (gracefully), *giocososo* (playfully/jokingly), and *agitato* (agitated). The overall form of the piece combines these six character types into all possible pairs resulting in an ever-changing musical texture. *Chimera* was written for and inspired by my friends and colleagues Conor Nelson (flute) and Thomas Rosenkranz (piano), and was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard.

Unremembered is an hour-long, thirteen-part (five parts heard here tonight) song cycle originally for seven voices, chamber orchestra, and electronics by composer Sarah Kirkland Snider, inspired by poems and illustrations by writer and visual artist Nathaniel Bellows (W.W. Norton, HarperCollins). Four years in the making, the studio recording of *Unremembered* was released on New Amsterdam Records in September 2015, and featured vocalists Padma Newsome (Clogs), DM Stith, and Shara Nova (My Brightest Diamond), and the Unremembered Orchestra (includes members of ACME, Alarm Will Sound, ICE, The Knights, So Percussion), conducted by Edwin Outwater (Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, San Francisco Symphony.)

A meditation on memory, innocence, and the haunted grandeur of the natural world, *Unremembered* recalls strange and beautiful happenings experienced during a childhood in rural Massachusetts: a houseguest takes sudden leave in the middle of the night; a boy makes a shocking discovery on a riverbank; a girl disappears in woods behind a ranging farm; ghosts appear with messages for the living. Through Bellows’ moving words and images and Snider’s vivid, fraught, astonishing score, the cycle explores the ways in which beguiling events in early life can resonate in—and prepare us for—the subtler horrors that lie beyond the realm of childhood.

It is a great honor to write and dedicate a piece to the Bowling Green State University and their Wind Symphony. I write this in a spirit of friendly comradeship, for the cause we all have at heart. It is a piece written for the Heartland, but it is also written for America.

America is unlike any other nation on earth, and Americans are exceptional. They vote and pay taxes. They serve in our military. They are united against a common foe.

But terrorists and extremists have gathered strength and spread to every region of the earth, and endanger people with the most destructive weapons known to humanity.

We need to protect ourselves and our freedom. Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction.

These radicalized masterminds continue to threaten our freedoms and attack our brave soldiers. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those who were affected.

Never Forget. Never Remember.

The beginning of *Ohm* reminds me a bit of the sound of the surge of an electrical hum that happens as you plug in a cable to an electric guitar. Alternatively, it reminds me of the sound of a light-saber, which is an idea I attribute to the fact that my six-year-old son was Luke Skywalker for Halloween. I remember reading that the sound of a light-saber was created by processing an electro-magnetic hum so the employment of an electrical term as the title seemed appropriate. A bi-product of musicalizing this quasi-electrical sound was that there are long passages with a static bass note as if the piece were chanting “OM”. *Ohm* runs about 12 minutes and is in four parts. Part one evolves from the lightsaber sound into a lively and robust celebration of energy. Part two is spacious and spacey with pulsating chords and a fragmented, slow melody, which turns out to be a slowed down version of the fast lick that culminated in the first section. The third section picks up from where the first section left off in terms of material and energy and the fourth returns to the pulsating chords but speeds them up by a factor of 8.

From 1 Corinthians Chapter 13:

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see *through a glass, darkly*; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Mirrors are an integral part of the structure and experience of music. To my ears, most effective music has a high degree of coherence, with myriad internal connections and relationships, both obvious and subtle, heard and not-heard though perhaps subconsciously sensed. Though true for short pieces, where simplicity and concise elegance can be so meaningful and convincing, this is at least as