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Winds of Change Duo



Bobby Collins - Horn/Voice

Cassie Fry - Piano

Concert Program

La Fritanga (The Barbeque)
Evening Reveries
Blobfish's Dream
Celdas
Golden Hour
Boatman's Work Song of the Li River
The Photo Wall
Dos Canciones para Corno Francés

Romanza
Parrandera

Victor Agudelo
Usamah Mustafa
Ming-Hsiu Yen
Darwin Aquino
Cait Nishimura
Daixuan Ai
Green Seo
Fulvio Villalobos

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Program Notes

La Fritanga (The Barbeque) - Victor Agudelo

This piece was written in 2001 in Medellin - Colombia. The Spanish word “Fritanga” is used to describe the action of frying food on a massive scale. In order to make a living, people with low incomes are obliged to work on the streets and one of the jobs they do is to fry food at the end of public events like soccer games, concerts, carnivals and popular celebrations. The closest translation of this word in English is “The Barbeque”.

This piece is not trying to be descriptive or incidental, it is just an interpretation of smells and landscapes in musical sounds.

Evening Reveries - Usamah Mustafa

Dedicated to his mom, Renee, this piece has become a classic of the Horn and Piano repertoire since its composition in 2012. A horn player himself, Mustafa captures the beauty of the instrument and nature with a modern voice.

Blobfish's Dream - Ming-Hsiu Yen

The blobfish is a deep-sea fish known for its miserable appearance and was even named the world's ugliest animal. Since the blobfish lives deep in the ocean, we rarely encounter it in our daily lives. In order to adapt to the extreme water pressure, the blobfish has no skeletal support structure, muscles or swim bladder. Instead, its body is composed of gelatinous tissue, allowing it to float above the seabed. The blobfish appears normal in the deep sea; however, when it is taken out of water, decompression makes its body expand, and without the skeletal support, it collapses into a shapeless mass.

Living in a nearly lightless world, I imagine its life in the darkness is extremely boring, lying quietly in the seabed throughout its existence. However, in a world of sight deprivation, other sensory organs become more sensitive, not only opening the door toward the beautiful world but also weaving more vibrant dreams.

While composing this work, I was inspired by the theme “blindness” presented in the film “Blind Beast” by Japanese director Yasuzo Masumura and the novel “Ensaio sobre a Cegueira (Blindness)” by José Saramago. Both works feature exceptionally eerie and shocking stories that leave audiences and readers astonished. However, in “Blobfish's Dream,” I attempt to approach the lightless world of the blobfish in a positive manner.

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Celdas - Darwin Aquino

Celdas (prison cells) describes the spiritual path of an evolving soul that surpasses its inner prison, transcending to complete enlightenment. The piece features spatial writing, extreme sonorities and timbre effects. Natural harmonics for the piano, clusters and changes of textures in the horn, move the piece from fragmentation of motives to an expressive tonal theme at the end.

Golden Hour - Cait Nishimura

The “golden hour” is the last hour of light before sunset. The early ideas for this piece came to me during a long drive from New York City to Toronto. We had left the NYC area in time to drive through the rolling hills of upstate New York during this magical time of day. We were treated to an incredible display of colors dancing among the clouds and golden light just pouring over the area and warming our faces. I let the ideas sit for several months, until experiencing a similar drive on the opposite side of the continent, in Yosemite National Park.

Driving up to the lookout at Glacier Point, we weren’t sure if we would make it to the top in time for sunset. It felt like a race against time, trying to ascend the steep mountain roads before the sun made its descent below the horizon. When we arrived at the lookout, it was as if the sky was on fire. The next few minutes led to a beautiful and calm glow before fading into dusk. The music in Golden Hour represents both of these memorable sunset experiences.

Boatmen’s Work Song of the Li River - Daixuan Ai

Boatmen’s Work Song of the Li River draws inspiration from the traditional 船工号子 (chuán gōng hào zi) — the rhythmic, forceful work songs sung by boatmen along the 澧水 (Li River) in Hunan, China. These songs, once used to synchronize collective labor and bolster morale, embody both the physical rigor of river navigation and the expressive warmth of regional working culture.

Characteristic vocal techniques shape the musical language of this piece: ornamental turns, sliding pitches, and the distinctive 甩腔 (shuǎi qiāng*)*, a vocal flourish from Chinese folk singing that stretches and colors a phrase for heightened emotional effect. Dialectal exclamations such as “哟 (yo),” “哩 (lǐ),” and “咳 (hāi)” appear as percussive, staccato repetitions in both horn and piano, anchoring the sound world firmly in its 湘西 (xiāng xī) roots.

Mirroring the structure of traditional boatmen’s songs, the piece unfolds in four contrasting sections, each reflecting a stage of the journey:

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- Intro “引号 (yǐn hào)” – free and textless, evoking the initial call that gathers workers into motion.
- Cantabile “抒情 (shū qíng)” – lyrical and spacious, recalling melodious singing during calm waters.
- Moderate “数板 (shǔ bǎn)” – Fast “快板 (kuài bǎn)” – steady, then urgent, shaped by the accelerating rhythm of collective labor as boatmen confront rapids, storms, and treacherous shoals.
- Andante “平板 (píng bǎn)” – known as “幺妹子嗨嗨 (yāo mèi zi hē hāi)” or “Little Sister’s Tune”, a slower, supple song traditionally sung after danger passes. Its broad, rising-and-falling contours and crisp call-and-response evoke resilience and expressive release.

I was drawn to this work song because my father grew up along the Li River, a waterway that once carried much of the province’s economic life and sustained a vibrant flow of trade and labor. My interest is not only nostalgic but also rooted in the shifting realities of modern life, where physical laborers are increasingly replaced by machines and non-human workforces. Across cultures, music and art have always emerged from the rhythms of manual work—mundane, repetitive tasks that nonetheless form the backbone of societal development. These work songs remind us that the smooth functioning of our daily lives rests on the unseen efforts of countless workers we may never meet, yet cannot live without.

As we move toward a future where physical labor might be fully replaced by automation or artificial intelligence, I wonder how our cultural expressions will evolve. Will freedom from physical toil allow us to rediscover and deepen our humanity—or will we lose something essential, something these work songs once held and protected?

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The Photo Wall - Green Seo

How do you feel when you reminisce over an artifact from your past? Maybe you recall joyous occasions, a carefree moment in your life. But you're still here, you're still now. The Photo Wall invites you to sit in this feeling, the at-times bittersweet yet still beautiful experience of contemplating both a somber present and a past life well-lived.

Green Seo is a classically-trained musician and composer. She is interested in writing film music, or other music which supports an underlying story. This piece was conceived by first imagining a story and then trying to convey that story musically.

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Dos Canciones para Corno Francés - Fulvio Villalobos

The piece “Dos canciones para corno y piano” was commissioned in 2008 by the horn player Mauricio Villalobos Villalón, son of the composer, during his student years. The work was requested for the audition to participate in a music festival that required an original work for the instrument.

The music inspired the lyrical inclinations of the composer during the Romanza, and his Costa Rican roots with the Parrandera. The horn part demands a good control of the high register and exploits the interpreter’s musicality, while the piano part is dense in chords and rhythmic in both styles.

Biographies

Bobby Collins is a highly regarded international conductor and collaborator who has captivated symphonic and operatic audiences across the United States and Europe. With a vision of bringing joy and healing to the world through music, Bobby embraces works that address contemporary issues and produces recordings that foster diversification and growth within the classical music industry.

Deeply committed to building community, Bobby crafts unique programs that engage both newcomers and seasoned concertgoers through representation and remarkable musicality.

Cassie Fry has been a devoted ensemble player since she graduated with a degree in piano performance from Oregon State University in 2015. She has toured internationally to Japan and played with the Portland Wind Symphony and the Tualatin Valley Symphony for three years. She has been accompanying vocal and instrumental soloists for 15 years. Cassie currently resides in the Seattle area and enjoys teaching piano to students that share her passion for music.