

COMPOSERS CONCERT

Thursday, February 12, 2026
Kilbourn Hall
7:30 PM



Eastman School of Music

PROGRAM

Diwata Emerges with a Flower (2025)

Niyayesh Bagheri
(b. 2004)

Jessica Kodsí, mezzo-soprano
Irene Huang, piano

Vignettes for voice, flute, and cello (2025)

Orpheus/Elegia
Ophelia

Sascha Burhop
(b. 2007)

Abigail Bodvake, soprano
Keegan Zicko, flute
Evan Tanko, cello

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS

Diwata Emerges with a Flower

Niyayesh Bagheri

*Text from an old Filipino folk song, **Sampaguita***

bulaklak na sakdal ng yumi
Sampaguita,

A flower most gentle
Sampaguita,

Ang kulay mong binusilak
ay diwa ng aming pangarap

Thy color with such purity
purity is the spirit of our dream

bulaklak ka ng aking lahi,
ang ba ngo mo'y katangi

Flower of my people,
your beauty is unique

sampaguita ng mutya
kong sa puso'y di ka mapapawi

Pearly Sampaguita,
in my heart, you are unforgettable

sa gitna ng manga pagsamo
dingginmo ang tibok ng puso
ng dalagang minamahal
ko kung sa pagibig a ko'y mabigo

In the midst of pleas,
one could hear a heartbeat
of the beloved girl
who was promised

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Diwata Emerges with a Flower (2025)

Niyayesh Bagheri

Diwata, a mythological Filipino spirit or goddess that is associated with nature, is portrayed through the singer's character in this piece. The piece begins with a dark and aggressive atmosphere, implied by the dissonant piano chords, representing the pain and aggression experienced by the Filipino people during and after the war between the United States and the Philippines. We hear Diwata crying from the distance. There is an interaction between the singer (Diwata) and the pianist (people) but they do not understand each other. Gradually, the piano begins to empathize with the crying sound by blending with it, trying to process the grief instead of screaming the anger. This empathy gives Diwata the courage to enter the stage. Then we hear her whispering some words from the Filipino folk song *Sampaguita* into the piano. She wants to offer people a glimmer of hope by giving them the Sampaguita, the national flower of the Philippines. After struggling with so much pain, Diwata begins singing some pitches followed by a resonant harmonic sound on piano. It feels like Diwata and the people are now connected. They are searching for hope and freedom. Finally, Diwata sings the folk tune, showing us her power, which is connected to nature. The ending of the piece with the gong sound and the dissonant chord remind us of the pain that will never be forgotten, as well as the independence that Filipino people achieved after the war. I would like to thank Luisa Iero for commissioning me to write this piece.

— Niyayesh Bagheri

Vignettes for voice, flute, and cello (2025)

Sascha Burhop

My *Vignettes for voice, flute, and cello* serve as a reflection on theatrical performance and the art of storytelling through the reimagining of two famous dramatic scenes from the classic literature and theatrical production canon.

The first vignette, *Orpheus/Elegia*, explores the desolate and emotional climax of Vergil's play *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a story that has been adapted time and time again due to its potent message and heartbreaking ending. Within this movement the cello represents Orpheus on his journey out of the underworld, a prophetic and lonesome solo that explores the highest and lowest registers of the instrument: an auditory representation of the contrast between the mortal world and the

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underworld he is leaving. This lonely refrain is interrupted by the soprano and flute's ghostly chanting, symbolizing Eurydice and the lost love she represents.

The second vignette, *Ophelia*, adapts the famous mad scene from Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. Towards the end of the play, Ophelia enters a manic episode as she is pushed to her breaking point by the people around her and the scenes unfolding within the palace walls. Throughout her refrain, Ophelia recounts the events leading to her ultimate spiral as well as passing out symbolic flowers to the crowd around her in a moment of pseudo-accusation and ultimate despair. The movement aims to capture the childlike naivety of Ophelia's character and the inner turmoil she feels as she is pushed over the edge and forced to face the death and destruction of those around her.

— *Sascha Burbop*

MEET THE COMPOSERS

Niyayesh Bagheri is a composer and pianist from Iran who is currently studying composition as an undergraduate student at the Eastman School of Music. Her music has been performed in the US, Canada, Germany, Switzerland and Iran. She has studied with David Liptak, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Mehran Rouhani, Tom Schneller, and currently with Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon. She has received multiple awards for her compositions, including second place in the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York's Emerging Composers' Competition, the Wayne Brewster Barlow Prize, and the Louis Lane Award. She collaborated with many student ensembles at Eastman, Soundscape Music Festival, as well as performers from Feminale Hamburg Music Festival. Her music is inspired by folklore songs and modes from her country, theater, dance, nature, poetry, and mythology. Other than composing, she enjoys playing and improvising on Tanbur (a Persian instrument), dancing and exploring new activities.

Sascha Burhop, a first-year undergraduate composition student studying with Elizabeth Ogonek at the Eastman School of Music, enjoys exploring the expansive storytelling modes and theatrical aspects of music and performance throughout his compositions. Burhop began studying composition in high school at The Governor's School for the Arts in Norfolk, Virginia with Stephen Coxe, and has since had many works performed by peers and professionals alike, working closely with musicians of the Virginia Symphony, members of the Zohn Collective, and composers such as Jessie Montgomery. In many of Burhop's works, he focuses on using instruments and melodic materials in much the same way that a visual artist makes use of different colors on a paint palette, thus creating auditory artworks within the music as he explores different textures and sound worlds created through the different timbral qualities of each ensemble or overlapping aleatoric devices within his compositions.

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

UPCOMING EASTMAN PRESENTS CONCERTS

Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at EastmanTheatre.org

EASTMAN PRESENTS – KODAK HALL SERIES

Up in Concert

Friday, February 13, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

The unforgettable animated classic *Up* returns to the big screen with Michael Giacchino's Oscar- and Grammy award-winning score performed live to picture! Follow the unlikely duo of a curmudgeonly 78-year-old balloon salesman and his 8-year-old stowaway on this hilarious, heartwarming journey to a lost world filled with danger and surprises.

BLACK STUDENTS UNION AT EASTMAN PRESENTS

Now, Then and Forever

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

*Free, tickets not required

UPCOMING EASTMAN ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

RAY CONNIFF JAZZ ENSEMBLE SERIES

Eastman New Jazz Orchestra

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

RAY CONNIFF JAZZ ENSEMBLE SERIES

Eastman Jazz Orchestra

Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

Musica Nova

Friday, February 20, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre



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