

COMPOSERS CONCERT

Wednesday, November 12, 2025
Hatch Recital Hall
7:30 PM



University
of Rochester
Eastman School of Music

PROGRAM

The Beef, 4 Four Rappers (2025)

Marina Lee

Introduction: “Fragmented thoughts”

(b. 2001)

Fight song: “First challenges”

Nocturne: “Diss lullaby”

Scherzo: “Don’t let him get away”

Mary Reins, soprano

Sofia Martinez, mezzo-soprano

Daniel Perez, tenor

Max Foreman, baritone

Skies of the Forgotten (被遗忘的那片天空) (2025)

Haoyi Zhang

(b. 2005)

Zijun Wang, electric guitar

Towards the vitality (2025)

Endong Li

(b. 2007)

Endong Li, piano

***Ballad* from Piano Sonata** (2024)

Nathanael Kumar

(b. 2004)

Lilian Feng, piano

Gavotte oubliée (2023)

Adil Köprülü

(b. 2003)

Adrian Lau, bassoon

OM A HUM (2025)

Jinpeng Feng

(b. 2001)

Jinpeng Feng, bass voice

tame/untame (2025)

Zijun Wang

(b. 2005)

Benjamin Small, baritone saxophone

The Beef, 4 Four Rappers

Marina Lee

I. Introduction: “Fragmented thoughts”

Ah! Say what, say what...
Don't let that man get a—!

II. Fight song: “First challenges”

Say what! Say something about my babe!

A challenge?

Don't call me. What about—that's it!
They call it hustle, they call it trap.
I can't take it! I'm losing my mind!

III. Nocturne: “Diss lullaby”

They call it hustle, they call it trap.
Don't let that man get away!
I'm all gold and grey. They can't take me away.
Back in those days, I had girls by me sayin',

“Mister, how ya doin'?”

Still I'm old and grey, so don't let that man get away!
Tell them that some baddie who slugged me last night

Ran off with my rival.
I'll take my revenge!
Then he said, “Stevie!”

TEXT

IV. Scherzo: “Don’t let him get away”

Say! Don’t let him get away!
Don’t let that man get away!
What is he doing?
Say something!
That Stevie...
What is he doing?
I’m the eye of the storm.

No one can do me harm if I stay above the waters,
Keep my head above the waters.
Ready now, here I come!

PROGRAM NOTES

The Beef, 4 Four Rappers (2025)

Marina Lee

The Beef focuses primarily on a fictional rapper known as “Li’l Stevie Nadasti”, and the events leading up to an explosive confrontation he has with his rival. Within the story, the feud starts out notably low-key, but ultimately reaches fever pitch in a dazzling display of vocal pyrotechnics. The text is also deliberately ambiguous, such that the line between spoken word and pure sound is straddled. Interjections common to all genres of poetry, such as “ah”, “yeah”, “ooh”, and so forth provide the vitality in an otherwise inanimate set of poems that need to be brought to life by the poet and composer, who—by fortunate coincidence—happen to be the same person.

The goal of this work is to distill a feud to its most basic essence, that of a person’s desire to prove themselves superior. The events in the piece, however, are not portrayed in chronological order, with the story unfolding more in the fashion of a whodunit mystery starting with a framing narrative. As a result, the text is also “shattered” in its setting, as though put through a kaleidoscope.

Skies of the Forgotten (被遗忘的那片天空) (2025)

Haoyi Zhang

Growing up in the concrete jungles, I always looked to the sky—a rare space where I felt truly free. I watched sunrises and sunsets, the evening

PROGRAM NOTES

clouds glowing like fire before the storm. I watched the clouds twist and turn before a typhoon, leaving straight trails behind planes as if drawn by crayons. I imagined sitting on those clouds, scattering my thoughts like seeds into each one.

Yet, daily tasks slowly filled every corner of my mind, leaving only hurried glimpses of the sky. That vast, boundless sky—both not mine and entirely mine—was forgotten. I searched for it desperately, searching, searching.....

May we all one day find that sky we once forgot.

Towards the vitality (2025)

Endong Li

For the people who didn't grow up in a frozen environment, the thing they most want in Rochester, this snowy, cold, city town, is to wait for the spring, warmth, and vitality coming back. Since the piece was written in April, and it was still cold at that time, I regarded it as a useless ritual to attract the attention of spring, not only to develop my piano writing language and skills. The piece is mainly made up of two kinds of bird songs, and the cluster of arpeggios like a wind swirl.

***Ballad* from Piano Sonata** (2024)

Nathanael Kumar

Written in three movements, this work explores a number of contrasting harmonic worlds. The second movement, *Ballad*, is framed by statements of an ominous, chromatic theme set over open fifths. The heart of the movement weaves its harmony from triads related by mediant motion, which underpin a wistful, lyrical melody.

Gavotte oubliée (2023)

Adil Köprülü

Deriving its name but not supposedly the character from the 'forgotten waltzes' of Liszt, this piece I had composed was kind of a short self-task to explore the bassoon, within a stream of consciousness. The form it constructs could be perceived as the instrument exploring its current self, while trying to recall another style from the past it could belong to.

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OM A HUM (2025)

Jinpeng Feng

“Om A Hum” (pronounced like “om ah hoom”) is a very famous Buddhist mantra. According to Buddhist belief, these three syllables possess extraordinary energy. These three syllables have been endowed with a wide variety of symbolic meanings. One interpretation is that “Om” represents the body, “A” represents speech, and “Hum” represents the mind.

In this piece, the three syllables are assigned to the pitches B-flat, D, and F-sharp, forming an augmented triad to reflect their equal and interconnected relationship. The entire piece’s various timbre and tuning materials are primarily derived from the spectral analysis of the sung “Om” on B-flat, alongside the element from a tubular bell spectrum.

Through techniques such as amplification of vocal harmonies/partials and superimposition between contrasting tuning systems, this piece invites the audience into a meditative, mysterious, and unfamiliar world.

MEET THE COMPOSERS

Marina Lee (b. 2001) started her musical journey after falling in love with Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. She writes multifaceted music that draws inspiration from folklore, military history and astronomy.

During recent years, her works have been performed by a variety of ensembles around the world including France (Paris), Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg), Taiwan (Taipei), and the U.S. She has also been commissioned by the American Guild of Organists (AGO), premiering her work written in collaboration with organist Elena Baquerizo, *Helix Variations*, in 2021. In 2022, she directed her one-act opera *Maggie-Now*, based on the novel of the same name by Betty Smith. Her dance work *Unwhispered* has been premiered in November 2022 by the Juilliard ChoreoComp collective.

Marina is currently a doctoral student in Theory at the Eastman School of Music, and studies composition with Dr. Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon and piano with Professor Ran Dank.

MEET THE COMPOSERS

Haoyi Zhang, born in 2005, is currently a third-year undergraduate student at the Eastman School of Music. She majors in composition, and has studied under the guidance of Daniel Pesca and Elizabeth Ogonek. Her pieces have been premiered in Europe, Asia and North America, by remarkable performers such as Mivos Quartet. Recently, she served as the secretary in the OSSIA New Music ensemble.

Endong Li is a composer from the Anhui province in China. He attended Music Middle School Affiliated to Shanghai Conservatory of Music from 2018 to 2024 and studied composition through all the six years there. He was always active with all courses and programs and won scholarships every semester. He also participated in many composition competitions. His work for folk music trio “Yi” (冀) has won the Excellent Work Prize of the 6th “Spring Awakening” National Composition Competition in 2021. The work for string quartet “Yi Zai” (逸哉) won the First Prize of the 5th “Yin Zhong Prize” International Composition Competition in 2022. Currently, Endong is a sophomore student at Eastman pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Composition.

Nathanael Kumar has been creating for as long as he can remember. After a decade spent writing fantasy stories, humming inscrutable tunes, and theorizing new inventions, he found a permanent creative home in classical music in the sixth grade, when he discovered a miniature tuba called the “euphonium”. In the ensuing years, he fell in love with soloing, composition, and the violin standard repertoire. Now, as a full-time music student, he leads a double life as a euphonist and composer.

As a euphonist, Nathanael has a penchant for unorthodox solo repertoire, such as violin-concerto transcriptions. In his compositions, he strives to write accessible works for the modern era. Alongside his practical studies, he’s currently pursuing a certificate in arts leadership. As part of this work, he’s completed internships in music admissions and summer-festival administration.

Nathanael currently studies with Justin Benavidez and Elizabeth Ogonek at the Eastman School of Music.

MEET THE COMPOSERS

Adil Köprülü was born in 2003 in Germany. Raised in Istanbul, Turkey, he developed an interest in music since his acquaintance with the piano at early ages. In 2021, he got accepted to Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Istanbul State Conservatory, where he studied composition with Hasan Uçarsu and Ahmet Altinel until he graduated first place in the music department in 2025. He collaborated with various musicians such as Ensemble Musikfabrik and Trio Immersio for performances in Austria and Turkey. He also conducted the premiere of his music at the 14th Sesin Yolculugu Young Composers Festival in Istanbul, as well as teaching solfege lessons and singing in choirs. He continues his studies at the Eastman School of Music under the guidance of Evis Sammouris.

Jinpeng Feng is a composer whose works mainly explore multicultural soundscapes and cross-disciplinary narratives. Born into a Chinese family with Han, Manchu, Mongolian, and Korean heritage, his music draws from diverse sources such as Chinese traditional music (particularly literati music and Peking Opera music), Korean traditional music, Western art music, and popular genres. His compositions blend rational structure with emotional depth, often weaving non-musical concepts into the fabric of the sound.

His works have won many awards and have been performed across China, published by institutions including Central Conservatory of Music Press, and presented in collaboration with organizations including Beijing Fashion Week SS2024 and the Chen Yidan Foundation.

Feng is currently a Master's candidate in composition at the Central Conservatory of Music, studying under Professor Chen Yao. He is currently spending the 2025-26 academic year as an exchange student at the Eastman School of Music, studying under Professor Evis Sammouris.

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

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

David Bowlin, violin and Tony Cho, piano

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Hatch Recital Hall

EASTMAN PRESENTS - THE FERNANDO LAIRES PIANO SERIES

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet

Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

The dynamic French virtuoso, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet makes his Eastman Piano Series debut with selections from Maurice Ravel's complete works for solo piano. An unrivaled artistic feat, this program includes the composer's most famous works, including delightful miniatures beloved by both pianists and listeners.

UPCOMING EASTMAN ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

Trombone Choir

Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

Musica Nova

Friday, November 14, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

Bach Cantata Series

Sunday, November 16, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Hatch Recital Hall



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