THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Wednesday, March 28, 7:30 PM
Bates Recital Hall

DIRECTOR
Dan Welcher

VISITING COMPOSER
Derek Bermel

PIANO SOLOIST
Xak Bjerken

BARITONE SOLOIST
Timothy Jones

This concert will last approximately two hours with one intermission
PROGRAM

Adeliia Faizullina (b. 1988) - Tatar Folk Tales (2017)
- Shurali
- Sak and Sook
- Arba

Adeliia Faizullina, voice

Jesse Jones (b. 1978) - Persona Mechanica (2016)
- Giocosa
- Dolente
- Gioiossa

Xak Bjerken, piano

Intermission

Derek Bermel (b. 1967) - Natural Selection (2000)
- One Fly
- Spider Love
- Got My Bag of Brown Shoes
- Dog

Timothy Jones, baritone

Derek Bermel - Three Rivers (2001)

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

_Tatar Folk Tales_
Adeliia Faizullina

Born: 1988
Composed: 2017
Premiere: Tonight’s performance is the premiere of this piece
Estimated duration: 11 minutes
Instrumentation: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trombone, percussion, harp, piano, solo soprano, violins, viola, cello, double bass

From the composer:

**Shurali. Movement 1.** Shurali is a monster of Tatar Folklore who lives in the woods and scares people with the sound of his wooden bones. Walk with me on your tiptoes and quietly try to overhear tiny magic sounds of the rustling leaves, insects, and even your own heartbeat. Don’t miss the monster!

**Sak and Sok. Movement 2.** Sak and Sok are two brothers, who after the curse turned into the Bird of Night and Bird of Day. They hear each other’s voices and wing-trembling just when it is sunrise or sunset time. But they cannot see each other.

**Arba. Final movement.** Arba is an Asian two-wheel cart to carry live stock and food. Let’s start our journey with the sound of the whip, a little folk song, and welcome to join our choir of mischievous, funny animals.

Uzbekistan-born composer Adeliia Faizullina (b. 1988) has studied as a composer, singer, vocal coach, and Tatar quray instrumentalist. She received her bachelor’s degree in Voice in Auhadeev College of Music (Kazan, Russia) and bachelor’s degree in Music Composition in Gnesins Russian Academy of Music (Moscow, Russia). She will receive her master’s degree in Music Composition in University of Texas at Austin. With a particular ear for cutting-edge vocal colors and an affinity for the music and poetry of Tatar folklore, Adeliia also writes music for chamber and symphonic genres.
**Persona Mechanica**

**Jesse Jones**

Born: 1978, Aztec, New Mexico  
Composed: 2016  
Premiered: St. Petersburg, Russia  
Duration: 25 minutes  
Instrumentation: solo piano and chamber orchestra

Jesse Jones’ music straddles two worlds: his ensemble works display a structural clarity and textural complexity that is modernist in spirit, yet his own background as a pianist reveals a Romantic spirit of lyricism, sonorous sensuality, and gestural freedom at his “home instrument.” In *Persona Mechanica*, he explores the overlapping paradoxical grid that is the keyboard: the mechanical/digital brilliance of its on/off nature, filtered through an exploration of the refined, vocally inflected qualities that are not inherent to the instrument. This duality of the fingertip’s ability to strike and stroke is at the core of the compositional sound world: the tone-poet must endow the machine with a soul.

This commission is part of a project premiering and recording three works for piano and sinfonietta by Grammy-winner Stephen Hartke, Rome Prize- and Guggenheim-winner Jesse Jones, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra Composer-in-Residence Elizabeth Ogonek. Conductor Tim Weiss, director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at Oberlin, has been given a grant to record all three works, to be distributed by Naxos.

The work unfolds in three contrasting movements:

Giocosa is a playful episode where the machine gradually takes shape and explores different personae—Dolente is a plaintive yet loving tribute to Jones’ late teacher and mentor, composer Steven Stucky. Gioiosa is a joyful and virtuoso romp with all manner of finger-twisting fun for soloist and orchestra alike.
Natural Selection
Derek Bermel

Born: Brooklyn, NY
Composed: 2000—commission Faber Music for its Millennium Series
Premiered: November 2000 at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival by Ensemble 10/10, conducted by Clark Rundell
Duration: 15 minutes
Instrumentation: flute, piccolo, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, horn, trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone, percussion, piano, harp, two violins, viola, violoncello, double bass

Natural Selection (2002) is a song cycle for baritone comprised of four settings by American poets Wendy S. Walters and Naomi Shihab Nye. It celebrates nature in various manifestations: insectoid, arachnid, mammalian, and human.

A note from the composer:

In 1997 I was nominated by the composer Nicholas Maw to compose a work which would be published as part of Fabermusics Millennium Commission Series. I chose to orchestrate settings by my long-time collaborator, the American poet Wendy S. Walters. I began work on One Fly and Spider Love; moving up the food chain, I added Dog by the poet Naomi Shihab Nye and Got My Bag of Brown Shoes by Walters, which completes the cycle by including human nature as part of these animal portraits.

Texts for Natural Selection can be found on the following page
I. ONE FLY

One fly
was all it took
to send you thrashing around
the house
moving in a way you hadn’t
for weeks
I figured
you were upset by the space
he took
but
I have been mistaken before
I am not (repeat)
not tired of your misdirected
temper,
your bluesy dispositions
You persistent —
You know you know how to
play me
So if you wouldn’t mind
could you leave the fly be
and stay here
(quiet some)
with me

Wendy S. Walters
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II. SPIDER LOVE

You know a spider lover
is like no other
She shows you her fangs and
bristles
But it’s how tightly she hugs
those squirming bugs
that sets off your bells and
whistles
She’s a little bit jumpy
real sensitive at first
running off to dark places
to hide
But soon she’ll wrap you in
silk, feed
you sweet spider milk
captivate you
with tales
of walking a thin line
that someday you’ll cross
without thinking
then there’s that shrinking
feeling
something is wrong
Wish she’d warned you
how she bites when she
fights
After the battle
You’ll be bleeding and torn
but mostly forlorn
You know she didn’t mean
to be mean to you
She was just giving you a hug
trying to spread
a little bit of spider love

Wendy S. Walters
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III. GOT MY BAG OF BROWN SHOES

This block’s got me locked in
my house
All over the sirens come
ringing in
taking away them kids
You’d think the streets be
empty
the way they’re carrying off,
but the dead is still sneaking
around
stealing shoes
They say the dead have got
no shoes
for walking,
but I’ve seen things different
I’ve seen young men
walking off the face of the
earth
in my shoes
I’ve got them hidden now
so when I need them
They’re sure to be there
I heard that once you set in
one place
you forget how to move
That’s how we get so many
dead
And some people don’t have
no more shoes
But I’m into dancing
I’m going to hang on the
front porch
Going to watch those kids
coming by
Keep coming by
They’ll see me dance on the
front porch
in the door frame
I can still do a step or two
Got my bag of brown shoes
Got my bag of brown shoes
I can still do a step or two

Wendy S. Walters
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IV. DOG

The sky is the belly of a large
dog,
sleeping.
All day his small grey ear
rises and falls.
The dream he dreams has no
beginning.
Here on earth we dream
a deep-eyed dog sleeps
under our stairs
and will rise to meet us.
Dogs curl in dark places,
We want to bury ourselves
in someone else’s home.

Wendy S. Walters
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Three Rivers
Derek Bermel

Composed: 2001
Premiered: March 1–3, 2001 by Kitchen House Blend, Derek Bermel conducting, at The Kitchen, New York—commissioned by WNYC Radio
Duration: 15 minutes
Instrumentation: flute, piccolo, clarinet, E-flat clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion, drum set, keyboard, violin, viola, violoncello, double bass

Three Rivers (2001) was inspired by a trip to Pittsburgh, during which I spent several hours staring, mesmerized, at the tumultuous and strikingly beautiful meeting point of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers. During the course of the piece, three rhythmic currents—a thick soup of lugubrious funk, a series of undulating mid-tempo phrases, and frenetically bubbling passages at maniacal speed—mix and collide, at times flowing separately, at other moments concurrently. Two guided improvisations of indeterminate length are framed by the three larger sections of the work. Three Rivers was commissioned by WNYC radio and premiered by House Blend at the Kitchen, conducted by the composer.

The three rhythmic currents in “Three Rivers” at times flow separately, and at other times concurrently; often they mix and collide. The opening “lugubrioso” material is linear, and its musical shapes should yield approximate contours rather than distinct melodies. The rhythm of this opening section in the low instruments is swung, felt “behind the beat”. The eighth note stays constant into the second section of smoother, cascading rhythms. The third, most frenetic rhythmic level, is felt in straight sixteenth notes. The triplet sixteenth notes in the “fast bop” section are also felt as “swung”.
ABOUT XAK BJERKEN

Pianist Xak Bjerken has appeared with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, the Schoenberg Ensemble, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Disney Hall. He has performed at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Glinka Hall in St Petersburg, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and for many years performed throughout the US as a member of the Los Angeles Piano Quartet. He has performed with the Cuarteto Casals, the Prazak, New Zealand, and Miami string quartets, and held chamber music residencies at the Tanglewood Music Center, Spoleto Festival and Olympic Music Festival. He is the director of Ensemble X, a new music ensemble, and has served on the faculty of Kneisel Hall, the Eastern Music Festival, and at the Chamber Music Conference at Bennington College. Bjerken has worked closely with composers György Kurtag, Sofia Gubaidulina, Steven Stucky, and George Benjamin, and over the next two years, will be presenting premieres of piano concertos by Stephen Hartke, Elizabeth Ogonek, and Jesse Jones. He released his first solo recording on CRI in 2001, and has since recorded for Koch International, Chandos, Albany Records, Artona, and is about to release his third recording for Open G Records, presenting solo and chamber works by Steven Stucky.

Xak Bjerken is Professor of Music at Cornell University where he co-directs Mayfest, an international chamber music festival with his wife, pianist Miri Yampolsky. Bjerken studied with Aube Tzerko at the University of California at Los Angeles and received his Master's and Doctoral degrees from the Peabody Conservatory as a student of and teaching assistant to Leon Fleisher.
American Bass-Baritone Timothy Jones enjoys a reputation as a charismatic presence on operatic and concert stages throughout the United States, Europe and South America. The Boston Globe hailed his voice as “stentorian and honeyed” and the Chicago Tribune called his “complete connection with the text extraordinary.” The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review praised him for his theatricality, noting that he “relished the dramatic possibilities of the songs’ text and music.” His eagerly anticipated performances combine intelligent musicianship, commanding vocal technique and a unique ability to connect with audiences. Highlights of the 2016-2017 season include performances with Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Ars Lyrica Houston, University of Houston Brahms Festival, and Houston River Oaks Chamber Orchestra.

A distinguished concert performer, Mr. Jones has soloed with the Cleveland Orchestra singing Handel’s Messiah and Bach’s St. Matthew Passion. He has also performed with Boston Baroque, Baltimore Symphony, St. Petersburg Chamber Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Houston Symphony, New Mexico Symphony, New Haven Symphony, Portland Symphony, Saginaw Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Utah Symphony, Wichita Symphony Orchestra and the Virginia Symphony. His repertoire includes the Bach’s St. John Passion, Haydn’s Lord Nelson Mass, Mozart’s Requiem, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Verdi’s Requiem and “A Sea Symphony” by Vaughn Williams.

Mr. Jones is an alumnus of Centenary College and the University of Michigan. He is currently a professor of voice at the University of Houston Moores School of Music.
Composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel has been widely hailed for his creativity, theatricality, and virtuosity. Artistic Director of the American Composers Orchestra, Bermel is also curator of the Gamper Festival at the Bowdoin International Music Festival, director of Copland House’s emerging composers institute Cultivate, and recently enjoyed a four-year tenure as artist-in-residence at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton. Bermel has become recognized as a dynamic and unconventional curator of concert series that spotlight the composer as performer, including ACO’s SONIC Festival. Alongside his international studies of ethnomusicology and orchestration, an ongoing engagement with other musical cultures has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language, in which the human voice and its myriad inflections play a primary role.

He has received commissions from the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC Radio, La Jolla Music Society, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, eighth blackbird, Guarneri String Quartet, Music from Copland House and Music from China, De Ereprijs (Netherlands), violinist Midori, and electric guitarist Wiek Hijmans among others. His many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center’s Trailblazer Award, and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, Meet the Composer, and Cary Trust; and residencies at Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri.
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Wednesday, April 25, 7:30 PM
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CLARINET
Jonathan Gunn

David Gompper
Clarinet Concerto

Russell Pinkston
Off Leash

David Gompper
Butterfly Dance

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UPCOMING CONCERTS AND EVENTS

Stefan Engles, organ
Saturday, March 31, 7:30 PM
Bates Recital Hall

AIME (Alternative Improvisation Music Ensemble)
Tuesday, April 3, 7:30 PM
Bates Recital Hall

The University of Texas Symphony Orchestra
Tuesday, April 3, 7:30 PM
Bass Concert Hall

The University of Texas Saxophone Ensemble
Thursday, April 5, 7:30 PM
Bates Recital Hall

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