



School of Music

SENIOR RECITAL

# CLARK NICHOLS '18, COMPOSITION

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018  
SCHNEEBECK CONCERT HALL | 7:30 P.M.

From the Throat of the Wild Iris (2016).....Clark Nichols  
b.1995

Colin Babcock '18, flute  
Katie Granger '20, oboe  
Jordan Loucks '20, clarinet  
Spencer Moore '19, vibraphone  
Clark Nichols '18, piano  
Jane Heyer '21, celeste  
Alonso Tirado '20, violin  
Jesse Jenks '18, cello  
Nicole Ecklund '20, bass  
Cameron Stedman '17, MAT '18, conductor

Suite for Violin (2016).....Clark Nichols  
I. Prelude  
II. Air  
III. Gigue

Eunmin Woo '19, violin

Prospero (2017).....Clark Nichols

Wyatt Jackson '19, bass-baritone  
Henry Gardella '19, piano

Sage Incense (2017).....Clark Nichols

Sage Genna '19, violin  
Clark Nichols '18, Harrison Just-Intonation Pipes

**INTERMISSION**

Concerto for Mandolin and Percussion Orchestra (2017-2018).....Clark Nichols

University of Puget Sound Percussion Ensemble

Tristan Winqvist '20

William Miyahira '19

Connor Roper '21

Maya Sealander '20

Spencer Moore '20

Kassidy Giles '18

Harrison Rosenberg '19

Jeff Lund, conductor and director

Jill Vernarsky '18, piano

Clark Nichols '18, mandolin soloist

*Reception following the performance in School of Music, Room 110.*

## PERFORMER

**Clark Nichols '18** has been studying music since the summer of 2010, beginning his musical education in the John Adams Young Composers program where he studied under Katrina Wreede, Martha Stoddard, Sivan Eldar, and Pulitzer Prize recipient John Adams. During this time he studied piano under John King. While attending Puget Sound, Clark has studied composition with Rob Hutchinson, percussion with Jeff Lund, and piano with Duane Hulbert. Clark's music has been played by the Left Coast Ensemble and the Del Sol String Quartet, and danced to by the San Francisco Ballet Trainee program. Clark plans on attending graduate school in music composition.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to my family, especially my parents, for putting up with my interest in music, and providing me the resources for my success. I am beyond grateful for the support you've given me. I would like to thank and congratulate all of the performers for playing what is frankly pretty difficult music. This concert would be nothing with all of you. "Party Nerds," thank you for keeping me sane when music would not.

Dr. Hutchinson: Thank you for teaching me these past four years. I would be a terrible composer without your pedagogy and patience. Professor Lund: Thank you for making me a more confident musician, this concert would be quite different (and worse) without your guidance as a musician and mentor. Dr. Block: Have a nice retirement, and thanks for indulging my interest in music history and contrarian tendencies. Finally, to Katie and Marty: Thanks for taking a chance on a 15-year-old kid who could barely read music, you had no reason to do so, and I will forever be grateful.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **From the Throat of the Wild Iris (2016)**

The title for this piece comes from the last line of the poem "Seasonal Rains" by Sarah Schaff. The poem was written as a tribute to Louis Gluck, evoking elements of her style (such as rhythmic and rhyme freedom) as well as use of space in poetry. I struggled for about a month to find a suitable title for this piece. I wanted something to would reflect the imagery of nature I intended to evoke and acknowledge the stylistic features John Adams, Lou Harrison, Philip Glass and Charles Ives. When I read through Sarah's poem again, I knew I had the perfect title. An increasingly prevalent aspect of my work is tracing and honoring my own artistic lineage. Just as Sarah honors Louis Gluck, I too honor my own inspirations by "drinking nectar from the throat of the wild iris." I have included the poem near the back of this program because it is lovely.

### **Suite for Violin (2016)**

This suite for violin was written in fall of 2016 for Eunmin Woo. I had the pleasure of watching Eunmin play an excerpt of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto and I was awestruck by the virtuosity and power of her playing. Fortunately around the same time I had some sketches for solo mandolin in my sketchbook that carried over to violin without much of a hassle, so I approached her to see if she would be willing to play a new piece written for her. She graciously accepted, and quite a few of her suggestions went into improving the piece.

### **Prospero (2017)**

During the time this piece was conceptualized (April 2017) I had just gotten into a bit of an art song “kick”. So, I did what any reasonable person would try to do by deciding that come hell or high water I was going to write a song. Finding the proper text was difficult; I knew I wanted something poetic and beautiful, while at the same time not being from a detached narrator. I eventually turned to asking friends for suggestions until my friend and amazing historian, Lindsey Hunt, suggested this piece of dialogue from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Prospero displays a high level of emotional complexity: love, melancholy, nostalgia, and bittersweet happiness are all present in this text. I hope it did it some justice. This piece was specifically written with Wyatt’s voice in mind.

### **Sage Incense (2017)**

If you are a careful reader, you may notice that the title of this piece shares part of its name with the violinist. This was quite intentional. In February of 2017, Sage asked me if I would be willing to write a piece for an event being put on by the all women music fraternity: Sigma Alpha Iota (SAI). I thought it sounded like fun and was looking forward to another chance to write for solo violin. As the date of the concert rapidly approached, I was still without much of a piece, but I was not without some inspiration. I had recently, with the help of physics professor Rand Worland and Bob Peaslee, constructed Just-Intoned Aluminum pipes for a recital taking place the same month. These pipes were specifically for a solo piece, but I was really struck by their sound, so I decided to write for pipes and violin. The incense part of *Sage Incense* comes from the sound of these pipes hanging in the air, much like an incense. Subtle, but there.

### **Concerto for Mandolin and Percussion Orchestra (2017-2018)**

I am absolutely confident when I say I am the first composer to write a concerto for mandolin and percussion orchestra, and probably the last composer, too. I knew early on when writing this piece that it was going to be a very personal one. Due to the unique nature of its ensemble, I do not foresee many performances of this piece. This is fine, what is most important to me is that it is a reflection of my own artistic growth. I have at one point in my life or another studied every single one of these instruments written for. The writing contains elements of minimalist, post-minimalist, post-modernity, rock-and-roll and of a “Left Coast School”, all things near and dear to my heart. Present even are the Harrison Just-Intonation Pipes mentioned earlier in the program, in honor of my favorite composer Lou Harrison. Ultimately, it is my own belief that a good piece of music tells you everything you need to know about its author. I really hope this is a good one.

## SONG TEXTS

### Seasonal Rains (a tribute to Louis Gluck)

Sarah Schaff (reproduced with permission)

We-  
or I-  
reached out; tendrils, vines, then fingers,  
and so from timelessness and into time  
you emerged, from being into Being.  
It used to be that the wildflower observed  
itself through your eyes.  
You traveled with the river for miles without

ever losing your place in the shallows  
but that was a language lost to childbirth.  
Tell me, when was it that you first confused the bird  
with the nest?

You began to believe yourselves  
different,

          separate,

above,

          apart

and so I let you be.

Yet in all the sunless moments since  
you have cried out to one hundred thousand gods  
to ease the suffering of their  
sundered

          creations

their ugly

wounded

children.

With clumsy red tongues, you whisper,

weep and howl to me

and though you believe us divided

by unfathomable eternities,

I know you through each thing that lives.

You have molded gods in your own image

Ripping away fistfuls of feathers, handfuls of glittering scales

rinsing the raw earth from their bodies

razing their branches

removing their animal heads

so they might better turn your own gaze back upon you

and so it is in these strange seasons you ask, "Who am I?"

like the wren calls to the grey morning.

It was to myself that I once asked the same question-

and in doing so, I found you

as a man who wanders into a garden of his own creation

and finds divinity, hidden like a bee between soft petals

drinking nectar from the throat of the wild iris.

**Shakespeare: *The Tempest* Act IV. Sc. 1**

You do look, my son, in a moved sort,  
As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;  
Bear with my weakness; my brain is troubled:  
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity:  
If you be pleased, retire into my cell  
And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,  
To still my beating mind.

## UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

Free unless noted otherwise.

Friday, April 20

### **Wind Ensemble/Concert Band**

Gerard Morris, conductor

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 23 and Tuesday, April 24

### **Chamber Music Concerts I and II**

Alistair MacRae, director

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 27

### **Jazz Orchestra**

Tracy Knoop, director

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 28

### **Adelphian Concert Choir**

Steven Zopfi, conductor

Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 29

### **Flute Day**

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 2 p.m.

Monday, April 30

### **Clarinet Ensemble**

Jennifer Nelson, director

Wheelock Student Center, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, April 30

### **Percussion Ensemble**

Jeffery Lund, director

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

The School of Music at University of Puget Sound is dedicated to training musicians for successful music careers and to the study of music as a liberal art. Known for its diverse and rigorous educational program, personalized attention to students, the stature of its faculty, and the superior achievements in scholarship, musicianship, and solo and ensemble performance, the school maintains the highest professional standards while providing academic and performance opportunities to all university students. Through faculty, student, and guest artist colloquia, workshops, performances, and a vibrant Community Music Department, the School of Music enriches the cultural life of the campus and community.

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