



**For Immediate Release:
Cascadia Composers
Explores the Scope of
Human Identity with
Shades of Autumn**

Featuring "the city's most accomplished composers and most promising next-gen voices"

- Willamette Week, April 2019

September 30, 2019 (Portland, OR): Cascadia Composers explores the scope and nuances of human identity through new music with *Shades of Autumn*, the 2nd concert in this, their 11th season. With an impressive variety of music that reflects on the many facets of humankind's complex, emotional landscape (including tranquil bliss, desperate anguish, embarrassment, childhood innocence, heartbreaking grief, sweet, warm joy, and spirituality among others), Cascadia Composers does what they do best - offering a prismatic cross-section of new musical ideas and modes of expression from some of the region's most active and original composers.

WHAT: *Shades of Autumn*
WHEN: Friday, November 15, 2019 | 7:30 pm
WHERE: Portland State University's Lincoln Hall, Rm 75
COST: \$5 - \$20; discounts for Arts Card holders, Students, Seniors, Working Artists
Children 12 years of age or younger: Free
TICKETS: www.cascadiacomposers.org/concerts

PROGRAM INCLUDES:

David S. Bernstein - *Four Silhouettes for Flute and Viola*

The use of the word "Silhouettes" conveys a two-dimensional representation of the outline of an object, in this work actually two objects...the flute and the viola. With many different dimensions explored within each instrument, the interplay pulls at our human need to make sense of and analyze relationship.

David S. Bernstein brings technical expertise, an eclectic style, and a flair for instant communication to his composition. Over 100 performances of his varied output have taken place during the last decades in the US, Canada, South America and Europe, including the Musart Series of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Eastman Percussion Ensemble, the Akron Symphony Orchestra under Louis Lane, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony and most recently the Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra.

Elizabeth Blachly-Dyson - *Blind Light*, for mezzo-soprano and cello

Claire Sykes wrote a chapbook of four poems, Blind Light, in response to her mother's passing. At once deeply personal and universal, Sykes' vivid depictions speak to the mystery of a life lived, only ever really known by that individual, yet with ripples permeating into loved ones' hearts. Using voice accompanied by solo cello, Blachly-Dyson sets two of the poems, aptly capturing a sense of loss and loneliness, gratitude and grace.

[Elizabeth Blachly-Dyson](#) is a molecular biologist turned composer. Governor Kate Brown's inauguration on Jan. 9, 2017 featured her music in live performance. Additional performances of her work include those by Fear No Music, Marylhurst Symphony, the Pacific Crest Chamber Orchestra and the Camas/Washougal Community Orchestra.

Brian Field - *Chansons Innocentes*, for soprano and piano

The two songs that make up Chansons Innocentes set the poetry of E. E. Cummings and reflect musical moments through the lens of childhood, of innocence. With Cummings' spare and precise use of language, a beautiful simplicity emerges. Through sweet and uncomplicated performance, the intimacy is palpable, as if a child is sharing a secret memory.

[Brian Field](#) has a background in English literature (Connecticut College, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa) and received his Master's degree in composition from the Juilliard School where he studied with Milton Babbitt. As a President's Fellow, he received a Doctorate from Columbia, studying composition with George Edwards and Mario Davidovsky. Field's works have been heard across the US and internationally, and include music for television and stage; solo, chamber, ballet, choral, and orchestral works—stylistically ranging from serious contemporary pieces to jazz to electronic music.

Evan Lewis - *Fogs & Fires*, for mezzo-soprano and piano

Fogs & Fires sets 5 of Carl Sandburg's Chicago Poems, using metaphor in nature to dive into human yearning for a connection to the divine and spiritual, through beauty, inner peace, appreciation, and cycles of time.

[Evan Lewis](#), born and raised in Portland, Oregon, received his Masters degree in composition from Mannes College, The New School (NYC) and subsequently completed the Film Scoring Certificate program at UCLA. Among his teachers are David Tsimpidis, Conrad Cummings, Chen Yi, John David Earnest, and Pulitzer Prize-winners Paul Moravec and Jennifer Higdon. He wrote music for the play Peter/Wendy (Bag&Baggage Productions, 2019) of which *Oregon ArtsWatch* wrote that his "fluent electronic score uses harp-like sounds and bass to signal changes in tone, mood, and even worlds. His percussive effects invigorate the loveliest scene."

Stephen Lewis - *horas non numero nisi serenas*, for mezzo-soprano, violin and cello

*horas non numero nisi serenas means "I count no hours but those that are serene," an inscription found on many sundials. The vocal line is a vastly expanded quotation of the final notes sung in Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, "...ewig...". This piece imagines the grandeur of that which is beyond human perception, such as the orbits of celestial bodies. Channeling Renaissance sacred polyphony and the slow movements of Beethoven as much as recent music, this is a personal and meditative work inviting all who hear it to perceive and simply be.*

Composer, pianist, and conductor [Stephen Lewis](#) writes music which inhabits the terrain between sound as physical sensation and sound as signifier of culture. He has received commissions from organizations nationwide including soundSCAPE, the Wellesley Composers Conference, red fish blue fish, Palimpsest ensemble, the Diagenesis Duo, Gnarwhallaby, Trio Kobayashi, and Aurora Borealis. Stephen has performed at Miller Theater (New York), Severance Hall (Cleveland), the Walt Disney and Zipper Halls (Los Angeles), Moore Theater (Seattle), and most recently with the Oregon Symphony at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Lewis received his PhD in composition from UCSD where he studied with Rand Steiger.

Jan Mittelstaedt - *Embarrassing Moments*, for mezzo-soprano and piano

Comprised of three vignettes which portray public mortification among strangers, narrow avoidance of a potentially awkward social situation, and the experience of being tongue-tied at a most inopportune time, this work deals with different manifestations of embarrassment, but all with a lighthearted choice of wording and sense of compassion.

[Jan Mittelstaedt](#) writes piano, chamber, vocal, and sacred music, and has a background in education. In 2017, she received an Oregon Music Teachers Association (OMTA) Honorary State Membership award, and was the OMTA Composer of the Year in 1994. She has received many ASCAP special awards and participated in the Ernest Bloch Composers Symposium. A teacher of piano and composition, Jan is a member of the OMTA piano syllabus adjudicating staff, and is chair of OMTA's Extended Study of Musicianship and Repertoire. Jan is past president of Cascadia Composers and remains on the board of directors.

Charles Rose - *After Basho: Three Pieces for Mezzo, Flute and Guitar*

The haiku genre is rich and complex: spiritual, using few words to express a wide breadth of meaning. Haiku often refer specifically to the author's experiences but are open to personal interpretation. Charles translated three poems by the beloved classical Japanese haiku poet Matsuo Basho into English, referencing particular images from his own life to align with the personal spirit of haiku, using an iambic meter more familiar to English speakers. Each haiku makes an explicit or implicit allusion to Autumn: the moon rising over Mt. Fuji, a lonely road in the evening, and wondering about a neighbor's life. In this new translation, these images become the cell towers on the West Hills, the empty roads in SEPortland, and the MAX train.

Charles Rose is a composer, sound artist, and recent graduate of Portland State University. He is the sound engineer for Fear No Music and a contributor to PSU's journal *Subito* and *Oregon ArtsWatch*. He has performed at the Portland Art Museum with SAMPLE, the resident Laptop Ensemble at Portland State, and was the winner of the Chamber Music Northwest 2018 Young Composer's competition.

Paul Safar - *Romanza*, for violin and piano

This short piece invokes the warm glow one gets sharing a candlelit dinner on a cozy winter evening with a special someone, speaking to our near constant human yearning for comfort, love, and hygge.

[Paul Safar](#)'s composition reflects his background in both classical and jazz/rock, and has been heard in cities ranging from New York to Seattle and Havana to Fairbanks. His accolades include an Erik Satie Mostly Tonal Award win, Oregon Music Teachers Association Composer of The Year

(2013-14), as well as placing as a finalist in the Fidelio Piano Composition Competition. Recent commissions include those from the Delgani String Quartet and Oregon Parks Department. His composition teachers include Joel Hoffman at the University of Cincinnati and Robert Kyr at the University of Oregon. Also active as a performer and private piano instructor, Safar lives in Eugene, Oregon and thrives on collaborative projects.

Dawn Sonntag - *Come Up from the Fields, Father*, for mezzo-soprano and piano

Whitman's classic Civil War poem tells of a rural Ohio family who receives a letter from their son, who writes that he has been injured in battle. Recognizing that the letter is signed in someone else's handwriting, the mother realizes that the son has already died. At the time that Sonntag set this poem, she was teaching music theory at Hiram College in rural northeastern Ohio, and from her classroom window, she could see her own front porch across the street. With her husband deployed to Afghanistan, she wondered what she would do if two soldiers approached the front porch while she was teaching. The pain and grief Whitman captures in this poem continues to be a reality for families of soldiers across the world.

Organizations across the US and Europe have commissioned [Dawn Sonntag](#), whose oeuvre includes opera, choral, vocal, chamber, orchestral, film and dance music. The Cleveland Opera Theater, the Hartford Opera Theater, ContempOpera Cleveland, and the Opera from Scratch festival in Halifax, Nova Scotia have all featured her operas. She has been a three-time resident composer at the Visby International Center for Composers in Visby, Sweden, receiving an intercultural artist exchange grant from the Swedish government in 2019. Sonntag is also active as a pianist, vocalist, and choral conductor and resides in Olympia.

Greg A Steinke - *Lifschey Cards II*, for oboe, viola and piano

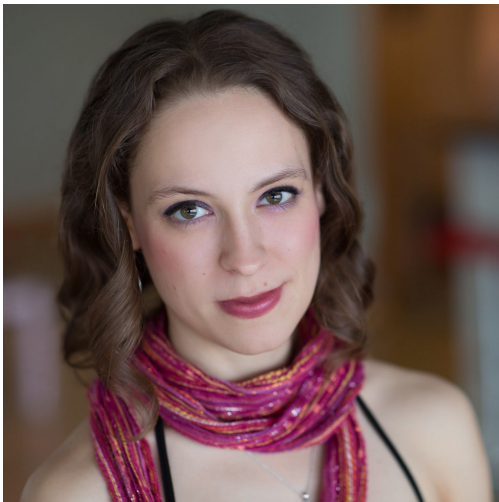
Lifschey Cards II is part of a series of pieces based on paintings completed by the late oboist Marc Lifschey (1926–2000) and dedicated to his memory in which Steinke has captured the metaphor of the paintings as well as Lifschey's milieu as a truly outstanding oboist. The work draws attention to our human impetus for expression and interpretation through the arts.

[Dr. Greg A Steinke](#) is retired, former Joseph Naumes Endowed Chair of Music/Art and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Marylhurst University; Associate Director, Ernest Bloch Music Festival ('93–97); Director, Composers Symposium ('90–97) (Newport, OR); and served as the National Chairman of the Society of Composers, Inc. (1988–97). Composer of chamber and symphonic music and author with published/recorded works and performances across the US and internationally, Dr. Steinke is the current national president of NACUSA and serves on the NACUSA Cascadia Chapter Board.

Jeff Winslow - *Epigraph*, for mezzo-soprano and piano

In this song, a bereaved mother paces a Sumatran beach, pouring out her grief, on a typically calm and sunny tropical day while the ocean laps lazily nearby. The water betrays no sign of the horror it unleashed on her people just a few days before, in one of the most deadly tsunamis of all time. Yet, in the wake of her desperate demand, something changes. A reverberant feeling of empathy, even sorrow, arises out of the depths from a long way away, speaking to our human need for connection in times of deep grief.

A fourth-generation Oregonian and former electronics engineer, **Jeff Winslow** seeks the heart of natural and psychological landscapes through music. His work has been performed by Fear No Music, The Ensemble of Oregon, and the Resonance Ensemble, and also at Cascadia Composers, Seventh Species, Cherry Blossom Musical Arts, and Oregon Bach Festival concerts. The Friends and Enemies of New Music, a New York-based composers' group, recognized Winslow's work with an honorable mention in 2010. Winslow is a founder of Cascadia Composers, serves Cascadia as board member and secretary / treasurer, and just this year enjoyed auditing three cycles at the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music.



Eight of the *Shades of Autumn* program selections feature mezzo-soprano and composer [Lisa Neher](#) (DMA), who brings dramatic specificity and committed physicality to her performances. Lisa performs with The Resonance Ensemble, Opera Theater Oregon, and has soloed in Duruflé's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, and *Coronation Mass*, Bach's *Magnificat* and *Ascension Oratorio*, and Arvo Part's *Pässio*. A composer and contemporary music specialist, Lisa is a fearless performer of new works whose appearances include the New Music Gathering in Boston, the Iowa Composer's Forum, and the International Saxophone Symposium.

Additional performers include:

Madeleine Ross, soprano - Amelia Lukas, flute - Catherine Lee, oboe - David Burham, violin
Julie Asparro and Hillary Oseas, violas - Nancy Ives, cello - Brandon Azbill, guitar
Colleen Adent, Paul Safar, and Sequoia, piano

Cascadia Composers engages our community through the creation, performance, and promotion of contemporary musical art, while providing resources and opportunities to composers in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The largest of the ten chapters in the National Association of Composers USA, Cascadia Composers offers its members educational enrichment and presentation opportunities through monthly meetings. Members work in virtually every musical genre: chamber music, jazz, choral music, musical theater, electronic and electro-acoustic music, world music and orchestral music. Cascadia Composers' members include independent professionals, composer/educators and students. Fostering a rich collaboration with local musicians, members benefit from being part of a regional community of composers who share common goals and aspirations.

www.cascadiacomposers.org



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For additional information, media materials and interview inquiries, please contact:

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