



## Student Composers Recital

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Eucalypti (2025) I. Threads II. Petrichor	Justin Trujillo (b. 2004)
Leslie Vazquez, marimba	
Fertile Valleys (2023)	Armando Muse (b. 2003)
Mia Kawakami, clarinet   Paul Salzberg, piano	
Live Forward and Reminisce the Past (2025)	Ster Montes (b. 2004)
Ster Montes, tenor   Paul Salzberg, piano	
Jim for mixed ensemble (2024)	Armando Muse
(MIDI playback)	
Prelude & Fugue (2025)	Kailer Bibbins (b. 1999)
Kailer Bibbins, piano	
Flip Side Switched (2024)	Tim Erdenesaikhan (b. 2005)
Tim Erdenesaikhan, piano	
A Tahoe Pastorale for Brass Quartet (2024)	Justin Trujillo
Armando Muse, trumpet 1   Anthony Alvarez-Chavez, trumpet 2 Anthony Munroe, horn   Michael Ruiz, trombone	
Boundless Grace (2024)	Evan Wright (b. 2002)
Alex Hawvichorst and Matthew Galinato, trumpet Anthony DePage, horn   Michael Ruiz, trombone Hunter Dalton, tuba	
Porcelain (white flight) (2022)	Abigail Cole (b. 2000)
Abby Cole, voice/guitar   Naomi Baraban, bass guitar	
Theia (2024)	Jesse Barba (b. 2004)
Lauren Fortes, Mia Fearon, Eden Tabios, Jesse Barba, percussion	

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### Student Composers – March 10

***Eucalypti***, titled after the uncommon plural form of eucalyptus, is a foggy swan song to early memories. Throughout my childhood, my mom and I would visit my Tía Clemen on weekends in San Francisco. We would cross the Golden Gate and cruise through the dense eucalyptus groves along Highway 1. This was my favorite part of the trip, even more so than the bridge itself. The scent of these trees still lingers in my mind, bringing me a sense of comfort. As I grew older, I learned that eucalyptus trees are widely disliked. They are not native to California, and their shallow roots make them prone to falling in storms. This duality of beauty and peril, nostalgia and reality is present through both movements of *Eucalypti*.

Movement I reflects my childhood wonder toward these trees, full of warmth and curiosity, yet threaded with harmonic and rhythmic dissonance, foreshadowing the next movement. Movement II brings that underlying danger to the forefront, highlighting their ominous nature.

**Justin Trujillo** is a composer and educator from California's East Bay with a background in both jazz and classical idioms. His works have been performed by world-renowned ensembles, including Hub New Music. Currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Theory/Composition at California State University, Sacramento, Justin studies under Dr. Shuying Li. His music takes inspiration from personal life experiences such as culture, events, and art. Musically, he is inspired by early 20th century concert music, renaissance polyphony, hip-hop, and alternative rock/metal.

Along with composing, Justin is an active educator, passionate about guiding students in their musical journeys. In his free time, he enjoys hiking, photography, and scenic coastal drives, seeking inspiration from the world around him.

***Fertile Valleys*** was originally written as a piano and voice submission for a call for scores, but never had the proper chance to be premiered. Here, the clarinet takes over the vocal line to evoke a longing, lyrical quality as the extended chordal arpeggiation in the piano line serves to further the search for home in this bitonal exploration.

As a Sacramento native composer and trumpeter, **Armando Muse** has spent years developing his compositional skills and fostering connections within the local music community. He has performed in bands such as: the Sacramento Youth Band, West Sacramento Community Orchestra, the River City Swingers, Sac State's Concert Band, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, 1:30 PM and 3:00 PM Jazz Ensembles, and University Chorale. He volunteers regularly with Sacramento Youth Band, directed by Sac State alumnus Vincent Salvitti, to march in parades throughout Northern California. During his time at Cosumnes River College, he collaborated with his peers to create and perform original arrangements and compositions.

From trumpet etudes to symphonic orchestra works, Armando aims for versatility to further broaden his artistic range and expression. He is currently cultivating his compositional chops by pursuing a Bachelor of Music Theory and Composition at Sac State. Outside of school, Armando engages with a variety of creative mediums such as cooking, writing, digital art, and board game development. As a Sacramento native composer and trumpeter, Armando Muse has spent years developing his compositional skills and fostering connections within the local music community.

***Live Forward and Reminisce the Past*** is about the past experiences and the history that had made meeting people happen. The world is grand, with many different moving parts, with moments being

created just by pure chance. The piece is about the joy and nostalgia that washes away with age, with a group of sailors waving goodbye to the past and starting anew in their next journey.

**Ster Montes** is an up-incoming composer from Sacramento, California. Raised and born in the Bay Area, Ster had interacted with many people that gave him inspiration and thought, especially the friends he made along the way.

Armando Muse's up-and-coming board game, titled "Occult Classic," features a pantheon of Gods that the player can summon by sacrificing their followers. The God of Fortune, Jim, appears to be nothing more than a simple salaryman, but there's much more to his mythical charm than he lets on; this theme captures this mysticity and godhood, evoking a sense of wonder and excitement befitting the God of Fortune. If you're interested in learning more about Occult Classic, follow @occult\_classic\_games on Instagram.

**Kailer Bibbins** is a pianist, composer, and organist from the Sacramento area. Completing bachelors degrees in piano performance and composition in 2025, he is also the accompanist for the choral and voice programs at American River College, as well as accompanying church and high school choirs around the area. Outside of music he spends his time with his elderly dachshund and enjoying a fine cup of coffee.

A set of 5 short pieces for piano, ***Flip Side Switched*** was written for composition projects in Tim's theory and composition classes. In the order that they were composed, *Flip Side Switched* is about developing as a person and how perspectives shift.

**Tim Erdenesaikhan** is a Mongolian American composer and pianist from the Bay Area. Playing piano since he was 10, his private lessons emphasized classical music. Tim chose to pursue a career in music during his last year of high school. During the same time, he also started composing his first songs in genres such as Hip-Hop, Pop, and Instrumental. Sharing music with his friends and family, songwriting, producing, and recording further sparked his passion to become a professional musician. Currently, he is pursuing his Bachelor of Music in Theory and Composition at Sacramento State, eager to perform, teach, and compose.

***A Tahoe Pastorale*** was written primarily in a hotel room in South Lake Tahoe, California. After premiering my Missa Brevis Sacramentum just a few months earlier, I decided to pause choral writing altogether to focus on orchestral score study and my multi-percussion piece, Lingered Residue. However, the quiet allure of winter in Tahoe and my growing fascination with Cecil Effinger's Four Pastorales for oboe and chorus drew me back to the choral medium.

While the piece was originally written for SSAA choir, I wanted to make an instrumental version inspired by performance practices of renaissance period sacred music (subbing in instrumentalists for singers, doubling parts on instruments, etc). This makes the music more accessible for younger groups as well as a variety of ensembles.

***Boundless Grace*** was written for my mom, who is the most selfless and graceful person I know. I have always been inspired by her unwavering generosity and care for the people she loves. While beautiful, her quiet nobility at times comes at the cost of her own well-being. This piece is an examination of both the beauty and sacrifice of her nobility. In three movements, the piece first begins with a triumphant character representing nobility and grace. In the second movement, the once noble character slowly begins to degrade and is eventually overtaken by a more menacing sonority. After

the second movement's horrifying climax, the seemingly unresolvable conflict between the low and high brass subsides at last. The jubilant yet absurd tone of the third movement is an abrupt detour from the previous dark and heavy character. The tumbling uneven groove represents a more nuanced illustration of grace and nobility, joyful yet unpredictable.

Ultimately, *Boundless Grace* is about the relationship between nobility and sacrifice. It is a tribute to my mom's quiet but profound strength and the unconditional love that she so readily gives to the people who are important to her. This piece is an attempt to give something back to the person that has given me everything I've ever needed.

**Evan Wright** began his musical journey in 5th grade when he first started playing the saxophone. It wasn't until high school that he began to study music seriously, taking lessons in jazz improvisation. As he progressed musically his passion for music grew leading him to pursue it as a career. After starting at Sacramento State in 2020 as a jazz performance major, his musical interests have expanded past playing and performing into composing and sharing his own music. In his sophomore year he became interested in composing and started writing music for the school's jazz combo. After some positive experiences working with performers to present his original music, he began to take composition more seriously and is now pursuing a double major in composition and jazz performance. Currently studying with Dr. Shuying Li, Evan is exploring composition from a classical perspective and hopes to find a balance between his experience as a jazz musician and his new interest in classical composition.

Written during Black History Month in 2022, *Porcelain* was conceived as a reaction to the fragile and conditional activism of the white people during the historic Black Lives Matter marches. The murder of Trayvon Martin on February 26th, 2012, sparked the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement, resulting in a wide variety of reactions from the American public. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmed Aubrey resulted in organized uproar from the public and created what is now known as 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

*Porcelain* is a multi-layered metaphor for the cost of white allyship to marginalized communities. Porcelain is a type of stoneware and is generally not considered fragile. However, when it breaks it is incredibly sharp and must be repaired delicately. In Japan the tradition is called Kintsugi, meaning to use gold or silver powder to repair cracks in broken porcelain and other pottery. Kintsugi is similar to the traditional Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi which is an embrace of the imperfection. By fixing the porcelain bowl with other materials one avoids waste and adds a degree of unique beauty to the piece while strengthening its durability.

This process of Kintsugi inspired me, because it takes time and dedication to fix something once broken. The process necessary to fix our broken systems is grueling and complicated. When marginalized communities take the time to educate white people on their experiences, they are sharing a unique beauty in knowledge. It is a disservice to marginalized peoples for white people to perceive the sharing of that knowledge as an attack.

I use broken porcelain as a metaphor for a phenomenon I have witnessed many times in activist circles. It is possible to have the best of intentions and still be a hinderance to freedom movements. *Porcelain* depicts the story of whiteness in America and how often the oppressor sees equality as injustice. Often leading to the oppressor asking for sympathy from the oppressed for the system of inequality they created.

As a white person I feel it is my duty to use my privilege wherever possible to dismantle systemic oppression. As an ally I am a tool in the resistance movement, not an arbiter but a mouthpiece. It is incredibly important for me to educate myself and others on the history of the black resistance movement.

**Abigail Cole** is a second-year composer and performer at the Sac State School of Music. Composition is a more recent endeavor for Abby beginning in 2022 under the guidance of Dr. Shuying Li. An interdisciplinary artist, their art is the result of time spent working in multiple artistic disciplines such as Theatre, Dance, and Music. Much of Abby's work centers around activism, personal experience, and self-reflection. Currently Abby is working on a few projects including songwriting, musical theatre, and orchestral scoring. Abby enjoys writing layered pieces, woven with metaphor, inspired by history, mythology, and the human experience. Stating "I write as a way to understand myself and the world around me, thus divining meaning from the human experience and allowing me to join in the great human tradition of storytelling."

**Theia** is a hypothesized earlier sister-planet that is said to have collided with Earth billions of years ago. This massive impact left the Earth with a moon and temporary rings like Saturn. When Dr. Jordan Shippy and Dr. Shuying Li approached Jesse with the opportunity to commission a composition for the CSUS Percussion Studio; he wanted to use the opportunity to recreate a real astronomical event. Using various instruments to layer ethereal sounds, Jesse uses metal instruments to contrast some of the softer tones that mallet instruments can produce. Theia uses contrasting repeated syncopated figures to create an unstable environment. Much like the early galaxy and the state of gravitational anomalies, Theia develops to a clarity that represents the life on our planet today!

**Jesse Barba** is a percussionist, composer, and educator from Southern California. Born in Van Nuys, raised in the San Fernando and Antelope Valleys, he has had a wide range of influences including rock, blues, modern pop, jazz, and classical. Jesse has experience playing for the Antelope Valley Symphony Orchestra and as a gigging drummer. In his free time Jesse enjoys listening to works by various composers such as Stravinsky, Mozart, and Bach. Jesse is planning to earn his B.M. in music performance from Sac State. He currently studies percussion with Dr. Jordan Shippy; he has previously studied extensively with many professional artists such as Dr. Gary Heaton-Smith in composition and percussion, Tre Balfour on drum set, Mel Booker on guitar, Professor Meenah Alam in percussion, and Dr. David Newby in conducting.