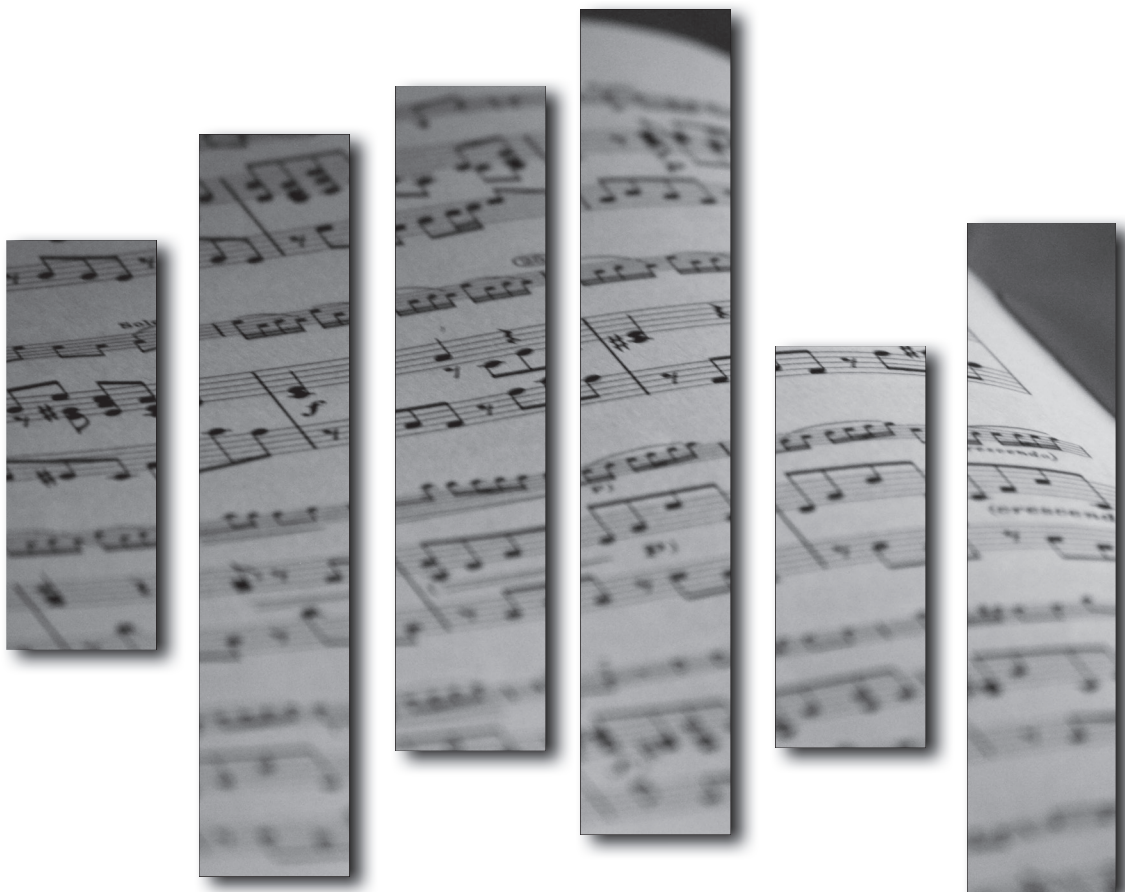


# IOWA

School of Music



## THE CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC

David Gompper, director

### Dal Niente

Premiering new music by UI School of Music composers  
Concert organized with Sivan Cohen Elias and Jean-François Charles

Sunday, April 18, 2021 at 3:00pm  
Livestream

## CNM Season 55

### Dal Niente, Guest Chamber Ensemble

Sivan Cohen Elias & Jean-François Charles, *musical directors*

## PROGRAM

<b>Dal niente, al niente</b> for soprano, flute, and harp	Hongwei Cai
<b>Music for Soprano and Electric Guitar with Live Electronics</b>	Stephan Carlson
<b>Resistance</b> for soprano and harp	Sanggeun Choi
<b>maḇūskīriēma cī</b> for soprano, flute, and harp	Max Denney
<b>Zahrat Alearear</b> for bass flute and guitar	Gregory Rowland Evans
<b>When the Moon Came Up</b> for soprano, flute, guitar and harp	Wenxin Li
<b>People-Shaped Boxes</b> for electric guitar and flute	Matt A. Mason Lyrics by Matt Mason and Val Siegel
<b>Mirages</b> for flute and electric guitar	Kris Peysen
<b>Kathairein</b> for harp solo	Trinton Prater
<b>birds/gulls</b> for electric guitar	Will Yager
<b>Splice</b> for flute and guitar	Geng Zhang

# PROGRAM NOTES & BIOGRAPHIES

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## ***Dal niente, al niente***

"Even with the prospect of achieving supreme power in life, one becomes nothing more than a heap of dust after death." Hongwei Cai - 2021

*Ozymandias* by Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert ... Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings,  
Look on my Works ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'—

## **Hongwei Cai**

Hongwei Cai, a Chinese composer and pianist, is currently a Ph.D. candidate in music composition at the University of Iowa. His works have been performed by the University of Michigan's Contemporary Directions Ensemble, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Chamber Orchestra, the University of Iowa Center for New Music, the Ensemble Accroche Note, and the JACK Quartet. His music has been presented at venues including the Society of Composers National Conference, the Midwest Graduate Music Consortium, the Midwest Composers' Symposium, and the Exchange of Midwest Collegiate Composers. Hongwei Cai received a M.M. degree in composition from Oklahoma City University, and a Bachelor of Literature in composition and theory from Shenyang Conservatory of Music (China). His composition teachers have included David Gompper, Josh Levine, Edward Knight, and Shenglin Jiang.

## ***Music for Soprano and Electric Guitar with Live Electronics***

Hello; we interrupt your daily digest of cat videos and meme compilations to bring you something only somewhat different. Is it noise? Is it pop? Is it rock? Is it theater? Who knows? Grab your favorite snack and your favorite drink because it's time to play some music.

## **Stephan Carlson**

Stephan Carlson is a composer and song-writer from northern Illinois. Stephan's musical interests include vocal music, including classic, contemporary, and experimental choral works, as well as a cappella and barbershop music; experimental electronic music and technologies; experimental instrumental techniques exploring the foundational, physical motions idiomatic to the playing of acoustic instruments; and popular music like rock and metal.

## **Resistance**

*Resistance* has an ironical meaning contrary to the original sense which is a refusal to accept a change or a new idea. A soprano and the harp show individually unusual techniques, creating diverse modifications along with different timbres, and mostly revolving around percussive movements and voiceless tones. It seems as if they resist their intrinsic musical methods, but their different layers and textures are smoothly merged together with contrapuntal elements, looking for a consensus.

## **Sanggeun Choi**

Sanggeun Choi is a Korean composer. His primary identity for music is based on Korean traditional musical themes and materials, which shows an aesthetic sense in Korean music, using Western musical techniques. Sanggeun is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in music composition at the University of Iowa with Dr. Sivan Cohen Elias and Dr. David Gompper. He holds the master of music degree in composition from Mannes School of Music The New School in New York City where he studied with Dr. Paul Moravec.

## ***maḇūskīriēma cī***

*maḇūskīriēma cī* is the first in a series of works inspired and informed by Kēlen, a language created by Sylvia Sotomayor that is most notable for its lack of verbs, explaining action through an invented grammatical device called a “Relational.” The piece plays with these ideas through the slow parallax between the three instrument’s parts as they frame the fragmented melody.

## **Max Denney**

Max Denney is a composer, guitarist, electronic musician, and improviser. Their practice often deals with ideas of “the natural” and the human perspective and place within natural systems, exploring these ideas using extended just intonation and open scores. They also focus on the use of ritual and repetitive action as a way of engaging with memory and ideas of the past. They are a member of composer’s collective This Machine and experimental guitar group Trio Ampliphonic; they release ambient music as Lithops. Max holds a B.M. in jazz studies from Shenandoah University and an M.F.A. in composition and performance from California Institute of the Arts.

## **Zahrat Alearear**

The word Zahrat Alearear translates to Juniper Flower. The Juniper tree is likely best known for swirling trunks, dense bush-like branches, meaty and spined leaves, and its fragrance. It has often been used in the concoction of liquors and perfumes, as well as serving a ceremonial purification purpose when burned. However, it is also the bearer of small flowers with starkly pointed petals.

## **Gregory Rowland Evans**

Gregory Rowland Evans is an award-winning composer and cellist. Mr Evans attended the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music from 2013–2017, receiving a B.M. with a double major in both cello performance and music composition where he studied cello with Lee Fiser and composition with Ellen Harrison, Mara Helmuth, and Joel Hoffman. From 2017–2019, Gregory attended the Frost School of Music, where he studied with Juraj Kojš and Charles Mason, receiving a M.M. in digital arts and sound design. He is currently a Ph.D. student in music composition at the University of Iowa, studying with Jean-François Charles. His music has been performed throughout the United States and Canada.

## ***When the Moon Came Up***

When the Moon Came Up is an ensemble piece that includes two very different themes. One is fragmental and cluttered, and the other is lyrical and melodic. These two themes contrast and develop into/from each other constantly. The lyrics of this piece are made up of fragmented syllables, words, and phrases from a Chinese folk song 小河淌水 (xiao he tang shui). The first phrase “yue liang chu lai” means “moon comes up,” which is where the title comes from.

## **Wenxin Li**

Wenxin Li is a native of Chongqing, China, and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in composition at the University of Iowa, studying with Jean-Francois Charles and Sivan Cohen Elias. Li's music has been featured in a variety of festivals, including Aspen Music Festival, Composers Conference, SCI National Conference, TURN UP Multimedia Festival, National Student Electronic Music Event, Midwest Graduate Music Consortium, FSC New Music Festival, and Midwest Composers Symposium. Her music has also been performed by the JACK Quartet, Accroche Note, Western Percussion Ensemble, and Sound Out Loud Ensemble. Li received her master's degree in composition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and bachelor's degree from Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

## ***People-Shaped Boxes***

Applying labels to others becomes a secondary skill and those people can spend their whole lives trying to break out of the boxes those labels put us in.

## **Matt A. Mason (Lyrics by Matt Mason and Val Siegel)**

Matt Mason is a composer and pianist from Lincoln, Illinois, whose music represents an intersection of music, theater, and poetry where tense constellations of pitch and rhythm combine with historical references to invoke contextual memory.

## ***Mirages***

For this piece, I wanted to explore spectral relationships between the two instruments. The guitar provides a shifting foundation for the flute to explore its various registers.

## **Kris Peysen**

Kris Peysen is a composer currently in the process of completing his Ph.D. in music composition at the University of Iowa. He holds the Bachelor of Music degree from the University of North Texas and the Master of Music degree from the University of Louisville, both specializing in composition. His works have been commissioned and performed by the Iowa City New Horizons Band, Hypercube, and the Unheard-of Ensemble, with further performances by Voices of Change, Invoke, the Out of Bounds Ensemble, saxophonist Erin Rogers, and members of the Beo String Quartet. For more information, visit his website at [www.krispeysen.com](http://www.krispeysen.com).

## ***Kathairein***

The Greek, kathairein, meaning to cleanse or to purge, is the ancestor of the English, catharsis: A process of relief via the release of energy.

## **Trinton Prater**

Trinton Prater is an American composer whose work focuses on time, memory, and non-associative affect. They graduated from LaGrange College in 2019 with a B.M. in composition and music technology, and are currently pursuing their M.A. in composition at the University of Iowa.

## ***birds/gulls***

### **Will Yager**

Will Yager is a bassist/improviser committed to experimental music, improvisation, and collaborating with living composers. He is a founding member of the duo LIGAMENT and improvising trio Wombat. Recent appearances include the Oh My Ears Festival, Big Ears Festival, Feed Me Weird Things, New Music on the Point, Cortona Sessions for New Music, and the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, where he was a Robert Black Double Bass Fellow.

### ***Splice***

This piece uses the six standard tuning notes of the guitar (EADGBE) as the tonics of six different church modes. Splicing these modes makes a connection between contemporary music and early music.

### **Geng Zhang**

Geng Zhang is a Chinese composer and second year Ph.D. student in composition at the University of Iowa, studying with Dr. Jean-Francois Charles. She received her master's degree in composition from Manhattan School of Music, studied with Dr. Reiko Fueting, and received her bachelor's degree from Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

## **PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES**

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### **Dal Niente**

Ensemble Dal Niente presents and performs new and experimental music in ways that redefine the listening experience and advance the art form. The programming, brought to life by a flexible repertoire-based instrumentation, seeks to challenge convention and create engaging, inspiring, and immersive experiences which connect audiences with the music of today.

Ensemble Dal Niente performs new and experimental chamber music with dedication, virtuosity, and an exploratory spirit. Dal Niente's roster of 23 musicians presents an uncommonly broad range of contemporary music, guiding listeners towards music that transforms existing ideas and subverts convention. Audiences coming to Dal Niente shows can expect distinctive productions—from fully staged operas to multimedia spectacles to intimate solo performances—that are curated to pique curiosity and connect art, culture, and people.

Now in its second decade, Ensemble Dal Niente has performed concerts across Europe and the Americas, including appearances at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC; The Foro Internacional de Música Nueva in Mexico City; MusicArte Festival in Panama City; The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Darmstadt Summer Courses in Germany, where it was the first-ever ensemble to win the Kranichstein prize for interpretation in 2012.

The group has recordings available on the New World, New Amsterdam, New Focus, Navona, Parlour Tapes+, and Carrier labels; has held residencies at The University of Chicago, Harvard University, Stanford University, Brown University, Brandeis University, and Northwestern University, among others; and collaborated with a wide range of composers, from Enno Poppe to George Lewis to Erin Gee to Greg Saunier and Deerhoof.

The ensemble's name, Dal Niente ("from nothing" in Italian), is a tribute to Helmut Lachenmann's Dal niente (Interieur III), a work that upended traditional conceptions of instrumental technique; and also a reference to the group's humble beginnings.

**BEN MELSKY**, harp/Executive Director

"Melsky's playing belied any perceived limits of his instrument. Even within phrases, individual notes had different colors and sensations, and melodies seemed to break free from their surroundings."

*- Chicago Classical Review*

Dedicated to connecting audiences to the music of the 20th and 21st centuries, Chicago-based Ben Melsky is Executive Director and harpist of the internationally-acclaimed Ensemble Dal Niente. In close collaboration with composers and performers he encourages the creation of new work to break pre-conceived notions of the harp's capabilities, activating new techniques, sounds, and performance practices.

Ben's concert activities include national and international appearances in solo and chamber ensemble configurations. Recently he has performed at the Library of Congress, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), the Ecstatic Music Festival at the Kaufmann Center (NYC), Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music (Germany), and Art Institute of Chicago with upcoming engagements at the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Festival Noon to Midnight, Stanford University, New Music New College, University of California Davis, and the Foro Internacional de Musica Nueva (Mexico City, MX). Having premiered hundreds of new works featuring the harp, he has worked closely with composers George Lewis, Raphael Cendo, Augusta Read Thomas, Enno Poppe, Anthony Cheung, Wang Lu, Mark Andre, Tomas Gueglio, Aican Çamci, Timothy Page, Drew Baker, Eliza Brown, Katherine Young, Jeff Parker, Marcos Balter, Fredrick Gifford, Sky Macklay, Chris Fisher-Lochhead, Mikel Kuehn, and Suzanne Farrin.

**AMANDA DEBOER BARTLETT**

Amanda DeBoer Bartlett is an experimental singer and presenter based in Omaha, Nebraska. She is a member of Ensemble Dal Niente, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, and Hasco Duo, and is the director of an experimental performance festival called Omaha Under the Radar.

As a contemporary classical music specialist, Ms. DeBoer has premiered works by inspiring musical innovators including Holly Herndon, Marcos Balter, Christopher Cerrone, Robert Honstein, Morgan Krauss, Ravi Kittappa, Fredrick Gifford, Aaron Einbond, Chris Fisher-Lochhead, Ryan Carter, Jonn Sokol, and many others.

Born and raised in Omaha, Neb., Ms. DeBoer moved to Chicago to study at DePaul University where she received a Bachelor of Music degree. She received a master's degree from the University at Buffalo, where she studied with acclaimed contemporary interpreter Tony Arnold, and a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from Bowling Green State University.

**EMMA HOSPELHORN, flute**

Emma Hospelhorn is a Chicago-based flutist, collaborator, researcher, and composer. As a flutist she is a member of Ensemble Dal Niente as well as The Machine Is Neither..., a computer music collaboration with composer Ben Sutherland that pushes the boundaries of live electronics processing through sonic and gestural control (this is to say, she makes awesome sounds happen with a wave of her hand). She is the music director of Bridging Memory through Music, a musico-social intervention for patients with dementia. A versatile and magnetic performer, she has also recorded and performed with a number of rock and pop groups, and is on the flute faculty at the Chicago Academy for the Arts and New Trier High School.

She has been featured live on numerous radio broadcasts for WBEZ and WGN 9 Chicago, and she performs regularly on stages large and small throughout the United States and Europe. Emma holds a Ph.D. in learning sciences from University of Illinois at Chicago, where her research focuses on spatial and embodied group learning in musical contexts. She also holds bachelor's degrees from Columbia University and CUNY Queens College, and was a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2007–2009. For a list of her recordings and publications, visit [www.emmahospelhorn.com](http://www.emmahospelhorn.com).

**JESSE LANGEN, guitar**

Jesse Lagen is a guitarist who specializes in new music. He works with living composers regularly and premieres dozens of pieces every season. Equally comfortable on classical and electric guitar, he seeks to push both the technical boundaries and the conceptual functions of the instrument. He can be heard regularly in Chicago, throughout the United States, and abroad as a soloist, as the guitarist for Ensemble Dal Niente, as half of Hasco Duo with Amanda Deboer Bartlett, and in duo with harpist Ben Melsky. A passionate and committed teacher of high school musicians, his students populate the finest conservatories and programs throughout the world, and have won international competitions and commissions. Jesse and his brother Tim also grew up learning Canadian fiddle tunes from their grandfather Clarence, and he plays Irish music regularly in pubs and at sessions throughout Chicago.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

For the most up to date listing of concerts and recitals please visit [arts.uiowa.edu](https://arts.uiowa.edu)  
All events are FREE unless otherwise indicated.

View livestreamed concerts at <https://music.uiowa.edu/about/live-stream-concert-schedule>

APRIL			2021
20	5:30 p.m.	DMA Recital: Kelly Hill, <i>mezzo-soprano</i>	Livestream
21	7:30 p.m.	MA Jazz Recital: Jonathan Eldridge II, <i>piano</i>	Livestream
22	5:30 p.m.	Senior Recital: Wade Carter, <i>bass trombone</i>	Livestream
22	7:30 p.m.	DMA Recital: ShengHo Wang, <i>violin</i>	Livestream
23	3:30 p.m.	DMA Recital: Lisa Lutgen, <i>oboe</i>	Livestream
23	5:30 p.m.	DMA Recital: Chieh-Chun (Anna) Chen, <i>piano</i>	Livestream
23	7:30 p.m.	Senior Recital: Ericka Barloon, <i>soprano</i>	Livestream
23	7:30 p.m.	Senior Recital: Patrick Vecera, <i>percussion</i>	Livestream
24	11:30 a.m.	Senior Recital: Amanda Happel, <i>flute</i>	Livestream
24	11:30 a.m.	Freshmen Percussion Trio Recital: Michael Hill, Charli Otto, Hannah Oberhoffer	Livestream
24	1:30 p.m.	Junior Recital: Amy Kenneson, <i>trombone</i>	Livestream
24	3:30 p.m.	DMA Recital: Sarah Hansen, <i>cello</i>	Livestream
24	3:30 p.m.	Trio Percussion Recital: Gabriel Albertus, Wil Voelker, Kraig Leahy	Livestream
24	5:30 p.m.	Student Recital: Benjamin Hahn, <i>trombone</i>	Livestream
24	7:30 p.m.	Senior Recital: Trevor Smith, <i>percussion</i>	Livestream
24	7:30 p.m.	Senior Recital: Becca Swanson, <i>organ</i>	Livestream

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