

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS



presents

JASPER SHARP
SENIOR SAXOPHONE RECITAL

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025

7:30 PM

BRAITHWAITE RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

Concert Suite I. Lively	William Bolcom (b. 1938)
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Elena Daughtery, piano

Maï	Ryo Noda (b. 1948)
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Brilliance I. Declame II. Desinvolve III. Dolcissimo IV. Final	Ida Gotkovsky (b. 1933)
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Elena Daughtery, piano

Tango Etudes No. 4 No. 5	Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)
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The Devil’s Rag	Jean Matitia (b. 1952)
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Elena Daughtery, piano

Intermission

Lessons of the Sky	Rodney Rogers (b. 1953)
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Elena Daughtery, piano

Bread and Circuses	Josh Trentadue (b. 1994)
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Iris Quartet
Jasper Scharp, soprano saxophone
Jovanny Morales, alto saxophone
Harvey Nguyen, tenor saxophone
Joel Carnero Figueroa, baritone saxophone

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Music degree with concentration in instrumental performance.
Jasper is a student of Dr. Sarah Roberts and Dr. Rico Allen*

PROGRAM NOTES

Concert Suite

Concert Suite was commissioned by the University of Michigan Band Alumni Association to celebrate the centennial of the University of Michigan Band program. The work was completed in 1998, being written for the U of M Symphony Band and esteemed saxophone professor Donald Sinta. Bolcom tailored the piece specifically to Sinta’s strengths, particularly his command of the altissimo register. Interestingly, Sinta sent some revisions to Bolcom upon doubting the feasibility of some of the passages in an early draft of the piece. Shortly thereafter, he called Bolcom to say “Don’t change any more notes. I’m taking the challenge!”

This “challenge” of a work has inspired various emotions from saxophonists ever since. Similarly to Jacob Chmara, saxophonist in the U.S. Marine Band, I was “shocked and frightened” by the difficulty of this four movement work. The first movement, marked by its dance-like quality and dramatic leaps, sets the tone for what Bolcom described as “a four-movement high-wire act.”

Mai

Ryo Noda is a Japanese composer and saxophonist celebrated internationally for his innovations in solo saxophone performance. Noda has combined traditional Japanese aesthetics with avant-garde Western techniques, forging a unique musical voice. His works are characterized by their expressive use of extended techniques and their deep connection to Japanese cultural and spiritual themes.

Composed in 1975, *Mai* utilizes Noda’s unique compositional style to tell a story of love and death. The title refers to a stylized form of dance, and the piece is designed to evoke the sound and spirit of the shakuhachi, the Japanese bamboo flute associated with Zen Buddhist meditation and Edo-period court music. The whole work is based on a narrative poem—*Mai, the Battle of the Sea*—which tells the story of a samurai general who sacrifices himself in a doomed battle to save his men. After his death, his ghost appears before his wife, who asks him why he left. “To save my army,” he replies. “And me?” she asks. “Did you think about me?”

Brilliance

French composer Ida Gotkovsky, now 91 years old, has established herself as a significant voice in modern wind and saxophone repertoire. Gotkovsky studied composition under Nadia Boulanger at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, where she gained distinction by earning first prizes in counterpoint, theory and composition. Across all of the genres she has written for— including ballet, opera, orchestra, and concerti—exists an identifying tonal language enriched with quartal harmony. In her words, her artistic mission is to “create a piece of art which is universal and which, thanks to the use of a strict modern language, helps to create a unity in the musical expression of all times.”

Brilliance was composed in 1974 and was commissioned by the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. The first movement, *Déclamé*, is evocative of an operatic recitative, giving each performer room to make their own unique interpretive musical choices. The second, *Désinvolté*, is nimble and witty, featuring fleeting chromatic runs and sudden exchanges between saxophone and piano. The third movement, *Dolcissimo*, explores sustained sweetness and coloristic nuance, weaving delicate lines through stacked fourths and fifths. Finally, the explosive *Final* demands extreme agility and control, juxtaposing bold flourishes with fierce dynamic contrast. In Gotkovsky’s own words, “Virtuosity, rhythm and dynamism dominate this Final... the work ends with strength and joy.”

Tango Etudes

Ástor Piazzolla was the foremost ambassador of Argentine tango in the 20th century. Born in Mar del Plata to Italian immigrant parents, he spent much of his youth in New York City, where he recalled, “My musical world gradually grew up round jazz, Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway... although I was both too young and too poor to go in.” His father’s love for Carlos Gardel’s nostalgic tangos and a ninth-birthday gift of a bandoneon set the young Piazzolla on a lifelong path in music. In the 1950’s, After studying with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, Piazzolla created *tango nuevo*— a bold, modern incarnation of tango that would reshape Argentina’s national sound for concert halls worldwide.

Composed in 1987, the *Tango-Études* were written for solo flute but have since found their place in the standard repertoire for essentially all woodwind instruments. Piazzolla described the études as “flute tango studies” intended for conservatory use and noted that their interpretation depends greatly on “the grace of the soloist, in particular by exaggerating the accents and breathings which must resemble the way tangos are played on the bandoneon.”

The Devil’s Rag

Christian Lauba is a Tunisian-born French composer known for blurring the boundaries between classical tradition and world music. Although much of his work reflects contemporary and avant-garde idioms, Lauba occasionally writes under the pseudonym *Jean Matitia* for his jazz and ragtime-inspired compositions.

Devil’s Rag, is a virtuosic tour de force for alto saxophone and piano. The piece evokes the spirit of the legendary violinist Niccolò Paganini, whose incredible technique inspired myths of a Faustian bargain. In a similar way, Devil’s Rag pushes the limits of both performers, demanding rapid technique, articulation, and rhythmic precision.

Intermission

Lessons of the Sky

Rodney Rogers is an American composer whose music is marked by clear structure, robust rhythmic energy, and poetic introspection. He began composing as a teenager and went on to study with figures such as Dr. Martin Jenni and Joseph Schwantner, earning degrees in composition from institutions including Arizona State University, where he later taught for over three decades. Rogers' works have been performed widely and have garnered recognition from organizations such as BMI, ASCAP, and the Tanglewood Music Center. Now retired from academia, he continues to compose while drawing inspiration from nature and the open landscapes of the American Southwest.

Lessons of the Sky takes its name from Loren Eisely’s contemplative essay *The Star Thrower*, where the sky becomes a symbol of openness, vitality, and the infinite. Rodney translates these ideas into a piece of music that is both structured and free, meditative and dynamic. The work is structured in a fast-slow-fast form, with motives and harmonic patterns constantly varied and recontextualized. Interestingly, the work makes use of dampened strings on the piano, offering a subtle percussive timbre to the palette of the piece.

Bread and Circuses

Josh Trentadue is a contemporary American composer and co-founder of the composer collective *Tetrafile*. His music often features a collaborative ethos, bringing the performers themselves into the heart of the creative process.

Composed in 2017, *Bread and Circuses* takes its title from the ancient Roman phrase “panem et circenses,” which refers to the appeasement of the public through superficial entertainment and distraction. I see the work as a commentary on modern life: the distractions that numb or even enrage, the excesses that dazzle, and the urgent need to look beneath the surface.

Spring 2025 School of Performing Arts Events

DAY	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	EVENT
Thu	Apr 24	6 pm	BRH	Bridget Gutierrez Recital
Thu	Apr 24	7 pm	Cowan	UT Tyler Bands Concert
Fri	Apr 25	6 pm	BRH	Austin Stanberry Recital
Fri	Apr 25	7:30 pm	BRH	Sydney Moseley Recital

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