

2022

CLARINET
COMPOSERS SERIES

SPOOKY SPACE JAM FESTIVAL

A CELEBRATION OF CLARINET
AND COMPOSER JONATHAN RUSSELL

A three-day celebration of the clarinet compositions of Jonathan Russell. Colorado State University clarinet students, clarinet professor Dr. Wesley Ferreira, and Jonathan Russell himself will perform works from Russell's impressive and eclectic catalogue over multiple days!

MAY 5-7, 2022

UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



A hand holding a clarinet against a starry space background. The clarinet is dark and positioned vertically, with the hand visible at the bottom. The background is a deep blue and purple space scene with numerous white stars and a bright orange and yellow light source in the upper left corner, creating a lens flare effect. The word "WELCOME" is written in large, yellow, pixelated letters across the middle of the image.

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2nd “Clarinet Composer Series” festival at Colorado State University. This event aims to feature many well-known and up-and-coming composers who have devoted much of their compositional output to creating works that feature or include our lovely instrument - the clarinet.

In 2019, we featured composer Theresa Martin and chose to name the festival “Solar Flair” after one of her most well-known pieces. This year, we are excited to feature Jonathan Russell and continue with the tradition of naming the festival after the title of one of his pieces. Jonathan Russell is an American composer and clarinetist who has written over 50 works featuring the clarinet. Russell is a pioneer in the bass clarinet world, and it was precisely with a bass clarinet in his hand when I first met Jonathan over 10 years ago. His compositional style is creative and imaginative and his performances effortless and awe-inspiring.

We are so pleased to welcome Russell in person to Colorado State University in 2022. The clarinet students have been working on his compositions all semester and are excited to work with him as they prepare to perform a recital of his compositions on Saturday, May 7th. Likewise, our composition students will enjoy their session learning about his life and career on Friday, May 6th at 11:00am. All events are free and open to the public. I will be performing Russell’s Double Concerto with faculty cellist Barbara Theim and together with Maestro Kenney and the CSU Symphony Orchestra to open the “Spooky Space Jam Festival.” Not to be outdone, Jonathan Russell himself will give a pre-concert talk, perform his new “Nomad” bass clarinet concerto in piano reduction, and conduct the CSU Clarinet Choir on Saturday, May 7th. I invite you to read through this program and attend as many events and concerts as possible!

STUDY CLARINET AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

WITH

WESLEY FERREIRA

STUDYING CLARINET AT COLORADO STATE

The clarinet students at Colorado State University get to learn and grow in a dynamic and engaging program brimming with opportunities. Under the direction of Dr. Wesley Ferreira, value is placed on achieving career goals as well as striving for personal growth. The discipline needed to develop advanced skills on the clarinet is used in a broader context. A great amount of emphasis is placed on problem-solving, attention to detail, personal accountability, and fundamentals of clarinet technique, as well as developing leadership qualities, individual expression, and becoming self-aware. These are the values that students will take away with them long after graduation, into wherever their life and career path takes them.

In the context of a supportive environment, students learn from one another by striving to succeed. Group discussion on pertinent topics, weekly performance masterclasses, and participation in chamber music groups and large ensembles allow students to become active performers and apply their knowledge in context.

Guest artists are continually brought in to stimulate learning, and outside opportunities throughout the academic year and into the summer months are encouraged and sought out to further enhance musical and artistic development.

Dr. Wesley Ferreira provides individual attention to each student, discerning their strengths and weaknesses and developing an individual clarinet curriculum to meet their needs and career goals. He encourages thinking outside of the box and developing one's marketability in the ever-evolving place of music within society. Technology is used to analyze physical and aural issues impeding growth, and Ferreira uses several non-musical devices to speak awareness and give confidence to students performing on the clarinet. His personal mantra of "Press On" has become CSU's clarinet mantra. Through persistence and determination, students can achieve success as musicians and as people.



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SCHEDULE

ALL EVENTS TAKE PLACE IN THE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THURSDAY, MAY 5 – CSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT

Wesley Ferreira and Barbara Theim Double Concerto by Jonathan Russell

7:30 p.m., Griffin Concert Hall, UCA

FRIDAY, MAY 6 – JONATHAN RUSSELL SPEAKS OF HIS COMPOSITIONS AND CAREER

11 a.m., Room 142, UCA

FRIDAY, MAY 6 – CSU SYMPHONY CONCERT

Wesley Ferreira and Barbara Theim Double Concerto by Jonathan Russell

7:30 p.m., Griffin Concert Hall, UCA

SATURDAY, MAY 7 – PRE-CONCERT TALK

11:30 a.m., Organ Recital Hall, UCA

SATURDAY, MAY 7 – JONATHAN RUSSELL CLARINET COMPOSITIONS RECITAL – PART 1

Opening performances featuring Jonathan Russell on the clarinet performing one of his own works! The talented CSU clarinet students will also perform solo and chamber pieces selected by Russell that highlight his compositional journey and evolution

12 p.m., Organ Recital Hall, UCA

SATURDAY, MAY 7 – JONATHAN RUSSELL CLARINET COMPOSITIONS RECITAL – PART 2

The culmination recital features the talented CSU clarinet students performing solo and chamber works, and then coming together as a clarinet choir to perform pieces conducted by the composer himself.

1:30 p.m., Griffin Concert Hall, UCA



JONATHAN RUSSELL BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Russell (b. 1979) creates music by turns tender and fierce, playful and profound, raw and refined, propulsive and still. In his work, he seeks to embody and express the full range of human experience in a way that speaks directly to people's hearts, minds, and bodies.

While he composes for all sorts of instruments, the extraordinary sound and spirit of the bass clarinet in particular is a driving force behind much of his work. His numerous compositions for bass clarinet(s) include solo works, sonatas, concertos, duets, trios, quartets, chamber works, and large bass clarinet ensembles. He was a longtime member of the Edmund Welles bass clarinet quartet, which channeled the ecstatic power of heavy metal through the deep acoustical resonances of four bass clarinets. He is a member, with Jeff Anderle, of the Sqwonk bass clarinet duo, which for the past 15 years has devoted itself to creating a new repertoire of expressive, vital, joyous music for two bass clarinets. He is also the founder and leader of Improbable Beasts, a professional 15-member bass clarinet ensemble in the Boston area. This group represents the culmination of Jonathan's bass clarinet journey, allowing him to fully realize the richly-textured, harmonious, ferocious music of his dreams.

Jonathan also has a significant body of work for "bass clarinet-adjacent" instruments such as Bb clarinets, saxophones, and other wind instruments. He loves the deeply human, physical quality of breath-produced sound, the wide spectrum of colors winds can produce, and the vast range of musical genres they can tap into, from Mahlerian bombast to jazz, klezmer, Balkan, Dixieland, funk, Latin, and beyond. His many wind-based compositions include works for solo saxophone, clarinet duet and trio, clarinet choir, saxophone choir, reed quintet, wind/brass octet, wind band, and clarinet and saxophone concertos. His wind works have been commissioned and performed by ensembles such as the Eastman Saxophone Project, Eastman Wind Ensemble, Imani Winds, Splinter Reeds, Nomad Session, Égide Duo, and Paradise Winds. His recent "Groovetudes" for saxophone and piano was commissioned by the International Saxophone Academy as a competition piece for their Young Artist competition. Jonathan also writes for more conventional ensembles: orchestras, string quartets, choirs, mixed chamber ensembles, solo piano, etc., and these works have been performed by groups such as the San Francisco Symphony, Roomful of Teeth, So Percussion, and JACK quartet, among many others.

Arranging music of the past for implausible combinations of modern instruments is another one of Jonathan's favorite activities. Imani Winds commissioned his woodwind quintet arrangements of *The Rite of Spring* and *Scheherazade*, which the ensemble has performed dozens of times throughout the United States and internationally. Other examples include Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* and *Dear Theodosia* from *Hamilton* for two bass

clarinets; *The Rite of Spring* for electric guitar, percussion, and two bass clarinets; and Ligeti's harpsichord work *Hungarian Rock* for reed quintet.

Many of Jonathan's projects have involved collaborations with or responses to other artists. He is fascinated by the similarities and vast differences between music and these other art forms, and by the challenges of "translating" from one to the other. He has served as music director for five evening-length dance productions with San Francisco-based choreographers Janice Garrett and Charles Moulton (Garrett + Moulton Productions), working closely with them to select, edit, arrange, and compose music for the productions, and then to organize, play in, and lead an ensemble of live musicians. In 2017, he wrote a work for the ZOFO piano duo to accompany a work of street art by Stormie Mills that he discovered while living in east London (and which has since been painted over). In 2019, he composed a piece to accompany a work by woodcarver David Esterly. That same year he composed music for the Rochester-based ensemble fivebyfive to accompany Judith Schaechter's stunning stained glass work *The Battle of Carnival and Lent*. He recently wrote his first film score for the silent film *Demons Before Breakfast*, which premiered at the 2020 "Sound of Silent Film Festival" in Chicago.

As a performer, Jonathan appears frequently as a bass clarinet soloist, and as a classical and klezmer clarinetist. He is also a sought-after guest clinician in composition, clarinet/bass clarinet, and creative/unusual musical career paths. His unique approach emphasizes staying present and open (both literally and metaphorically) and engaging students' sense of creative possibility and playfulness. He has appeared in this capacity throughout the United States, as well as in Mexico, Germany, and New Zealand. In 2021, he was one of ten bass clarinetists from around the world selected to produce a series of instructional videos and give a masterclass for the online Digital Bass Clarinet Academy.

A card-carrying music theory nerd, Jonathan's doctoral dissertation is a 400+ page harmonic analysis of the entire *Rite of Spring*. He holds degrees from Harvard University (B.A.), San Francisco Conservatory of Music (M.M.), and Princeton University (Ph.D.), and has taught at Harvard, San Francisco Conservatory, and MIT. His primary composition teachers have included Paul Lansky, Dmitri Tymoczko, Dan Trueman, Barbara White, Steve Mackey, Dan Becker, Elinor Armer, Eric Sawyer, John Stewart, and Eric Ewazen. His clarinet teachers have included Janet Greene, Alan Kay, and Jo-Ann Sternberg.

When not making music, Jonathan loves exploring cities, hiking, reading, playing word games, and improv comedy (both watching it and feebly attempting to do it himself). He lives in Cambridge, MA, with his wife and 5-year-old son.

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY **WES KENNEY**

WITH GUESTS **WESLEY FERREIRA**, CLARINET, AND **BARBARA THIEM**, CELLO

THURSDAY, MAY 5, AND FRIDAY, MAY 6
7:30 P.M. | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

A Fabled Night



Among other works on the program, the following piece by Jonathan Russell will be performed with faculty soloists.

Double Concerto for Clarinet, Cello, and Orchestra (2021)

Soloists: Wesley Ferreira, clarinet

Barbara Theim, cello

PROGRAM NOTES:

The combination of clarinet and cello has special significance for me; my wife plays the cello, and we fell in love in college playing the Brahms Clarinet Quintet together. It should perhaps come as no surprise, then, that my Double Concerto for Clarinet, Cello, and Orchestra turned out to be especially lyrical and romantic. The work is in two movements, with a slowly unfolding, lyrical first movement giving way to a fast and driving second movement. It was commissioned and premiered by the Peninsula Symphony with myself and cellist Nathan Chan as soloists. This version for a smaller orchestra was commissioned and premiered by the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra with Jeff Anderle and Hannah Addario-Berry as soloists.



CSU CLARINET STUDENT RECITAL – PART I

FEATURING THE WORKS OF JONATHAN RUSSELL

SATURDAY, MAY 7 – 12 P.M. | ORGAN RECITAL HALL, UCA

NOMAD CONCERTO

JONATHAN RUSSELL

(b. 1979)

Jonathan Russell, Bass Clarinet
Jooyeon Chang, Piano

LOCKSTEP

- I. Just A Second
- II. Lydian Lullaby
- III. Going to Eleven

Richard Galbreath, Clarinet
Rachel Phillips, Clarinet

QUARTET FOR FOUR CLARINETS

- II. Andante Serioso

Kie Watanabe, Eb Clarinet
Rachel Bowyer, Bb Clarinet
Caroline Miller, A Clarinet
Ben Landfair, Bass Clarinet

- III. Fugue

Trek Salzer, Eb Clarinet
Megan Johnson, Bb Clarinet
Savannah Nichols, A Clarinet
Raemi Morin, Bass Clarinet

KLEZDUO

Andrew Rutten, Bass Clarinet

Scotty Vela, Bass Clarinet

EVIL ROBOT SPOOKY SPACE JAM

Rachel Phillips, Eb Clarinet

Bradley Irwin, Bb Clarinet

Maddy Cort, Bb Clarinet

Claire Cunningham, Bb Clarinet

Caroline Miller, Bb Clarinet

Andrew Rutten, Bass Clarinet

Richard Galbreath, Bass Clarinet

Raemi Morin, Contrabass Clarinet

CSU CLARINET STUDENT RECITAL – PART II

FEATURING THE WORKS OF JONATHAN RUSSELL

SATURDAY, MAY 7 – 1:30 P.M. | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL, UCA

SONATA FOR BASS CLARINET AND PIANO

JONATHAN RUSSELL

(b. 1979)

Andrew Rutten, Bass Clarinet
Tim Burns, Piano

STRANGE BREW

Samuel Anderson, Clarinet
Claire Cunningham, Clarinet
Ethan Coulter, Clarinet

THIS HOMELESS WAY

I. A Shiver is All
III. This Homeless Way

Kie Watanabe, Clarinet
Richard Galbreath, Bass Clarinet

WUNITZIAN DANCES

II. Horo Choro Tango
III. Wunitzian Hoedown

Bradley Irwin, Clarinet
Trek Salzer, Clarinet

NIGHT DANCE

Rachel Phillips, Clarinet
Chris Delisa, Guitar

CLAREMONT SUITE

- I. Midnight Owl
- II. Slow Loris
- III. Les Éléphantes Dangereuses

Scotty Vela, Eb Clarinet
Rachel Phillips, Clarinet
Bradley Irwin, Clarinet
Trek Salzer, Clarinet
Samuel Anderson, Clarinet
Savannah Nichols, Clarinet
Megan Johnson, Clarinet
Kie Watanabe, Clarinet
Ethan Coulter, Clarinet
Caroline Miller, Clarinet
Claire Cunningham, Clarinet
Rachel Bowyer, Clarinet
Makaylee Lange, Clarinet
Andrew Rutten, Bass Clarinet
Ben Landfair, Bass Clarinet
Richard Galbreath, Bass Clarinet
Dylan Kelly, Bass Clarinet
Miah Tofilo, Bass Clarinet
Raemi Morin, Bb Contrabass Clarinet

JONATHAN RUSSELL PROGRAM NOTES:

Nomad Concerto: Humans evolved as nomads: hunter-gatherers following the seasonal migrations of animals. Yet today, nomadism is a distant memory for most of us, a concept both marginalized and romanticized by our society. Actual nomadic cultures have become rare, and they almost always exist on the margins of the states that contain them, often mistrusted and looked down on by others. Think of the European Roma (“Gypsies”), the Irish “Travelers”, the middle-Eastern Bedouin, the sub-Saharan African “Bushmen.” In our own society, nomadism is also often associated with marginalization, from people who live in their vehicles, to seasonal migrant workers, to homeless people. Yet nomadism is also romanticized; “Nomad” shows up as a hip name for everything from cafés to bicycle shops to lifestyle blogs to...wind octets...signaling freedom, and an unwillingness to be hemmed in by society’s conventions.

So are humans innately nomadic? Evolutionarily, the answer would seem to be “yes”...And yet, the urge for “home” also seems to be profoundly innate. We invest extraordinary resources in owning and maintaining homes, sums we would never contemplate spending on anything else. And we seem to view the lack of a “proper” home very negatively: we talk of troubled children being from “broken homes” and of course at the very bottom of our social order are those who are “homeless.”

But what is “home”? A building? A community? A landscape? An idea? How do we square our clear desire for home with our innate urge to wander and our historical origins as nomads? What, in the end, does “home” actually mean?

This piece attempts to explore these contradicting human desires for home versus exploration, being settled versus being nomadic. It is structured in four movements that flow together without pause. The first movement evokes the wide open spaces and limitless possibilities – both literal and metaphorical – of an idealized “homeland.” Movement two interrupts this idyll with crisis, forcing us to flee from the comfort and security of home, becoming involuntary nomads like so many refugees and migrants before us. The third movement reflects nostalgia for a return to that idealized “home” that may never be possible. The final movement is an attempt to come to terms with and embrace the nomadic life. It is inspired in part by the genre of raucous, joyous wind and brass “street music,” as exemplified by Somerville, MA’s Honk Festival. This music, performed in the streets and deeply connected to movements for social justice, draws on a wide range of folk traditions and cultures in an attempt to create a sense of community that transcends the insular, personal sense of “home” that our modern, physical houses create. It implies that, in the end, perhaps “home” is not so much a physical place as a place within a community. That sense of a place within a community – of *belonging* – is what we ultimately long for when we long for “home.”

Nomad Concerto was commissioned by the San Francisco-based wind octet Nomad Session, and was scheduled to be premiered by Nomad Session and bass clarinet soloist Jeff Anderle in May 2020. The pandemic quashed those plans, and it will now finally be premiered this summer in Reno at ClarinetFest. Today is the premiere of the piano reduction version of the piece, and a sort of sneak preview for this summer’s full premiere.

Lockstep: A rollicking work in three short movements, commissioned by the Harbinger Duo.

Quartet for Four Clarinets: I wrote *Quartet for Four Clarinets* for my undergraduate senior thesis. In it, I wanted to achieve a synthesis of many of the fundamental skills I had been working on as a student. As my compositional thinking tends to be very harmony-based, I especially wanted to try to develop my contrapuntal chops. I studied a good deal of Bach while working on the piece, which strongly informs the highly contrapuntal middle movements. Another important influence was jazz music, especially the work of Charles Mingus. The improvisatory spirit, the singing, human melodic lines, and the vitality and energy of jazz was a breath of fresh air for me at a time when classical music was feeling stale. The spirit of Mingus is most obvious in the outer movements, with their swinging, jazzy melodies, but what I learned from studying jazz harmony pervades the entire piece.

This Homeless Way: *This Homeless Way* is inspired by three poems by Jacob Folger, a formerly homeless person who now runs an organization called “Friend to the Homeless” (www.friendtothehomeless.org), whose purpose is “to educate on Homelessness and help people to discover simple things they can do to ease the lives of Homeless People.” All proceeds from sheet music sales and performance royalties from this piece will be donated to homelessness-related causes.

Evil Robot Spooky Space Jam: It’s Friday night. You’ve been working hard all week for your evil alien overlords. Now it’s time to kick back with your fellow evil space robots at the Evil Robot Spooky Space Jam!

Sonata for Bass Clarinet and Piano: The *Sonata for Bass Clarinet and Piano* was composed for my good friend, pianist Kate Campbell. She asked me to write something for a piano recital she was giving, but rather than writing a solo piano piece, I thought it would be fun to write something we could play together. The resulting piece contrasts jazzy riffs and grooves with quiet, lyrical sections, and is a true duet, with the piano in every way the bass clarinet’s equal.

Strange Brew: A strange piece composed for strange people.

Wunitzian Dances: The tiny Queendom of Wunitzia was founded in 1546, when, after centuries of feuding, a peace treaty was signed between the powerful Wu and Moonitz clans. This treaty established the extraordinary “bi-queenal” governing structure – two equal co-rulers, one from each clan – that has fascinated scholars of government ever since. From its founding, Wunitzia was an open and forward-thinking place, welcoming dissidents, Gypsies, Jews, escaped slaves, and others who had been exiled or driven from all over the world. Bordered by Transylvania and Austria to the west, Macedonia and Romania to the east, Argentina and Brazil to the south, and Louisiana to the north, Wunitzia’s traditional art and music incorporates aspects of all of these surrounding cultures. The traditional Wunitzian court instrument is named after its founding queens, Queen Claire and Queen Annette, and is traditionally performed in pairs, with one representing the Wu clan and the other the Moonitz clan. A typical Wunitzian dance suite, like the one presented here, consists of three dances of increasing speed and intensity: a free, rhapsodic doina, followed by a mid-tempo “dance of passion,” closing with a vigorous, up-tempo hoedown.

Night Dance: *Night Dance* is a brief, evocative work for clarinet (or flute) and guitar. It has no specific program, but its circling melodic cells, subtly shifting rhythmic grooves, and undulating harmonies evoke, for me, mysterious nocturnal creatures scurrying and dancing through an enchanted night forest. The seamless integration of improvisation and notated music in the piece makes the performing musicians' own intuition and creativity an integral component of the work.

KlezDuo: *KlezDuo* was my attempt to bring together two musical worlds that are very important to me as a performer, but that are normally kept separate: klezmer music, and my bass clarinet duo, Sqwonk. It was great fun to combine these elements together into this raucous and joyous piece.

Claremont Suite: *Claremont Suite* was composed for the 2011 Claremont Clarinet Festival, where I was Composer-in-Residence, and premiered by the festival's clarinet choir. The first movement is an arrangement of a wind octet I wrote earlier in 2011 (2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns), which was composed as a companion piece to Mozart's C minor Wind Serenade. I sought in this work to combine the clarity, resonance, and sense of drama that characterizes Mozart's "Serenade" with my own expanded harmonic palette and driving rhythms. Movements 2 and 3 are arrangements of tunes I originally wrote for a klezmer band. It was challenging but also a lot of fun to take these tunes, both of which have very free, improvisatory sections, and arrange them into fully notated music for clarinet choir. The resulting three-movement suite takes full advantage of the vast range of colors and characters that the clarinet choir can produce, ranging from the thick chords of the opening to the jazz and klezmer riffs of the second movement, to the driving dance rhythms and virtuosic runs of the final movement.



JUNIOR LIFT

CLARINET ACADEMY

June 20 - 24, 2022

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO at COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Junior Lift Clarinet Academy is an action-packed five day journey, designed for students ages 13 -18 who are seeking to expand their clarinet study within a supportive and engaging musical environment. Organized and hosted each year at Colorado State University by clarinet professor Dr. Wesley Ferreira and his graduate clarinet students, the Junior Lift Clarinet Academy is nationally renowned.

Daily lessons, warmup and technique sessions, clarinet-specific classes, chamber music performances and concerts are included as well as wonderful social interaction in beautiful Colorado.

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