New Music Greensboro presents the

**Faculty Composers Concert**

with

**Present~Continuous**

Nate Beversluis, music director

featuring

Joseph DiPiazza, piano  
Gregory Carroll, piano  
Janet Phillips, alto flute  
Mark Engebretson, saxophone  
Brian Lampkin, spoken text  
Eric Willie, percussion ensemble director

Tuesday, February 24th, 2015  
7:00 pm  
Recital Hall, Music Building

UNCG  
School of  
Music, Theatre and Dance
Program

Excuriation (2015, world premiere) 12’
Am’re Ford
(b. 1990)
Justin Bunting, Chris Eaton,
McKayla Phillips, Cassie Swiney, percussion

RedLine (2005) 7’
Steven Bryant
(b. 1972)
Justin Bunting, Chris Eaton,
McKayla Phillips, Cassie Swiney, percussion
Eric Willie, director

Choice Phobia?! (2015, world premiere) 10’
Binshan Zhao
(b. 1989)
Emily Loboda, soprano saxophone, Xin Gao, alto saxophone
Dillon Chambers, tenor saxophone, Ben West, baritone saxophone
Donald McEwan, Chris Underwood, trumpet
Corinne Policriti, horn, David Vance, trombone
Max Wang, tuba, Cassie Swiney, percussion
Nate Beversluis, director

A Winter Meditation (2015, world premiere) 5’
Gregory Carroll
(b. 1949)
Janet Phillips, alto flute
Gregory Carroll, piano

Musings, Thirteen Pieces for piano (2014, world premiere) 16’
Phillip Ramey
(b. 1939)

1. On Repose
2. On Pranks
3. On Romance
4. On the Cacophony of Bells
5. On Obsession
6. On Nervousness
7. On Loneliness
8. On Rage
9. On Enigmas
10. On Mortality
11. On Mirth
12. On Conquest
13. On Rachmaninoff

Joseph DiPiazza, piano

The Difficulties (2012) 4’
Mark Engebretson, music (b. 1964)

It’s So Easy (2014) 5’
Brian Lampkin, words (b. 1961)

Brian Lampkin, spoken text
Mark Engebretson, baritone saxophone
**Program Notes**

**Excruciation:** the act of inflicting intense pain: torturing; subjecting one to intense mental distress. This is the only word that I feel encapsulates the event that influenced this piece—the crucifixion of Jesus. I took interest in this story and used it as thematic material for the piece. The piece is not programmatic, but rather a reflection of the text. There are moments of solace along with moments of great intensity. The various “sound worlds” help to highlight these different moments.

**RedLine** was originally composed for solo piano in 1999. I lived in New York City during this time, and often took the 1/9 “Red Line” train to work. This is one of the fastest, and often most densely-packed trains in the entire NYC subway system, and I used that experience as the basis for this work, while simultaneously playing on the double meaning of the word “redlining” something, i.e. pushing something to (or beyond) its limits.

**Choice Phobia!?** was written for Present-Continuous in 2015. The main idea is about choice. People, including myself, always need to make a choice—in this case I had to choose the number 2. There are two different cultures represented in this piece: Chinese and American. I tried to use Chinese music elements combined with western harmonies. This special number appears in different parts of this piece like key, instrumental group, texture, harmony, form, organization, etc. Also, the piece switches between two main theme sections and two group variations. I ultimately wanted to show the “shilly-shally” motions in this music.

**A Winter Meditation:** This short, atmospheric, and sparsely-pitched work grew out of eidetic and auditory imagery. In my mind’s eye I saw a tall dark tree, with its barren leafless limbs reaching upward into the frigid grey clouds. In my mind’s ear I heard the strum of an Asian string instrument and the plaintive call of a lonely, single loon. In composing this work my hope has been to create, for the listener, a moment of brief psychological space.

**Musings** consists of thirteen characteristic pieces of medium difficulty. My model was the famous Bagatelles by my mentor Alexander Tcherepnin, which I often played as a student. This set is dedicated to my friend Joseph DiPiazza.

- **On Repose** presents a tranquil melody centered on the note B-flat, accompanied by parallel chords.
- **On Pranks** features a rhythmic ostinato striving against impish staccato chords built on fourths.
- **On Romance** suggests a harmonically updated Chopin nocturne.
- **On the Cacophony of Bells** is a soundpiece in which clangorous cluster-chords and off-beat rhythmic patterns climax and then die away.
- **On Obsession** has stern-sounding lyricism accompanied by irreverent interjections.
- **On Nervousness** displays repeated notes moving in shifting patterns.
- **On Loneliness** is a poetic nocturne enriched by chromatic harmony.
- **On Rage** highlights strident music decorated with declamatory dissonance and interlocking octaves.
- **On Enigmas** has quicksilver figuration interrupted by plodding discord.
On Mortality is a muted study in chromatic lyricism.  
On Mirth seeks to convey joviality with a self-satirizing folksy tune.  
On Conquest is a menacing slow march that finishes in triumph.  
On Rachmaninoff, a small tribute to the great Russian composer-pianist, is  
generated by the opening pathétique theme of his unfinished C-minor piano concerto  
from 1889.

The Difficulties sprung forth from absence. Composer Mark Engebretson and writer  
Brian Lampkin used a film they had never seen—and knew nothing about—as source  
material. We recommend the practice, because the creation of “The Difficulties” was  
one of those rare moments in artistic life when it all appears before you: the words,  
the music, the ideas come together in a prime example of “first thought, best thought”  
as a creative principle. The song has become a hit (relatively speaking), and  
demanded a companion piece.

And It’s So Easy was born, but what a difficult birth. The irony is too obvious, but we  
labored over “It’s So Easy.” The rewards of this kind of work are different, and  
perhaps more satisfying. The independent components struggled to adhere, but when  
it finally puzzled into place, the whole became a beautiful thing. Together, “The  
Difficulties” and “It’s So Easy” map out approaches, or rather, reveal the varied  
necessary approaches in the creative act. Yeah, yeah, it is and isn’t so easy.

Biographies

Am’re Ford is a 24-year-old Master’s student at the University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro studying composition. Ford began arranging for his high school pep band  
as a sophomore and took his first composition lesson his 2nd year of college. He has  
written pieces for woodwind duet, full orchestra, and choir and maintains a steady  
gig as an orchestral arranger during the holiday season. In June of 2012, Am’re was  
commissioned to write a piece by two professors of Langston University in Langston,  
Oklahoma. The piece, Freedom Suite, was written for soprano, mezzo soprano, violin  
and piano. Freedom Suite was premiered in the spring of 2013 in Birmingham,  
Alabama during the National Association for the Study and Performance of African  
American Music national conference.

Steven Bryant trained for one summer in the mid-1980s as a break-dancer, was the  
1987 1/10 scale radio-controlled car racing Arkansas state champion, and has a Bacon  
Number of 1. He is also Distinguished Visiting Professor of Composition at the  
University of North Carolina Greensboro for the 2014-2015 academic year. Steven  
studied composition with John Corigliano at The Juilliard School, Cindy McTee at the  
University of North Texas, and Francis McBeth at Ouachita University, He resides in  
Durham, NC with his wife, conductor Verena Moesenbichler-Bryant.

Binshan Zhao (b. 1989) is a graduate student in the composition masters program at  
the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is an international student from  
China—he also is Mongolian and was born in Inner Mongolia. In 2002, he studied  
composition and piano performance in the Affinity Middle and High School of Art  
College of Inner Mongolia University, which is famous for Mongolian traditional  
music and art. In 2007, he began to study Composition and Composition Theory with  
Professor Zheliang Zhao at Tianjin Conservatory of Music. During this time, he has  
studied western music and wrote many different kinds of pieces such as strings,  
woodwind, and piano. In 2012, he received his bachelor’s degree and now has been  
studying music composition with Mark Engebretson and Steven Bryant at UNCG.
Dr. Gregory Carroll is an Associate Professor in the School of Music at UNC-G, where he teaches courses in music theory, history and literature. He was the first winner of the Outstanding Teacher Award in the School of Music, and first winner of the UNCG Excellence in Online Education Award.

He earned his masters and doctorate in Music Composition and Theory from the University of Iowa. Prior to coming to UNCG in 1981, he taught at The University of Iowa and Indiana State University.

His compositions have been performed at regional and national conferences in the United States, and in Canada, Alaska, Europe, and Australia. He has frequently served as finalist judge for state, regional, and national composition contests and has published theoretical articles in state and national journals. Dr. Carroll previously served as President of the Southeastern Composers League. He currently serves as Composition Area member of the National Student Advisory Council for the College Music Society.

Although the American composer Phillip Ramey has produced an appreciable body of orchestral and chamber music—including a horn concerto premiered by Philip Myers with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Slatkin—the piano has been his favored medium throughout his career. Ten sonatas, the substantial Piano Fantasy, the satiric Leningrad Rag (written for Vladimir Horowitz) and numerous multi-movement sets are highlights of a solo-piano catalogue of some fifty scores—about half of his musical output. The piano also figures prominently in Ramey’s symphonic efforts, featured in three concertos, the Concert Suite for Piano and Orchestra and the Color Etudes for Piano and Orchestra.

Born in Elmhurst, Illinois on 12 September 1939, Ramey began piano lessons at age seven. Crucial for Ramey’s development was his period of composition study, from 1959 to 1962, with the Russian-born composer Alexander Cherepnin (1899–1977): first at the International Academy of Music in Nice, France, then at DePaul University in Chicago. Later composition studies were at Columbia University with Jack Beeson (1962–65).

On November 14, 1985 Proclamation for Orchestra, Ramey’s orchestration of Aaron Copland’s Proclamation for Piano, received an unusual bi-coastal premiere: by the New York Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Erich Leinsdorf.

Ramey is also a well-known writer on music: the author of hundreds of liner notes for recordings and an exhaustive trove of program notes produced during his sixteen-year tenure (1977–93) as Program Editor for the New York Philharmonic. In 2006 he received the ASCAP Deems Taylor/Nicholas Slonimsky Award for Outstanding Musical Biography for his book Irving Fine: An American Composer in His Time, published by Pendragon Press in association with the U. S. Library of Congress.

(Biography by Benjamin Folkman)

Mark Engebretson (b. 1964) is Associate Professor of Composition and Electronic Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the recipient of a Barlow Commission (for Bent Frequency), North Carolina Artist Fellowship in Composition (for the Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Orchestra), a Fulbright Fellowship for studies in France, and has received major commissions from Harvard University’s Fromm Music Foundation (Acrylic Waves), the University of Wisconsin-
Madison (They Said: sinister resonance), the Thomas S. Kenan Center for the Arts (Deliriade) and the Barlow Foundation He is the founder of the UNCG New Music Festival.

Engebretson’s creative work is driven by melody, timbre, virtuosity, clear and balanced formal structure, the integration of new media, multiple levels of associations, and a desire for fresh, engaging musical expression. Recent work has included strong overtones of pop music and creative intersections with written texts. Dr. Engebretson taught composition at the University of Florida, music theory at the SUNY Fredonia and 20th-century music history at the Eastman School of Music. He studied at the University of Minnesota (graduating Summa cum Laude), the Conservatoire de Bordeaux (as a Fulbright Scholar), and Northwestern University, where he received the Doctor of Music degree. At Northwestern he studied composition with M. William Karlins, Pauline Oliveros, Marta Ptaszynska, Michael Pisaro, Stephen Syverud and Jay Alan Yim and saxophone with Frederick Hemke. His teachers in France were Michel Fuste-Lambezat and Jean-Marie Londeix.

www.markengebretson.com
http://www.youtube.com/user/mysterE512

Brian Lampkin’s career has many insignificant highlights. Let’s call them moments of “pathetic fame.” To wit: his blurb is on the back cover of the second hardcover edition of Samuel Delany’s Times Square Red, Times Square Blue. At seventeen, he appeared in an article in the Tonawanda News after nearly drowning in the Niagara River. His song, “Falling Star,” appeared on the CD Crossroads Vol. II: Original Music from the Clarence Center Open Mic, and most recently, his poem “Jimmy Jazz” will appear in Clash At Night an anthology of poems about “London Calling.” Surprisingly, he is an owner of Scuppernong Books in Greensboro and is actually married with three children.

Joseph Di Piazza has performed extensively in the United States, Canada, China, and Europe as a recitalist, chamber player, and soloist with symphony orchestras. He has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards including: Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto soloist in Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, Chopin recital at the Chicago Art Institute as winner of the Chicago’s Women’s Club Piano Competition, MacDowell recital at Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University as winner of the Illinois National Federation of Music State Competition. In addition to numerous University guest artist recitals such as the University of Alberta, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Kentucky, other venues include the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for the Performing and Cultural Arts, and Concert Series at the Art Museums of Washington DC, Cincinnati, North Carolina and Kentucky.

Nate Beversluis is a pianist, conductor and composer/arranger, currently in his fifth season as Resident Conductor with Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. In this position he leads a variety of pops and classical concerts as well as creating and leading the hilariously entertaining children’s concerts which reach nearly 50,000 students in North Carolina. Pops artists he has worked with include John Pizzarelli, Hilary Kole, Franc D’Ambrosio, Nicole Parker, Ali Mauzey, Steve Lippia, Stephen Freeman, Mark McVey, and John Pagano. He serves as assistant conductor and frequent concerto accompanist to Dmitry Sitkovetsky, as well as Music Director of the flourishing Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra program. He conducts Greensboro Symphony as a ballet orchestra for local productions. Recent guest conducting engagements include Ohio Southwest Regional Orchestra, CCM Philharmonia, and
Orlando Philharmonic. He is adjunct faculty at the School of Music, Theatre and Dance at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he teaches conducting and leads the new music ensemble.

**Present--Continuous** is the resident new music ensemble at UNCG. It is comprised of some of the best performers in the UNCG musical community, and dedicated to presenting masterworks by leading contemporary composers alongside new works written for the group by UNCG student composers.

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