



CLEVELAND  
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

2025-26  
SEASON

# CONCERT SERIES



## About the Cleveland Institute of Music

The Cleveland Institute of Music empowers the world's most talented classical music students to fulfill their dreams and potential. Its alumni command hallowed stages across the globe as soloists, opera leads, chamber musicians, and ensemble members; compose meaningful, award-winning music; produce Grammy Award-winning recordings; and are highly sought-after teaching artists, administrators, and thought leaders. CIM's faculty likewise hail from around the country and across the world, giving students "The CIM Advantage" as they embark on professional careers. The school's increasingly diverse collegiate and pre-college student bodies benefit from access to world-renowned visiting artists and abundant performance and outreach opportunities, and from the rich curriculum offered by CIM's partner, Case Western Reserve University. A leader among its peers, CIM is the largest presenter of free performances, masterclasses, and community concerts in the Midwest, hosting hundreds of events each year on campus and at locations regionwide, including Severance Music Center. Explore [cim.edu](http://cim.edu) to learn more.



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**NEW MUSIC SERIES**  
**Keith Fitch, director**

Sunday, April 19, 2026  
4pm | Mixon Hall

**Composition Department Recital**

Brennen Taggart  
(b. 2004)

Concerto for Double Bass and Chamber  
Orchestra (2026)  
I. Allegro ma non troppo

**Brennen Taggart**, solo double bass  
**Jake McQuaid**, flute  
**Sara Brown**, oboe  
**Lucas Black**, bassoon  
**Chloe Raber**, harpsichord  
**Rebekah Hou**, harp  
**Ella Golden**, violin I  
**Blake Armstrong**, violin I  
**John-Paul Hernandez**, violin II  
**Fiona Khuong-Huu**, violin II  
**Joshua Felser**, viola  
**Thomas Song**, cello  
**Yuming Zhu**, double bass  
**Nathaniel Hill**, conductor

Nikolas Scheiber-Loeis  
(b. 2004)

Chorale Variations (2025)

**Tao Ke**, clarinet  
**Andrew Schneider**, bass clarinet

Alexandra Monafu  
(b. 2004)

AWAKE;ASLEEP (2026)

**Yifei Duan**, cello

**Mitchell Beckmann**, marimba

Andrew Schneider  
(b. 2007)

Stars Shine, the Sea Swallows (2025-26)

**Fiona Khuong-Huu**, violin

**Yahli Anter**, violin

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### **Concerto for Double Bass and Chamber Orchestra**

**Brennen Taggart**

Originally for Baroque orchestra with the modern double bass in solo tuning, this work has since evolved to be performed with modern instruments with the addition of the harpsichord. To maintain the original transposition, the bass must be tuned a minor third above standard tuning.

The first movement unfolds as a wild set of dances, using shifting meters and high energy figures to provoke conflict and question within the ensemble. The center of the movement presents a cadenza characterized by extended tonality and Appalachian blues from which a section inspired by Middle Eastern influences emerges.

At its core, this movement is a plea for unity.

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### **Chorale Variations**

**Nikolas Scheiber-Loeis**

*Chorale Variations* is a set of variations based on J.S. Bach's Chorale No. 6 ("Christus, der ist mein Leben"). I took the chorale's melody (which is likely a quotation from a Lutheran hymn) and filled in the spaces to create my theme. I then reharmonized the melody in my own harmonic language and used those chords to create the contrapuntal textures heard throughout the piece. The only time Bach's original chorale can be heard is in the final section of the piece, in which the texture fluctuates between the tonal chorale and my interpretation of the hymn.

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### **AWAKE;ASLEEP**

**Alexandra Monafu**

*AWAKE;ASLEEP* is a short work for marimba and cello inspired by the feeling of drifting in and out of sleep. While composing, I was drawn to the blurred line between awareness and dreaming; moments where sounds feel clear and grounded, followed by passages that seem distant or suspended. The marimba and cello move between these states, sometimes in sync and sometimes apart, reflecting the subtle shifts of consciousness that occur in this in-between space.

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## **Stars Shine, the Sea Swallows**

**Andrew Schneider**

This work is for two violins, written for Fiona Khuong-Huu and Yahli Anter. *Stars Shine, the Sea Swallows* is driven by a push and pull in meter exacerbated by register and dynamics. The music can be characterized as curious and innocent, while confronted by stately forces.

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## **ABOUT THE COMPOSERS**

**Brennen Taggart** is a bassist-composer established in Cleveland, Ohio. In 2024, he composed a chamber symphony titled *Viṣṇu* for the Chautauqua Festival Orchestra and a double bass quartet titled *Yggdrasil*. In 2022, he toured Europe and North America with the USA National Youth Orchestra, performing in prestigious venues such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the KKL at the Lucerne Festival, and Carnegie Hall. Taggart's *Bass Quartet No. 1* was premiered at the Berlin Konzerthaus in that same year. He has previously studied at the University of Louisville and currently studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music with Charles Paul and Keith Fitch pursuing a degree in bass performance with a minor in composition.

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**Nikolas Scheiber-Loeis** is a junior at CIM studying for a Bachelor of Music in composition with Keith Fitch. He grew up in New York City and previously studied composition at the New York Youth Symphony with Dr. Kyle Blaha. He has played both violin and viola in many ensembles over the years, including the CIM Orchestra and numerous chamber groups. His works have been read and performed by performers including Jessica Meyer, Emi Ferguson, the American Modern Ensemble conducted by Dr. Erin Bodnar, the DeCoda Ensemble, the SoRi Trio, and the NYYS Orchestra. Scheiber-Loeis is the recipient of the 2023 NYYS Composition Directors Choice Award.

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**Alexandra Monafu** is a Romanian-American composer whose works have been performed internationally by distinguished musicians and ensembles such as the Mivos Quartet, Sean Gabriel, Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, and more. She is actively involved in the music ministry at the Cleveland Romanian Baptist Church, serving as an accompanist, arranger, and conductor. Her compositional development has been shaped through studies with notable composers including Oliver Weber, Philippe Leroux, and Andrew Rindfleisch, as well as participation in masterclasses with Martin Bresnick. She is currently pursuing a degree in music composition under the mentorship of Keith Fitch at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

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**Andrew Schneider** is a composer from Columbus, Ohio, in their first year of the bachelor's degree. Their compositional style has evolved over the past few years but has consistent neo-impressionist and absurdist influence. Schneider's music attempts to express common human experiences of young persons in America through their use of tone colors and sound painting that create nostalgic imagery.

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## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

**Keith Fitch** holds the Vincent K. and Edith H. Smith Chair in Composition at CIM, where he also directs the CIM New Music Ensemble. Called “gloriously luminous” by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, his music has been consistently noted for its eloquence, expressivity, dramatic sense of musical narrative, and unique sense of color and sonority. Reviewing a performance of his work *Totem* by Wolfgang Sawallisch and The Philadelphia Orchestra (chosen by Maestro Sawallisch to celebrate the orchestra’s centennial), *The Wall Street Journal* praised “the sheer concentration of his writing, and its power to express a complex, unseen presence shaping the course of musical events.” The American Academy of Arts and Letters has said, “[his] music reveals an individual landscape that concentrates on unusual textures and sounds – all within a strong narrative that drives towards a rich and powerful conclusion.”

His works have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia by such ensembles and soloists as The Philadelphia Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble, Colorado Quartet, Da Capo Chamber Players, guitarist Jason Vieaux, and many others. His music has been heard at the Mostly Modern Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, June in Buffalo, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and New York’s Carnegie and Merkin Halls, among others. Recent works include *Alee* for orchestra, commissioned by CIM for its centennial; *as Earth dreams*, a solo work for the renowned harpist, Yolanda Kondonassis; *still*, commissioned by the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition at the University of Chicago; and *Mirrors*, commissioned by the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation for the Bangor Symphony Orchestra.

A native of Indiana, Fitch (b. 1966) began composing at age 7 and began formal musical training on the double bass at age 11. While still in high school (age 16), he received his first professional orchestral performance. He attended the Indiana University School of Music, where he studied composition with Frederick Fox, Eugene O’Brien, and Claude Baker; double bass with Bruce Bransby and Murray Grodner; and chamber music with Rostislav Dubinsky, founder of the Borodin Quartet. He also counts Donald Erb and Joan Tower among his compositional mentors. Among his many awards are a 2023 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the 2023 Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Composer Award, the Arts and Letters Award in Music

(2024) and the Walter Hinrichsen Award (2016) from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Fromm Music Foundation Commission, three Individual Excellence Awards from the Ohio Arts Council, a Copland House Residency Award, and an Individual Artist Grant from the Indiana Arts Commission/National Endowment for the Arts. He has enjoyed multiple residencies at The MacDowell Colony and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, as well as at Yaddo, The Charles Ives Center for American Music, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and he has twice served as resident composer and faculty at the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East.

Highly regarded as a teacher, chamber music coach, and conductor of new music, he has taught at Indiana University, Bard College, and for 11 years served on the faculty of the Mannes College of Music in New York. From 2015-17, he served as composer-in-residence and director of the Young Artist Seminar in Composition at the Rocky Ridge Music Center.

He frequently appears as guest composer at colleges, universities, and summer festivals nationwide, and his students regularly win awards from such prestigious organizations as ASCAP, BMI, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Fulbright Foundation, as well as attending leading summer festivals around the world.

A passionate advocate for new music, for five years, he curated a concert series at Cleveland's Museum of Contemporary Art, and he has mentored such ensembles as Cleveland's FiveOne Experimental Orchestra and Ars Futura ensemble, as well as individual members of leading new music ensembles throughout the country. Not one to avoid controversy, in 2014, he organized and co-authored an open letter that took to task The Cleveland Orchestra for failing to program works by American composers. That letter went viral, gaining national attention and re-igniting a conversation about the place of American music on our nation's orchestral programs. Equally adept at working behind the scenes, he also guided pianist Daniil Trifonov, the 2011 Tchaikovsky Competition gold medalist, in the composition and world premiere of Trifonov's first piano concerto.

His music is published by Non Sequitur Music and Edition Peters and appears on Azica Records and Naxos Digital. He joined the CIM faculty in 2008.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, April 24**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Intensive Duo Concert**

**Saturday, April 25**

*10am, 12pm, & 3pm | Kulas Hall*

**Academy Ensembles Concerts**

**Sunday, April 26**

*2pm | Kulas Hall*

**Monday, April 27**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Brass & Woodwind Ensembles Concerts**

**Tuesday, April 28**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Advanced Piano Trio Program Concert**

**Wednesday, April 29**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Advanced String Quartet Program Concert**

**Thursday, April 30**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Friday, May 1**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Saturday, May 2**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**String & Piano Ensembles Concerts**

**Monday, May 4**

*7:30pm | Mixon Hall*

**Percussion Ensemble Concert**

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