CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

2026-27 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. 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. Explore **cim.edu** to learn more.



CLEVELAND
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

NEW MUSIC SERIES
Keith Fitch, director

Sunday, November 15, 2026
4pm | Mixon Hall

Composition Department Recital

Anh Kieu
(b. 2007)

petrichor (2026)

Kyuwon Baek, flute
David Chang, clarinet
Sean Ellis, violin
Asim Kapoor, cello
Ka Yiu Avis Yan, piano
Olivia Keenan, percussion
Nathaniel Hill, conductor

Sean Murphy
(b. 2007)

Re-materialization (2026)
Reflection
Refraction

Carter Doolittle, soprano saxophone
Brennen Taggart, double bass
Olivia Keenan, percussion

Andrew Schneider
(b. 2007)

3 Pieces for Trombone Quartet (2026)
Fanfare
Distant, Ghostly
Pompous

Gabe Nieman, trombone
Clay Mason, trombone
Vidyuth Guruvayurappan, trombone
Devin Spaulding, bass trombone
Andrew Schneider, conductor

Owen Axelberd
(b. 2006)

Digital Sawdust (2025)

Owen Axelberd, mandolin
Brennen Taggart, double bass

Brennen Taggart
(b. 2004)

3 Miniatures for Solo Piano (2026)

I. Meditation
II. In the Crisp Autumn Air

Andrew Maskoff, piano

III. Waltz

Linx Xing, piano

Alexander Moiseev
(b. 2004)

Become Stellar (2026)

Jake McQuaid, alto flute
Victoria Goettel, viola
Wyatt Knutson, double bass

Wyatt Knutson
(b. 2004)

Electrum (2026)

Sebastian Kelzenberg, oboe
Andrew Schneider, clarinet/bass clarinet
Clay Mason, trombone
Amelia Korbitz, violin
Katie Snelling, viola
Asim Kapoor, cello
Wyatt Knutson, double bass
Alexander Moiseev, conductor

Nikei Kai Bowen
(b. 2002)

Hada (2026)

David Chang, clarinet
Carter Doolittle, saxophone
Emma Welsh, viola
Nikei Kai Bowen, cello
Junrong Melanie Liu, piano
Nathaniel Hill, conductor

ABOUT THE MUSIC

petrichor **Anh Kieu**

petrichor is my reflection of ideas regarding the rain, and the process of 'calling' for the rain that is prominent in many cultures. In fact, the structure of the piece is loosely inspired by a Vietnamese folktale, that whenever toads croak with particular intensity, thunder and rain comes, as if they were calling to the sky — similarly to how we smell the scent of *petrichor* before the downpour. The piece calls for the rain through a floating, quasi-improvisatory flute melody, accumulating into rings of metal wind chimes underlining drum-calls, from which emerges efflorescent blooms of music as rainfall arrive and the earth grows anew.

Re-materialization **Sean Murphy**

I wrote this piece not thinking of Bebop music, yet as time went on, it progressively started to sound a bit similar to Bebop in its own, extended, almost re-materialized way. This ensemble is very similar to those used commonly during the Bebop jazz era. I started to lean into this fact heavily in the second movement, but I kept the harmonic style from the first movement, playing each of the instruments off each other creating a fusion of two different worlds.

3 Pieces for Trombone Quartet **Andrew Schneider**

This work was written during a period where I was consuming an intense amount of Alban Berg, and there are some quotes that may stick out like a sore thumb, but that's for the listener to find. Each little piece fits into the same compositional universe but with different timbral atmospheres.

Fanfare: The material unravels itself through the ever-evolving exciting rhythms that pile on top of the other.

Distant, Ghostly: The quartet is muted throughout; this little piece is still and, although "ghostly," it is calm.

Pompous: Little motifs are used for maximum excitement!

Digital Sawdust **Owen Axelberd**

Digital Sawdust is a musical picture of our cultural air saturated by technological fallout. The separation between our "natural" lives and our digital lives has increasingly blurred over time. The work depicts this by presenting two musical strains: one inspired by EDM and internet culture, the other by bluegrass and the blues. At times these

styles are contrasted, at others they are blended. As you listen, consider what these strains may be saying to each other, where might they be agreeing and disagreeing, and who dominates by the end.

3 Miniatures for Solo Piano **Brennen Taggart**

Although bass is my main instrument, I often channel my natural creative energy through free improvisation at the piano, a daily practice of mine since I was a young boy. These miniatures emerge from the hours of practice. I wanted to show you, the audience, my creativity in its purest musical form: 1 person, 1 piano, 3 miniatures — a clear statement of rhythm, harmony, and melody.

Meditation begins, as the title suggests, in a rather subdued mood, as if settling into meditation. However, behind the calm surface, there is a storm of pain and tumult that the space of the meditation reveals.

In the Crisp Autumn Air is a beloved tune of mine. This will likely be the first of many versions of this piece. I hope to arrange it for a big band, an orchestra, or a jazz combo one day. The melody came to me during a dream in the fall of 2025.

Waltz emerged from some of my earliest composition sketches. It has grown quite a bit since those early days.

Become Stellar **Alexander Moiseev**

Become Stellar was written after I re-discovered an old flute line in a Sibelius file from 2022. The piece is around seven-and-a-half minutes long and features three instrumental solos that relate to the surrounding material. There is no extramusical narrative, aside from the fact that the work is constantly reaching upward registrationally.

Electrum **Wyatt Knutson**

Electrum is the Latin word for amber, the fossilized tree resin used in jewelry and folk medicine. Plant and animal matter can become entrapped in tree resin as it is secreted. When this resin becomes amber, the organic matter trapped within can be preserved in a fashion that maintains elements of the organism which typically cannot be fossilized. In addition, electrum is also the name of a naturally occurring alloy comprised primarily of silver and gold.

As to how this relates to the music, this piece often deals with the idea of entrapment. Musical objects appear contained within viscous sonic textures, at times undergoing processes analogous to fossilization or alloying over the course of a section, recalled later in a transformed state.

Hada **Nikei Kai Bowen**

This piece is an elegy for my grandfather. He passed when I was just a few months old, but his memory has been kept vividly alive from my mother and grandmother. This movement is part of a working collection of pieces titled *Stories from Halmeoni* (*Stories from My Grandma*).

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

Anh Kieu is a Vietnamese composition student at CIM, studying with Keith Fitch. Before coming to Cleveland, he studied piano performance at the Vietnam National Academy of Music in Hanoi and was a pianist for his high school orchestra. His works have been performed by several regional chamber ensembles, including the SIAM ensemble in Hanoi as well as traditional Vietnamese musicians.

Sean Murphy is a composer and violist based out of Atlanta, Georgia. He has won various local competitions in his home state such as the Georgia Music Educators Association Composition Competition in 2022 and attended the Brevard Music Summer Institute in 2024.

Andrew Schneider is a composer from Columbus, Ohio, in their second year of the bachelor's degree at CIM. Their compositional style has evolved over the past few years but has consistent neo-impressionist and absurdist influence. Schneider's music attempts to express the common experiences of young persons through their use of tone colors and sound painting that create nostalgic imagery. Schneider has had works premiered by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, several high school commissions, recorded with the CIM Orchestra, as well as a handful of conservatory faculty recordings over their composition career.

Owen Axelberd is a Bachelor of Music student at CIM, studying composition with Keith Fitch. His works aim to bridge gaps and forge connections between genres beyond classical music. An example of this crossover-classical flavor can be heard in his Bluegrass-inflected piece *Drive Down I-81*, which premiered at Mostly Modern Festival in 2025. Some recent achievements include being a finalist in the 2023 National Young Composers Challenge, performances from the Greater Cleveland Flute Society, and winning first prize in the 2025 Cleveland Composers Guild Collegiate Composition Competition. Most recently,

his piece *Snake Oil Trip*, commissioned by GRAMMY-nominated cellist Dave Eggar, won first prize in the 2026 Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Collegiate Composers Contest.

Brennen Taggart is a bassist-composer from Lexington, Kentucky. He currently studies double bass performance with Charles Paul and composition with Keith Fitch at CIM. As an orchestral soloist, Taggart has played the Dittersdorf Concerto in Kentucky's Singletary Center for the Arts, his own Concerto No. 1 in Cleveland's Mixon Hall, and, after being the first bassist to win CIM's Concerto Competition, he performed Eduard Tubin's Double Bass Concerto in Kulas Hall. In 2024, after composing a chamber symphony titled *Viṣṇu* for the Chautauqua Festival Orchestra students, he premiered his bass quartet *Yggdrasil* composed for the Festival's 250th year. In 2022, he toured Europe and North America with the USA's National Youth Orchestra, performing in venues such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, KKL Luzern, and Carnegie Hall, and premiering his Bass Quartet No. 1 at the Berlin Konzerthaus. Beyond classical music, Taggart is an avid performer of folk, jazz, and sacred music.

Alexander Moiseev is a composer and performer currently working towards his master's degree at CIM. In addition to his undergraduate composition degree, Moiseev also pursued a double major in music theory, researching the relationship between astrophotography data and music. Throughout his conservatory studies, he had several works performed and recorded by his colleagues around the United States and Canada. He was also the Canton Symphony Orchestra Composer Fellow in 2025, and was awarded the Donald Erb Commencement Prize in Composition from CIM. In 2022, he won the Marvin Hamlisch International Music Award in classical composition. Aside from music, Moiseev has a passion for photo and video work. He is an independent contractor for CIM, where he works on mini-documentary footage and as an event photographer.

Wyatt Knutson is a composer and bassist studying at CIM with Scott Dixon and Keith Fitch. Knutson's recent compositions deal with algorithmic and formalist approaches to musical creation. He has attended the Nief Norf and Mostly Modern summer festivals.

Nikei Kai Bowen is a composer and cellist located in Cleveland, Ohio. He is pursuing a Master of Music in composition at CIM, studying with Keith Fitch. In addition to composition, he is studying cello with Jeffrey Lastrapes. He previously studied composition and cello

performance at the University of Utah, pursuing composition with Dr. Miguel Chuaqui and cello with John Eckstein. Bowen's music is motivated by visual art, poetry, nature, culture, and relationships.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Keith Fitch currently heads the Composition Department and 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, the 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 2024 Arts and Letters Award in Music and the 2016 Walter Hinrichsen Award 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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