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2025-26
SEASON

CONCERT SERIES



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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 to learn more.



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CLEVELAND
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NEW MUSIC SERIES
Keith Fitch, director

Sunday, March 29, 2026
4pm | Mixon Hall

New Music Ensemble

Keith Fitch, director

Libby Larsen, guest composer

Kulas Foundation Visiting Artist

New Music Ensemble is generously supported by the Roy Minoff Family Fund.

Libby Larsen
(b. 1950)

Trio Noir (2022)

Tao Ke, clarinet
Andrea Wang, cello
Jingyu Xu, piano

Libby Larsen

Cowboy Songs (1979)
Bucking Bronco
Lift me into Heaven Slowly
Billy the Kid

Cassandra Dixon, soprano
Yao Xiao, piano

Libby Larsen

Turn, Turn (2011)

Drew Russell, baritone
Ralitsa Georgieva-Smith, piano

Libby Larsen

Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the
Wives of Henry VIII (2000)

II. Anne Boleyn

Zara Smith, soprano

Jonathan Fuller, piano

V. Katherine Howard

Jessica Bell, soprano

Ralitsa Georgieva-Smith, piano

Intermission

Keith Fitch
(b. 1966)

Burnt Counterpoint (2007)

Malik Nowlin, alto saxophone

Kaden Smutz, percussion

Libby Larsen

Monk's Oboe (2013)

Sebastian Kelzenberg, oboe

Amelia Korbitz, violin

Dongsub Alex Jeung, violin

Victoria Goettel, viola

Andrea Wang, cello

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Trio Noir

Libby Larsen

I composed *Trio Noir* for Romie de Guise-Langlois, clarinet; Dmitri Atapine, cello; and Hyeyeon Park, piano. I intend the piece as a film noir movie score meant to interact with your mind's eye. If you will, close your eyes and let *Trio Noir's* narrative form — *Introduction to a Flashback, Flashback, Dark Bargain, Sealed, The Caper, Doubt, Rash Action, No Way Out* — plunge your imagination with your own crime drama and cast of characters.

I love film noir — its dark plots, femme fatales, detectives, chumps, bad guys and good, loyal women — its dark, low-key lighting and high-contrast *mise en scène*. I love the sadder-but-wiser protagonist's voice-over narration and the way it book-ends the story. Most of all I love the music — the way it creates unbearable tension, its sudden, hyper-dramatic bursts, its smoldering, sultry melodies. I hope *Trio Noir* is for you, a quantum experience — flashing you back from our 2026 world into your own 1940/50 cinematic fantasy.

— Libby Larsen

Cowboy Songs

Libby Larsen

The *Cowboy Songs* are three character songs. Two of the texts are drawn from cowboy/girl poetry, “Bucking Bronco” with a text by Belle Starr and “Billy the Kid” with an anonymous text. The third, “Lift me into Heaven Slowly” is the retitled “Sufi Sam Christian” of American poet Robert Creeley.

Composed in 1979 for fellow graduate student Jeannie Brindley Barnett, I thought that these three poems made a nice set, suggesting a narrative without specifying one, giving me the opportunity to begin working with American English as a source of musical syntax and shape.

Bucking Bronco

My love is a rider, my love is a rider...
My true love is a rider wild broncos he breaks,
though he promised to quit for my sake.

It's one foot in the stirrup and the saddle put on
with a swing and a jump he is mounted and gone.
The first time I met him it was early one spring
a riding a bronco a high headed thing.
The next time I saw him 'twas late in the fall
a swinging the girls at Tomlinson's ball.
He gave me some presents among them a ring
the return that I gave him was a far better thing;
A young maiden's heart, I'd have you all know,
that he won it by riding his bucking bronco.
Now all young maidens, where're you reside,
beware of the cowboy who swings rawhide,
He'll court you and pet you and leave you to go
in the spring up the trail on his bucking bronco.

— Belle Starr

Sufi Sam Christian

Lift me into heaven slowly,
cause my back's sore
and my mind's thoughtful
and I'm not even sure
I want to go.

— Robert Creeley

Billy the Kid

Billy was a bad man
carried a big gun,
He was always after good folks
And he kept them on the run.
He shot one every morning
To make his morning meal.
And let a man sass him,
He was sure to feel his steel.
He kept folks in hot water,
Stole from every stage,
When he was full of liquor
He was always in a rage.
He kept things boilin' over,
he stayed out in the brush,

when he was full of dead eye,
other folks'd better hush.
Billy was a bad man, but
one day he met a man
a whole lot badder
and now he's dead
and we ain't none the sadder.

— *Anonymous, adapted by Libby Larsen*

Turn, Turn

Libby Larsen

Turn, Turn was commissioned to honor the 150th academic year of Gustavus Adolphus College and premiered on September 30, 2011. The setting features three tunes: "Tis the Gift to be Simple," "Turn, Turn," and "Eternal Ruler of the Ceaseless Round." The song explores themes of turning and seeking light, with a structure that includes variations of the word "turn" throughout the piece.

Turn, Turn

We turn, turn, turn in search of light
Turn, turn, turn to come 'round right;
turn, turn, turn again to find
the light without shines quietly within
and where we are is where we've always been.

We turn, turn, turn our mind and heart
to love and bind, to tear, to mend, to part;
then turn to love again and in the loving
find that love is light, a candle lit within,
and where we are is where we've always been.

We turn, turn, we turn until the turning comes 'round right
Turn, turn, in morning and in night;
Until the turning stills, and we begin
-finite and eternal-
and Light is all as it has always been

— *Bethany Ringdal, adapted by Libby Larsen*

Try Me, Good King

Libby Larsen

Divorce, behead, die, divorce, behead, die. This grade school memory game is how I first came to know about the six wives of Henry the VIII, King of England from 1509 to 1547. Since then, I've been fascinated with the personal consequences of power that befell the Tudor family and the circle of political intrigue of both church and state which caused such a wrenching in the private lives of the seven people — Henry and his six wives.

Try Me, Good King is a group of five songs drawn from the final letters and gallows speeches of Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Katherine Howard. Henry's sixth wife, Katherine Parr, outlived him and brought some domestic and spiritual peace into Henry's immediate family. Although her written devotions are numerous, her role in the story of the six wives of Henry VIII is that of a peaceful catalyst. In these songs I chose to focus on the intimate crises of the heart that affected the first five of the six wives. In a sense, this group is a monodrama of anguish and power.

I've interwoven a lute song into each song, including John Dowland's "In Darkness Let Me Dwell" (Katherine of Aragon and Katherine Howard), Dowland's "If My Complaints" (Anne Boleyn), Praetorius' "Lo, how a Rose E'er Blooming" (Jane Seymour), and Thomas Campion's "I Care Not for these Ladies" (Anne of Cleves). These songs were composed during the reign of Elizabeth I, and while they are cast as some of the finest examples of the golden age, they also create a tapestry of unsung words which comment on the real situation of each doomed queen.

Two other musical gestures unify the songs, firstly, the repeated note, which recalls the lute and creates psychological tension. The second device I created is abstract bell-tolling, which punctuates each song and releases the spiritual meaning of the words.

It is an honor to create new work for Meagan Miller and Brian Zeger and contribute to the ongoing vision of the Marilyn Horne Foundation.

Anne Boleyn

Try me, good king, let me have a lawful trial and let not my enemies sit as my accusers and judges. Let me receive an open trial for my truth shall fear no open shame. Never a prince had a wife more loyal in all duty, in all true affection, than you have found in Anne Bulen. You have

chosen me from low estate to be your wife and companion. Do you not remember the words of your own true hand? 'My own darling, I would you were in my arms, for I think it long since I kissed you. My mistress and my friend.' Try me, good king. If ever I have found favor in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Bulen has been pleasing to your ears-then let me obtain this request and my innocence shall be known and cleared

Good Christian people, I come hither to die, and by the law I am judged to die. I pray God save the King. I hear the executioner's good, and my neck is so little.

Katherine Howard

God have mercy on my soul. Good people, I beg you pray for me. By the journey upon which I am bound, brothers, I have not wronged the King. But it is true that long before the King took me, I loved Thomas Culpeper. I wish to God I had done as Culpepper wished me, for at the time the King wanted me, Culpeper urged me to say that I was pledged to him. If I had done as he wished me I should not die this death, nor would he. God have mercy on my soul. Good people, I beg you pray for me. I die a Queen, but I would rather die the wife of Culpeper.

— *Libby Larsen*

Burnt Counterpoint

Keith Fitch

When I was an undergraduate at Indiana University in the late 1980s, I had the tremendous good fortune to have as my principal composition teacher Frederick Fox, a wonderful composer and teacher who shaped so much of my musical and pedagogical thinking. As luck would have it, the year I was to take counterpoint, Fred was teaching the class. After a late night of post-concert debauchery with some friends, I prepared (as best I could!) the next morning's counterpoint assignment. After playing my homework in class, Fred, saying nothing, took out his lighter and proceeded to incinerate my feeble attempt in front of the class. Twenty years later, while relating this story to some friends, the idea and opening gestures of a work for saxophone and percussion suddenly came to me. As Fred had been a saxophonist in the beginning of his career, it only seemed natural to dedicate the work to him, in appreciation for everything he gave me as a musician and teacher. The

work is in three sections (fast – slow – fast), all linked by related harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic material (*à propos* of the “homage” nature of the piece, the middle, slow section contains music loosely reminiscent of one of Fred’s most distinctive works, *Shaking the Pumpkin* for saxophone, piano, and percussion). *Burnt Counterpoint* was composed between October 2006 and April 2007 in New York City and lasts approximately 12 minutes in performance.

— Keith Fitch

Monk’s Oboe

Libby Larsen

Monk’s Oboe for oboe and string quartet is an homage to Thelonious Monk, one of my heroes. The piece resulted from a fireside conversation at Interlochen Academy where oboist Jared Hauser and I were roasting marshmallows and talking about jazz. Though both of us are classified as classical musicians, we are really American musicians, a different kind of bird. We decided to express ourselves by creating a new composition.

— Libby Larsen

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Libby Larsen (b. 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America’s most performed living composers. Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2024), she has composed over 500 works including orchestra, opera, vocal and chamber music, symphonic winds, and band. Her work is widely recorded. An advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973, Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer’s Forum. Grammy Award winner and former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen has also held residencies with the Minnesota Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony, and Colorado Symphony. From 2014-20 as artistic director of the John Duffy Institute for New Opera, she guided a faculty of practicing professional artists in nurturing and production of new opera by American Composers. Larsen’s 2017 biography, *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life*, Denise Von Glahn, author, is available from the University of Illinois Press.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

The CIM New Music Ensemble was first formed as the CIM Contemporary Music Ensemble in 1973 by composer Donald Erb (a precursor to the ensemble was CIM's "Portfolio" Series in the early 1970s). Its first concert was given on October 10, 1973, and was devoted to the music of Bernard Heiden, with whom Erb had studied at Indiana University. Since then, the ensemble has been led by Larry Baker and Margaret Brouwer; it is currently led by Keith Fitch. Devoted to the music of our time — as well as classics of the 20th century — in recent years the ensemble has hosted many of today's leading composers, including Claude Baker, Chen Yi, Donald Crockett, James Mobberly, Andrew Norman, David Rakowski, Shulamit Ran, Augusta Read Thomas, Steven Stucky, and Joan Tower, among others. Members of the ensemble have gone on to establish such contemporary music ensembles and series as Classical Revolution Cleveland, FiveOne Experimental Orchestra, and Ars Futura, as well as being members of such nationally recognized groups as wild Up and the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. Notable alumni of the ensemble include the 2014 gold medal laureate of the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, Jinjoo Cho. For several years, the ensemble partnered with the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland as part of their concert series; it now appears regularly at the Cleveland Museum of Art and as part of NEOSonicFest, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony's annual celebration of contemporary music in Northeastern Ohio.

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; *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 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the Arts and Letters Award in Music and the

Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Composer Award, 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, April 8

7:30pm | *Mixon Hall*

Olga Dubossarskaya Kaler, violin

Ilya Kaler, violin

Lynne Ramsey, viola

Daniel Kaler (BM '20), cello, *Kulas Foundation Visiting Artist*

Ilya Itin, piano

DEBUSSY Violin Sonata, L. 140

YSAË Sonata for Solo Violin in G Major, Op. 27, No. 5

YSAË Caprice d'après l'étude en forme de valse de Saint-Saëns

BRAHMS Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

Tuesday, April 14

7:30pm | *Mixon Hall*

Inna Faliks, piano, *Kulas Foundation Visiting Artist*

“Adventurous and passionate” (*The New Yorker*) Ukrainian-born pianist Inna Faliks has established herself as one of the most communicative and poetic artists of her generation. She has made a name for herself through commanding performances of standard piano repertoire, as well as genre-bending, interdisciplinary projects, and inquisitive work with contemporary composers.

Thursday, April 16

7:30pm | *Mixon Hall*

Tommy Mesa, cello, *Kulas Foundation Visiting Artist*

Michelle Cann (BM '09, MM '10), piano, *Kulas Foundation Visiting Artist*

Trailblazing artists Tommy Mesa and Michelle Cann renew their collaboration in a program that reimagines the chamber music canon for the 21st century. This unique concert pairs works by modern composers like Andrea Casarrubios and Kevin Day with Debussy and Rachmaninoff, brought to life by the invigorating talents of two outstanding musicians.

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