

UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL MISSOURI.  
SCHOOL OF  
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS  
AN ALL-STEINWAY SCHOOL

**Spectrum Ensemble: Promoting LGBTQ+ Representation**

Friday, April 16, 2021

6:00 p.m. - [Zoom discussion](#)

7:00 p.m. - Concert

Link to livestream on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/ucmmusic>

*Twelve Fables after Aesop* (selections) Stephen Hall

*Mi Cosa* Wes Montgomery

*Maria* from *West Side Story* Leonard Bernstein

*Ah Yes, The Three Genders* Alex Temple

*Golden Gate* Kevin Rosacia

*Twelve Fables after Aesop* (selections) Stephen Hall

*Dorothy Fragments* Derek Tywoniuk

## Program Notes

"Maria" is a song full of wildly oscillating emotions, as Tony ruminates on all of the various feelings that the name of his beloved instills in him. Bernstein imbues the music to match each emotion so well that even in an instrumental version one can clearly feel the emotions of each absent lyric, from bouncing joy to soaring grandeur to pious awe.

Of course, we all know the rest of the story (TLDR; it ends in tragedy). For this brief moment we get to experience pure love and joy, unmarred by the drama between the warring gangs or the looming tragedy of their relationship.

"Ah yes, the three genders." The meme started as a joking response to things like a trio of airport signs labeled "Men," "Women," and "Telephones," or an application form whose options are "Male," "Female," and "Business." Over time, it was extended to refer to any group of three things. In this case, the three genders are metal, wood and skin — the three materials that pair with the vibraphone in the piece's three movements. The title is also a playful nod to my and the performers' queerness.

"Metal" (featuring cymbals, bells and chains) consists of three versions of the same tune, in three wildly different styles: haunted music-box lullaby, chill-out jazz, and Very Fake Early Music. "Wood" (featuring woodblocks and shakers) is a perpetuum mobile with a habit of getting stuck. "Skin" (featuring drums and mouth sounds) is the longest and maybe the strangest, with dissonant, sensuous chords that keep getting diverted into blurry polyphony or staggering polyrhythms.

Golden Gate is named after the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California. This piece represents my internal struggles of coming to terms with my sexual orientation and serves as the metaphorical "bridge" between myself and the wonderful opportunities that lie ahead of me as a member of the LGBT community.

Although I have never personally been to San Francisco, Golden Gate attempts to capture what I imagine to be the atmosphere and character of the city, such as the foggy mornings at the Golden Gate Bridge, the hustle and bustle of the streets, and so on.

I hope this piece does justice to a city I have never been to before, and that I will be able to see the city of San Francisco for myself someday.

Dorothy Fragments is a collection of ephemera drawn from drag culture, catch phrases, geosocial apps, and Craigslist discussion forums, among others. One thing that strikes me about queer culture is its fragmentary nature. It is highly decentralized, reliant upon coded language and dress, inside jokes, and a relentless parsing of itself into subcultures, sub-subcultures, sub-sub-subcultures, and so on. In this piece, the silly, the heartbreaking, the nonsensical, and the problematic assemble into an incoherent whole, much like queerness itself. The name "Dorothy" in the title refers to the expression "friend of Dorothy," a coded term for gay men that dates back to at least World War II.

There are two types of material: rhythmic sections, and a selection of “interludes” in which the performers are asked to recite text or perform actions. The numbered movements should be performed in their given order, but the interludes may be included in any order (furthermore, a performance may include all of them, or only some of them).

The pitch material is loosely derived from a melodic fragment of “I’m Every Woman,” originally by Chaka Khan and rekindled as a dance anthem by Whitney Houston. The text of this fragment appears in the opening sentence of D. Gilson’s poem “Supplication,” written in the aftermath of the 2016 Pulse massacre:

“Strange now to think of you, this song --

I’m every woman, it’s all in me — suddenly

off-key on repeat, bass and synth bleat

against the bathroom wall, bodies

sticky with vodka and piss, pink disinfectant disc.”



**[Spectrum Ensemble](#)** is a percussion duo advocating for LGBTQ+ representation in concert/Classical music, through commissioning and championing the works of Queer composers, educating about the importance of representation, community-building, and collaborating with charities/non-profits working in the area of LGBTQ+ issues. In just a couple years, Spectrum has performed and spoken at numerous festivals, universities, and conventions, and has been fortunate to remain active—and even increase activity—during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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