



CLEVELAND CHAMBER SYMPHONY
MUSIC
THAT DARES TO
EXPLORE

Cleveland Chamber Symphony
Young & Emerging Composers Concert
Steven Smith, Music Director
Sunday, April 12th, 7:30pm
Baldwin Wallace University - Gamble Auditorium

www.clevelandchambersymphony.org

Cleveland Chamber Symphony
April 12, 2026 Musicians

****concertmaster *principal**

Flute: *Sean Gabriel

Oboe: *Martin Neubert

Clarinet: *Lou Gangale

Bassoon: * Mark DeMio

Horn: *Ken Wadenpfohl

Trumpet: *Jack Brndiar

Trombone: *Paul Ferguson

Percussion: *Mell Csicsila

Harp: *Julia Kay Jamieson

Violin 1: ****Leah Goor Burtnett, Susan Britton**

Violin 2: *Amber Dimoff, Diana Pepelea

Viola: *Laura Shuster, Amber Rogers

Cello: *Julie Myers King, Linda Atherton

Bass: *Tracy Rowell

Audio Engineering: David Yost

Streaming Video & Audio: William Hartzell

Steven Smith, Music Director and Conductor

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NEOSonicSpring

Cleveland Chamber Symphony Young & Emerging Composers Concert

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Steven Smith, Music Director

Confessions

Lucas Sparrow

Bowling Green College of
Musical Arts

The Guardian of Light

Faith Rawlins

Baldwin Wallace
Conservatory of Music

Freed From This Chamber

Jacob Sims

Kent State School of Music

<I. M. HUMAN>

Joseph Ardo

University of Akron School of
Music

Jigsaw Tableaux

Owen Axelberd

Cleveland Institute of Music.

***please silence your cell phones**

***no digital recording during the performance**

CCS supporters include: Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, Amphion Foundation, Bascom Little Fund, George Gund Foundation, Ohio Arts Council, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, and the many individuals that have supported new music for so many years. Support also includes our ongoing partnerships with Baldwin Wallace University and with The Music School Settlement, ensuring stability and growth in our mission and in our impact.

Steven Smith has been the Music Director of the Grammy Award-winning Cleveland Chamber Symphony since 2005. In 2019 he

completed a very successful decade-long tenure as Music Director of the Richmond Symphony, expanding the orchestra's repertoire, developing new concert series and enhancing the orchestra's connection to the community. He also served as Music Director of Santa Fe Symphony & Chorus from 1999 to 2013, and as Assistant Conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1997 to 2003. An active composer, his works have been performed by many soloists, ensembles and orchestras, including CCS.

Biographies and Program Notes

Lucas Sparrow is an American composer of Contemporary Art Music residing in Bowling Green, Ohio. He is currently completing a Master's degree in Music Composition at Bowling Green State University, where he studies with Dr. Marilyn Shrude. He received a Bachelor of Music in Composition from Bob Jones University in 2025 where he studied with Dr. Seth Custer. He enjoys working within various sound worlds and using various techniques, unified by his desire for emotional expression and inevitability through music. Upcoming performances include his work *Confessions* being premiered by the Cleveland Chamber Symphony as part of their 2026 Young and Emerging Composers Project, and his duo for Violin and Piano, *I Step Into Infinity*.

Confessions is my attempt at a type of Neo-Expressionism. The original proposal I made for the piece had to do largely with the uncertainties of life. The piece, in its final form, is a kind of dichotomy. In general, the piece takes a dark and somewhat turbulent tone, not resting in the same emotional area for long before shifting to something different, sometimes dramatically so. Occasionally the mood takes a lighter tone, only to eventually return to darkness.

Faith Rawlins is a third-year undergraduate student studying Music Composition at the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Performing Arts. She is currently studying Music

Composition under the guidance of Dr. Clint Needham and Dr. Carolyn Borcharding, and organ with Dr. Matthew Wachtman, along with previously studying piano with Dr. Robert Mayerovitch. Hailing from the quaint town of Medina, Ohio, Faith began composing during high school and has been continuously inspired to create exciting and cinematic acoustic and electronic instrumental works that can let one's imagination wander into a world beyond ours. Her works have been premiered in New Music Series Concerts at Baldwin Wallace, the BW 24-hour Composition festival, BW Convocation series, BW Ovation, and other BW and non-BW affiliated collaborations. Her passion for composing first stemmed from soundtracks from movies, video games, and modern-day composers such as Hans Zimmer, Steve Jablonsky, Thomas Bergersen, Neil Davidge, and many more. Besides composing, Faith loves playing many instruments available to her. Besides piano and organ, Faith has dabbled in playing the accordion, synthesizer, keytar, mallet percussion, violin, guitar, recorder and even kalimbas. Oftentimes, besides in the music world, Faith can be seen creating digital and physical artwork of all different kinds, building elaborate costumes from scratch, taking care of woolly bears, and playing with her two fluffy bunny friends.

Guardian of Light

"With this Light, we have hope, and with this hope we have each other."

It commenced with a speck of light in the distance, a lone star that began to glow brighter than the sun. The Heavens breathed into the Light, until its presence unfolded quietly, not with the resounding blare of trumpets, but sewn together in the silence of the cosmos. The Light then grew, forming a body, a mind, a soul, and heart, wrapped in heaven-forged steel with eight mighty wings encompassing him. He was given one purpose from the Heavens, to protect his home of Zaneas, to uphold the lost, and to guard the Light that was suffocating beneath the shadow of newly borne darkness. His name began as Zarionel, a name that would be whispered throughout the cosmos, and soon would become a

title that darkness feared: The Guardian of Light. Light never truly fades, it's in the stars, the sun, the moon, and constantly around us. It is living, breathing, full of splendor and yet the harshness of a blazing sun. Light is not forged of only peace and war, but of strength, valor, triumph, and time. The work of Light is never truly finished, for darkness is always on the rise. It is only a matter of how we choose to fight it.

“I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:13

Jacob Sims is currently a junior studying Music Composition at Kent State University. He began playing percussion since the 5th grade, and has been composing music for well over a decade. He originally attended Kent State as a Computer Science major, but changed his major after realizing he wasn't cut out for coding. So, he decided to make his hobby into a career. He dreams of composing music for video games and animation, and is one of the composers for the upcoming indie game, *Harmonious Optasia*.

Freed From This Chamber is a chamber orchestral piece I began writing late 2025. The piece is structured into two different sections, with the first half in an octatonic scale, and various odd meters to create an ominous and unsettling atmosphere. Yet, there are moments and sections where there's groove and energy. This half is meant to represent chaos and conflict. After a chaotic buildup, the piece then transitions into a calmer, beautiful and comforting section, meant to represent hope and peace. I want this piece to be open to the listener's own interpretation, and hope they can relate their struggles and desire to find hope in the piece.

Joseph Ardo is a third-year biomedical engineering major and music composition minor at The University of Akron (UA). He is the former president and current vice president of the Epsilon Iota chapter of the Tau Beta Sigma national honorary service sorority. Additionally, he is both a Resident Assistant and an

Undergraduate Researcher on campus. Through his time at UA, Joseph has sought the continuous improvement of his compositional skills while studying under Dr. James Wilding and Dr. Robert Brownlow. With graduation close in sight, Joseph hopes to continue bringing new music into the world.

What is the root of Human creativity? Does it come from the mind, or from the soul? ***I.M. HUMAN*** ponders the question of what it means to be Human in a world where a work of “art”, graphic or audio, only needs a sentence and a click of a button.

Owen Axelberd is a Bachelor of Music student at the Cleveland Institute of Music 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, a performance 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.

Jigsaw Tableaux came out of one big idea: What if Wes Anderson's visual style was adapted into music. The symmetry, the 90 degree angles, the color, the wide cast of whimsically costumed characters, and the mixture of comedy and drama even in the visuals alone struck me as full of musical potential. So, based on those features, I created some musical “rules.” For example, when orchestration changes, I often sought to create textures that had little or nothing in common with the previous, giving the impression of a 90 degree turn. Another example is the establishment of a large group of fragments within the first minute and a half which serve as the material for the whole piece. I thought of these fragments as a large group of colorful

characters, each with their own motives and personalities which lead them to interact with each other in different ways. When the piece begins the “characters” are in conflicting keys, as it moves toward the end they begin to agree to a common tonality. Finally, I wanted to have a movement where the rules are dropped, which was inspired by the movements in Anderson’s films where the "manufactured" visuals are dropped, in favor of a more natural style. In the case of this piece, that meant dropping the right angles in favor of a group of smooth swells. This moment serves as the turning point in the work, and points us toward the end.

About the Cleveland Chamber Symphony

Since its founding by Dr. Edwin London in 1980, the **Cleveland Chamber Symphony** has served a leading role in the art of contemporary American music through its mission to commission, perform, record and promote musical works by composers of our time. Its history of over 170 world premiere performances and wide range of recordings has been critically acclaimed, and has been recognized by many awards, including a 2007 Grammy Award, numerous ASCAP awards and repeated recognition by the American Music Center. Its recent collaborations with Verb Ballets, the Cleveland School of the Arts and the launching of the annual NEOSonicFest demonstrate CCS’s ongoing commitment to contemporary performance and education in Northeast Ohio.

CLEVELAND CHAMBER SYMPHONY
NEOSonicSpring

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Cleveland Chamber Symphony Today!!**

***Help keep the Cleveland Chamber Symphony
on the forefront of new music presentation***

Upcoming Performance

**Cleveland Chamber Symphony
Music of Margaret Brouwer
With Ohio Contemporary Ballet**

Steven Smith, Music Director

Sunday April 19, 2026, 4:30pm

The Cultural Center at Disciples Church, Cleveland Heights

Margaret Brouwer, *Mandala*

with special guests the [Ohio Contemporary Ballet](#)

Margaret Brouwer, *Inner Voices*

Margaret Brouwer, *City Life*

***World Premiere

Donald Erb, *Harold's Trip to the Sky*

Mandala was originally commissioned by CCS in 2001.

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Cleveland Chamber Symphony
c/o The Music School Settlement
11125 Magnolia Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

www.clevelandchambersymphony.org