

Gettysburg  
COLLEGE

Sunderman Conservatory  
of Music

SENIOR RECITAL  
ORAZIO THOMAS  
*Saxophone*

*featuring*

DR. SCOTT CROWNE, *Piano*

JUSTIN MORGAN '27, *Alto Saxophone*

THOMAS MANNING '25, *Tenor Saxophone*

CONNOR SLEMP '27, *Baritone Saxophone*



SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025 • 8:30PM  
PAUL RECITAL HALL  
SCHMUCKER MEMORIAL HALL

Cameras and recording devices often cause major distractions for musicians and audience members alike. Moreover, there are copyright issues to be considered. We ask that you not take pictures or record any concerts. An exception is made for family members of students performing a senior recital.

**Always turn off your cell phone and refrain from talking during a performance. Food and drink are not permitted in Paul Recital Hall.**

*Thank you for attending a Sunderman Conservatory of Music event.  
We hope you return again and again to support Gettysburg College students,  
Conservatory faculty, and visiting professional artists.*

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# PROGRAM

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Maï (1975)

Ryō Noda (野田 燦) (b. 1948)

Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914-1917)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

arr. Orazio Thomas

1. Prélude

*Dr. Scott Crowne, piano*

Tarot Suite (2023)

Orazio Thomas (b. 2003)

0. The Fool
3. The Empress
17. The Star

*Justin Morgan '27, alto saxophone  
Thomas Manning '25, tenor saxophone  
Connor Slemph '27, baritone saxophone*

Concerto for Alto Saxophone (1941)

Paul Creston (1906-1985)

1. Energetic
2. Meditative
3. Rhythmic

*Dr. Scott Crowne, piano*

Suite for Solo Saxophone (2014, rev. 2024)

Avner Dorman (b. 1975)

1. Prelude
2. Courante
3. Sarabande

Fuzzy Bird Sonata (1991)

Takashi Yoshimatsu (吉松 隆) (b. 1953)

1. Run, bird

*Dr. Scott Crowne, piano*



*This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Bachelor of Arts in Music.  
Orazio is a student of Professor Amanda Heim*

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## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Maï (1975)**

Ryo Noda, born in Amagasaki (Japan) in 1948, has been hailed throughout the world for his perfect control, powerful avant-garde improvisations and innovative playing techniques. Mr. Noda graduated from the Osaka College of Music as a saxophonist. He pursued advanced music studies at Northwestern University (Illinois) under Fred L. Hemke and at the Bordeaux (France) Conservatory under Jean-Marie Londeix. While he is a leading exponent of new Japanese music for the saxophone, his repertoire also includes Western music of the baroque, classical, and romantic periods. He was twice awarded the Osaka City Art Festival Prize and, in 1986, won the Osaka Prefecture Gold Award; he also received the Grand Prix of the Yamaha Electone Festival in 1989. Noda's work as a composer was recognized in 1973 when he was awarded the SACEM Composition Prize.<sup>1</sup>

Written for solo alto saxophone, *Maï* makes use of many extended techniques as to both be evocative of the shakuhachi, a traditional Japanese flute, as well as assert itself as a powerful piece of modern music.

Alongside the music the score contains the following poem:

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<sup>1</sup> Noda Ryo, *Maï* (Alphonse Leduc, 1975).

MAI  
LA BATAILLE DE LA MER

Au crépuscule d'une nuit d'automne, alors que la lune réfléchit sa lumière d'argent  
à la surface des flots, le Général Kiyotsun Taira joue de la flûte.

Debout, à la proue du navire, il saisit son poignard et tranche la natte réunissant  
ses cheveux qu'il dépose à ses pieds, puis il disparaît dans l'onde

Au seuil de sa demeure, le fantôme du Samourai apparaît. Lui faisant face, son  
épouse lui demande : "Pourquoi es-tu parti" ? "Pour sauver mon armée", répond-il  
"car je savais la bataille perdue d'avance et j'ai ainsi épargné la vie de mes  
hommes et de leur famille".

"Et moi", dit-elle, "As-tu pensé à moi" ?

GIT DE HEIKE

Texte de Jean Leduc d'après la récit da Ryo Noda<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 1.

Maï  
The Battle of the Sea

At dusk of an Autumn evening,  
As the moon reflects its silver light on the surface of the waves,  
General Kiyotsune Taira plays his flute.

Standing at the bow of his ship,  
He seizes his dagger and slices a braid from his head,  
Places it by his feet,  
And disappears into the sea.

At the threshold of his house,  
The ghost of the Samurai appears.  
Confronting him his wife asks:

"Why did you leave?"

"To save my army", he answered... "Because I knew in advance that the battle was lost, and  
thus, I saved the lives of my men and their families".

"And me, she said, "Did you think of me"?<sup>3</sup>

This poem references *The Tale of the Heike*, a major piece of Japanese classical literature and a cultural cornerstone based on historical events. The tale tells of the war between the ruling Heike clan, led by Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181), and the Genji clan, led by Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199). Both Taira no Kiyomori and Minamoto no Yoritomo are major figures in Japanese history. At the end of the story, when the Heike clan's fate as the losing party was sealed, Taira no Kiyotsune, a general for the Heike

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<sup>3</sup>Lawrence, Man Kai Chung. "How to Approach Saxophone Works by Ryo Noda." B.Mus. Thesis, Iceland University, 2022, 9.

army and grandson of Taira no Kiyomori<sup>4</sup>, said “The Genji drove us from the city, ...Like netted fish, we have no escape. I have no life left before me”, before drowning himself in the sea.<sup>5</sup> There is however no mention of Kiyotsune’s ghost in *The Tale of the Heike*; instead, this part of the poem is based on a piece of traditional Japanese theatre (Noh), aptly titled *Yoshitsune*. While the script includes more details that are seen in the poem, including Yoshitsune playing the flute, his reasons for suicide are less selfless than the desire to save his army. Instead, his intentions are more prideful, not wanting to die to a foot soldier and instead wishing to be reincarnated into the Buddhist Pure Land.<sup>6</sup>

### Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914-1917)

Maurice Ravel was born March 1875 in the Basque village Ciboure to Pierre Joseph Ravel and Marie Delouart. Despite moving to Paris three months later, Ravel always felt close to his Basque heritage, which also forged a connection with the neighboring Spain. He started his musical education young, though he faced opposition and failure in his early years. He however came to be regarded as France’s leading composer after the death of Claude Debussy.<sup>7</sup>

In 1914 when World War II broke out, he halted work on multiple projects to enlist in the military, one of which being an untitled French suite. He would finish this piece in 1917, titling it *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, or The Tomb of Couperin, reminiscent of both the recent death of his mother and the death he saw in the war.<sup>8</sup> When the piece premiered in 1919, it was criticized for being too cheerful for elegiac music, to which he responded “The dead are sad enough in their eternal silence.”<sup>9</sup>

### Tarot Suite (2023)

An ongoing composition started in 2023, Tarot Suite is based on the deck of tarot cards, with each major arcana card being set as a miniature for saxophone quartet. The history of Tarot can be dated as far back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, where it is believed that they originated in Egypt as playing cards.<sup>10</sup> It was not until the late 1700s that the predominant view of tarot today came about: their use in divination.<sup>11</sup> The modern meaning behind tarot is an amalgamation of various practices such as Alchemy, Astrology, and Numerology.<sup>12</sup> A tarot reading is usually centered around a question you want answered, with cards

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<sup>4</sup> Royall Tyler, *The Tale of the Heike* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), xli, xliii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 702

<sup>6</sup> “Kiyotsune,” Noh Plays DataBase : Kiyotsune : Synopsis and Highlight, accessed February 19, 2025, [https://www.the-noh.com/en/plays/data/program\\_020.html](https://www.the-noh.com/en/plays/data/program_020.html).

<sup>7</sup> Barbara L. Kelly, “Ravel, (Joseph) Maurice,” Grove Music Online, accessed February 20, 2025, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000052145>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Tin Vi La et al., “Maurice Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin*: Human Emotions, Grief, and the History of the *Tombeau*,” 2023, 33

<sup>10</sup> Isabella Alston. *Tarot Cards* (Charlotte, North Carolina: Taj Books International, 2014).

<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=261cec15-398f-3da7-bbbd-3e6f70232e5f>, 4

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

being placed in a pattern after being shuffled. Meaning is then interpreted based on which card is in each position, with each position relating to a different part of the question (past, present, and future, for example) and card having a specific meaning. Of the cards being represented today, their meanings are as follows:

0. The Fool

As the 'zereth' card in the tarot, The Fool represents a lack of knowledge, and the subsequent journey of learning that follows. I portrayed this through a wandering A section which leads into a solo cadenza in the soprano saxophone, before the A material returns, this time headstrong.

3. The Empress

The Empress represents femininity and is often taken as a sign of motherhood. I chose to represent the latter though a sort of lullaby filled with both care and concern.

19. The Star

The Star represents hope and the strength to continue. I have modeled by interpretation of this off of the wonder of seeing a shooting star or a meteor shower.

One of my goals with this piece is to allow both performers and audience to engage with the performance process in new ways. Of course, the piece can be performed in its totality as a standard suite, or just through selections like today, but I would also encourage future performances to be based on the process of tarot reading in different creative ways.

### **Concerto for Alto Saxophone (1941)**

Paul Creston was born October 1906 in New York to poor Italian immigrants. He never received any formal education in theory or composition but had the opportunity to study both piano and organ. He decided to pursue composition in 1932 and won the New York Music Critic's Circle Award for his first symphony in 1941, which propelled him to national prominence. His compositional style is highly rhythmic, and his harmonic language draws on impressionism and makes heavy use of dominant seventh chords while avoiding a tonal center and still avoiding perceived dissonance. In the 1940s and 1950s, he was one of the most performed American composers and served as president of the National Association for American Composers and Conductors from 1956 to 1960, and as a director of ASCAP from 1960 to 1968.<sup>13</sup>

In the late 1930s Creston was an accompanist for saxophone virtuoso Cecil Leeson, and this connection led both to his admiration for the saxophone as well as the creation of multiple works for saxophone, including his Concerto for Alto Saxophone which was dedicated to Leeson. The piece was originally written for saxophone and orchestra in 1941 and was premiered in 1944 by the New York Philharmonic.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Walter G. Simmons, "Creston, Paul [Guttoveggio, Giuseppe]," Grove Music Online, accessed February 20, 2025, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000006817>.

<sup>14</sup> "Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra (or Band)," Wind Repertory Project, accessed February 19, 2025, [https://www.windrep.org/Concerto\\_for\\_Alto\\_Saxophone\\_and\\_Orchestra\\_\(or\\_Band\)](https://www.windrep.org/Concerto_for_Alto_Saxophone_and_Orchestra_(or_Band)).



### Suite for Solo Saxophone (2014, rev. 2024)

Avner Dorman writes music of intricate craftsmanship and rigorous technique, expressed with a soulful and singular voice. A native of Israel now living in the United States, Dorman draws on a variety of cultural and historical influences in composing, resulting in music that affects an emotional impact while exploring new territories. His music utilizes an exciting and complex rhythmic vocabulary, as well as unique timbres and colors in orchestral, chamber, and solo settings; many of his compositions have become contemporary staples in the repertoire. At the age of 25, Dorman became the youngest composer to win Israel's prestigious Prime Minister's Award for his *Ellef Symphony*.<sup>15</sup>

On his Suite for Solo Saxophone, Dorman says:

My first work for an unaccompanied melody instrument, I structured this suite in a quasi-Baroque style. Each movement marries intellectual, mathematical constructs with strong emotional expressions, stretching and bending time in different landscapes while re-purposing traditional melodic materials in new ways.

This piece is dedicated to Amanda Heim who premiered the work on December 17, 2015 at the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C.<sup>16</sup>

### Fuzzy Bird Sonata (1991)

Takashi Yoshimatsu (b. 1953) is a Japanese composer born in Tokyo. After dropping out of Keio University's engineering department, he both taught himself composition and studied under Teizo Matsumura (松村禎三). He has also participated in both rock and jazz groups. In his compositions, he challenges the tendencies of contemporary classical music by pursuing an unconventional path that revives tonality. His compositions include six symphonies, ten concertos, and various chamber music and piano compositions. He has also published books, including his autobiography *Composition is Like a Bird* (作曲は鳥のごとく).<sup>17</sup>

The Fuzzy Bird Sonata was commissioned and shortly afterwards recorded by Japanese saxophone virtuoso Nobuya Sugawa (須川展也). In 1992, Sugawa performed the piece at the tenth World Saxophone Congress in Italy, which exposed the piece to the world and landed it in the standard repertoire for saxophonists. Yoshimatsu composed this piece in a unique style that synthesizes many different types of music, including classical, jazz, folk, and rock.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "Biography." *Avner Dorman*. Accessed February 20, 2025. [avnerdormanmusic.com](http://avnerdormanmusic.com)

<sup>16</sup> Avner Dorman, *Suite (for solo saxophone)* (New York: G. Schirmer, 2014, rev. 2024), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Takashi Yoshimatsu, "Profile," <http://yoshim.music.coocan.jp>.

<sup>18</sup> Chiaki Hanafusa, "The Influence of Japanese Composers on the Development of the Repertoire for the Saxophone and the Significance of the 'Fuzzy Bird Sonata' by Takashi Yoshimatsu," 2010., 22-24

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## UPCOMING SUNDERMAN CONSERVATORY EVENTS

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March 20 • 6:00pm *Clarinet Alone: Studio Recital* Schmucker Art Gallery

March 21 • 7:00pm *Sr. Recital: Rock Braten, flute* Paul Recital Hall

March 21 • 8:30pm *Sr. Recital: Kelsey Hull, flute* Paul Recital Hall

March 22 • 7:00pm *Sr. Recital: Ana Griffin Morimoto, soprano* Paul Recital Hall

March 23 • 2:30pm *Sr. Recital: Vivian Fritz, harp* Paul Recital Hall

March 27 • 12:00pm *Audeamus Notes at Noon* Musselman Library

March 28 • 7:00pm *Songs of Support: Sigma Alpha Iota Benefit Recital* Paul Recital Hall

March 29 • 7:00pm *Sr. Recital: Greer Garver, piano* Paul Recital Hall

March 29 • 8:30pm *Sr. Recital: Ethan Hankins, tuba* Paul Recital Hall

March 30 • 2:30pm *Sr. Recital: Isaac Masters, cello* Paul Recital Hall

April 4 • 8:00pm *Wind Symphony Concert* Majestic Theater

April 5 • 8:00pm *Choir Concert* Christ Chapel

April 6 • 2:30pm *Sr. Recital: Libby Carpenter, voice* Paul Recital Hall

April 11 • 8:00pm *Sunderman Sings Voice Area Recital* Paul Recital Hall

April 13 • 3:00pm *Symphony Band* Majestic Theater

April 18 • 8:00pm *Symphony Orchestra* Majestic Theater

April 19 • 8:00pm *Jazz Ensemble* Majestic Theater

April 25 • 7:30pm *Opera Workshop Performance* Majestic Theater

April 26 • 7:30pm *Opera Workshop Performance* Majestic Theater

April 27 • 7:00pm *Jazz Combo* Paul Recital Hall

April 28 • 6:30pm *Wind Symphony Student Conductor Concert* Majestic Theater

May 1 • 6:30pm *Piano Citizens Recital* Paul Recital Hall



For Information 717.337.6815

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