

Composer Bios:

The Mississippi Music Teachers Association has just announced that the 2017 Commissioned Composer will be, tubist, and theory pedagogist **Joe L. Alexander**. He recently joined the “W” music faculty in the Fall of 2016 where he teaches Theory, Composition, Music History and Low Brass. His music has been performed throughout the United States, Ecuador, Germany, Greece and South Korea. His compositions have been performed on recitals at conferences of the Birmingham Art Music Alliance; the Louisiana Composers’ Consortium; National Association of Composers, USA (NACUSA); the Society of Composers, Inc.; the College Music Society; the Southeastern Composers’ League, and the International Tuba Euphonium Conference. His music has been featured at Bowling Green State University’s annual *New Music & Art Festival*, the *Electroacoustic Barn Dance*, the *Birmingham New Music Festival*, *New Music on the Bayou Festival* and *New Music for Young Ensembles Composers’ Competition*. His *Two Bryant Songs* are recorded on the CD, *Winds and Voices*, by *Living Artist Recordings*. He is the Mississippi Music Teachers Association, 2017 Commissioned Composer.

Dr. Alexander is an Assistant Professor of Music at Mississippi University of Women. He also serves as the National Treasurer for NACUSA. In 2005 & 2010 he hosted the Southeastern Composers’ League’s Forum and the 2013 NACUSA *National Festival* at Louisiana Tech University. Alexander holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas and studied composition with Newel Kay Brown, Douglas Knehans, Martin Mailman, Cindy McTee, and James Riley. Tuba teachers include Bruce Mosier, Ken Meisinger and James Michael Dunn. Additional information about the composer can be found by visiting his website, jacomposer.com.

In the fall of 2007, the composer was approached by the director, Don Stevens and asked to compose music for a song to be included in the Louisiana Tech University’s production of William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. The request was for “a song composed a Baroque era setting, or, in the style of Sinatra.” *Sigh No More* was premiered on October 31, 2008 with Toni Brown singing alto, Madelyn Hollifield playing viola and Madelyne Godley on piano.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more!
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shore;
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.
Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny.

William Shakespeare - *Sigh No More*

I often get request from students to compose a piece for them. In the fall of 2015, two sopranos, Emmie Lancon and Bethany Cárdenas, asked for a piece. For several years, I had wanted to set one of Mary Baker Eddy’s poems. After reading many, I chose *Signs of the Heart*. Because of the nature of the text, I added a tenor part. The piece was composed in early February, 2016 for Emmie Lancon, Bethany Cárdenas, and Garrett Brown. It was premiered on the April 24, 2016, National Association of Composers, USA recital in Ruston, Louisiana. The piece is dedicated to Emmie, Bethany and Garrett.

Come to me, joys of heaven!
Breathe through the summer air
A balm - the long-lost leaven
Dissolving death, despair!

Mary Baker Eddy - *Signs of the Heart*

O little heart,
To me thou art
A sign that never can depart.

Come to me, peace on earth!
From out life's billowy sea, -
A wave of welcome birth, -
The Life that lives in Thee!
O Love divine,
This heart of Thine
Is all I need to comfort mine.

Come when the shadows fall,
And night grows deeply dark;
The barren brood, O call
With song of morning lark;
And from above,
Dear heart of Love,
Send us thy white-winged dove.

A native of Romania, pianist and composer **Valentin Mihai Bogdan** serves as Assistant Professor of Music at Mississippi University for Women. His compositions were performed in Europe and North America, at the Assisi Festival of Performing Arts (Italy), Festival Miami, Music at MOCA Concert Series, the Oregon Bach Festival, and at new music concerts hosted the College Music Society, NACUSA, the Society of Composers Inc., and the International Trumpet Guild. His music was premiered by musicians of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, Beta Collide, Grambling State University Wind Ensemble, Grambling Chorale, Black Bayou Brass Trio, and the AWC Wind Ensemble. The past two years, he has fulfilled commissions by trumpet virtuosos James Zingara, Randall Sorensen, the University of Alabama Birmingham Trumpet Ensemble, the Starkville-MSU Symphony, and the AWC Concert Band. He was also commissioned by the Dranoff Two Piano Foundation of Miami. Valentin was named the 2010 Florida State Music Teachers Association commissioned composer of the year, and the 2015 Mississippi Music Teachers Association commissioned composer. As a pianist, he has won awards at national and international competitions, and he has performed in Europe, Asia, and North America, including France, England, Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Jordan, Canada, and the US. He is a graduate of Wayne State University, Michigan State University and University of Miami, with degrees in piano and music composition.

Lipatti's Fantasie is a multi movement work dedicated by the composer to his wife, Madaline Cantacuzino.

Wisconsin native **Ken Davies** (www.kendavies.net) has had acoustic and electronic works performed at numerous new music festivals such as the Society of Composers, Electroacoustic Barn Dance, Southeastern Composers League (he is a past president), Electronic Music Midwest, International Trombone Festival, National Association of Composers USA, Christian Fellowship of Art Music Composers, Parma Music Festival, London New Wind Festival (UK), and Sonic Coast (UK).!!Since 2002, he resides in coastal south Mississippi. Awards include the Mississippi Arts Commission's Performing Arts Fellowship for Composition (twice), the Mississippi Music Teachers' Association's Commissioned Composer Of The Year, and winner of the American Trombone Workshop National Composition Competition. His music studies were at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Yale School of Music, Middle Tennessee State University at Murfreesboro (MA trombone), and the University of Colorado at Boulder (MM composition). A writer and publisher member of ASCAP, his music is published by Kenvad Music.

A nocturne is a musical composition usually inspired or evocative of the night. Since the 18th century, many composers have written nocturnes. Probably the best known composer of the form was Frederick Chopin who wrote 21 of them. This nocturne is for a solo instrument. In this instance, it is for solo trombone because that is the composer's instrument and the composer presents the first

performance at the Southern Chapter of the National Association of Composers USA (NACUSA) concert held 24 September 2017 at Mississippi University for Women at Columbus, MS.

“...and then I came upon the dark river, murky, mysterious, melancholic mist suspended over the surface like ancient spirits of a lost tribe sighing, singing, screeching from the dark river...” In my part of south Mississippi, there is a legend built around a river that periodically emits inexplicable eerie sustained sounds. The Singing River legend says that an ancient tribe of Pascagoula Native Americans chose to drown themselves in the river rather than go to war against their neighboring Biloxi tribe and that their anguished voices can still be heard today. Since its premier in 2005, the work has received numerous performances including festivals Electroacoustic Barn Dance, inner sOUNscape (University of OK), and New Music on the Bayou. The performer, Dr. Jessica Haislip, is on the faculty at Mississippi State University, Starkville.

ALAN GOLDSPIEL has performed world premieres at New York’s Carnegie and CAMI Halls and has been featured on NPR radio stations from coast to coast. He continues to be an active international performer whose compositions are regularly commissioned.

He is the recipient of the Alabama State Council on the Arts 2016-2017 Artist Fellowship Award for artistic excellence as well as professional commitment and maturity – awarded to outstanding individual artists from Alabama who create important works of art and make valuable contributions to the entire state. His music has been performed at national and international events including the conferences of the North American Saxophone Alliance, National Association of Composers, and International Clarinet Association. Dr. Goldspiel received the 2014 Alabama Music Teachers Association Composition Commission and he was a 2013 recipient of the Escape to Create Residency in Seaside, Florida.

He is the only guitarist to be honored with the Marshall Dodge Award of the Performing Artists Associates of New England and has been a soloist with the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin, Monroe Symphony Orchestra, Vermont Philharmonic, Sinfonie-by-the-Sea, and served as an Artist-in-Residence for North Carolina’s prestigious Visiting Artists Program, presenting over eighty concerts throughout that state.

As the Music Director of the *Magic Shtetl Klezmer Band*, he has performed and arranged many pieces from the classic Klezmer repertoire. His composition project, a *Klezmer Shabbat Service*, keeps that tradition current.

He has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching, research, and service including the Louisiana State Arts Council Artist Fellowship Award for artistic excellence and the University Senate Chair Award from Louisiana Tech University.

He has taught at the International Guitar Festival held at the The Hartt School, where he remains the only guitarist to be designated University Scholar for his research on the music of Villa-lobos. He is Professor of Music and Chair of the Department of Music at the University of Montevallo.

“Goldspiel’s compositions exhibit a variety in thematic melodies that are well suited for musicians and audiences. His work is imaginative and explores new musical ideas.” – Alabama State Council on the Arts

Dr. Richard Montalto holds degrees in composition from the University of New Orleans, Tulane University, and the University of North Texas. He is the recipient of a number of awards, including an ASCAP Grants to Young Composers Award for his *Symphony for Wind Ensemble*, over 30 ASCAP Awards, and a Mississippi Artist Fellowship for his *Symphony #2*. His works have been performed at Carnegie Hall, the Montreaux International Jazz Festival, Symphony Space in New York, the New Orleans Contemporary Arts Center, the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States, the International Computer Music Conference, and throughout the United States and Europe. He has served as President of the Southeastern Composers' League, President of the College Music Society Southern Chapter, and President of the Mid-South Chapter of NACUSA.

He has performed on bass across the United States, in South America, and in Europe with a number of ensembles, including Harry Connick, Neil Sedaka, the 5th Dimension, the New Orleans Pops. He recently retired as Principal Bass in the Starkville/Mississippi State University Orchestra. Prior to joining the Mississippi University for Women faculty in 1988, he served as director of the University of New Orleans Jazz Band. Richard retired from MUW as Professor Emeritus in May, 2016.

Invocation, for guitar and pre-recorded electronics, was composed in 2017. The piece was envisioned as a work for a beginner through intermediate level performer. It is intended to serve as an introduction to contemporary music notation and performance techniques, including modal improvisation, harmonics, and synchronization with pre-recorded material.

Street Scene: St. Charles Avenue was recorded on a cell phone during a streetcar ride in New Orleans in May 2017. The only processing applied was layering of the original recording, with added reverberation.

David R. Peoples, originally from Southern California, is a composer of traditional, experimental, jazz and rock styles. His music has been featured on numerous albums and performed throughout the world. Recently, David was a GMTA/MTNA commissioned composer, American Prize semi-finalist, Luxembourg Prize 3rd place winner, and the International Jazz Arranging Competition winner. Recent premieres and commissions include the Westpoint Band, Argento Chamber Ensemble, and Luna Nova Chamber Ensemble. Additionally, he has enjoyed jazz premieres by the Jazz Surge with Randy Brecker, David Sanchez, Rufus Reid, and Gary Foster. Dr. Peoples teaches at the University of North Georgia, where he has taught courses in composition, theory, class piano, and appreciation. He studied composition at The University of Memphis and the University of Texas at Austin under the direction of Kamran Ince, Jack Cooper, Jim Richens, Donald Grantham, and John Mills (and additional studies with composers in residence John Adams, John Corigliano, and Joseph Schwantner). His music is published by Bluesilhouettes Music and UNC Jazz Press and distributed by J. W. Pepper. More information, including upcoming releases, events, and catalog can be discovered at the composer's website www.davidpeoples.com.

This work was composed for Diana Peoples, pianist (the composer's wife). It features many contrasting elements and is based on the inspiration of a new home the composer and Diana moved to, secluded and surrounded by forest with an overhanging canopy. The piece is imaged/accompanied by the following poem:

Light,
Dances on the swaying leaves.
Shadows,
Play hide and seek.

The thunder of an acorn falling,
Fills the canopy with autumn sparks.

Sun,
Tickles the canopy.
Showers,
Caress spider webs.

Beneath it all, A House Lost in the Forest.

Performer Bios:

Mississippi University for Women's **Stephen Funderburk**, tenor, is a junior from Mooreville, Mississippi. He is a music education major. He studies voice with Dr. Cherry Dunn.

Dr. **Jessica Haislip** serves as a Lecturer of Music at Mississippi State University, where she teaches oboe and History and Appreciation of Music. Prior to joining the music department at Mississippi State, Dr. Haislip served on the faculty of Calvary University, where she taught applied woodwinds, woodwind methods, music theory, music history, and music appreciation.

In addition to her teaching duties, Dr. Haislip performs as a member of Mississippi State's Faculty Woodwind Quintet. She also performs as Second Oboe of the Starkville-MSU Symphony Orchestra. She has performed with such ensembles as the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra (MS), the Kansas City Symphony (MO), the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony (ND), the Mankato Symphony (MN), and the Midwest Chamber Ensemble (MO). She is the new principal oboe of the Monroe, LA symphony.

Dr. Haislip holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree and the Master of Music degree in Oboe Performance from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and the Bachelor of Music degree in Oboe Performance from Concordia College (MN).

Diana Peoples is an active performer and accompanist. She has premiered numerous pieces at the Music for Now series in North Georgia and enjoyed many collaborations with artists throughout the world. Diana has performed with the Rome Festival Orchestra/Opera, Southeast Missouri Symphony Orchestra, and the Southern Illinois Symphony. She has helped to organize several performance ensembles such as the 3D Trio and the Clarke Piano Trio (2nd Prize winners of the WRRChamber Music Competition). An on demand adjudicator, accompanist, and teacher, Dr. Peoples resides in North Georgia. She served as adjunct faculty at the University of North Georgia. Diana earned her doctoral degree at the University of Texas at Austin and previously studied piano with such artists as James Sifferman, Mona Smith, Heidi Williams, Elaine Greenfield, Danielle Martin, and David Renner.

Lucy and Laura Sandifer have been playing violin for sixteen years. They were trained in the Suzuki method, classical methods, and fiddle. They are members of the Meridian Symphony Orchestra and the MSU-Starkville Symphony Orchestra. They also play regularly with the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra and the North Mississippi Symphony Orchestra. Lucy and Laura teach approximately thirty-five students and are both instructors with the local Suzuki String Program. They are also members of the Sumic Trio which includes Lucy, Laura, and their brother Scott on cello.

Lorena Surducun, piano, is a junior studying music therapy major at Mississippi University for Women. She is from Romania. She studies piano with Dr. Julia Mortyakova.