

# Program

A Turbulent Festival

Cee McClave, flute - Charlie Jennison, clarinet  
Vi (aka Victor) Matheos, vibraphone (via keyboard)  
Charles Edwards, violin - Aruli Pillai, violin  
Bai Xue, viola - Tristan Price, cello  
Evan Fan, piano - Benny Wang, piano

Laura Grube, conductor

Albert Lu '26

Walked Away

Madi Cron, voice and piano

Madi Cron '23

Find My Way

Anthony Yu, electronic production

Anthony Yu '25

If I

Kate Rose, voice and piano

Kate Rose '24

C Complex: Evapora

Jon Sakata, piano

Erin Chen '25

Or Not To

Vi (aka Victor) Matheos, voice and electronic production

Vi (aka Victor) Matheos '24

A Ten and Two Pennies

Polly Vaillant, voice and guitar

Polly Vaillant '23

The Divide (Radio Mix)

Haakon Kohler, electronic production

Haakon Kohler '23

Falling Apart

William Simpson, voice, guitar, and electronic production

William Simpson '24

# Composer's Notes

## “A Turbulent Festival” - Albert Lu

“A Turbulent Festival” depicts an annual festival being disrupted by an unseen enemy, and the rejoicing of the people by its equally sudden disappearance. The piece is expressed in ABA form.

The first A section follows a joyful tune repeated often, expressing the regularity of the festival. The strings' melodic line marks the end of the festival's first chapter, yet the chromatic at the end indicates the beginning of a sudden change.

The B section gives an eerie feel with its slow-moving tempo and contrasts with the previous section. Along with sudden surges and drops in dynamics, it conveys a picture of the people's unease and fear of the enemy outside.

The final A section represents a continuation of the first A section, with a similar melodic line, but in a different key. The rapid sections in the strings, the clarinet, and the vibraphone capture a newfound harmony and excitement within the townspeople. And it is more intense than it was before, because what knocks you down makes you stronger.

The inspiration for this piece came from the COVID-19 pandemic. Before it occurred, there were parties and festivals everywhere. However, these festivals were disrupted by an “unknown enemy” (aka COVID), which replaced the happiness of the festivals with the dread of being stuck in a house 24/7. However, as the situation cleared up, the festivities restarted, and the people now value the parties much more than before.

## “Walked Away” - Madi Cron

I wrote this song about a personal experience and the lessons it taught me. I have loved playing piano and guitar and singing for as long as I can remember. Songwriting lets me do both and create beautiful art that tells stories and teaches lessons. I absolutely love this art form and I am excited to share it for the first time. Thank you.

## “Find My Way” - Anthony Yu

This piece is inspired by artists of the EDM genre Future Bounce, such as Taiga and Dirty Palm. There's really not much background to the track --- I love EDM so I just made it for fun! I hope this will be an enjoyable listen!

## “If I” - Kate Rose

This piece is inspired by the constant pressure women are under from men to do things they may not be comfortable doing. It is inspired by the feelings around these experiences, of regret, guilt, and anger. It is inspired also by the freeing feeling of leaving these toxic people behind.

## “C Complex: Evapora” - Erin Chen

The compositional problem of C Complex: Evapora involves the acoustical decay, dissolution, and dispersion of sound. The notes— and their absence, traverse space over a journey of sonic evaporation. Composing this piece was a study of sonorities and their relationships.

The piece itself invites collaboration with the performer to co-create and interpret the piece themselves. All time and dynamic indications are to be understood as suggestive, dependent on acoustics of instrument and performance space. I've been inspired by 3 works: Elliot Carter's 7th Etude from his 8 Etudes and a Fantasy (1959), Alban Berg's “Invention on a Single Note” from his opera, Wozzeck (1922), and Gyorgy Ligeti's Piece no. 1 from his Musica Ricercata (1951-53), that each explore a single note. My twist on this has been to compose the piece by exploring the note ‘C’ in its multiple spellings. i.e. C double-flat, C flat, C natural, C sharp, C double-sharp. I've also been referencing Lei Liang's Garden Eight Interludes(1996) because of its use of inside the piano techniques.

## “Or Not To” - Vi (aka Victor) Matheos

“Or Not To” is a vaguely hyperpop song about receiving ineffective expressions of love at the same time as existing at Phillips Exeter Academy Exeter New Hampshire.

## “A Ten and Two Pennies” - Polly Vaillant

I work in a coffee shop. One early morning Sunday shift, a woman came in and gave me \$10.02 for her \$4.28 drink. I couldn't figure out how to make her change—and didn't want to have to either! I came home when my shift ended and wrote this song. I'm a day student and senior here at Exeter, and I'll be going away for school this fall. This song captures my feelings about this in-between time.

## “The Divide (Radio Mix)” - Haakon Kohler

This was composed as a piece during Covid-19 to bring people back to dancing in a basement.

## “Falling Apart” - William Simpson

This one was just a good time. All around a good time to make.

## The Pittman Family Student Composition Competition



*Joan and Fred '51, P'82 Pittman (with granddaughter Elena)*

The Pittman Family Student Composition Contest is made possible with support from the Pittman Family Student Composition Fund that Joan and Fred Pittman '51, P'82 established in 2021 to encourage and inspire student composers and music creators.

Financial aid made it possible for Fred to spend a post-graduate year at Exeter after graduating as valedictorian of his high school in Cleveland, Mississippi. He credited much to that year, often describing it as the most meaningful in his life. In the spirit of non sibi, Fred and Joan dedicated their time and resources to many educational and arts organizations, including Exeter. In 2003, Exeter bestowed the 2003 Founders' Day Award on Fred for having "served Exeter mightily with a rare combination of fiscal generosity and the kind of energetic legwork that truly makes us a richer place, one student at a time."

The Music Department at Phillips Exeter Academy is committed to supporting the individual creative expression of our students across a multiplicity of musical styles and media. The generous gift of the Pittman family has provided an invaluable new avenue of opportunity for our students, encouraging the composition and completion of new works. This event reinforces that the creative voices of our students have innate, immense value, and that new music--in all its yet-unknown-and-unwritten forms--has an important and welcomed place here in the music department.

We are enormously grateful for the generosity of the Pittman Family, and we look forward to presenting brilliant new works of student art for years to come.

## 2023 Pittman Family Student Composition Competition

### CONCERT OF FINALISTS

**Tuesday, May 9, 2023  
7:00 pm in "The Bowld"**

*Compositions & live performances by:*

**Erin Chen '25    Vi (aka Victor) Matheos '24**  
**Madi Cron, '23                    Kate Rose, '24**  
**Haakon Kohler, '23    Will Simpson '24**  
**Albert Lu '26                    Polly Vaillant '23**  
**Anthony Yu '25**

This competition is made possible through the generous support of the Pittman Family Student Composition Competition Fund.