



# The Postcard Scores II

**A Gordon Square Classical [Zoom] Concert**

Tuesday, April 20th, 2021 | 7:00-8:00pm

Solo works composed by Ryan Charles Ramer for 16 players  
(piano, trumpet, violin, and vocals)

## About the Composer

Ryan Charles Ramer is a Cleveland-based composer, director, producer, playwright, and private teacher. He studied music composition at Eastern Michigan University and Baldwin Wallace College. He is a 2019 Cleveland Arts Prize Verge Fellowship Recipient. Ramer's works have been premiered by the NY Treble Singers, The Cleveland Opera Theater, Cleveland Public Theater, New Music Society Orchestra, The Cleveland Guitarist's Guild, The Greater Cleveland Flute Society, and the distinguished Almeda Trio. Recordings of his compositions have received radio play on WCLV's program of new music, 'Ideastream'.

## Program Notes

A year later, the postcard performers offer a concert to bookend the pandemic experience. With the same cast and a few new additions, an entire evening of world premiere solo pieces awaits with a light smattering of fan favorites from the first time.

How could such a long year go by so fast? Celebrate a year since we first came together to figure out how Zoom works; little did we know it'd become a common ground that has even replaced phone calls. A live broadcast always holds more gravitas than a pre-recorded concert—not because it's better, but because it's flawed.

This virtual concert endorses the differences in sound & video quality as the patina of online society. Live concerts on Zoom have a certain flair in their unexpected hiccups that adds a humanistic dimension. We are ecstatic to have our efforts underwritten by the Ohio Arts Council to use this multidimensional online platform for its best intention—to support live theater.

Program

T.C. Biggs piano  
 -Birds  
 -Going Somewhere

Chris Bott piano  
 -Minimalism

Ariel Clayton-Karas violin  
 -[untitled]

Ben Czernota voice/piano  
 -The Celestial Surgeon  
 -Beowulf

Jessica Firing violin  
 -Spirits  
 -Celebrazione

Leah Frank piano  
 -Kapok  
 -Realilty Cabbage

John Gamin piano  
 -Through the Window  
 -Crawling Out of Your Mouth

Liz Huff piano  
 -A Minor Bird  
 -To Andrew Lang

Rob Kovacs voice/piano  
 -Crawling Out of Your Mouth  
 -Henry James

Program

Ben Malkevitch voice/piano  
 -To H. F. Brown  
 -Haiku

Shaun McGrath heldentenor  
 -A Song of the Road  
 -For the Guy Who Wrote the Dictionary

Angela Penrose violin  
 -Allegro Con Gusto  
 -Presto Vivo

Ryan Charles Ramer voice/musicbox  
 -Druid Oath  
 -A Country of Camisards

Brian Skoog tenor  
 -To Will H. Low  
 -Our Lady of the Snows

Ken Wendt trumpet  
 -Gaily  
 -Allegro

Jennifer Woda alto  
 -Spirits of the Dead  
 -A May Hymn

Spencer Lawrence Boyd tenor  
 -To A Gardener  
 -Maggie and Millie and Molly and Mae

Liz Huff

A MINOR BIRD

I have wished a bird would fly away  
and not sing by my house all day.  
Have clapped my hands at him from the door  
when it seemed as if I could take no more.  
The fault must have partly been in me;  
the bird was not to blame for his key.  
And of course there must be something wrong  
in wanting to silence any song.

- Emily Dickinson (Dec 10, 1830 - May 15, 1886)

TO ANDREW LANG [excerpt]

Dear Andrew, with the brindled hair  
Whose glory to have thrown in air  
High over arm the trembling reed  
By Ale By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed:

Equal craft of hand you show, pen to guide,  
the fly to throw: I count you happy starred: for God  
When he with ink-pot and with rod  
Endowed you, bade your fortune leading

Forever by the woods of song  
And the Lands that to the Muse belongs  
Or if in in peopled streets, or  
In The abhorred pedantic sanhedrim,  
It should be yours.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

Rob Kovacs

CRAWLING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH

I am not a tear in the heart of the news paper.  
I am not a figment of the loony midget'S voice.  
I am not a carol in the middle of a national holiday.  
I am not the canyon, random dampness in the cellar.  
I am close to everyone with ears.  
I am your regular stalled car.

- Terry Stokes (1943 - present)

HENRY JAMES [excerpt]

Who comes tonight? We ope' the door in vain.  
Who comes? My bursting will can you contain  
The presences that now together throng  
Your narrow entry ass with flowers and song!

As with the air of life, the breath of talk?  
Lo, how these fair immaculate woman walk  
Behind their jocund maker with all their silken,  
all their airy kin do like unbidden angels enter in.

But he, attended by them comes  
(best of all) himself, our welcome James.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)



Shaun McGrath

A SONG OF THE ROAD [excerpt]

The gauger walks with willing foot,  
 And aye the gauger played  
 And what should master gaugerplay  
 But "O'er the hills and far away"?

O pleasant gauger, long since dead,  
 I hear you fluting on ahead.  
 You go with me the selfsame way,  
 The self-same air for me you play.

For I do think and so do you  
 It is the tune to travel to.  
 For who would gravely set his face  
 To go to this or t'other place?

There's nothing under heav'n so blue  
 That's fairly worth the trav'ling to.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

FOR THE GUY WHO WROTE THE DICTIONARY

I read your book last week. Not bad.

- Terry Stokes (1943 - present)

Ben Malkevitch

TO H. F. BROWN [excerpt]

I sit and wait a pair of oars  
 On cis Elysian river shores

Where the immortal dead have sate  
 'Tis mine to sit and meditate

To reascend life's rivulet,  
 Without remorse, with-out regrets.

And sing my Alma Gentrax  
 Along the willows of the Styx.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

HAIKU

Why am I content  
 To never taste her lipstick  
 Outside of my dreams

-(anonymous)

Ryan Charles Ramer

DRUID OATH

We swear by peace and love to stand  
heart to heart and hand in hand  
Oh, spirit hear us now  
Confirming this, our sacred vow.

- (traditional)

COUNTRY OF CAMISARDS [excerpt]

We travelled in the print of olden wars  
But all the land was green and love we found  
And peace where fire and war had stood  
They pass and smile the children of the sword.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

Brian Skoog

TO WILL. H. LOW

Youth now flees on feathered foot,  
Faint and fainter, sounds the flute

Rarer songs of gods; and still  
Somewhere on sunny hill,

Or along the winding stream,  
Through willows, flits a dream;

Flits, but shows a smiling face,  
Flees, bit with so quaint a grace,

None can choose to stay at home,  
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she  
Now in air floats high and free,

Takes the sun and breaks the blue;  
Late with stooping pinion flew

In wet wood and miry lane,  
Still, we pant and pound in vain;

Still with leaden foot we chase  
Wan-ing pinion, fainting face;

Still with grey hair we stumble on,  
Till, behold, the vision gone!

Where hath fleeting beauty led?  
To the doorway of the dead.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

Brian Skoog

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS [excerpt]

Out of the sun, out of the blast,  
 Out of the world, alone I passed.  
 Across the moor and through the wood  
 To where the Monastery stood

There neither lute nor breathing fife,  
 Nor rumourof the world of life  
 Nor confidences low and dear  
 Shall strike the meditative ear

Aloof, unhelpfu,l unkind.  
 The prisoner of the iron mind  
 Where nothing speaks except the bell  
 the unfraternal brothers dwell.

Poor passionate men, still clothed afresh  
 With agonizing fortress folds of flesh;  
 Whom the clear eyes solicit still  
 To some bold output of the will,

While fairy Fancy far before...

Now to heroic death invite  
 And now uncertain fresh delights:  
 Oh little boots it thus to dwell  
 On the remote unneighbored hill!

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

Jennifer Woda

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD [excerpt]

Thy soul shall find itself alone  
 'Mid dark thoughts dark of the gray tombstone  
 Not one of all the crowd to pry  
 Into thine hour of secrecy

Be silent in that solitude  
 Which is not loneliness for  
 Then the spirits of the dead  
 Who stood In life before thee,

Are again In Death around thee  
 And their will shall over shadow thee:

be still.

- Edgar Allan Poe (Jan 19, 1809 - Oct 07, 1849)

A MAY HYMN

Mary, Mary's, not contrary,  
 She is fresh and pure and kind;  
 Round our hot and throbbing temples,  
 We her gorgeous precepts bind.  
 She is Momma, She is Grandma,  
 And what fills us most with ah,  
 Logical manipulation  
 Can make her our mother-in-law.  
 Then it's Gloriana peal the bell,  
 Send the echoes down to Hell  
 Make the sound all the trees to fell  
 With our screaming glee!  
 Plaster statues sweetly smiling,  
 We will deck with fragrant weeds

While the sky's great hollow bucket  
Booms the thunder of our beads!  
Tear up crabgrass rip up bind weed,  
Strip the wooded thi-ckets bare,  
Till an Everest of flowerets  
Greets the unbeliever's stare.

- John Bellairs (Jan 17, 1938 · Mar 08, 1991)

Spencer Lawrence Boyd

TO A GARDENER

Friend, in my mountain-side demesne  
My plain-behold-ing, rosy, green  
lin-net-haunted garden ground,  
Let still the esculents abound.

Let first the onions flourish there,  
Rose among roots, the maiden-fair,  
Wine-scented and poetic soul  
of the salad bowl.

Let thyme the mountaineer (to dress  
The tinier birds) and wad-ing cress,  
The lover of the shallow brook,  
From all my plots and borders look

Nor crisp and ruddy radish  
Be lacking; nor of salad clan  
The last and least that ever ran  
About great nature's garden-beds.

Nor thence be missed the speary heads  
Of artichoke; nor thence the bean  
That gathered innocent and green.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (Nov 13, 1850 - Dec 03, 1894)

MAGGIE AND MILLIE AND MOLLY AND MAY

maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles,

and milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles

and may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone

for what ever we loose (like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves that we find in the sea

- e e cummings (October 14, 1894 – September 3, 1962)



**T.C. Biggs** has been teaching piano lessons in Medina, Ohio since 1997. He specializes in classes for parents of musicians and new piano teachers. He plans to continue performing, composing, and creating more way to bring us into a world full of music.

**Chris Bott** has been the musical director at Rabbit Run Theatre in Ashtabula with a masters degree from Ball State University. His talent in working with budding actors is almost untouchable.

Violinist **Ariel Clayton Karas** leads an active career as a performer, educator, and entrepreneur. As founder of northeast-Ohio based ensemble OPUS 216 and director of Classical Revolution Cleveland, she performs, produces, and manages more than 200 events annually. She is also a longtime Musician in Residence for the Cleveland Clinic. As an educator, she maintains a private home studio based in the Gordon Square Arts District and serves as the Career Advisor at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Ariel and her husband Timothy co-parent two daughters, Amani and Evi. They love cooking and backyard campfires. They also have two guinea pigs named Ringo and Starr.

**Benjamin Czarnota** has been an avid fan of Ryan's work since they were classmates at Baldwin Wallace University, where he studied Voice Performance and Music Theory. After graduate work at Indiana University, he returned to Cleveland, performing opera and musical theater with fine arts organizations like Cain Park, Cleveland Opera Theater, and the Beck Center for the Arts. He now lives in Orange Village with his wife, Emily, and his dear son Freddie.

**Leah Frank** is a pianist & violinist/violist who currently studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She is a member of Mu Phi Epsilon and the music director at Heritage Congregational Church. She enjoys collaborating with artists all over Northeast Ohio and is currently on staff at Baldwin Wallace University. Her favorite wine is moscato and she loves Pistachio Gelato.

**Liz Huff** is thrilled to be doing another Postcard series concert with Ryan and Chris! Classically trained, she loves singing new works, music theater, and jazz, as well as doing straight theater and improv. She is co-founder and host of the podcast, And Now The Music.

**Jessica F. McGrath** is the Assistant Director of Education at Beck Center where she manages the music and visual arts departments. Her favorite color is spring-green, and she is nurturing her love for nature this year by starting to garden and grow her green thumb. She also enjoys her newfound quarantine hobby of cooking and playing more music alongside her husband, Shaun McGrath.

**John Gamin** is a pianist and filmmaker who lives in Wooster, Ohio. He is the accompanist for the First Mennonite Church in Wadsworth, Ohio. In addition to classical music and filmmaking, he is a dedicated chef with an obsessive taste for the gourmet, and a seasoned world traveler.

**Rob Kovacs** is a recording artist, pianist, singer and composer, and also performs piano arrangements of video game music under the moniker 88bit. He's currently composing the score for the Virtual Reality game "Straylight" and also streams weekly on Twitch.tv.

**Ben Malkevitch** is a versatile pianist, vocal coach, and sometime composer. He is on staff at Baldwin Wallace University and the choir director at Lakewood Congregational Church. He lives on the West Side of Cleveland with his wife, son, and 3 cats.

**Shaun McGrath** specializes in the title roles of Richard Wagner's operas. When he is not working on Siegfried and Tristan, he is an avid motorcycle and hot rod enthusiast, and you might actually catch in his Batmobile or on his Cruiser. Mr. McGrath is also cherishing the moments that he gets to spend with his family.

**Angela Penrose** has her bachelors in Music therapy and performance. She freelances with different metro Detroit orchestras and is the concert mistress for the Detroit Gay men's and allies chorus orchestra. Angela also leads the VSO string quartet.

Tenor **Brian Skoog** first performed the music of Ryan Charles Ramer in 2019 when he sang the role of Mark in *The Divorce Box* as part of Cleveland Opera Theater's New Opera Works Festival. In the fall 2020, after having performances with The Cleveland Opera, Opera Maine, and Toledo Opera canceled, he completed a virtual residency with Pensacola Opera. He will be included on an upcoming CD of the works of Margaret Brouwer on the NAXOS Label, which was recorded in January, and he will return to the operatic stage in October with Toledo Opera as part of their yet-to-be-announced 2021-2022 season.

**Ken Wendt** grew up in Medina, Ohio and met Ryan Charles Ramer at Medina Highschool where they played in a delightful basement progressive rock band. His musical roots began with doubling on both trumpet and drum set before going on to earn a bachelor's degree in Music Education as well as a Masters and Doctoral degree in Trumpet performance. Ken currently works for Case Western Reserve University teaching music technology courses and directs the Pop Music Ensemble. A small business owner, Ken founded Media 216, a local audio and video production company that regularly records and shoots with local artists and groups including Apollo's Fire, the Cleveland Composer's Guild, and the Cleveland Chamber Music Society. Musically, he continues to perform on both trumpet and drum set, compose new works, and is excited to be back playing with the Postcards Scores II virtual family.

Cleveland Heights native **Jennifer Woda** is a classically trained mezzo-soprano and actress who has performed with many different organizations in the Cleveland area. She has performed with many of the local opera companies, Cleveland Public Theater and The New World Performance Lab. In addition to performing she teaches Music Together® (a music and movement curriculum for children birth-7) through her company Sing and Swing LLC. She has been riding out the Covid Quarantine with some of her favorite people: her husband Brian Thornton, a cellist with the Cleveland Orchestra, and her daughters Maya Thornton (a junior at Cleveland School of the Arts) and Madelyn Woda (a sixth grader at Monticello Middle School). The family added a puppy last summer, so they now have two cute border collies, Owyn and Bentley.

**Spencer Lawrence Boyd** is a tenor from Canal Fulton, OH, he is currently completing his doctoral studies in voice at Indiana University with Carol Vaness. Next season he will be a resident artist with Opera Colorado singing Don José in *Carmen* and will have other exciting opportunities. Spencer is thankful to be returning "virtually" to sing some of Ryan's music after having done so about 8 years ago in a couple of wonderful chamber premieres.

# Thank You

This experience goes to show that applause is not the reason why musicians perform. Music is an offering, not a commodity. These players today displayed solidarity to their craft because its value lies in the human touch—no amount of technological inferiority can stifle that quality.

It has been a pleasure to produce this hour of new music for you. Hopefully this will be the last annual pandemic concert, but I am certain we'll all be armed and ready in case of another. One thing this past year has proven is that no amount of physical barrier can stop the indomitable spirits of musicians with internet access.

Please download the program from [www.ryancharlesramer.com](http://www.ryancharlesramer.com) to read the performers' bios. The lyrics to all the songs from the concert are available to read with information about the poets as well.

-Ryan Charles Ramer