



# The Postcard Scores III

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

Wednesday, May 4th, 2022 | 7:30-8:30pm

Solo works composed by Ryan Charles Ramer

This year's concert marks the third annual Postcard Scores event. I organized the first of these Zoom concerts during the 2020 lockdown as a way to bring together as many performers as possible for an hour-long concert. I asked 14 different classical musicians if they would each be interested in learning a few solo pieces of music I composed that were short enough to fit on the front of a postcard. All of them replied with an enthusiastic "yes", and the Postcard Scores concert series was born.

Since 2020, over 20 different performers have participated and 65 postcard scores have been performed. These include songs as well as instrumental works for solo violin, cello, trumpet, piano, organ, and even a custom music box. Each musician performs solo from their own house, providing a behind-the-scenes glimpse into their regular practice spaces. And since all of the instrumentalists read directly from their own postcard score, the brief musical selections offer a breezy program perfect for the short attention span that often comes with any Zoom event.

The music on these programs are either pieces I wrote specifically for the event or arrangements of larger works I previously composed. The material must must

be long enough to feel like a complete piece of music but short enough for the scores to legibly fit on a 4.25 x 6 inch postcard. Before they're mailed to the performer, Christopher Richards festoons each score with art that creates a Dadaistic narrative that brings the postcard to life. The first year he designed 32 postcards, the second year 33 postcards, and this year the figure jumped to 60 postcards since a bassoon trio accompanies 12 songs (and each bassoonist requires their own postcard score).

Eric Yuan, a Chinese-American tech billionaire, founded Zoom in 2011. Personally, I had never heard of it before the Pandemic. It provides a fun, interactive platform for performers to practice their craft while staying in their "bubble". This year's Postcard Score concert offers a mix of solo performers and ensemble performers. Three musicians will Zoom from their own house to perform solo works, but we will also hear a quartet performing together in the same space. Next year's concert will hopefully be live and in-person, providing a chance to hear more duet, trios, quartets, and quintets. But as always, we will still be reading from individual, little pieces of art known as "postcard scores".

# Program

Ryan Charles Ramer (music box)

- Envoy

Benjamin Czernota (baritone), Emily Campbell,  
Jennifer Kowalski, Alexander Morris (bassoons)

- Envoy

- IV

- To Minnie

Liz Huff (soprano, music box)

- My House, I Say

- Country of Camisards

- Los, 33

Benjamin Czernota (baritone), Emily Campbell,  
Jennifer Kowalski, Alexander Morris (bassoons)

- Et Tu In Arcadia Vixisti

- Henry James

- Katharine

- Requiem

David Ellis (cello)

- Skerryvore: the Parallel

- To Will H. Low

- A Song of the Road

Benjamin Czernota (baritone), Emily Campbell,  
Jennifer Kowalski, Alexander Morris (bassoons)

- XXIV

- XXXI

Program

Ryan Charles Ramer (bass, harmonium)

- Skerryvore
- To N. V. de G. S.

Benjamin Czernota (baritone), Ryan Charles Ramer  
(toy piano), Emily Campbell, Jennifer Kowalski,  
Alexander Morris (bassoons)

- A Camp
- Skerryvore
- XXXIX

Leah Frank (piano)

- To a Gardener
- A Visit from the Sea
- To H. F. Brown

**Ryan Charles Ramer** is a Cleveland-based composer, pianist, and producer. In the past five years, performances of his work include three micro-operas, a string symphony, several chamber works, over two hours of piano music, and a choreopoem for Cleveland Public Theatre. In 2017, he co-founded Gordon Square Classical Concerts, which presents performances of his work throughout Cleveland's westside theater district and online. He has been an active member of the Cleveland Composers Guild since 2012. In June, he will release an album with tenor Brian Skoog premiering a song cycle with bassoon trio.

**Emily Campbell** has played bassoon with the University of Akron, Ohio University, Stow Symphony, Akron Pops, and the All Thumbs Bassoon Ensemble. Her favorite bassoon-related experiences include arranging music for All Thumbs, performing at Carnegie Hall, and playing "Into the Woods" and "Sweeney Todd" at every available opportunity.

**Baritone Benjamin Czarnota** originated the role of Mr. Webb in the world premiere of Ned Rorem's operatic setting of the iconic Thornton Wilder play *Our Town*. Other notable roles include Stanley Kowalski in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, and Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, as well as roles in *The Merry Widow*, *Susanna*, *Savitri*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* with companies such as Wichita Grand Opera, Cleveland Opera, Cleveland Opera Theater, Opera Circle Cleveland, The Janiec Opera Company, and the Indiana University Opera Theater. While attending Indiana University, he was chosen by baritone Håkan Hagegård to perform the role of Anton Chekov in Dominick Argento's *A Few Words About Chekov* in music written for the world renowned singer. He has also appeared as baritone soloist in the Fauré Requiem, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, the Mozart Requiem, and Handel's *Messiah* in appearances with the Traverse Symphony and the BlueWater Chamber Orchestras. Regional music theatre roles include the title role in *Sweeney Todd*, Marcus Lycus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Freddy in

My Fair Lady, the Father in Children of Eden, and, most recently Emile de Beque in South Pacific, a production with the Akron Symphony Orchestra at EJ Thomas Hall. Most recently he was seen as Sir Joseph Porter in HMS Pinafore with the Indiana University Opera Theater. He also served for two seasons as the official national anthem singer of the Cleveland Browns, performing at all home games.

A conductor, cellist, and viola da gambist, **David B. Ellis** has performed repertoire ranging from Renaissance to Contemporary. He received a Bachelor's of Music degree in Cello performance, a Master's of Music degree in Historical Performance, and a Master's of Music degree in Orchestra Conducting, all from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. While at Oberlin, David studied with professors Raphael Jimenez, Tim Weiss, and Catharina Meints, and assembled and directed the Oberlin Baroque Orchestra. As a viola da gambist and baroque cellist, David has performed in many ensembles in Ohio and throughout the United States, including The Newberry Consort, Catacoustic, les sôûls d'amour, Les Délices , Ampersand, Three Notch'd Road, The Bach Project, Apollo's Fire, Burning River Baroque, and the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra. As a conductor, David directs the Case Camerata Chamber Orchestra and has served as the Executive and Artistic Director for Earth and Air: String Orchestra. He is a native of Solon, Ohio, and currently resides in Cleveland.

**Leah Frank** is a pianist, violinist, violist, organist, and educator. She is a SIM alumn and loves to share her gift with the world. On her free time, she creates her own electronic music and loves to explore new places and experiences.

**Jennifer Kowalski** has been performing on the bassoon for 25 years. She studied bassoon with Dr. Lee Goodhew Romm at Ithaca College and Prof. Barry Stees at the University of Akron. Jennifer has enjoyed performing bassoon in many different music ensembles over the years, including the Warner Theater Pit Orchestra, Catskill Symphony Orchestra and currently with the Akron Pops Orchestra, and The All Thumbs Bassoon Ensemble. In addition to performing, she has taught bassoon privately and given public clinics and demonstrations on bassoon reed making.

**Alex Morris** is a composer, bassoonist, and audio engineer from Northeast Ohio and earned a master's degree in music technology from The University of Akron. In 2018, Alex helped to establish a non-profit, N.E.O. Sound, which focused on performing new music of under-represented composers. After a successful concert cycle featuring orchestral music of composers from around the country, the organization had to cease operations once the pandemic began. In addition to his full-time day job, Alex holds a dual position as Sound Engineer and Professor of Music Technology at The University of Akron. Alex enjoys performing with various area ensembles when possible, especially those focused on new music.



# Thank You

I would like to give a special thank you to Christopher Richards, whose help with this program extended from big picture organization to minutiae that would have been overlooked. He lent an inimitable sense of design aesthetics with the stylish promotional images and the beautiful, streamlined program. His “Zoom Fatigue” paintings are indelibly associated with this concert, a strong image that audience members can easily reconjure.

On the technical side of the concert, Chris set up the Facebook event page, organized the online Zoom component, figured out the camera angles and microphone placement for the performance, and operated all the video aspects for the evening. He ran sound checks with performers, attended rehearsals, and remained on top of the surprisingly intricate details of production.

His final gift to all of us this evening is the performance space; his paintings on the wall are an amazing backdrop for the song cycle’s world-premiere. These are part of a solo show with 18 acrylic paintings hanging in the gallery of Marie Neil Art Project. They will be on view this Friday for the “Walk All Over Waterloo” event from 5pm - 8pm.

It was Chris’s attention and foresight that made this concert possible and I cannot overstate the importance of his role behind-the-scenes. Thank you, Chris!!

-Ryan Charles Ramer

