

Miscellaneous Music (2015) by American composer **Durwynne Hsieh (b. 1963)** is a collection of three contrasting pieces completed on a commission from Black Cedar.

The first movement, **Möbius Movement**, is named after the famous Möbius strip, which is a geometric construct that has only one surface, and can be visualized as a paper strip that has been formed into a loop with a half twist. You can trace the loop and touch the entirety of the figure without lifting your finger, and you end up in the same place. This piece is the musical equivalent. The opening passage uses alternating odd meters of 5/8 and 7/8 to create a feeling that is slightly twisted and unbalanced, and this material returns numerous times as we travel around the Möbius strip. There are several detours into warmer territory, as if we wish to be somewhere else, but each time we are soon returned to where we started.

Introverted Interlude is a slow, musical portrait of an introvert. The character of the piece is often dark, but it tries to celebrate the depth that is possible with introverts – that ability to be quiet and to let thoughts and ideas evolve slowly and organically without the necessity to be constantly occupied.

The last movement, **Five Fun Facts**, is a collage that incorporates disparate elements for the sole purpose of having a good time. There is the emphatic and virtuosic flapping of arms, the somewhat inappropriate misappropriation (Hsieh's own words) of rock and jazz rhythms, and general imbecilic silliness. There is also the repeated use of a cello effect that the composer named the "*gobble-gobble gliss.*" after its similarity to what he imagines a turkey would feel like if it were to take a ride down the front of a cello. One introspective moment for a brief break from the fun, and then it is back to the silliness. "*Is there a deeper meaning here?*" – *Nah, just want to have fun*, says Hsieh.

Durwynne Hsieh hails from Upstate New York but currently composes music in the San Francisco Bay Area. His early works are firmly grounded in tonality and traditional forms, but his subsequent works draw from disparate influences, creating crunchy atonality alongside lyrical melodies, minimalistic textures followed by romantic excess, and in Hsieh's own words, "*the use of effects of questionable taste.*" One of the common threads throughout his works is his desire to tell a story through music, although Hsieh claims that "*listeners as well as the composer are sometimes unsure what that story is.*" Hsieh's eclectic mix of music education was accumulating musical coursework in his ride towards a Bachelor of Science from MIT and a Ph. D. in molecular biology from UC Berkeley. He studied composition privately with Elinor Armer.

Hungarian Trio (2012) by American composer **Nathan Kolosko (b. 1975)** gives a musical depiction of traditional Hungarian folk melodies in the slow movements and traditional Hungarian dance steps in the fast movements. Kolosko uses techniques in all three modern instruments that mimic their Hungarian counterparts: The *Ütőgardon*, or percussive cello is unique to Hungarian folk music, and as its English name suggests, it does not have a bow. The performer simply strikes the strings with a hardwood stick in one hand while plucking the strings with the other, effecting a drone-like accompaniment. The *cobza* is a multi-stringed instrument from the lute family of folk origin popular in Romanian, Moldovan and Hungarian cultural traditions. Instead of the nylon strings of a fretted guitar, the *cobza* is metal-strung and lacks frets. Eastern European folk traditions often used it in elaborate and florid melodic passagework, and Kolosko draws upon this treatment in his *Hungarian Trio*. A Hungarian shepherd's flute is more similar to a Renaissance recorder than to a transverse flute, and it is blown into from the end with a fipple mouthpiece. It was often played by shepherds tending their flocks.

Nathan Kolosko was born in Portland, Maine, and he is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including grants from the Allied Arts Foundation and D'Addario Strings. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Asia, and he is devoted to expanding the voice of the guitar through performance, composition, and improvisation. In addition to being a performer and composer Nathan is a teacher dedicated to advancing the pedagogy of the guitar.

Klaus Hinrich Stahmer (b. 1941) first wrote **Debussyana** in 1983, and later included it as a movement in *Acht Nachtstücke* (1990), a larger collection of works for varying chamber voices. The movements were all inspired by the poem cycle *Stages of the Night* by physician Gerhard Vescovi (1923-98). Stahmer

aimed to create a bond between the sonorities of the guitar and nocturnal imagery. “*As fears and doubts are heard, sometimes somnambulist cockiness is as well. Starting with dusk when all the secure daylight is withdrawn, and with dawn when the course of the night is ended, this is traced throughout the eight movements. Midway through the movements, the listener experiences the blackness of the night and one is directed towards the view of the sky,*” writes the composer.

Klaus Hinrich Stahmer was born in Szczecin, Poland, but in 1945 he fled west to Germany with his family upon the approach of the Soviet military during the post-World War II East-West divide. He studied at the College of Arts in Dartington, England and the Academy of Music in Hamburg, Germany, later serving as professor of composition at the Academy of Music in Würzburg, Germany. Beyond his life as a composer, Stahmer has been active in German cultural policy, serving as a member of the German Music Council, where he helped repair relations between Germany and Israel and between Poland and Germany.

Black Cedar commissioned ***Of Emblems*** by American composer **Garrett Shatzer (b. 1980)** in 2014. The work comes from a composer who started out writing techno rock music for all-night dance parties in Detroit’s underground rave music scene. Yet *Of Emblems* portrays the after effects of the bacchanal, with moody introspection and delicate, lonely melodies written with intentionally thin textures. There is some autobiographical inspiration to this melancholy work, but Shatzer alludes only vaguely to the personal inspirations that drove him to compose the trio. Shatzer completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Music Composition and Theory at the University of California at Davis in 2013.