

No Exit opens season with three premieres by Ohio composers

by Mike Telin



The inventive new music ensemble [No Exit](#) will launch their ninth concert season with a free concert on Saturday, September 23 at 8:00 pm at Heights Arts. Staying true to the ensemble's mission, the program will feature three premieres by Ohio composers.

"We've always had a keen interest and deep commitment to commissioning and premiering new works by composers working and living in our area," No Exit's Artistic Director Timothy Beyer said during a telephone conversation. "There are so many artists in our neck of the woods who are creating interesting and worthwhile music. Cleveland — and for that matter, Ohio — has something special going on in this regard."

The program will be repeated on September 29 at Cleveland State University's Drinko Hall and on the 30th at SPACES Gallery. Both performances begin at 8:00 pm and are free of charge.

New works by Cleveland residents include Matthew Ivic's *Septet*, and Iranian-born composer Nasim Khorassani's *Growth* for string trio. Also seeing its world premiere will be *...his existence a flux...* by Columbus-based saxophonist and composer Michael Rene Torres.

"All three of our world premiere pieces are really amazing," Beyer said. "This is the third time that No Exit has commissioned a work from Matt Ivic, and he always brings something original to the table."

Beyer described Nasim Khorassani as "an extraordinary young lady who is currently a composition student at Cleveland State. We performed a piece of hers in a workshop and were so impressed that we wanted to have her write something for

us.”

Beyer noted that No Exit has played music by Michael Rene Torres in the past. “Our clarinetist, Gunnar Owen Hirthe, performed his *Voices of Contempt* for solo clarinet during last year’s NEOSonicFest. I think that he’s a remarkable composer, and his new work is really powerful.”

Also included on the program will be music by Saint Paul, Minnesota-based composer Alex Brusentsev. “Alex wrote an evocative piece for solo flute called *In Mourning*. We were introduced to Alex’s music through the exchange program that we’ve been doing for the last few years with Saint Paul new music ensemble [Zeitgeist](#). The partnership with them has been a rewarding experience that has borne a lot of fruit, not the least of which is getting to know some great composers from Minnesota like Alex.”

The program will be rounded out with the music of clarinetist and composer Eric Mandat. “*Tricolor Capers* is a rather virtuosic piece, the kind that our clarinetist Gunnar has a special talent for bringing to life,” Beyer said, adding that Mandat is known for composing forward-thinking, often experimental pieces for the clarinet. “His work has helped to flesh out a lot of the extended techniques that are used on the instrument.” Beyer added that all five works share a commonality of layered rhythms, ranging from the violent to the mesmerizing.

These concerts are just the beginning of what promises to be a remarkable season for No Exit, Beyer said. “We have so many extraordinary things planned, including more commissioned pieces that will see their world premieres.” In October No Exit will return to St. Paul to perform a series of concerts with Zeitgeist, and in January both ensembles will perform in Cleveland.

Other season highlights include the revival of their Trio Concert format, featuring violinist Cara Tweed, clarinetist Gunnar Owen Hirthe, and percussionist Luke Rinderknecht. The April series will include a collaboration with saxophone-percussion duo Patchwork.

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