

‘Wisconsin Soundscapes’ concerts feature UWO professor, pianist

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A University of Wisconsin Oshkosh professor and pianist will have the honor of launching a statewide concert series on campus on Sept. 30, debuting six diverse, solo piano works composed by six state musicians, each evoking the spirit of Wisconsin’s vibrant people, places, events and culture.

UW Oshkosh Department of Music Professor Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi will debut “Wisconsin Soundscapes” at 3 p.m. in the music hall of UW Oshkosh on Sept. 30. From there, the traveling concert will perform at UW Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Madison, LaCrosse and additional locations and dates into the fall.

In 2011, the Wisconsin Alliance for Composers received support from the Wisconsin Arts Board to commission six Wisconsin composers, each chosen through a double-blind judging process, to create original solo piano works based on Wisconsin themes. With support from a second Wisconsin Arts Board grant in 2012, the resultant concert was designed to be performed in communities throughout Wisconsin.

The concert features the compositions of Geoffrey Gordon, Joseph Koykkar, Ryan Maguire, Joel Naumann, Yehuda Yannay and Donald J. Young. Their pieces were based on various self-selected Wisconsin themes, including: geographic locations (Black Earth, Mineral Point and Spring Green; Brady Street and Downer Avenue in Milwaukee); personalities (Steve Nelson-Raney, a pianist and saxophone player, jazz musician, composer, poet and visual artist); scenes (a field study of a herd of cows in a thunderstorm, Good Times at River Bend, Cloudy Day-River Rising, Pounding Rain-Raging River); and events (depiction of the political turmoil in Wisconsin leading up to the June 2012 recall election).

The musical styles, representative of 20th and 21st Century writing, are as diverse as the subjects. Astolfi, a Wisconsin resident, was chosen as performer for the project because of her background and commitment to commissioning, performing and recording new music.

The scheduled performance dates for Wisconsin Soundscapes include:

- Sunday, Sept. 30 – 3 p.m., Music Hall, UW Oshkosh.
- Friday, Oct. 12 – Noon, UW Milwaukee.
- Sunday, Oct. 14 – 2 p.m., Rahr-West Museum, Manitowoc.
- Saturday, Oct. 20 – 7:30 p.m., First Unitarian Society, Madison.
- Sunday, Oct. 28 – 3 p.m., Three Lakes Center for the Arts, Three Lakes.
- Thursday, Nov. 1 – 7:30 p.m., Pump House Regional Arts Center, La Crosse.

About the artists...

Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi is a Canadian-born pianist lauded for her “versatile artistry.” Her performances, which critics have described as “brilliant,” “phenomenal,” “jaw-dropping” and “a pleasure to listen to,” embrace a repertoire that ranges from the Renaissance Era through the present. A keen interest in new music has led her to commission and premiere many new solo and collaborative works—music that has been featured on live radio broadcasts and on recordings on the Capstone and Albany Records labels as well as various anthology recordings for the Society of Composers Inc. Performers Recording Series (Capstone Records), including the series’ inaugural disc, *Me?lange: New Music for Piano* and its successors, *Sonance: New Music for Piano* and *Chroma: New Music for Piano*. Here (and there), a recording of music for solo piano and electronics is scheduled for release in 2013 on the *innova* recordings label. Astolfi is also active as the soloist for the Wisconsin Soundscapes commissioning and touring project as well as a founding and performing member of the piano duo, *duoARTia*. The recipient of numerous awards and grants, Astolfi's professional activities have taken her throughout Canada, the United States and abroad. Her passion for new music has been recognized by invitations to many professional regional, national and international music forums, where she has lectured on, performed and premiered new piano music. Astolfi also frequently serves as a piano clinician, adjudicator, coach, and master class instructor. An active member in various local, state, and national music associations, she serves on the governing board of both the Wisconsin Music Teachers Association and *PianoArts* (a North-American piano competition, festival and fellowship organization). Dr. Astolfi is currently an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

In the past year, **Geoffrey Gordon's** works have been performed more than 50 times on three continents. A winner of the Aaron Copland Award, Gordon has been nominated for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Stoeger Prize, and recognized by the Academy of Arts and Letters. His music has been called “brilliant” (Boston Globe), “stunning” (Milwaukee Journal), “a cosmic beauty” (Chicago Tribune), “haunting” (Strings) and “remarkable” (Fanfare). He is represented by LCM Artists Management.

Joseph Koykkar has had his music performed nationally and internationally for the past 30 years. His music can be heard on nine CDs. He has composed in a variety of media including chamber music, orchestral scores, music for dance, film/video scores and electronic/computer music. He has received numerous grants and awards from national, state and local sources. He is a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Ryan Maguire is a musician whose compositions explore contrast, structure, and sensation. Growing up in Southeastern Wisconsin, Ryan studied Physics and Music at Beloit College, Music Composition at the New England Conservatory, and is currently a graduate student in the Digital Musics program at Dartmouth College. His recent work has been inspired by nature, chaos theory, his teachers, friends and family.

Joel Naumann taught composition and electronic music at Eastern Illinois University, the Catholic University of America and, for 23 years, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he is Emeritus Professor of Music. He was Fulbright Composer in Residence at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia; founder of The Washington Sinfonia and Composer/Director of the Contemporary Music Forum in Washington, D.C.; and the founder of The Wisconsin Alliance for Composers in 1984.

Yehuda Yannay is an American-Israeli composer, conductor, film maker and winner of international and

national composition awards. He produced more than a 130 works that include music for orchestra, electronic, live electronic and synthesizer pieces, film, music-theater and a long list of vocal and chamber music pieces. Considered an international figure in contemporary music, his contributions to new ideas in 20th century music are written up in articles, textbooks and encyclopedias of music.

Donald J. Young received his B.M. from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and his M.M. from Arizona State University at Tempe where he studied composition with Ronald LoPresti. He has won several composition contests, and his music is published by a variety of publishers. Mr. Young has taught music at the elementary, middle school, high school, and college level. He is currently the Director of Bands and Chairman of the music department at William Horlick High School in Racine, Wisconsin.

**The Wisconsin Alliance for Composers provided content featured in this posting.*

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