



**DEPAUL UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

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Sunday, May 24, 2026 • 3:00 PM

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**DEPAUL COMPOSITION  
PROGRAM PRESENTS:  
DUO DIORAMA —  
PREMIERES FROM DEPAUL  
COMPOSITION STUDENTS  
AND MORE**

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Murray and Michele Allen Recital Hall  
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

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Sunday, May 24, 2026 • 3:00 PM

Allen Recital Hall

# DEPAUL COMPOSITION PROGRAM PRESENTS: DUO DIORAMA – PREMIERES FROM DEPAUL COMPOSITION STUDENTS AND MORE

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## PROGRAM

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Kyong Mee Choi (1971)

You, my temple (2022)

Gwenyth Lark (2001)

Scorched Sea (2026)

Olga Berman (2004)

Domovoi Ball (2026)

Kyle Craven (1997)

Nocturne (2026)

Julia J. Evans (1999)

and not (maybe this year) the winter (I'm the bird) (2026)

Edward Nicholson (2004)

Rugcutter (2026)

Sean Danielson (1993)

Ir (2026)

Augusta Read Thomas (1964)

Toft Serenade (2006)

MingHuan Xu, violin  
Winston Choi, piano

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*As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.*

## BIOGRAPHIES

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**DUO DIORAMA** comprises violinist MingHuan Xu and pianist Winston Choi, both compelling and versatile artists known for their eclectic mix of musical styles, ranging from classical standards to avant-garde compositions. Their fresh and powerful approach to violin and piano music seamlessly blends their distinctive personalities into a unified whole, and they maintain an active performing and touring schedule.

With extensive performances across Asia, Europe, North America, and South America, Duo Diorama has garnered a loyal following worldwide. Recent highlights include acclaimed appearances at the Chicago Cultural Center, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Washington D.C.'s Library of Congress, and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. They have also performed at prominent festivals and series such as Chamber Music Unbound, Colours of Music Festival, Ebb and Flow Arts, GroundSwell Series, Mammoth Lakes Music Festival, Manchester Music Festival, New Music Concerts (Toronto) Chamber Music Festival of Saugatuck, and Walla Walla Music Festival. Their South American tour featured performances at Brazil's Festival Musica Nova and Argentina's Festival Encuentros. As inaugural recipients of the Banff Centre's Rolston Fellowship in Music, they frequently tour Canada, performing in recital series nationwide. Their three recital and masterclass tours of China included appearances at the Central, Shenyang, and Sichuan Conservatories of Music, as well as performances in Baotou, Hohhot, Jinan, and Shanghai. A feature broadcast on their Carnegie Hall debut was covered by Voice of America, reaching millions in Asia.

Duo Diorama is a leading advocate for contemporary music, having commissioned and premiered more than 60 works by living composers. Their premieres include works by Gilad Cohen (recipient of the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition Prize), George Lewis (McKim Fund Commission from the Library of Congress), Huang Ruo (recipient of the Chamber Music America Commissioning Grant), and Igor Santos (recipient of both the Fromm Foundation Commissioning Grant and the McKim Fund Commission from the Library of Congress). They have also premiered works by distinguished composers including Marcos Balter, Kyong Mee Choi, George Flynn, Stuart Folsie, Kathleen Ginther, Timothy Johnson, Felipe Lara, Jacques Lenot, Lei Liang, John Melby, Robert Morris, Robert Pollock, Melinda Wagner, Daniel Weymouth, Amy Williams, Jay Alan Yim, and Mischa Zupko.

They have also collaborated with renowned composers such as William Bolcom, John Corigliano, Bright Sheng, and Augusta Read Thomas. Duo Diorama's dynamic interpretations of contemporary music have established them as true champions of the genre. Committed to today's cultural landscape, they present works by both established modern masters and emerging composers with a personal approach. Their projects often involve multidisciplinary works with electronic media, and their performances are enhanced by engaging commentary, highlighting the relevance and vitality of classical music.

They are core members of Ensemble Dal Niente, one of the nation's leading new music organizations. Additionally, they perform with cellist Nick Photinos as Trio Diorama. The duo's recordings are available on Albany Records, the MIMM label, New World Records, and iTunes. MingHuan Xu and Winston Choi, a husband-and-wife team, reside in Chicago with their twin children.

**MINGHUAN XU** performs extensively across five continents in recital, chamber music concerts, ensemble musician, and concerto soloist. She is a highly sought-after chamber musician, having collaborated with the St. Petersburg Quartet, Colin Carr, Eugene Drucker, Ilya Kaler, and Ani Kavafian. As a member of Ensemble Dal Niente and formerly the Grossman Ensemble, she actively performs and records works by some of today's most prominent composers. She is the Program Director of Strings and Assistant Teaching Professor of Violin at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

**WINSTON CHOI** professional career was launched as the Laureate of the 2003 Honens International Piano Competition (Canada) and winner of France's 2002 Concours International de Piano 20e siècle d'Orléans. He regularly performs in recitals, chamber music concerts, and as concerto soloist throughout North America and Europe. A prolific recording artist, he can be heard on the Albany, Arktos, Cedille, Crystal Records, l'Empreinte Digitale, Intrada and QuadroFrame labels. He is the Program Director of Piano and Professor of Piano at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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Kyong Mee Choi (1971)

**You, my temple (2022)**

*Duration: 12 minutes*

*You, my temple* is a love song dedicated to MingHuan Xu and Winston Choi to honor their artistry and kindness. The structure of the piece with four sections reflects the rectangular structural beauty of Unity Temple in Oak Park, IL, where MingHuan Xu and Winston Choi were the artistic directors of the Unity Chamber Music Series.

*Note by Kyong Mee Choi*

Gwenyth Lark (2001)

**Scorched Sea (2026)**

*Duration: 6 minutes*

*Scorched Sea* is built from an interval cycle derived from the first few partials of the G harmonic series. This cycle shapes many aspects of the work: its melodies, accompanying harmonies, rhythmic durations, and the overall form. This piece goes through the emotional experience of writing it. It begins as an exploration of the possibilities within the cycle, gradually uncovering its rhythmic character and form. As the process unfolds, there are interruptions of the melodic flow, and an emotionally charged section emerges from the cycle and patterns. After this break, we finally get a balance from the machine of the cycle and the experience using it.

*Note by Gwenyth Lark*

Olga Berman (2004)

**Domovoi Ball (2026)**

*Duration: 2 minutes*

Inspired by the Slavic folklore creature known as the domovoi, this piece imagines a hidden world unfolding in the attic of an old house. Traditionally regarded as protective household spirits, domovoi are often described as elusive beings who emerge only after the household has fallen asleep. In this work, they gather after midnight in celebration — dancing, whispering, stomping across wooden beams, and disappearing before dawn.

*Note by Olga Berman*

Kyle Craven (1997)

**Nocturne for Violin and Piano (2026)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

*Nocturne for Violin and Piano* centers on the delicate exchanges of harmonics and irregular tremolo between the two instruments. The piece's structure is built from the harmonic series of G and C#, which informs the work's harmonic language and rhythmic behavior. As my final completed work at DePaul, I'd like to dedicate this piece to my professors, Dr. Jones and Dr. Netzer, in appreciation of their guidance and for the opportunity to study here.

*Note by Kyle Craven*

Julia J. Evans (1999)

**and not (maybe this year) the winter (I'm the bird) (2026)**

*Duration: 2 minutes, 45 seconds*

In this piece, the violin and piano material is sliced and spliced together as a study in contrast, change, freedom, and relationship. Seemingly quite different, at their core the respective instruments' content is actually very similar. I think at separate times of our lives we are either the cold but steady winter left behind, or the free spirited but adaptable bird moving to warmer climates. I've had enough time considering myself the winter; this year I'm trying out what it's like to be the bird.

*Note by Julia Evans*

Edward Nicholson (2004)

**Rugcutter (2026)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

In this piece I wanted to explore using repetition as a central part of the form. This piece needed to be written in a short amount of time so I also decided to give each instrument specific intervals that would be used for the entire piece. The violin uses major 3rds and minor 6ths while the piano uses major 2nds and minor 7ths.

*Note by Edward Nicholson*

Sean Danielson (1993)

**lr (2026)**

*Duration: 7 minutes, 30 seconds*

Much of my music has grown out of nature and painting. I've often been drawn to the way painters like Claude Monet, Francis Bacon,

Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, and František Kupka create movement, density, and shifting perspectives through color and texture.

With *Ir*, I became less interested in the image of nature itself and more interested in the forces underneath it, especially wave dynamics and the motion of energy through space. The piece unfolds as a continuous process in which energy circulates, builds pressure, becomes unstable, and gradually breaks apart. Changes in rhythm, resonance, timbre, and density emerge from this process rather than from traditional thematic development.

At times the violin and piano seem to resist one another and at others they fuse into a single unstable texture. Throughout the work, materials are continually stretched, blurred, compressed, and transformed like waves colliding, overlapping, and dissolving back into motion.

The title *Ir* comes partly from the Iribarren number used in fluid dynamics and coastal wave studies, where changing conditions determine whether waves remain stable or collapse. I was also drawn to the appearance of the suffix “-ir” in various figures and names throughout Nordic mythology, giving the title a more elemental and mythic resonance beyond its scientific origin.

*Note by Sean Danielson*

Augusta Read Thomas (1964)

**Toft Serenade (2006)**

*Duration: 9 minutes*

Toft Serenade for violin and piano, composed in 2006, is a six-minute duo commissioned by Christopher and Douglas Toft for their parents, Richard and Marietta, in honor of their respective 70th and 65th birthdays. It was premiered by Rachel Barton Pine, violin, and Matthew Hagle, piano, in Chicago on October 28, 2006, at a private party. Organic and, at every level, concerned with transformations and connections, *Toft Serenade* unfolds in two short movements, played without a pause, each lasting about 3 minutes and 30 seconds. Arc I is generally spacious and is marked *Flexible, Lyrical, Majestic*; Arc II is fast and is marked *Playful, Like an improvisation; Energized, Passionate*.

*Note by Augusta Reed Thomas*

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**Website:** For information about HPC, the DePaul University School of Music, and its upcoming concerts or events, please visit [go.depaul.edu/musicevents](http://go.depaul.edu/musicevents).

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July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

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**DePAUL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

**SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

May 26 • 7:00 P.M.  
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall  
**DePaul Jazz Combos I**

May 26 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
**DePaul String Chamber Showcase I**

May 27 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
**DePaul String Chamber Showcase II**

May 28 • 7:00 P.M.  
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall  
**DePaul Jazz Combos II**

May 29 • 8:00 P.M.  
Gannon Concert Hall  
**DePaul Wind Symphony**

May 30 • 1:00 P.M.  
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall  
**DePaul African Ensemble**

May 30 • 3:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
**DePaul Trombone Choir**

May 30 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
**DePaul Wind/Mixed Chamber  
Showcase I**

June 1 • 8:00 P.M.  
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall  
**DePaul Jazz Combos III**

June 1 • 8:00 P.M.  
Gannon Concert Hall  
**DePaul Percussion Ensemble**

June 3 • 7:00 P.M.  
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall  
**DePaul Jazz Ensemble**

June 2 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
**DePaul Wind/Mixed Chamber  
Showcase II**

June 3 • 7:00 P.M.  
Gannon Concert Hall  
**DePaul Jazz Workshop**

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