**Chamber Music @ AEIVA**

**Thursday February 21, 2019**

**5:00 Reception**

**5:30 Concert**

**Program**

String Quartet No. 2 Erwin Schulhoff

III. Allegro gajo (1894 - 1942)

La Chose Verte\* Brian Moon

Natural Structures\* Tom Reiner

Of What Might Have Been\* Kenneth A. Kuhn

Carrier Hotel Victoria (Corner of Green and White)\* Holland Hopson

Despair\* Eric Mobley

Sarah Nordlund Dennis, violin

Pei-Ju Wu, violin

Zakaria Enikeev, viola

Laura Usiskin, cello

Chris Steele, piano

(\*World premiere)

*Special thanks to the UAB Department of Music, AEIVA, Birmingham Art Music Alliance, Music Teachers National Association, and the UAB Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for making this event possible*

**Program notes**

**String Quartet No. 2 - Erwin Schulhoff**

Erwin Schulhoff was a Czech composer whose life was cut short by the Nazi regime. He spent his early years studying with the greatest composers of his time, including Antonin Dvoràk and Claude Debussy. Many musical styles influenced his compositions, including jazz and neoclassicism, and he wrote a variety of pieces for string quartet including the one on today’s program, which he wrote in 1925.

**La Chose Verte - Brian Moon**

The title translates as *“the green thing.”* Irene Grau clearly uses the color green as inspiration for her work(s), and I feel that the ambiguousness of what exactly the *green thing*means for my composition fits in perfectly with her work.

**Natural Structures - Tom Reiner**

*Natural Structures* is written for piano trio. The piece was inspired by photographs taken by the contemporary Spanish artist Irene Grau. The photos she used in her installations *Natural Structure* and *Seixo Branco* depict stark cliffs in black and white. The cliffs are large and imposing. There is a stillness in the photos yet you can imagine the wind blowing and the breaking surf below. As you study these photos you can imagine what it would be like to be in there feeling the wind against your face, hearing the waves crashing and the calls of seagulls and other birds that nest among the cliffs. You can look out over the cliffs and out to the sea. You can see the horizon. You look at the cliffs that run along the coast and you take it all in - these huge majestic cliffs have stood for ages forming a barrier to the sea. These cliffs were there before us and they will be there long after we are gone. It is truly a sight to see. Just imagine.

**Of What Might Have Been - Kenneth A. Kuhn**

This short work is a musical representation of deeply personal feelings of something that might have been but tragically wasn’t. Inspiration came from looking at pictures of the Strnad exhibit concerning the Holocaust and in particular of the picture of Paul and Hedy Strnad who might have become a famous dress designer had she and her husband been able to escape to the United States.

The music is an adaptation of the composer’s Impromptu No.1 for piano transposed down from the original D minor to a darker A minor and also that the violin is not pushed in its upper register. The melody was altered for a very emotional violin performance and the piano part altered for accompaniment with original harmonies changed to bittersweet.

**Carrier Hotel Victoria (Corner of Green and White) - Holland Hopson**

Like Irene Grau’s installation, this piece references Alphonse Allais’ collection of monochromes, *Album Primo-Avrilesque*. The work unfolds with each musician proceeding independently, as if reading through the book of colors—the resulting mixtures generating subtle variations of the monochromes.

**Despair - Eric Mobley**

Despair is one of the most powerful emotions and as such is largely associated with the Holocaust.  It's easy to imagine the despair that Hedy Strnad felt before her murder.  This piece tackles the different facets of despair, starting with the sheer terror and anxiety of the holocaust, then moving into desolation and disillusionment, finding false hope in the sketches of the dresses, and finally back to the terror of the impending doom.

**Biographies**

**Sarah Nordlund Dennis** grew up in Birmingham, AL, studying violin with Jeffrey Flaniken and Patrick Rafferty. She entered the University of Alabama early and graduated Summa Cum Laude with honors at age nineteen. She went on to study with Paul Kantor at the Aspen Music Festival and Cleveland Institute of Music, earning a Master's Degree in Violin Performance. In 2004, Nordlund Dennis won a position with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, where she performed for two years. After a year performing and teaching in New York City, Nordlund Dennis joined the Alabama Symphony in 2007.

Nordlund Dennis has collaborated with faculty of the University of Alabama and Cleveland Institute of Music including Dr. Bruce Murray and Paul Kantor in chamber concerts. She served on the faculty of Lutheran Summer Music from 2009-2013, where she performed with the Omega Quartet. She is a founding member of Birmingham-based Cahaba River Strings, and she has been part of the Amion Quartet and now the newly formed Birmingham Art Music Alliance Players performing new music in Birmingham. She began violin at age three in a Suzuki program in Rochester, NY, and has gone on to pursue Suzuki teacher training herself.  She has taught with the Suzuki Talent Education Program in Birmingham since 2012. In the last few years, her family has grown to include son Peter and daughter Augusta.

**Zakaria Enikeev** is a finalist and top prizewinner of international music competitions in his native Russia and the United States. He was granted the prestigious *Stipend of the Government of the Russian Federation* and the *Rostov Governor's Award for the Achievements in Art and Culture*.

Zakaria graduated from the Rachmaninoff Conservatory in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. On receiving full scholarship from the Juilliard School, he moved to the U.S. He was principal violist of the Juilliard Orchestra on many occasions, and performed in the Juilliard School's Centennial Gala Concert broadcast nationally on PBS. His performances have also been featured in international radio broadcasts on *Voice of America*, Washington, D.C.

As a soloist, chamber musician and recitalist, Zakaria Enikeev has performed in the most prestigious concert halls of New York City, including Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, Bargemusic and Weill Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall.

Zakaria received his Bachelor of Music at Juilliard and his Master's Degree at Manhattan School of Music. He studied viola with Samuel Rhodes and Karen Dreyfus; chamber music with Charles Neidich, Seymour Lipkin and members of the Juilliard String Quartet and the Emerson String Quartet.

Zakaria Enikeev has been Assistant Principal Viola of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra since 2011. When he isn't performing with the ASO, Zakaria is active as a studio musician in Nashville and New York. Mr. Enikeev enjoys teaching both violin and viola. He has been on the faculty of the Birmingham-Southern College and the Alabama School of Fine Arts.

**Chris Steele** held previous positions at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as Staff Pianist, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) as both Lecturer of Music Theory and Ear Training, and as Faculty Fellow for the UNCG Grogan College Music Learning Community. At UNCG he studied with Andrew Harley and James Douglass and held assistantships in both accompanying and music theory/ear training. At The Florida State University, he studied with Carolyn Bridger.

An active performer, Steele is a member of the UAB Chamber Trio and has collaborated with members of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. As a proponent of new music, he is a member of the Birmingham Art Music Alliance, and has performed at the Society of Composers Region IV Conference and the Mid-South Chapter of the National Association of Composers Concert. He has also presented lecture-recitals on the late compositional style of Gabriel Fauré, including at UNCG’s biennial Focus on Piano Literature Symposium.

Cellist **Laura Usiskin** enjoys a versatile career as a soloist and chamber musician. Her playing has taken her to concert halls throughout the United States and Europe, including the Kennedy Center, Palazzo Chigi Saracini (Siena, Italy), Symphony Hall (Boston), and New York venues including Alice Tully Hall, Weill Hall, Zankel Hall, Merkin Hall, Miller Theatre, Barge Music, Steinway Hall, Klavierhaus, and more.

She has received such awards as the Prix d’Instrument at the Écoles d'art Americaines (France), the Aldo Parisot Prize at Yale University, and was a finalist for the Pro Musicis International Award. She completed the nationally acclaimed Artist In Residency with the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra as well as a fellowship with the Yale Baroque Ensemble. Usiskin has held tenured orchestral appointments with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra Iowa, where she served as Principal Cello.

Usiskin has performed chamber music with such renowned artists as Richard Stoltzman, Ani Kavafian, and Emanuel Ax. Recent solo performances include concerts of the complete J.S. Bach solo suites in Los Angeles and Connecticut as well as concertos of Dvoràk and Shostakovich with the Montgomery Symphony and Orchestra Iowa respectively. Usiskin is a member of multiple chamber groups including the Bayberry String Quartet, Arté Piano Trio, and new music ensemble BAMA Players.

In 2011, Usiskin founded the Montgomery Music Project, an El Sistema strings program for school students in Montgomery, Alabama. Under her direction, the program gave intensive string instruction to hundreds of low-income children across three counties. She served as the Executive Director of the program from its inception through 2013.

Usiskin currently serves on the faculty of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, through which she founded the concert series Chamber Music @ AEIVA. She also teaches at Birmingham-Southern College, the Alabama School of Fine Arts, STEP Birmingham, and privately. Usiskin's cello studies began at age five with Gilda Barston of the Music Institute of Chicago and continued with Richard Hirschl of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She graduated from Columbia University cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Neuroscience and Behavior, The Juilliard School with a Master of Music, and Yale University with a Doctor of Musical Arts.

Violinist **Pei-Ju Wu**, a native of Taipei, Taiwan, has established a performance career as an active chamber and orchestral musician. She joined the first violin section of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in 2013 and is a member of the Des Moines Metro Opera. Prior to moving to Birmingham, Pei-Ju was a member of the San Antonio Symphony, and performed frequently with the Houston Grand Opera, Fort Worth Symphony and Dallas Chamber Symphony. She was the former concertmaster of the Woodlands Symphony and Opera in the Heights. Interested in many genres of music, Pei-Ju toured with the Star Wars in Concert orchestra during its 2010 North America tour and performed with Peter Gabriel's New Blood North America tour.

In 2010, Pei-Ju co-founded Quartus Chamber Players, a Houston-based chamber music ensemble that focused on collaborating with local artists and educational outreach through music. During its 4-year operation, Quartus reached over 2,000 students with its educational program and brought numerous chamber music concerts of varied ensemble settings to the audience of Houston. She was a member of the Hall Ensemble while living in Fort Worth, Texas, and performed frequently with other Texas chamber music groups, such as Aperio, Music of the Americas, Virtuoso String Quartet, Mount Vernon Music and Ensemble 75.

Pei-Ju studied with Kathleen Winkler, Roman Totenberg, Shirley Givens and Rodney Friend, and received her degrees from Boston University and Rice University. She was an adjunct instructor at the Texas Wesleyan University and currently teaches at STEP Birmingham in Birmingham, Alabama.

UAB Department of Music

Presents

PRISM

2019

Monday, March 25th 2019

7:00p.m.

Featuring Choral, Band, Piano, Voice, Jazz, Gospel Choir, Computer & Chamber Music

Alys Stephens Center- Jemison Concert Hall

Tickets are $25.00 and $15.00 for UAB Employees

Free for all UAB students with school ID

To purchase tickets visit [www.alysstephensorg.org](http://www.alysstephensorg.org) or contact the Box Office at 205.975.2787

*Upcoming Events*

*Fri. Feb. 22nd* ***UAB Invitational and Wind Symphony/Symphony Band Winter Concert****, Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center, Jemison Concert Hall, 7:00pm. Free*

*Sat. Feb. 23rd* ***UAB Jazz Summit****, Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center, Jemison Concert Hall, 2:00pm. Free*

*Sat. Feb. 23rd* ***Faculty Recital: Dr. Emily Jaworski, accompanied by Dr. Chris Steele****, Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center, Reynolds-Kirschbaum Recital Hall, 7:00pm. Free*

*Tue. Feb. 26th* ***Faculty******Recital: Percussion Recital Dr. Gene Fambrough,*** *Hulsey Fine Arts Center, Mary Culp Hulsey Recital Hall, 7:00pm. Free*

*Thu. March 7th* ***UAB Faculty Brass Quintet First Thursday Concerts****, UAB Hospital Atrium. 12 noon. Free*

*Sat. March 16th* ***UAB Clarinet Symposium Concert,*** *7 p.m. Free. UAB’s Mary Culp Hulsey Recital Hall. UAB Clarinet Symposium events include workshops, recitals and master classes.*

*Sun. March 17th* ***Clarinet Symposium Finale Concert****, 2:30 p.m., UAB’s Alys Stephens Center, Jemison Concert Hall. Free. Directed by Denise Gainey, DMA.*

*Tue. March 19th* ***Iron Giant Percussion Ensemble****, Hulsey Recital Hall, 7:00pm. Free*.

*Tue. March 26th* ***UAB Young Performing Artist Piano Recital featuring Fred Song****, Hulsey Recital Hall, 7:00pm. Free*

*Thu. March 28th* ***UAB Young Performing Artist Piano Recital featuring Zoe Willis****, Hulsey Recital Hall, 7:00pm. Free*