College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Showcase Series

Ensemble Dal Niente

Emma Hospelhorn, flute
Katherine Jimoh, clarinet
Matt Oliphant, horn
Caitlin Edwards, violin
Ammie Brod, viola
Juan Horie, cello
Ben Melsky, harp
Michael Lewanski, conductor

This ensemble is a guest of the MSUFCU Entrepreneurial Musical Artist in Residence program

Wednesday, September 23, 2026
Cook Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

...in the receding mist... (1988)	Bernard Rands (1934–2026)
Spirare (2018)	Carlos Bandera (b. 1983)
After some remarks by CW on his work (2018)	Wang Lu (b. 1982)

Intermission

the space in which to see (2019, rev. 2024)	Leilehua Lanzilotti (b. 1983)
Jaromiluna (1989)	Ricardo Lorenz (b. 1961)
Quatre pantomimes pour six (2013)	Luis Fernando Rizo Salom (1971–2013)

PROGRAM NOTES

Ensemble Dal Niente celebrates the opening of its 21st season with a program of new and recent works by Luis Fernando Rizo Salom, Carlos Bandera, Wang Lu, Leilehua Lanzilotti, Bernard Rands, and Ricardo Lorenz.

...in the receding mist... is a short piece for flute, harp, and string trio which takes its title from an early poem by Samuel Beckett. The piece is based upon three musical characters – a simple, folk-like melodic line which itself is made up of a Baroque rhythmic figure and a mordent/turn figure. These three are gradually elaborated and transformed until they create a complex network of relationships and references within an elaborate texture. Out of this emerges a long cantilena flute line. This latter, supported by sparse accompaniment from the ensemble, concludes the work.

...in the receding mist... is dedicated in friendship to composer Jacob Druckman and was written as a gift for his sixtieth birthday. The work was commissioned by ONDINE Ensemble, London and the Arts Council of Great Britain.

- Bernard Rands

Since composing the opening of ***Spirare***, which features several techniques that emulate air, I have associated the piece with breathing and an attempt to achieve a state of tranquility. Active textures persist for most of the piece until the ending, where the active textures, now more subdued, accompany the clarinet as it slowly alternates between two multiphonics, like slow, meditative breaths.

- Carlos Bandera

After some remarks by CW on his work – I recently attended a talk by Christian Wolff, the eminent elder statesman of American experimentalism and the last living link to the New York School. At 83, his unassuming wisdom and humor shine through, and the talk was a retrospective of a life marked by stylistic changes, priorities, and commitments, and a shifting relationship between art and politics, while still pointing to an unknown future. While I'm touched by the singularity of approach to sound, I'm mostly liberated by his belief in shared decision-making and breaking down the hierarchies of the creative act. This short piece, which lives moment-to-moment in a series of delicate sound objects and intimate dialogues between the clarinet and harp, was completed in the aftermath of this encounter. It is dedicated to Ben Melsky and Katie Schoepflin, whose music-making and collaborative spirit encouraged and inspired me during the writing process.

- Wang Lu

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

the space in which to see draws from a text by Layli Long Soldier (reprinted on the title page with permission). Long Soldier, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation, lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her work often explores her own indigenous identity. The way Long Soldier uses the concept of "place" and "space" resonated with me as I turned the poem around in my hands and my head. Each movement takes one edge of the poem and presses up against it, amplifying the text or reacting to it.

- Leilehua Lanzilotti

Jaromiluna – The title of the work is the name of a fictitious character, native to the Caribbean, who awakens at every full moon. Jaromiluna is personified in this work by the violin, while the harp plays the part of the moon. The sight of the first reflection of the moon over the sea, as it begins its path across the dark sky, is irresistible to Jaromiluna. After the dance begins, it is difficult to tell who is seducing and who is being seduced. Both Jaromiluna and the moon are absorbed in the game. At the end of the night, they are exhausted, but Jaromiluna attempts to capture the last ray of light shining from a dimming moon that has almost dissolved into the horizon.

The work was commissioned by violinist Andrés Cárdenes, who together with harpist Deborah Hoffman gave the work's premiere at the 1989 Skaneateles Festival in New York.

- Ricardo Lorenz

Quatre pantomimes pour six – The work is inspired by the wordless theater known as pantomimes. In a pantomime, the mime embodies different characters in a given situation. The white makeup on the face symbolizes a neutral mask, helping the mime transition from one character to another almost imperceptibly. In my piece, more than a specific character, I wanted to recreate situations in which the music carries a message embodied by sounds and not words. I therefore designed four "pantomimes of sounds", each evolving in a specific context, with clearly contrasting sections allowing for breaks linked to the change of character between the different musical situations.

The first pantomime, titled "Lux", represents dreams, wishes, ideals, and anything intangible. This movement is oriented toward a collective effort, embodied by the instrumentalists collaborating together in the pursuit of these ideals, represented in the work by a flow of intertwined high-pitched

sounds. The second section, entitled "Confrontation," is based on the fragmentation of collective thought to give way to the individual and assert one's identity through confrontation. Two distinct benches then form on stage, pitting the string trio against the wind trio, which always play in alternating blocks. The strings are treated percussively here in a complex polyphonic texture, while the winds are characterized by stiff sounds over unison rhythmic figures.

"Lamento" represents a moment of contemplation. It is an adagio inspired by the Transylvanian funeral chants used by Gyorgy Ligeti in the second movement of his concerto for piano and ensemble, to whom I wished to pay homage. The final movement, entitled "Beatbox Rap," represents celebration, play, and sharing in a playful context. I was inspired by beatboxing, where a single person is able to simultaneously imitate different musical instruments, including percussion, with their voice. This task is assigned here to the bass flute, used as the main instrument, handling melodies, percussion, and accompaniment.
—Luis Rizo-Salom

ENSEMBLE BIO

Ensemble Dal Niente performs, develops, and sustains new and experimental music for a small to large chamber ensemble. We are dedicated to growing relationships with artists, composers, and listeners; advancing distinct and challenging musical voices; and sharing that work with our Chicago, U.S., and international communities.

Dal Niente's roster of 26 musicians presents an uncommonly broad range of contemporary music. Audiences coming to Dal Niente shows can expect distinctive productions – from fully staged operas to multimedia spectacles to intimate solo performances – that are curated to pique curiosity and connect art, culture, and people.

Over the past two decades, Ensemble Dal Niente has performed concerts across Europe and the Americas, including appearances at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC; El Foro Internacional de Música Nueva in Mexico City; Radialsystem Berlin; MusicArte Festival in Panama City; The Library of Congress and the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.; the Art Institute of Chicago and the Hyde Park Jazz Festival; Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles; The Americas Society; and the Darmstadt Summer Courses in Germany. Dal Niente is the recipient of the 2019 Fromm Music Foundation prize, and was the first-ever ensemble to win the Kranichstein prize for interpretation in 2012. The group has recordings available on the New World, New Amsterdam, New Focus, Navona, Parlour Tapes+, Kairos, Albany, and Carrier labels; has held residencies at The University of Chicago, Harvard University, Stanford University, Brown University, Brandeis University, and Northwestern University, among others; and collaborated with a wide range of composers, from Enno Poppe to George Lewis to Hilda Paredes to Roscoe Mitchell.

The ensemble's name, Dal Niente ("from nothing" in Italian), is a tribute to Helmut Lachenmann's *Dal niente (Interieur III)*, a work that upended traditional conceptions of instrumental technique; and also a reference to the group's humble beginnings.

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