String Quartet no. 3 (2024) - Ryan McAvoy (b. 2001)

I. Early Morning Before Sunrise
II. The Way the Light Shines Through the Canopy Can Play Tricks on the Eyes

In 2024, I had the privilege of visiting Acadia National Park in Maine, and I was immediately struck by the wonder and natural beauty of the landscape—vast, unspoiled vistas and tranquil forests that seemed to invite a deeper connection with nature. "String Quartet No. 3" reflects the sensory journey of my experience, capturing the serene stillness of the early morning and the playful magic of light filtering through the trees.

The first movement, *"Early Morning Before Sunrise,"* is a meditation on the calm and peaceful moments before the sun rises. The piece evokes the quiet solitude of standing atop Cadillac Mountain, the first place in the United States to witness the sunrise. A reflective, pastoral quality permeates the music, reminiscent of the gentle ritual of brewing coffee while waiting for the first light to spill over the horizon. The music is full of long, spacious phrases, offering a sense of stillness and anticipation, much like the tranquil moments of those early hours.

The second movement, *"The Way the Light Shines Through the Canopy Can Play Tricks on the Eyes,"* takes a more playful and mysterious turn. Inspired by the dappled sunlight filtering through the trees of the Acadia forest, this movement captures the shifting and fleeting patterns created by the sunbeams on the forest floor. There is a sense of movement and trickery in the way the music unfolds, mirroring the way light can seem to dance and shift unpredictably. The playful interaction of the strings creates a sense of visual and auditory illusion, much like how light can create captivating patterns that seem to shift as you move.

Together, these movements convey a journey through the beauty and mystery of the natural world—one that is both grounding and full of wonder, from the quiet of the dawn of the day to the playful shadows of the forest.

Snowfall (2024) - Ryan McAvoy (b. 2001)

I. As the Snow Begins to Fall
II. Snow Mirage
III. The Lord’s Prayer

Snowfall was originally conceived for oboe, viola, and piano, but as the music took shape, I felt that the combination of saxophone, violin, and piano better conveyed the imagery and emotion I sought to express. This trio unfolds in three movements, each capturing a distinct aspect of a snowstorm, from its gentle beginnings to the intense peak of its fury, and finally to the serene calm after its passing.

The first movement, *"As the Snow Begins to Fall,"* portrays the very early moments of a snowstorm. The music evokes the light winds picking up, swirling the first wisps of snowflakes into the air, gradually building as the storm begins. As the snow grows heavier, the piece transforms, evoking the image of "rolling fields of snow" as the ground becomes covered and the storm deepens.

The second movement, *"Snow Mirage,"* flows seamlessly from the first, shifting into a more intense depiction of the storm’s progression. The music represents the wind taking the snow, lifting it into the air

and creating fleeting, shifting patterns that deceive the eye. There is a sense of confusion, as the landscape is obscured and distorted, with the swirling snow creating a hazy, dreamlike quality that suggests a world where reality is uncertain and elusive.

The final movement, *"The Lord's Prayer,"* represents the calm that follows the storm. The snow is now settled on the ground, unmarred and pure, creating a peaceful, serene landscape. This movement is a wordless setting of the Lord's Prayer, capturing a sense of relief and reverence after the intensity of the storm. While the music could easily be interpreted as a vocal setting, the instrumental arrangement conveys a feeling of beauty, serenity, and the "pure" stillness of a new, untouched snowfall.

Together, these movements tell the story of a snowstorm's journey—from the quiet start, through the swirling chaos, to the peaceful calm of its aftermath.

Going Home (from Symphony no.9 "From the New World) (2023) - Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904), Arr. Ryan McAvoy (b. 2001)

This arrangement, *"Going Home,"* is based on the hymn from Antonín Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9 "From the New World,"* which encapsulates the theme of returning home, both physically and spiritually. The lyrics, *"Goin' home, goin' home, / I'm a goin' home; / Quiet like, some still day, / I'm jes' goin' home,"* express the peace that comes with the end of a journey and the comfort of returning to a place of belonging. The music embodies this sense of calm, with a gentle, hopeful melody that evokes the relief of returning home after a long and often difficult journey. It's not just a physical return, but a spiritual one: *"No more fret nor pain, / No more stumblin' on the way, / No more longin' for the day,"* the lyrics sing, symbolizing the forgiveness and grace that allow us to reconnect with our faith. There's an undeniable sense of comfort and fulfillment in knowing that the journey is complete, and a peaceful life awaits on the other side.

Whether it's the search for spiritual peace or the return to one's place of belonging, this hymn captures both the loneliness of being lost and the serenity found in the embrace of faith and homecoming.

Song For Guitar (2025) - Ryan McAvoy (b. 2001)

Concerto for Horn (2025) - Ryan McAvoy (b. 2001)
Dedicated to Patrick Ring

I. Allegro
II. Cantabile
III. Allegro

Concerto for Horn is the longest and most significant work in my recital, both in terms of its length and its personal connection. It was written for and is dedicated to my close friend, Patrick Ring, and it represents a culmination of our friendship, shared experiences, and our long-held desire to collaborate on a musical project. This piece is not programmatic in the traditional sense; it does not aim to evoke specific

imagery, but rather it is a deeply personal work, filled with meaningful musical motives, inside jokes, and references between the two of us.

The piece is in three movements: *I. Allegro*, *II. Cantabile*, and *III. Allegro*. These movements represent a balance of energy, lyricism, and joyful exuberance, reflecting both the musicality and agility of the horn. Although the music does not directly aim to portray external imagery, it carries with it a rich subtext of shared memories and experiences, each movement containing nods to our friendship and the meaningful moments we've had over the years.

This piece is also notable for its personal nature beyond the music itself. Some of the central musical themes in the piece were provided by Patrick, and many of the motives are intertwined with musical and extra-musical references that are unique to us. We first became friends at Belmont University, where we both marched in the Spirit of Gold Marching Band at Vanderbilt University. It was there that Patrick introduced me to Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the music fraternity, and became my “big,” welcoming me into the fraternity and into his circle of friends. It was during this time that we first bonded over a shared love of among other things: *Monty Python*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, cider, and Dungeons & Dragons.

Throughout our time at Belmont, we continued to play music together regularly, eventually becoming founding members of *The Lakes Brass Quintet*, which later grew into a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit that is still active today in Nashville, TN. It is this history—both musical and personal—that has shaped *Concerto for Horn*, making it a celebration not only of Patrick’s artistry but also of the enduring friendship we share.

Currently, Patrick is completing his Master's in Horn Performance at the University of North Texas in Denton, TX, where he also maintains a thriving studio of students in the surrounding community. This concerto represents not only a personal tribute to him but also a tribute to the lasting impact he’s had on my life, my music, and my journey as a composer.