

Planning a Recital Program

International Society of Bassists, June 6, 2025

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

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Sources consulted:

Bjella, Richard. "The Art of Successful Programming: Study, Selection, and Synthesis." In Abrams, Frank, and Paul D. Head. Ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Choral Pedagogy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 281-301.
Emmons, Shirlee, Stanley Sonntag. *The Art of the Song Recital*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1979.
Schnabel, Artur. *Music and the Line of Most Resistance*. New York: Da Capo, 1969 [Princeton University Press, 1942].

Purpose.

Degree recital. Needs variety, appropriate difficulty.

Teaching job application. Include teaching repertoire. Show a specialty (research agenda).

Balance art vs. entertainment

The specialist recital. Bass & voice; humor; underrepresented group; HIP; new music.

Audience.

Dittersdorf/Rachmaninoff/Stevens *vs.* general public/school/specialists

Special interests and attention spans. Young, Elderly, topical organizations

Who's performing?

Unaccompanied

Piano

Electronics: fixed or interactive

Other performers

Consider your own age

Repertoire

Source?

- Original composition
- Transcription
- Composer-authorized or historically-validated transcription

Role in the profession

- Required
- Standard
- Non-standard but should be better known
- Personal agenda

Level of artistry. Programming Bach, Beethoven, and Simandl

Other lenses to apply:

Include "alternative styles," inc. folk music?

Time periods. Most common strategy: chronological ordering

Place of origin. Local interest?

Gender

BIPOC

Mix familiar with unfamiliar. Research the entire output of the composer.

If there are many short pieces, think about how to group them.

How long a program?

Program order: start with a non-expressive "introduction." Let people get to know you.

Acoustics of hall.

Key relationships. Tempo relationships. Variety of tempo.

Contemporary music

How much? What's before and after?

Other arts

Enclose within a topic

Meet the composer

Make the program look attractive on the page.

1.
West Virginia University
College of Creative Arts and Media
School of Music

present

Andrew Kohn, double bass
Sun Jung Lee, piano

Sept. 31, 2025
8:00 pm
Bloch Learning and Recital Hall
Creative Arts Center
West Virginia University



Creative Arts Center Calendar website:
<http://calendar.wvu.edu/ccarts>

Andrew Kohn, String Bass
Sun Jung Lee, piano
Wednesday, Sept. 31, 2025

Program

Don't Have It Today (1986)	Frederic Rzewski (1938-2021)
Silent Prayer (1952)	John Cage (1912-1992)
An anti-personnel CBU-Type cluster bomb unit will be thrown into the audience (1968)	Philip Corner (b. 1933)
Paint Drying, from <i>Pungencies for Piano</i> (2013)	Andrew Kohn (b. 1962)
Blue Heron (2006)	Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)
Beast (1971)	James Tenney (1934-2006)
For 1, 2, or 3 people (1964)	Christian Wolff (1934)
Deep (2004)	Alex Shapiro (b. 1962)
Spiegel im Spiegel (Mirror within Mirror) (1978)	Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

2. Music of Mindfulness

Andrew Kohn, Sun Jung Lee

Sept. 31, 2025

We never keep to the present. We recall the past; we anticipate the future as if we found it too slow in coming and were trying to hurry it up, or we recall the past as if to stay its too-rapid flight. We are so unwise that we wander about in times that do not belong to us, and do not think of the only one that does; so vain that we dream of times that are not and blindly flee the only one that is. That fact is that the present usually hurts. We thrust it out of sight because it distresses us, and if we find it enjoyable, we are sorry to see it slip away. We try to give it the support of the future, and we think how we are going to arrange things over which we have no control for a time we can never be sure of reaching.

Let each of us examine his thoughts; he will find them wholly concerned with the past or the future. We almost never think of the present, and if we do think of it, it is only to think of what light it throws on our plans for the future. The present is never our end. The past and the present are our means, the future alone our end. Thus we never actually live, but hope to live, and since we are always planning how to be happy, it is inevitable that we should never be so. —Blaise Pascal

Don't Have It Today

Frederic Rzewski

Silent Prayer

John Cage

What do you hear?

One Note Once

Philip Corner

Paint Drying

Andrew Kohn

How does the sound change color as it fades? When does it end?

Blue Heron

Pauline Oliveros

Bass keeps the same tone and piano keeps the same cluster. Notice the least change in intensity; the speed of vibrato; notes sounding in each cluster; duration of cluster decay; sound between *una corda*, no pedal and sustaining pedal.

Beast

James Tenney

Listen for the acoustic beats.

For 1, 2, or 3 people

Christian Wolff

It's all in the coordinating of sounds. It's all in the listening.

Deep

Alex Shapiro

I want truth and nakedness in my music; I want honesty. I want the listener to feel my heart and have their own stirred by what I offer in sound. Deep was commissioned by Carolyn Beck, who has been the inspiration for much of my bassoon music. I was touched by her excitement when a gorgeous new contrabassoon, affectionately named Moby, came into her life. Listening to the profound resonance of the tones the two made together returned me to the depths of the translucent sea that enveloped my body on a recent visit to Belize. The lower I sank, the more beauty greeted my eyes. The flat color of the surface had hidden the truth below.

Sometimes I make the mistake of believing that I'm not being unless I'm doing and moving. This piece was my challenge to myself to be still and present. And in doing so, I've never been as much before. Like the sea, my truth lies below, and I am happiest when I am immersed. Inhale. Exhale.

Spiegel im Spiegel (Mirror within Mirror)

Arvo Pärt

Music of Mindfulness

Andrew Kohn

Jeanne Kohn

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Frederic Rzewski

Silent Prayer

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Music of Mindfulness

Andrew Kohn Jeanne Kohn

Don't Have It Today Frederic Rzewski

Silent Prayer John Cage

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Deep Alex Shapiro

Spiegel im Spiegel Arvo Pärt

Some people, in moments of crises and great need, have made the discovery that simple attention to the present will steady them momentarily, or even get them through days and weeks of a difficult period. In this new state we have time, plenty of time, for noticing details.

—Mary C. Morrison, *Let Evening Come*

Shadyside Presbyterian Church Chapel, Sept. 31, 2025, 8:00 pm