

**Illinois State University
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts
School of Music**

**Guest Artist Recital
Mark Stevens, *piano*
“Scape”**

**Center for Performing Arts
September 4, 2024
Wednesday Evening
7:30 p.m.**

This is the second program of the 2024-2025 season.

Program

Please silence all electronics for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

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| Nunataks (Solitary Peaks) (2007) | John Luther Adams
(born 1953) |
| Sonata in D Major, Op. 28
I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace
IV. Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo | Ludwig van Beethoven
1770-1827) |
| Zwei Konzertetüden, S. 145 (1863)
I. Waldesrauschen | Franz Liszt
(1811-1886) |
| Alluvion (2020) | Laura Kaminski
(born 1956) |
| Until there is nothing left (2018) | Natalie Draper
(born 1985) |
| The Arching Path (2016)
I. Musmeci's Concrete
II. Sul Basento
III. | Christopher Cerrone
(born 1984) |

Program Notes

Until there is nothing left

Until there is nothing left was written for pianist Lior Willinger as part of his commissioning project funded by the Presser Foundation. This piece is a meditative reflection on our destructive environmental tendencies, particularly those relating to deforestation. From the vast devastation of the Amazon rainforest to the more insidious nature of local urban sprawl, we remove trees and root systems without considering loss of life, flooding potential, and habitat sustainability. My hope is that, as global, national, and local communities, we can rally and prevent more destruction that we can prevent a situation in which there is nothing left.

-Note from the composer

The Arching Path

The Arching Path was inspired by a visit to the Ponte Sul Basento (Bridge over the Basento River), a bridge in the southern Italian city of Potenza. It is often called the Ponte Musmeci, named after its designer, the engineer Sergio Musmeci. While visiting Potenza, I was struck by this beautiful and hulking modernist mass—with its curving lines and concrete structure—that stood out from so much older, historical, and ornamented architecture in Italy.

The first movement, “Musmeci’s Concrete”, traces my own experience of walking through the substructure of the bridge, which features wavelike shapes that undulate slowly downward and outward. In the music, the pianist very slowly expands the range of the music throughout the entire movement in a series of wavelike patterns. The pianist is asked to play many different rhythms on top of one another, imaging how different speeds can represent different curves on the bridge. Finally, the musical material itself—sharp, icy, repeated notes—draw inspiration from the material of concrete; something not often thought of as beautiful, yet an infinitely malleable material.

The second movement, “Sul Basento”, is aquatic, imaging a view from the river below. Musically, it compresses the repeated notes of the first movement into a flowing and quiet tremolo. Just like skipping stones on water, the music imagines a single note from the piano bouncing across the sonic surface—slowing flowing from an attack into an almost sustained sound. The form of the music is aqueous too—one idea gradually flows into another until finally it grows into a grand musical depiction of a view of the entire bridge from below.

The final, untitled movement imagines these elements together in a kind of epilogue, with the bridge (the repeated notes), the water (a flowing chorale), and a sharp repeated dissonant chord weaving together. At the end, both the bridge and the water are left in the distance.

-Note from the composer

About the Artist . . .

Dr. Mark Stevens enjoys a dynamic career as a solo pianist, collaborative artist, teacher, and adjudicator. Dr. Stevens' experience as a pianist ranges from traditional piano repertoire to contemporary music, with a focus on works written in the past 50 years. An active commissioner, he is preparing to premiere 10 new works composed by a diverse range of early to middle career American-identifying composers, all written to be playable by an advanced amateur pianist. In recital, he engages audiences through thematic programming, juxtapositions of unique repertoire, and colorful insights about music, composers, and cultural context.

Dr. Stevens serves as Director of Keyboard Studies and Assistant Professor of Piano at South Dakota State University. An active and committed teacher for nearly 25 years, he has repeatedly been awarded for the quality of his instruction. His students have won dozens of prizes in competitions including the MTNA solo competition, the South Dakota and Washington State Music Teachers Competitions, the Seattle Young Artists Music Festival, and the Northwest Bach, Viennese Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary Piano Festivals. He is regularly invited to adjudicate and teach throughout United States, offering masterclasses and workshops for universities, professional organizations, private studios, and music academies. As president of the South Dakota Music Teachers Association, he is active in service to his profession at the state level and beyond.

Dr. Stevens holds graduate degrees in piano performance and piano pedagogy from the University of Oregon and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He completed his undergraduate studies in piano performance at Whitworth University in Spokane, WA. He has served as a member of the faculty at Washington State University, the University of Oregon, the Chopin Academy of Music, and as a visiting instructor at Cornish College of the Arts. His primary teachers include Dean Kramer, Paul Barnes, Peter Mack, David Riley, and Judith Schoepflin, and he has performed in masterclasses with artists including Jon Nakamatsu and the Chiara String Quartet.