

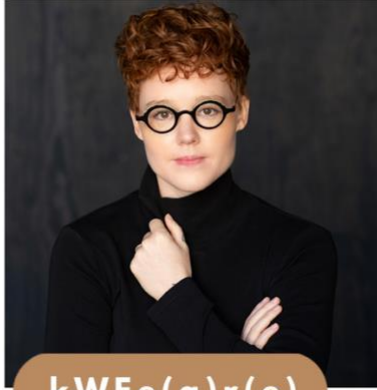
Charlotte Street Premieres New Compositions by Queer Artists in Upcoming Concert *kWEe(a)r(e)*



(Left to right: Kyle Jones, Nathan Mertens; Bottom: Spectrum Ensemble)

Kansas City, MO, January 20, 2023: Join us for the exciting premiere of *kWEe(a)r(e)* (pronounced “Queer”) at the Charlotte Street Stern Theater, on **Saturday, February 4, from 3:00-5:30 PM**. Addressing themes and/or narratives existing inside the LGBTQIA+ community, Queer saxophonists **Nathan Mertens** (he/him) and **Kyle Jones** (he/him) will be performing a new chamber work from **Anthony R. Green** (he/him) entitled *kWEe(a)r(e)*. This work, as the title suggests, is not centered on a typical trope of painful Queer experiences, but rather, on all aspects of Queer visibility and excellence. Green himself will be performing spoken word in the piece, and will be present for the Community Panel Discussion held at the beginning of the event.

Complementing Mertens and Jones is an additional performance by the **Spectrum Ensemble**, a Queer percussion duo that grew in response to a distinct lack of LGBTQ+ representation in the classical music community despite Queer artists making up a large portion. They will be performing additional new works by composers **Alex Temple, Darian Thomas, Derek Tywoniuk, and Leonard Bernstein**.



kWEe(a)r(e)



Along with the performances, performers will also speak on a **Community Panel Discussion** built around artists of the **LGBTQIA+ community**. This panel will feature artists **Zachary Parker, Stacy Bush, Christian Wurst, SA Hall,** and *kWEe(a)r(e)*'s composer **Anthony R. Green**. This discussion will interrogate the question "What is Queerness in Art?" by exploring the role of identity in the creative process among our varied panelists. ASL interpretation will be available for the duration of the panel.

Upcoming in 2023, artists Kyle Jones, Nathan Mertens, and the Spectrum Ensemble will be releasing a call for music scores in February as a continuation of the **New Music Compositions Competition** at Charlotte Street. A concert of the composed pieces will be held in May 2023. Artists interested in submitting work are invited to meet the performers of *kWEe(a)r(e)* during Saturday's Community Panel Discussion.

kWEe(a)r(e)

Saturday, February 4, 2023 from 3:00-5:30 PM

Charlotte Street Stern Theater

3333 Wyoming Street, Kansas City, MO 64111

RSVP here - <https://bit.ly/kweeare>

ABOUT KYLE JONES

Kyle Jones, saxophonist, is a performer, teacher, and arts administrator. An advocate for new music, Kyle actively collaborates with composers and performers from various styles and genres. Recently, he has been involved in a commissioning project with Dr. Nathan Mertens with the composer Anthony R. Green, as well as leading a consortium for a new work for saxophone and clarinet by composer Gabriela Ortiz. Kyle was chosen as the winner of the 2018 Sarah and Ernest Butler Winds, Brass, and Percussion Concerto Competition held at the University of Texas-Austin. He is currently a doctoral student of Zachary Shemon at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, as well as Instructor of Saxophone at Northwest Missouri State University and MidAmerica Nazarene University.

In addition to his performing activities, Kyle serves as a Co-Director for Fast Forward Austin, Kyle serves as Production Coordinator for Kansas City Baroque Consortium, Grant Writing Associate for Appalchia: A Southeastern Wind Symphony, and manages and produces his own podcast entitled "Pay to Play." He holds degrees from The University of Texas-Austin, Peabody Conservatory, and East Tennessee State University.

ABOUT NATHAN MERTENS

Nathan Mertens American saxophonist, Nathan Mertens (he/him) currently serves as the Teaching Assistant Professor of Saxophone at the University of Arkansas. As an active soloist and chamber musician, he has performed recitals in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Croatia, Bolivia, the United Kingdom, and throughout the United States. He has performed as a soloist with orchestras including the Busan Philharmonic Orchestra, Hastings Symphony Orchestra, The University of Texas Symphony Orchestra, and the University of Arkansas Saxophone Ensemble. Mertens' orchestral experience includes performances with the San Antonio Symphony and the Omaha Symphony. In competition, he was awarded Third Prize in the 14th Kurashiki International Saxophone Competition, Second Grand Prize in the North International Music Competition in Sweden, and has been a finalist for many national competitions.

Previously, Mertens lived in Tokyo, Japan as a Monbukagakusho Research Scholarship recipient with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. As such, Mertens was the first American Saxophonist to formally study in Japan. Realizing that awareness and access to Japanese music were lacking in the West, Mertens created the Japanese Saxophone Database, a resource to connect the rest of the world with all things saxophone in Japan. While in Tokyo, he performed with the Kunitachi Saxophone Ensemble, the Japan Saxophone Orchestra, Marie Kikuchi, and Emi Kondo.

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816.352.5181 | boiboy@charlottestreet.org

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As an advocate for new music, Mertens has commissioned and premiered works by composers including Lucy Armstrong, Akiro Ito, Sachie Kobayashi, Andrew Boss, Rob Buckland, and Zach Browning. He has premiered these works with many ensembles across the globe at the World Saxophone Congress, North American Saxophone Alliance Conference, and other concert venues. Most recently, he commissioned Anthony Greene for a work entitled, “kWEe(a)r(e),” which centers around celebrating and uplifting queer identities.

ABOUT SPECTRUM ENSEMBLE

Spectrum Ensemble is based in Texas where LGBTQA+ representation has the potential to make a difference in the lives of young queer people. The ensemble has three main objectives: to commission and perform great music of high caliber, to increase the representation of Queer artists in the classical music world, and to use music to raise funds that will be donated to meaningful LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations.

ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET

Charlotte Street centers Kansas City’s most forward-thinking visual artists, writers, and performers—acting as the primary incubator, provocateur, and connector for the region’s contemporary arts community, and its leading advocate on the national stage. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over \$2 million in awards and grants to artists and their innovative projects, and connected individual artists to each other and to the greater Kansas City community. For more information about Charlotte Street, its awards, programs, and initiatives, visit charlottestreet.org

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