



University of
Lethbridge

Faculty of
Fine Arts
Piikksinaasin

Presents

Payge Laverdiere, saxophone

In a

Graduation Recital

Assisted by

Dr. Holly De Caigny, saxophone

Veronique Fortier, saxophone

Noelle Kuntz, soprano

Naomi Huber, piano

Seth Villamil, electronics

From the Studio of

Dr. Holly De Caigny

7:30PM

March 17th, 2026

Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Luminous Sky

Chris Evan Hass
(b. 1993)

Payge Laverdiere, soprano saxophone
Véronique Fortier, alto saxophone
Dr. Holly De Caigny, baritone saxophone

SAXA IGNIS Op. 20

Adam Sherkin
(b. 1982)

Payge Laverdiere, alto and tenor saxophones
Noelle Kuntz, soprano

Dreams In the Dusk

David Biedenbender
(b. 1984)

Payge Laverdiere, alto saxophone
Naomi Huber, piano

INTERMISSION

Dracones Nursery

Nick Hwang
(b. 1982)

Payge Laverdiere, alto saxophone
Seth Villamil, electronics

My Dearest Ruth

Stacy Garrop
(b. 1969)

Payge Laverdiere, alto saxophone
Naomi Huber, piano

Scaramouche

Darius Milhaud
(1892-1974)

- I. Vif*
- II. Modéré*
- III. Brasileira*

Payge Laverdiere, alto saxophone
Naomi Huber, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Luminous Sky - Chris Evan Hass

Luminous Sky is a trio for Soprano, Alto, and Baritone saxophones. It is a beautiful lyrical ballad that depicts the warmth and serenity of a colourful sunset. This piece combines my love for beautiful, lyrical pieces, my wish to play the soprano saxophone, and my wish to collaborate with the other members of the saxophone studio.

SAXA IGNIS - Adam Sherkin

SAXA IGNIS translates to 'Stones of Fire' It is a song cycle for saxophone and high voice that contains eight separate movements, all named after igneous rocks. Four of the movements are played on alto saxophone and the remaining four are played on Tenor Saxophone. Adam Sherkin is a Canadian composer and pianist who is currently based out of Toronto. This piece uses a handful of extended techniques for both the saxophone and voice, showing great versatility in both musicians. I chose to collaborate with Noelle Kuntz, a U of L Masters student in Voice Performance, not only because she is an exemplary musician and because the hardest parts of this piece line up with her thesis, but also because we are great friends. As we put this piece together, we did a lot of work together and forced each other out of our comfort zones. I began working with a saxophone I had no prior experience with, and the both of us had to confront some difficult rhythms, and work with the delicate balance between voice and saxophone. I have had the best time working on this piece, even when things got a little rocky.

Dreams In the Dusk - David Biedenbender

Dreams in the dusk,
Only dreams closing the day
And with the day's close going back
To the gray things, the dark things,
The far, deep things of dreamland.

Dreams, only dreams in the dusk,
Only the old remembered pictures
Of lost days when the day's loss
Wrote in tears the heart's loss.

Tears and loss and broken dreams
May find your heart at dusk.
- Carl Sandburg

This piece is a concerto for alto saxophone and wind orchestra and no piece has touched my heart as deeply as this one. Biedenbender wrote this piece after he took a walk on a cold snowy evening, feeling as though this was the first time he had ever heard true silence. These walks were the way he dealt with the passing of his sister-in-law, who lost her battle to cancer at the age of 23. The primary musical gesture within this piece is a bend from one note to another, simulating groaning, moaning, or wailing. This piece demonstrates true, unadulterated grief and loss. It is the most challenging piece I have worked on thus far. Not only does it require technical skill and work, but also emotional interpretation and feeling. This was the first piece I selected for my recital, nearly a year before I began working on it, and it will remain in my heart as one of the most beautiful pieces for saxophone that I have ever played or even heard.

Dracones Nursery - Nick Hwang

Dracones are a type of giant, toothed, serpentine monster in Greek mythology. This piece, for Alto Saxophone and live electronics depicts what it might sound like to be in the nursery of baby dracones. The electronics provide atmosphere and work together with the saxophone to create a soundscape of a nursery of baby dracones. This piece was challenging in a different way. As a musician who has mainly studied the performance of more 'classical' pieces, this piece and its improvisatory elements are not something I have ever worked with before. It provides a lot of unique challenges but creates an interesting soundscape. I would like to thank my electronic collaborator, Seth Villamil, who has been very proactive in ensuring I sound the way I want to sound, and taking this piece

as seriously as I do, considering mic placement, stage placement, and many other aspects of the performance of this piece.

My Dearest Ruth - Stacy Garrop

This piece was commissioned by Jane and James Ginsburg for their mother, former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. This piece is originally sung, and the lyrics are taken from the letter written by Ginsburg's husband, Martin Ginsburg as he was in the hospital battling cancer. This piece is dedicated to my Grandmother, Ruth Laverdiere. She is one of the sweetest and most thoughtful people I have met. In my first year of university, her husband, my grandfather, passed away after a series of health complications. This was a difficult loss to comprehend, and it is one that my family is still coping with to this day. This beautiful, lyrical piece expresses how Martin Ginsburg felt, coping with his own mortality, but also expressing his love for his wife.

Scaramouche - Darius Milhaud

Scaramouche displays virtuosic musical gestures, and the three movements represent three distinctly different characters, being music that he wrote for two other theatrical productions. A scaramouche is a stock character from the French theatre, which is personified as a boastful coward. The first movement, Vif, is the most obvious iteration of this character, flying through different musical ideas, never slowing down, and carrying a certain air of whimsy. The second movement, Modere, is more lyrical and the most collaborative of the three movements, with the piano and saxophone parts weaving in and out of each other. The third movement was inspired by Milhaud's time in Brazil. It is a Brazilian dance that also displays virtuosic use of saxophone technique. Together these three movements create a diverse cast of characters with earworm melodies that are sure to stick in your mind.

Thanks To:

Dr Chee Meng Low
Peggy Mezei
Kirk Wassmer
Colleen Wassmer
Tracy Connery
Philip Boyer
Isaac Risling
Max Kortbeek
Gabe Heywood
Rachel Wilkinson
Phoenix Keeler
Charlie Peach
Gwen Argento
Lily Fair

Jessica Rohl
Ruth Laverdiere
Dave Laverdiere
Susan Strong
Bernie Grumpelt
Matthew Laverdiere
Aynsley Laverdiere
Michelle Laverdiere
Naomi Huber
Seth Villamil
Noelle Kuntz
Veronique Fortier
Cori Campbell
Augustus Connery Boyer

Special Thanks To:

Dr. Holly De Caigny: Holly has been my saxophone instructor since my second year in the university and helped me navigate the hardest musical challenges I have ever faced. Her expertise, skill, and advice have been so influential to who I am as a musician. She has seen me at my best and at my worst and has never given up on me, even when I had already given up on myself. Because of her, I have branched out my musical repertoire more than I would have under any other professor. She has made me feel welcome in any ensemble she has been in and has supported me more than anyone else. She has provided me with musical opportunities that have challenged me and pushed me beyond what I believed I could ever do. I am so thankful to have the privilege to study under her and I hope to continue to do so in the future. Thank you so much Holly, for helping shape who I am as a musician and a person.