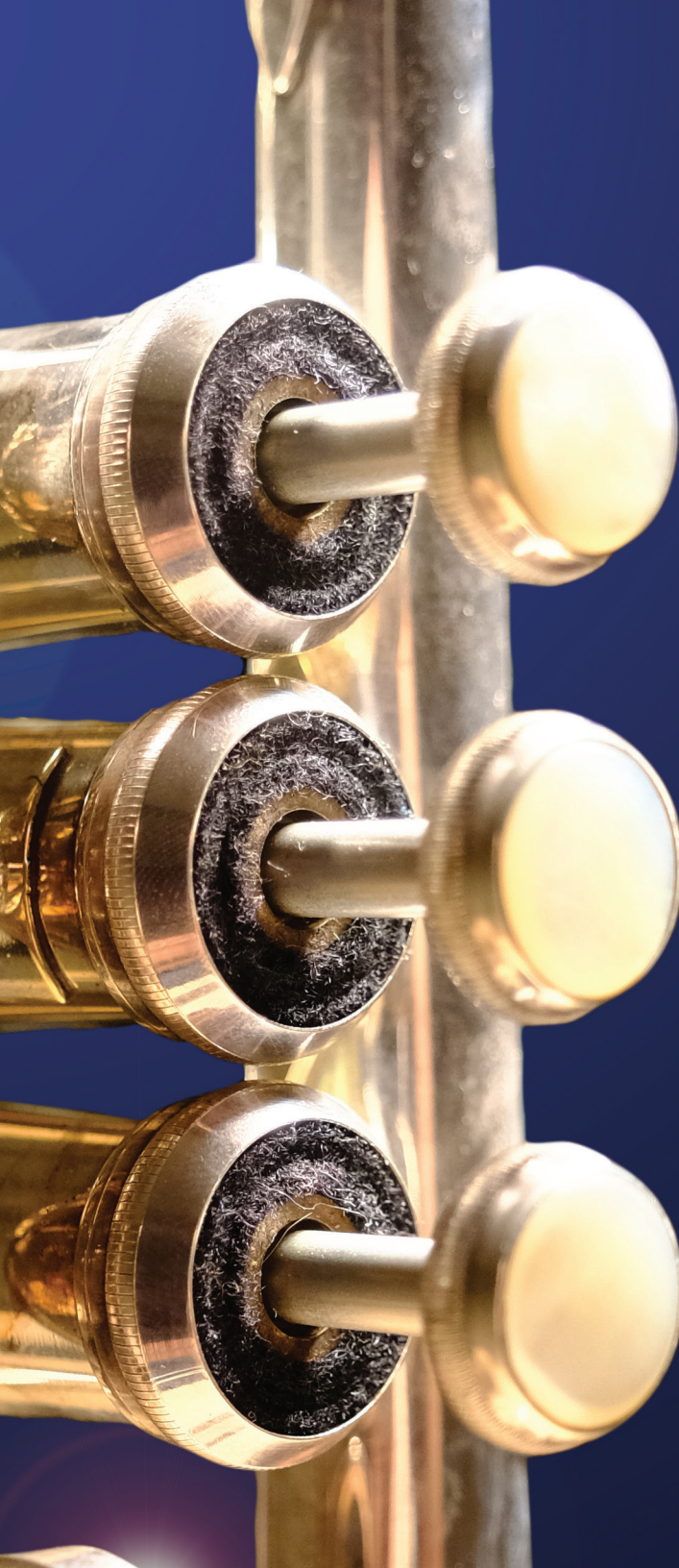




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2023 | 2024

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# Oluwasajibomi Osunkoya, Composer

2023 | 2024

## Musical Minds: Exploring the Connection Between Music and Emotions

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Saturday, February 24, 2024, 3:30 PM

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Performing Arts Studio  
1804 N. Decatur Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30322

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### Acknowledgements

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I am profoundly grateful to Dr. Katherine Young and Dr. Laura Emmery for their invaluable guidance and support throughout my honors thesis process. Special thanks also go to the Center for Mind, Brain, and Culture, the Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, and the Emory Music Composition area for their generous funding and assistance. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all of my performers, whose talent and dedication have brought this work to life, and to the Performing Arts Studio crew for their indispensable help behind the scenes. Lastly, I offer my deepest gratitude to my family, friends, and loved ones for their unwavering support and encouragement. This journey has been enriched and made possible by all of your contributions!

# Program

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*Liberosis*

Oluwasijibomi Osunkoya  
(b. 2001)

Carol Xu and Christy Song, violin;  
Caroline Ma, viola;  
Andrew Choi, cello

*Iji Lile (Hurricane)*

Osunkoya

Carol Xu and Christy Song, violin;  
Caroline Ma, viola;  
Andrew Choi, cello;  
Damisi Akinpelu, piano

— **Interlude: Lecture** Presented by Oluwasijibomi Osunkoya —

*Imqlara (Feeling)*

Osunkoya

- I. *Ayọ*
- II. *Ibinu*
- III. *Ijaya*
- IV. *Ibanuje*

Christy Song and Carol Xu, violin;  
Caroline Ma, viola;  
Andrew Choi, cello

# Program Notes

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## Introduction

Welcome to “Musical Minds,” a capstone recital presented as a culmination of my academic journey at Emory University, where I have been studying both Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology and Music Composition. This project represents not just a synthesis of my majors, but an investigation into how the precise mechanics of the brain intersect with the emotive art of music.

Throughout my studies, I have been fascinated by how music can profoundly affect our emotions and how this is mirrored in our brain’s activity. Pioneering research in the field of neuroscience by experts like Carol Krumhansl, Stefan Koelsch, and Anne J. Blood has shed light on how music can trigger actual chemical changes in the brain, influencing our emotional state. This revelation has been a cornerstone in my approach to composition, inspiring me to work to craft musically engaging and emotionally evocative works.

The recital you’re about to experience is more than a presentation of musical compositions; it’s an experimental fusion of neuroscience and music. Informed by my neuroscience research, I have composed each piece with the intent to evoke specific emotions, a venture into understanding and manipulating the emotional impact of music based on neuroscientific principles.

As you listen to *Liberosis*, *Iji Lile*, and *Imqlara*, I invite you to experience the music not just as a listener but as a participant in an exploration of the interplay between neuroscience and music composition. This journey has been immensely enriching for me, and I hope it offers you a glimpse into the powerful relationship between music and the human mind.

# Program Notes

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## ***Liberosis***

The string quartet *Liberosis* first premiered at the Emory Composer's Society's Fall 2021 composition showcase. The title comes from the name of a lesser-known emotion, "liberosis," which describes the longing to care less about things. This composition explores complex human emotions, particularly the intricate balance between concern and indifference. In a subtle interplay of rhythms and harmonies, *Liberosis* navigates through the nuances of emotional attachment. The piece transitions between simple and compound beat groupings within a waltz, and this rhythmic fluidity attempts to alter the listener's perception of the beat and pulse. The minor mode and harmonic structure add layers of melancholy and introspection to the piece. The main themes of *Liberosis* directly quote the Windows 10 USB connecting and disconnecting sounds, and within this musical landscape, a narrative emerges, tracing the evolution of relationships. These themes depict the transition from a deep connection to a gradual detachment. They reflect on the cyclical process of letting go and the emotional liberation that can follow. *Liberosis* invites listeners to delve into their own experiences of attachment and detachment, of caring deeply and then learning to let go. I intend for this quartet, through its melodies and rhythms, to reflect listeners' own stories, and I hope it resonates with the subtle, often unspoken emotions that dwell within the depths of the human heart.

# Program Notes

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## ***Iji Lile***

I debuted the piano quintet *Iji Lile* at the Emory Composer's Society's Fall 2022 composition showcase. This piece, whose title translates from Yoruba to "strong storm" or "hurricane," explores the use of harmony to express emotion through music. The use of Ab minor chords in the context of the key of c minor, also known as chromatic mediant chords, lies at the heart of this piece. These and other chords taken from other keys have been scientifically noted to provoke increased amygdala activity, as shown in studies like Koelsch et al. (2008), due to their unexpected sound in the context of the piece. This aligns with my objective to evoke a sense of emotional turbulence and instability, mirroring the unpredictability of a hurricane.

In *Iji Lile*, I aim to convey the storm's intensity through the use of harmony and instrumental techniques. The tremolo and artificial harmonics in the piece add to the sense of urgency and anticipation, enhancing the overall stormy atmosphere. The opening section of the piece immediately immerses the listener, with the music's dynamic contrast mimicking the chaotic nature of a hurricane. The middle section of the piece offers a contrasting, serene moment: the eye of a storm. Here, a heartwarming duet between the cello and viola, later joined by the piano, provides a brief break from the stormy surroundings. However, this peaceful interlude soon ends, as the piece reverts to a recapitulation of the opening sections. The return of the opening motifs acts like a frightening encore of the storm, intensifying the emotional journey for the audience, and culminating in a solemn ending.

***Program notes for Imolara will be available on a separate insert after the concert.***

# Biography

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Oluwasijibomi (Siji) Osunkoya, 22, is a senior at Emory University double majoring in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology and Music Composition on the pre-medical track. As a performer, he is currently the Principal violist of the Emory University Symphony Orchestra and has studied viola performance under Yinzi Kong and Joseph Skerik. He has performed in Emory's chamber music program for over three years. Before attending Emory University, Siji performed in ensembles such as the Emory University Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Georgia Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra, and the Gwinnett County Youth Symphony Orchestra. As a composer, he studies under Dr. Katherine Young. Siji has had multiple works premiered through the Emory Composer's Society, and has had works read by the Emory University Symphony Orchestra and the Vega String Quartet. At Emory, he is involved in research at the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and is in leadership roles in the Emory Orchestral Students Association, Music Advisory Board, and African Students Association.

## Ensemble

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Violinist **Carol Xu** ('24C) will be graduating with bachelor of arts in Economics & Human Health and Music Performance.

Violinist **Christy Song** ('23C) previously graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance.

Violist **Caroline Ma** ('26C) will be graduating with a Bachelor of Sciences in Marketing/Accounting.

Cellist **Andrew Choi** ('24C) will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Physics and Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science.

Pianist **Damisi Akinpelu** ('24C) will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience & Behavioral Biology and a Minor in Music.

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