

16 SEASON  
MUSIC  
AT EMORY UNIVERSITY

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**MICHAEL SHINGO CRAWFORD, SENIOR**  
HONORS COMPOSITION RECITAL

Anna Bing, cello  
Elena Cholakova, piano  
Parker Ellison, trombone  
Minjee Kim, viola  
Daun Kwag, violin  
Claire Della Mahon, flute  
Haley Matthews, bassoon  
Christopher Prugh, percussion  
Benito Thompson, violin  
Vega String Quartet

**SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2017, 5:00 P.M.**



EMORY  

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arts

**EMERSON CONCERT HALL  
SCHWARTZ CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS**

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## PROGRAM

<i>A Fantastical Flight</i>	Michael Crawford (b. 1995)
Daun Kwag, violin Benito Thompson, violin	
<i>Present Day, Present Time</i>	Crawford
Daun Kwag, violin Minjee Kim, viola	
<i>Einstein's Dreams</i>	Crawford
I. <i>Prologue</i> II. <i>3 May 1905</i> III. <i>28 June 1905</i>	
Claire Della Mahon, flute Haley Matthews, bassoon Anna Bing, cello Christopher Prugh, percussion	
<i>Following</i>	Crawford
Parker Ellison, trombone Elena Cholakova, piano	
<i>Aquatic Motion</i>	Crawford
Elena Cholakova, piano	
<i>River of Light</i>	Crawford
Elena Cholakova, piano	
<i>Portraits</i>	Crawford
I. <i>D.K.</i> II. <i>A.B.</i> III. <i>M.K.</i> IV. <i>M.S.C.</i>	
Vega String Quartet	

This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the Emory College Center for Creativity & Arts.

## PROGRAM NOTES

A *Fantastical Flight* transports the listener into a dream where he is airborne, unfettered by reason and fully convinced of the reality of what he sees before his eyes. The constantly shifting meter reflects the boundless imagination of the dreaming mind and its proclivity for sudden, unexpected changes in focus. The opening presents diatonic harmonies and simple accompaniment, joyous and spritely in character. As this dream progresses, darker undertones emerge through the use of bimodality and polymeter. The concurrence of contrasting pitch collections and meters expresses the conflict between the purely mental imagery of the dream and the corporeal world that lies awaiting the sleeper's wake. The motivic material is passed between the two parts and presented in several variations throughout the piece. The music pensively draws to a close, reflecting on the inevitability of awakening and the dreamer's melancholy at the thought of abandoning the fantastical journey that will soon fade into oblivion.

*Present Day, Present Time* is a programmatic work based on *Serial Experiments Lain*, a 1998 avant-garde anime series. The plot examines the potential for human consciousness to be extracted as electrical data and reconstructed within a digital network akin to the internet. As the story progresses the lines are blurred between the material and digital worlds, bringing to mind questions about the nature of reality. The music consists of four sections that flow into each other, tracking the protagonist's journey from an exclusively physical being to one that exists simultaneously in both spaces. Throughout the piece, the violin and viola represent two characters engaged in dialogue.

*Einstein's Dreams* is inspired by Alan Lightman's novel of the same name. This fictional narrative consists of a multitude of short episodes that describe Albert Einstein's dreams about various conceptions of time. The piece is divided into three movements, each corresponding to a chapter of the novel.

The first movement, *Prologue*, depicts Einstein in his waking state as he strolls into his job at a patent office in the early hours of the morning. The tubular bells represent the calls of the clock tower, and the wind chimes paired with the flute's air sounds capture the ambient noises emerging from the city. The texture becomes increasingly dense with the breaking of dawn, and the prologue concludes as Einstein hums from Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata.

The second movement describes a world in which cause and effect are erratic. A gesture in one instrument links to a new gesture in another instrument, the first motion serving as the impetus for the second. This forms a cause and effect relationship. Throughout the movement, these relationships are reversed and otherwise varied. The music is characterized by contrapuntal density and unexpected turns in meter.

The third movement encapsulates a world in which a flock of nightingales represents time. When captured, these birds cause time to slow for the captor, who is able to delight in the moment. The opening of the movement paints the image of a pleasant summer day. This serenity is broken with the sudden appearance of a flock of nightingales. The following section continues this more

active character but with a series of repeating figures that gradually accumulate in density, depicting the sense of folly and absurdity of those who join in pursuit of the birds. The final, more lyrical section describes the moment when a nightingale is captured. A darker mood emerges at this point as the nightingale perishes. The tubular bells return in a brief reference to the epilogue, where the clock tower strikes eight and the reader emerges from the dreaming state.

*Following* is loosely based on "Following Piece" by the performance artist Vito Acconci. The music plays on the idea of following or being followed. The simultaneous presence of two or more distinct metrical ideas represents two people walking at different paces. These ideas occasionally converge into a more unified statement, where the characters interact in some way. As the follower's intentions are uncovered in the frantic final section, the music launches into a chase characterized by imitative motivic fragments that interject themselves at unanticipated moments.

*Aquatic Motion* depicts water in its various guises. The A section of the piece involves constant rhythmic activity, leaping melodic lines, a large number of registral shifts, and unsettling meter changes, representing water's ability to quickly change shape, split off from a larger body, and move in different directions. The B section develops these familiar ideas through rhythmic variation and superimposition. Three strands of distinct metrical ideas progress at the same time, producing the sensation of separate streams of water flowing through paths exerting varying amounts of resistance. After a varied recapitulation, the piece concludes in grandiose gestures over a stable harmonic framework, calling to mind the movement of waves through a large body of water.

*River of Light* seeks to evoke an image of reality in an altered state. The transmutation of light, a long-familiar substance, into a fluid, an unnatural and physically impossible form, imparts a surrealistic character to this newly born entity. It is plausible enough to be imagined, yet sufficiently mysterious that it evades full comprehension. The music is characterized by freedom in rhythmic structure. Melodic and accompanimental ideas are syncopated and alternate with triplets, conveying a sense of fluidity, as if the tones were detached and floated freely above the rigidity of the metrical structure.

*Portraits* is a string quartet in which each of the four movements is a depiction of one of the principal string players of Emory University Symphony Orchestra as of fall 2015.

*D.K.*, concertmaster, opens the quartet with its exuberant character. The A section features succinct motifs and brief shifts to distant tonalities. These ideas are then fragmented and distributed across all four instruments, taking advantage of the spatial arrangement of the quartet. After the contrasting middle section, the opening material returns again, relaxing into a calmer character and leading into the second movement.

*A.B.*, principal cello, seeks to convey enveloping warmth. While the cello is often in the foreground, all of the instruments have independent lines that interweave with its melody. The movement concludes with a fragmentation of the opening melody above a metrically contrasting figure in the cello line.

*M.K.*, principal viola, is quirky and joyfully effervescent. It features an unusual and rather humorous use of glissandi in the second violin part and often creates harmonic structure based on the simultaneous presence of two modes. The movement concludes with a section driven by ostinati across all instruments, each of which is in a different meter.

*M.S.C.*, as principal second violin, is a self-portrait. There is a sense of restlessness and forward drive in this movement accomplished through much more dissonant harmonies based on stacked intervals, particularly the seventh, as a method of building chords. *M.S.C.* makes countless motivic references to the previous movements, emphasizing the role that each of the people portrayed have played in my life. The quartet comes to a close with a coda, where the defining motifs for each portrait are localized to their respective instruments.

## BIOGRAPHY

Michael Crawford is a senior at Emory majoring in music, with concentrations in violin performance and composition. Born in Lawrenceville, Georgia, he began playing violin at age seven, studying first with Victor DeLisa and later with Laura Nadine. He was introduced to piano through lessons at age ten and has largely been self-taught since then. While in high school, he was a member of the Gwinnett Symphony Orchestra, and he participated in the 2011 Georgia Governor's Honors Program. He currently studies violin with Shawn Pagliarini. Crawford is concertmaster of the Emory University Symphony Orchestra and was the winner of the 2015–2016 Concerto and Aria Competition with the Barber Violin Concerto. He is also an active member of Emory's Chamber Music Program. During the past three summers, he has attended the Franklin Pond Chamber Music College Festival, National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute, and Eastern Music Festival, where he was assistant concertmaster.

Crawford has had an interest in composition throughout high school, and he began formal study with Richard Prior in his sophomore year at Emory. He has also studied with John Anthony Lennon. Composing has become an increasingly important part of his musical activities, and he plans to continue pursuing music in graduate school with a focus on composition.



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**EVENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION** Available online at [arts.emory.edu](http://arts.emory.edu).

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**BACK COVER PHOTO CREDITS:** Clockwise (from top left): Emory University Symphony Orchestra, *Tony Benner*; Barenaked Voices, *Emory Photo/Video*; Emory Concert Choir: *courtesy of Emory Concert Choir*; Emory Jazz Big Band, *Bill Head*.

**THE TREE LIGHTS** in Allen Plaza were installed by Illuminating Design, specialists in holiday and outdoor lighting. [illuminating-design.com](http://illuminating-design.com)