



Bard College Conservatory of Music

20 Years of Music, Vision, and Excellence

Third-Year Recital

Into No One's Song

Elena Hause, *composition*

Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 7:00 pm
Olin Hall

The House In The Wood Beside The Lake (2024)

Elena Hause
(b. 2005)

Text by Thomas MacDonagh

Ryan Michki, *soloist*
Elizabeth Bayer, *soprano*
Elie Walsh, *alto*
Ben Schlaich, *tenor*
Javy Polanco, *bass*
Isabel Chin Garita, *violin*
Sawyer Dahlen, *piano*

In The Stairwell (2023)

Hank Zhang, *violin*
Isabel Chin Garita, *violin*
Sky Metting, *viola*
Aidan Young, *bass*

Nadir (2025)

Sky Metting, *viola*

Dear Dad (2024)

Lyrics by Elena Hause
and Luca Raufer

Catherine: Willa Maurette, *voice*
Hank Zhang, *violin*
Abby Wolf, *cello*
Sawyer Dahlen, *piano*

i am just a girl (2024)

Gwynn Bennett, *flute*

continued...

Blue Prelude (2025)

Text by Saeed Jones

Kielor Tung, *conductor*

Elizabeth Bayer, Norrie Canniff, Julia May,
Leah Schell, Ruben Giunta, and Teddie Silver, *sopranos*

Abby Wolf, Charlotte Ferguson,
Fiona O'Halloran, Elie Walsh, and Abigail Arndt, *altos*

Charles Goehring, Shavonne Farley,
Julian Kwiatkowski, Ben Schlaich, Riley Mabry, and Earl Aguila, *tenors*

Garrick Neuner, Drew Frankenberg,
Javy Polanco, Colin Walsh, and Miles O'Rourke, *basses*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Elena Hause is a composer and vocalist from West Orange, New Jersey. At Bard, she is pursuing a double major in music composition and biology, concentrating in Environmental Studies. She currently studies composition with George Tsontakis, and has previously studied with Joan Tower and Missy Mazzoli. Additionally, she has studied voice with Matthew Deming and musical theatre with David Sytkowski. As a musician, she cherishes the process of collaboration with players, striving to create music that enables a powerful and personal connection between musicians and audiences. She particularly enjoys writing vocal music, whether for musical theatre, choir, small chamber groups, or opera – through her work, she explores the power and intimacy of each person's unique voice. Theatricality, individuality, and memory are common themes across her compositions.

During her time at Bard, Elena has worked with the Da Capo Chamber Players and the Now Ensemble, as well as several Bard student groups including the Conservatory Orchestra and the Musical Theatre Workshop. In 2024, she premiered the original musical “Dear God”, which she composed, co-directed, and co-produced with bookwriter Luca Raufer. She has also served as music director for several theatrical productions at Bard, including “Dear God”, “Twisted: The Untold Story of a Royal Vizier”, and the original musical “Turn To Dust by Julian Kwiatkowski”. Elena also performs in various plays and musicals, the most recent of which include “Urinetown” and “The Wolves”. She will graduate in May 2028.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The House In The Wood Beside The Lake

Thomas MacDonagh (1878) was an Irish poet and revolutionary leader. He was one of the seven leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916, and was executed for his role at age thirty-eight. During his life, he wrote beautiful, lyrical poetry which offers a window into an emotional world of enduring love. He writes of his passion for nature, for the towns and landscapes of his country, for an unnamed lover. At the same time, he writes of deep and profound grief, where the loss of romance, youth, and freedom all feel inextricably bound. This piece seeks to explore these vivid aches through the language of Irish folk song. It references vocal and violinistic techniques characteristic of Irish traditional music, placing the soloist at the forefront of a mournful and nostalgic atmosphere.

The House In The Wood Beside The Lake

By Thomas MacDonagh

(Only the first portion of the full text is adapted)

The house in the wood beside the lake
That I once knew well I must know no more
My slow feet other paths must take --
How soon would they reach the old known door!
But now that time is o'er.

The lake is quiet and hush to-day;
The downward heat keeps the water still
And the wind that round me used to play
Ere through elm and oak from the pine-clad hill
I plunged with heart a-thrill.

A time can die as a man can die
And be buried too and buried deep;
But a memory lives though the ages fly--
I know two hearts one memory keep
That cannot die or sleep

In The Stairwell

“In The Stairwell” is an adventure into darkness and disagreement. One of the first pieces I began working on as a Bard student, it explores a narrative perspective that has many different feelings on the same difficult idea. With the dark resonance of the bass as an anchor, “In The Stairwell” moves through despair, confusion, agitation, and a short-lived moment of hope. The title refers to a real-life memory of an argument in a stairwell, as well as the symbolic image of descending further and further down into a future that cannot be predicted.

Nadir

“Nadir” is an unstable and personality-centric piece drawn from the idea of mental agitation and the frustrating effort to understand one’s own mind. The word “nadir” refers to the lowest point of a space. In this piece, the violist takes on a sort of character, and with an almost monologue-like expressiveness, attempts to find what is at the lowest point of their mind. They trudge, stumble, and squeeze through mental obstacles, pursuing some indefinite goal, and in the end they feel more tired than satisfied. Composing this was a compelling exercise in solo string writing, rhythmic motifs, and harmony as a source of color rather than function.

Dear Dad

In November of 2024, scriptwriter Luca Raufer and I produced our first original musical, “Dear God”. Together, we co-wrote, co-directed, and co-produced an entire two-act original show with only the conviction that the material meant something important to us. “Dear God” follows two girls, Ava and Catherine, who first develop a romance when they are young teenagers at ideologically opposed summer camp programs. After they are torn apart and eventually dismiss their pasts, it’s up to their older selves to put together the puzzle pieces and learn something from their youthful hearts. In this climactic number, 22-year-old Catherine finally musters the courage to come out to her father. “Dear Dad” is a release of the tension that has built, a moment of surety and acceptance from a character who has struggled to feel joyously herself.

i am just a girl

The words “i am just a girl” have seemed to appear more and more prominently online in the past few years, often accompanied by statements like “I shouldn’t have to go to work” or “I can’t eat a full dinner”. In these quips, girlhood is equated with weakness and inability – to be “just” a girl means that you are tired of trying to be more. Writing this piece, I often thought about how, in a culture that continuously pushes women down, it takes active effort and courage to maintain a feminist outlook and not fall victim to the lonely distractions of inflammatory online messages. In this theatrical piece, the flautist explores the mentality of an exhausted girl trying to latch onto something. Juxtaposed passages of breathy, mournful notes and manic high-pitched melodies represent the searing and unsatisfying cuts of distraction which does not resolve pain. Breath is used to represent energy and to create a sense that the player is speaking, even crying out, sometimes choking. This piece paints a picture of a young woman who seeks a resolution to her loneliness, but proceeds to look in all the wrong places.

Blue Prelude

Saeed Jones (1985) is an American poet who writes cuttngly and vividly, often drawing from his experiences as a Black gay man and speaking about the simultaneous pride and isolation of fighting for equal rights. This text, “Blue Prelude”, sits at the isolated end of his portfolio, depicting a moment of “exquisite” envy for a dancing couple. Here, one imagines a person who, despite the strength and conviction they show the outside world, still feels profoundly alone in the night. The multitude of voices which make up the choir are really only one voice, weaving in and out of tight harmony like multiple trains of thought in one mind. The ache of the moment is huge, a dissonant choral explosion, but it’s all only taking place inside. The piano’s introductory melody comes back over and over, as if it is the music the narrator hears through his ceiling. Cascades of sound feel like the music dripping into and flooding his empty room.

Blue Prelude

by Saeed Jones

Last night, the ceiling above me
ached with dance.
Music dripped down the walls
like rain in a broken house.
My eyes followed the couple's steps
from one corner to the other,
pictured the press of two chests
against soft breathing, bodies slipping
in and out of candlelight.
And the hurt was exquisite.
In my empty bed, I dreamed
the record's needle
pointed into my back, spinning
me into no one's song.