



# Bard College Conservatory of Music

*20 Years of Music, Vision, and Excellence*

Undergraduate Degree Recital

Kai O'Donnell, *oboe*  
with Lara Saldanha, *piano*

Monday, May 18, 2026 at 1:00 pm  
László Z. Bitó '60 Conservatory Building, Performance Space

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*Garden of Love* (2007)

Jacob ter Veldhuis  
(b. 1951)

*Obsession* (1960)

Makoto Shinohara  
(1931-2024)

– BRIEF PAUSE –

Oboe Concerto H.353 (1955)  
Moderato  
Poco Andante  
Poco Allegro

Bohuslav Martinů  
(1890-1959)

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

**Garden of Love** by Jacob TV is based on the poem *The Garden of Love* by poet, William Blake. This poem explores the duality of innocence and guilt through the usage of nature against industry. The liturgical vernacular used in coalition with industrialization shows us that Blake feels somewhat skeptical. While the Garden of Eden is the intangible ideal, the Garden of Love is a desirable place but is tainted by human tangibility. In Jacob TV's musical interpretation, he uses oboes, harpsichords, bird sounds, and electronic noises in order to create an exotic soundscape. Most importantly, he employs sound bytes of the poem throughout the piece and this highlights his interpretation of the poem by placing words in juxtaposed environments.

After finishing his studies at the Paris Conservatoire with composer Olivier Messaien, Makoto Shinohara wrote his piece for oboe and piano titled, **Obsession**. One of the most interesting things about this piece is the lack of time signature and the sinister atmosphere evoked. Obsession is a symmetrical piece where the beginning and the end are quite similar to one another, musically showing us how the life-cycle of an obsession is continuous. Shinohara draws inspiration from the tonal flexibility of the Japanese *hichiriki*, a Japanese double reed pipe often used in imperial court music and Shinto rituals, in order to curate an atmosphere that lacks the western meter. By exploiting the oboe and piano, he attempts to bridge the cultural gap between eastern and western music.

**Garden of Love** (2007) by Jacob TV (1951- )  
Concert video by Amber Boardman  
Poem by William Blake  
*THE GARDEN OF LOVE*

*I went to the Garden of Love,  
and saw what I never had seen:  
A chapel was built in the midst,  
where I used to play on the green.*

*And the gates of this chapel were shut,  
and 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door;  
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,  
that so many sweet flowers bore.*

*And I saw it was filled with graves,  
and tomb-stones where flowers should be:  
And priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,  
and binding with briars, my joys and desires.*

Bohuslav Martinu's electrifying **Oboe Concerto H.353**, is a common staple of the oboe repertoire known for its virtuosity and its emotionally unstable moments. Martinu was a Czech citizen that fled to Australia due to the imminent threat of communism. In the same situation as him, oboist Jiří Tancibudek, requested for a concerto to be dedicated to him. In this piece he blends Czech folk music with the French-American style of writing. This remains Martinu's sole concerto for a solo wind instrument. The first movement exhibits a lush, bucolic landscape where the oboe and piano have occasional 'dialogue' with one another. His influence of jazz is frequent in sections where we exit the pastoral environment and enter a more rhythmic, syncopated area. The next movement is quite reflective and introspective where the tension piques in the middle and slowly falls in despair towards the end of the movement. The last movement in both the piano reduction and the original orchestral version both start off with solo piano. This movement is quite playful, upbeat, lively and feels somewhat of a homecoming. This piece was premiered in August 1956 to celebrate the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Kai O'Donnell** is a fifth year oboist at Bard College Conservatory simultaneously pursuing a BM in Oboe Performance and BA in Philosophy. His primary teachers are Elaine Douvas, Alexandra Knoll, and Ryan Roberts. Kai began playing the oboe at 15 in Richmond, Texas, under the guidance of Mayu Isom. He has been a fellow for two summers at the *Immanuel and Helen Olshan Texas Music Festival*. Last year he earned honors for his philosophy SPROJ entitled, *The Binary System of the Beautiful and the Sublime: An inquiry into the ecliptic behaviors of aesthetic judgements through classical music*. In this piece, Kai uses Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgement to illuminate the codependent nature of the beautiful and the sublime within music. In his free time he enjoys watching true crime documentaries, playing tennis, or playing pickleball. Kai will continue his musical studies this fall at the New England Conservatory pursuing an MM under oboist, Keisuke Wakao.

Pianist **Lara Saldanha** is equally at home as a soloist and collaborator in the worlds of new music, standard repertoire, and historical performance. New music highlights include appearances with Metropolis Ensemble, Sandbox Percussion, Chelsea Symphony, Leschetizky Association, Mannes American Contemporary Ensemble, and Round Top Festival. Standard repertoire highlights include concerts at Princeton Sound Kitchen, Valley Cottage Young Masters Series, Rites of Spring Festival, Music Iowa City, Icicle Creek, National Federation of Music Clubs, Weill Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and Bohemian National Hall. Lara debuted in India, her country of origin, at the National Center of Performing Arts in Mumbai, Kala Academy in Goa, and Pune Music Society in 2017. As a historical performer, Lara performed with Kollektive 366 in Beethoven's Triple Concerto in 2024, Virginia Baroque Academy, and Mannes Baroque. Lara is currently a collaborative piano fellow at Bard Conservatory, having completed her DMA in Piano Performance at Stony Brook University, PDPL and MM at Mannes, and BA/BM at Northwestern University, and high school diploma at the International School of Geneva and Geneva Conservatory, Switzerland. Lara is deeply grateful for the guidance of her past teachers, including Christina Dahl, Vladimir Valjarevic, Alan Chow, Serguei Milstein, Neya Korsantia, and Inna Terekhov. Lara is a committed educator, having held assistantships at Mannes and Stony Brook, and with a thriving private studio.