



The Music Department Presents

**BEING ALIVE:
A Drum and Voice Senior Recital**

Alex Ciardullo

with
Dan Foster, piano

Saturday, April 19th, 4:00 PM
Arthur Zankel Music Center
Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall

ACT I: Jazz Drums

Drum Kit: Alex Ciardullo '25
Electric Bass: Owen Kitchel '26
Electric Guitar: Jonah Cadorette '26
Vibraphone: Colson Warren '26

Yes or No
Wayne Shorter
(1933-2023)

A Night in Tunisia
Dizzy Gillespie
(1917-1993)
Arr. by Alex Ciardullo
(b. 2003)

Criss Cross
Thelonius Monk
(1917-1982)
Arr. by Steve Kahn
(b. 1947)

Actual Proof
Herbie Hancock
(b. 1940)

Intermission

ACT II: Voice

Out There (from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*)
Alan Menken (b.1949) and
Stephen Schwartz (b. 1948)

Border Song	Elton John (b. 1947) and Bernie Taupin (b. 1950)
Race You to the Top of the Morning (from <i>The Secret Garden</i>)	Lucy Simon (1940-2022)
Bring Him Home (from <i>Les Misérables</i>)	Claude-Michel Schönberg (b. 1944) and Herbert Kretzmer (1925-2020)
Falling Up	Alex Ciardullo
Dragonfly	Alex Ciardullo
Being Alive (from <i>Company</i>)	Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)

Program Notes

A Night in Tunisia: This is my favorite jazz standard of all time, and I've listened to many renditions, including Ella Fitzgerald's and Miles Davis' off his album "The Musings of Miles." When I studied abroad in London Spring of '24, I called this song instantly at the first jazz jam I went to and took a drum solo that went on way longer than I realized... whoops. Moreover, I recognize this song as the gateway to exploring my musical passion while I was overseas.

Criss Cross: My drum teacher, Bob Halek, recommended this Steve Kahn Samba-feel arrangement of “Criss-Cross” for our jazz combo in my freshman spring. Our group never learned it, so I decided to revisit it senior year, and it instantly became one of my favorite arrangements to play (the rest of my recital quartet feels the same way, too). To my surprise, I only discovered recently that the original chart was composed by one of my favorite jazz pianists, Thelonius Monk. Thus, playing this song in my recital became even more enticing. Monk’s chromatic playing strongly influences my improvisations when soloing on any instrument, and you will notice the chromaticism in the melody of this piece.

Out There: In the Fall of 2020, my High School musical was canceled due to COVID. Being a big Alan Menken fan, I decided to direct and produce a socially distanced Alan Menken Cabaret with my friends in my backyard. Although I was always familiar with much of his music, I only began singing “Out There” in my lessons with Professor Gray junior year. I instantly felt a personal connection to the song, particularly the sentiments expressing feelings of isolation. Although Quasimodo and I are quite different in appearance (or at least I hope people think so), I connect with the lyrical message of longing to be “normal” in the context of my disfluent speech, and it is now one of my favorite songs to sing.

Border Song: Elton John was one of my first ever favorite artists, especially going through a giant EJ phase in senior year of high school, recording covers of his tunes to post on my YouTube channel, which I started during COVID when I couldn’t make music with my friends in-person. I chose “Border Song” for my recital not only as an homage to the music that led me to pursue vocal performance, but also due to its timeless and crucial message that hate has no home anywhere, which is especially relevant today. Music is the one constant unifier, and nothing will ever change that.

Bring Him Home: Les Mis was the musical that made me fall in love with singing musical theater. In late middle school, I memorized every lyric in the entire show (I was a little less busy back then). Bring Him Home is such a personal piece to me, as I sang it in my sophomore year of High School, whilst I understudied for the role of Jean Valjean in our High School fall musical. I revisited this song with Professor Gray two years ago. After countless hours of practice and learning to sing it more healthily, I want to perform this to my younger self to remind Alex that he can grow, and that the nice parts of the past will always be with him.

Falling Up: This was my first ever released song on music streaming services, on which I played all the tracks and produced myself in winter 2023. I wrote it back at the start of COVID but never recorded it until a few years later. The song is about my stutter... and the feeling like I am becoming more fluent, I fall right back into a period of disfluency. I often thought I was going nowhere, but I later realized this lifetime struggle has led me to be a proud stutterer, and to recognize each roadblock as a step forward.

Dragonfly: I wrote this song in Joel Brown's Songwriting Workshop last fall when our topic for the week was "Autumn." I decided to compare the changing of the leaves to evolving as a person while still being the same at heart. When I was a kid, my mom decided to make the theme of my room dragonflies (I still don't know why, my mom has never given me an answer), but I decided to call the tune "Dragonfly" as an homage to my younger self, always being a core part of me today.

Biography

Alex Ciardullo is a multi-instrumentalist, producer, and songwriter from Redding, CT, with a strong passion for performance,

production, and composition. Living with a stutter, music has served as a positive detour, and safe haven from the stressors of dysfluent speech. It wasn't until Alex sang when he realized the absence of his stutter. Music was the key to him finding a voice of his own. Alex first took to the stage in 2nd grade making his performance debut as a child in Joel Barlow High School's 2011 Production of "The King and I." Additionally, he began taking classical piano lessons that same year, where his instructor discovered Alex's perfect pitch. Following piano which Alex still actively plays, he began taking drum lessons at age 10, vocal lessons at age 12, and taught himself bass and guitar at age 13. Since then, Alex has become fully immersed in a wide variety of musical ensembles and opportunities on and off campus at Skidmore. Continuing to refine his instrumental and vocal craft, Alex has participated every semester in the Skidmore Small Jazz Ensembles on drums and bass guitar, sang musical theatre in Musical Theatre and Opera Workshop, and been an active performer on voice, drums, piano, guitar, and bass in Skidmania '72, '73, and '74. You may also recognize Alex from singing, and snapping with the Skidmore Banderstachers (Skidmore's tenor-bari-bass acapella group), drumming and running around with Pulse (Skidmore's found object percussion group), directing live sound and lights for Lively Lucy's (Skidmore's live music club), recording and mixing fellow student's projects in Grossman Recording Studio, and appearing as a performer or sound engineer at numerous additional campus events.

Among all his musical passions that have flourished at Skidmore, Alex has particularly fine-tuned (pun intended) his musicianship on the drum set and voice, which is what you will hear during his recital. His program will act as a culmination of Alex's lifelong work in his diverse musical endeavors, ranging from instrumental jazz to contemporary pop, musical theatre, and original acoustic songs. The first act will feature Alex on drum set alongside a quartet with three

of his closest peers, Owen Kitchel '26, Jonah Cadorette '26, and Colson Warren '26, showcasing arrangements of pieces composed by some of Alex's favorite and most influential jazz musicians such as Wayne Shorter, and Thelonius Monk. Act II is comprised mostly of contemporary musical theatre and acoustic original songs that collectively tell Alex's personal story of how music has given him life and led him to discover what it truly means to "be alive," further reinforcing his firm belief that when words fail... music speaks.

Acknowledgements

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Upcoming Events

Skidmore in Concert: Orchestra
Tuesday, April 22, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Chorus
Thursday, April 24, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
String Ensembles
Friday, April 25, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Concert Band
Sunday, April 27, 1:00pm

Senior Guitar Recital:
Rimmele Wood
Sunday, April 27, 4:00pm

Senior Recital: Arielle Lam

Skidmore in Concert:
Guitar Ensemble
Friday, April 25, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Global Music Showcase
Saturday, April 26, 1:00pm

(Piano & Voice)
Sunday, April 27, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Big Band +
Cuban Music Ensemble
Monday, April 28, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Small Jazz
Ensembles + Guitar
Wednesday, April 30, 7:00pm