Student Composers Forum

**Melancholia** (2021)  
I. Ratio  
II. Imaginatio  

Shayna Filion, soprano sax  
Eric Volaski, alto sax  
Margaret Kettell, tenor sax  
Matthew Catron, baritone sax

**Orchard** (2021)  

Derian Rowe, oboe  
Nick Dombroski, alto sax  
Andy Zimlinghaus, tenor sax  
Jordon Gyarmathy, bassoon

**Gaeilge Medley** (2021)  

Nicolas Kent, violin I  
Holland Goddard, violin II  
Darian McDonough, viola  
Touria Benhammou, cello

**Squirrels** (2021)  
Movement 2  

George Hetherton  
(b.1992)

Alexander C Gray, clarinet
So Follows Love (2021)  
Adam Beiter  
(b.2003)

Chris Mavrogian, oboe  
Ellie Barth, piano

Tribal Dances (2020-2021)  
Bailey Lapo-McDermott  
(b.2001)

John Aebly, clarinet  
Julie Miller, piano

Dark Side (2021)  
Fai Yam Melody Cheng  
(b.2001)

Fixed media

Forest (2021)  
George Hetherton

Fixed Media

Viola Circus Concerto (2020)  
Matthew Mazer  
(b.2000)

2. The Sad Story
3. The Show Must Go On

Matthew Grosso, solo viola (movement 2)  
Laura Matthews, solo viola (movement 3)  
Anne Marie Strader, Julia Ingemi, Ally Lilja, violin I  
Felipe Rodas, Katie McCabe, violin II  
Tyler Schiavone, Allison Carbone, viola  
Austin McCann, cello  
Robin Tucksmith, bass  
Matthew Mazer, conductor
Viola Circus Concerto is a musical narrative of a day in the life of a clown. The piece is broken into three movements, each telling a different part of the story.

The first movement, “The Old Clown”, introduces the audience to the clown represented by the solo viola. This boisterous movement follows the clown during a normal day at work. Throughout the movement the viola acts as though circus tricks are being performed. There are fast moving lines and lyrical melodies that are backed up by the rest of the circus members represented by the orchestra. The adagio section at m. 69 provides a contrast from the quick section prior. This represents a dangerous trick being performed in slow motion. An accelerando brings us back to normal time where the orchestra is musically setting off fireworks while the clown shows off dramatically. After a few more tricks the show is about to be over, leading up the grand finale, the cadenza. During the cadenza the soloist has the opportunity to be as dramatic as they want and can perform actual circus tricks. The climax up to the tonic brings the orchestra back in to finish off just as strong as they started.

The second movement, “A Sad Story”, is the story of what happens when the clown’s' make up comes off. This movement shows off the viola's range and musicality. Though in a major key, it feels as though there is a sense of despair. The orchestral overture at the beginning of this movement acts as a scene change from the circus to the clown's home. The soloist enters in a low register as if without the clown makeup and costume, they are a different person. Throughout this movement the soloist is faced with problems from outside sources represented by the orchestra. Twice, the soloist reaches a very high register as though they are crying out for help. The clown feels as though nothing they do is right, and they are a failure. At m. 208, the clown theme from the first movement returns. This is meant to remind the soloist that even though they might not like how they are, as a clown, they make others happy, and this makes them realize their worth. After a few more ups and down the story arrives at m. 242 where the soloist stands their ground and knows that they do not need to change, they are important and needed.

The third movement, “The Show Must Go On”, starts out with a viola cadenza beginning with the theme that ended the second movement. This starts proud and then moves to upbeat as the clown is ready to bring the rest of the circus back in. Starting at the scherzo in m. 269 the scene shifts back to the circus. Starting at m. 301, the orchestra begins a long exposition in which all of the instruments begin to layer on new textures. Above this, the soloist’s part gets harder and harder with each new entrance until eventually the lower strings drop out and allow the viola to lead into a very busy section where every instrument is showing off their circus act. At m. 357, the orchestra has their time to shine as they play little tunes that represent different circus acts such as a tightrope walker, trapeze artist, and acrobats. This all leads to a short viola cadenza and m. 390 where the soloist has the opportunity to make their own cadenza/act to show off their talents for the last time.

The moral of this story is that we need to be proud of who we are. Just because someone is a clown does not mean that they have less worth than anyone else. It doesn't matter what a person's job is, but rather how well they do that job -- that is what really defines a person's character.