



**Florida International University  
School of Music**

*presents*

Marcus Norris, composition

in

a Masters Thesis Recital

*in partial fulfillment of the MM in composition*

6 p.m. March 26, 2017

Room 157

Florida International University School of Music  
Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center  
10910 SW 17<sup>th</sup> St., Miami, FL 33199

## Program

the same rain. (2014)

Chen-Hui Jen, *piano*

S A V A G E (2015)

Raven Reynolds, *percussion*  
Alex Lough, *programmed electronics*

Peace in Pain (2015)

Stephanie Jaimes, *cello*  
Felipe Carvajal, *guitar*

You Haven't Said a Word (2016)

Stephanie Jaimes, *cello*  
Marcus Norris, *programmed electronics*

You Would Too (2017)

Stephanie Rengifo, *flute*  
Sarah Suarez, *viola*  
Chen-Hui Jen, *piano*

## Program Notes

*the same rain.* is the first piece I wrote at FIU. Rain was an interest at the time because its omnipresence and unpredictability, especially in my new home of Florida. I explore indeterminacy and the resonance of the piano in the work.

*S A V A G E* is written to be an introspective experience for the audience. Contrasting gestures, timbres, pitch collections, and moods are used to explore the complex emotions that result from becoming hardened by life. The electronics, created by Alex Lough, are constructed from the original acoustic samples of the percussion instruments using granular synthesis. Lough transforms sharp percussive attacks into long atmospheric layers that intertwine with the acoustic sounds of the percussion instruments. The result is an interplay between acoustic and electronic sounds forming a rich soundscape.

*Peace in Pain* is inspired by the fact that sometimes one can be in turmoil so long that it becomes their new normal. The work is very intimate and introspective. The listening experience is designed to be meditative, so much so that I invite the audience to close their eyes and simply appreciate the sounds as they come.

*You Haven't Said a Word* is an attempt to write music that reflects moments of intense stress in relationships, specifically instances in which neither person voices their emotions. I represent this unspoken tension, as well as its eventual resolution in musical terms. I do not follow any specific story, and the work is not programmatic, but my goal is for the tension and resolution to be apparent to the listener. The title influenced the composition of the piece, with the material at the beginning sounding very static, dissonant, and slowly evolving.

I wrote *You Would Too* not long after the deaths of my great grandfather and his daughter, which happened within days of each other. I would not say the piece is *about* them, but it comes as a reaction to the experience of losing them. The title quotes a Notorious B.I.G. lyric in which he says "You would too if you knew what this game will do to you." I think the message of that passage is that although some decisions may seem questionable to other people, they might make similar choices if they went through the same experiences. My harmonic and melodic choices make this one of the less dissonant works in my catalog, as I wrote it during a time in which I needed pleasantness from my art.

## Marcus Norris Bio

Composer and producer Marcus Norris was called a “New Musical Talent in our Midst” by Chicago’s N’digo Magazine in response to his “When Composer’s Lose Composure” concert in 2014. He studied Music Recording Technology at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan and subsequently earned his Bachelors of Music in Composition at Columbia College Chicago. He is currently finishing his Masters of Music in Composition degree at Florida International University studying with Orlando Jacinto Garcia and has participated in masterclasses with Augusta Reed Thomas and Italian Composer Ferdinando Lazzaro.

Marcus’s compositions have been played by the Jackson Symphony Orchestra Community Strings, the Chicago Composer’s Orchestra, Hopera & The Hip Hop Orchestra, and Chris Wild of Dal Niente. In 2016 he collaborated on a composition with aquatic ecologist Evelyn Gaiser that was performed at TEDxFIU. In this piece, Geiser charted the water levels of a Florida lake to pitches, and Marcus arranged those pitches into a piece for string trio.

Marcus has produced music for the Grammy and Oscar Award winning Rhymefest, Tink, Jean Deaux, and many more. Billboard named the "Winter's Diary 2" project he produced on as one of the top 10 R&B Albums of 2014. He also worked as a studio instructor, engineer, and producer at Kanye West’s and Rhymefest’s nonprofit musical development program Donda’s House. The Donda’s House organization provides a safe place and learning opportunities for underserved communities of black and brown at-risk youth on Chicago’s south side.

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The use of recording equipment during recitals is permitted if arranged with the  
recitalist, and there is no disruption of the recital or distraction to the audience.

Still photography is not permitted during the performance.

*Your cooperation is appreciated.*