

MoVE

Modern Violin Ensemble

MoVE Premieres

For *MoVE* — the Modern Violin Ensemble — music begins not with sound, but with connection.

Comprising twelve world premieres, this album is the result of more than a decade of collaboration, curiosity, and trust — a process that began not with a concept, but with relationships.

“At the beginning,” recalls violinist Livia Sohn, “we started with people we knew — composers we had personal relationships with, who felt that we represented their music well.” From those early collaborations, the project expanded outward.

That evolution — from personal networks to a global artistic dialogue — shapes the identity of *MoVE Premieres*. What began as an experiment in instrumentation became something far larger: a growing body of work defined not by style, but by voice.

From the outset, the ensemble posed a simple but radical question to each composer: “What matters to you?”

As Lina Bahn explains, “we wanted to find out what was on the top of their minds and so we asked — what are you passionate about? What do you feel needs to be said?”

The result is an album that unfolds as a kind



of tapestry — each piece rooted in a distinct urgency: memory, identity, nature, social justice, love, grief. “Each work means something very specific to the composer,” Sohn reflects. “And then it becomes our responsibility to represent that meaning.”

Four violins — identical in range and color — offer no traditional hierarchy, no established repertoire, no clear model. Carolyn Stuart says, “we were excited, knowing the vast range of the violin, about the possibilities for something new.”

For Janet Sung, the most striking discovery came later, “when we listened to the full album, it was amazing... every piece sounded completely

different. You wouldn't even know it was the same instrumentation."

Freed from expectation, composers approached the ensemble with radical openness. That freedom gave rise to an astonishing diversity of approaches: extended techniques, spoken text, singing, percussive gestures, theatrical elements MoVE believes that "the result is something much bigger — more than just four parts."

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That intimacy is immediately present in *As Snow Falls* by Aftab Darvishi.

For MoVE, the connection to the composer was distant and deeply personal. "While we never met in person... her music feels incredibly intimate. Hers is such an authentic voice — internal and very beautiful.

The ensemble immersed itself in the sound world of the *kamancheh*, an ancient Persian instrument that informs the piece. "We listened to this music," MoVE explains, "not to mimic it, but to absorb those colors into our playing."

This idea — of absorbing and translating cultural sound — becomes central to the album's broader exploration of identity.

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In contrast, Josh Henderson's *Rain, Sleet, Gloom and Heat* explodes outward in narrative and physicality.

The piece was inspired by the life of Mary Fields (otherwise known as Stagecoach Mary), the first African-American woman to work for the U.S. Postal Service. It was inspiring to the ensemble on multiple levels. MoVE recalls, "the demands for singing and spoken text added an exciting layer of interpretation to our work". The result is a vivid, almost cinematic experience.

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Other works move toward stillness and introspection.

Golfam Khayam's *Lullaby* stands apart in its emotional clarity. "It just washes over you," says MoVE. "There's something achingly beautiful about it."

Written as a gesture toward peace, the work carries particular resonance in the present moment. "To create something for peace in the midst of conflict," reflects MoVE, "that's incredibly powerful."

For the ensemble, the connection to the composer extends beyond music. "When you're in contact with someone living through that reality," MoVE adds, "it changes how you listen — how you play."

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Across the album, sound itself becomes fluid — shifting between density and silence.

In Daniel Wohl's *Collapse*, this manifests as a visceral contrast between overload and stillness. "It feels exactly like that when you play it," MoVE notes — relentless motion giving way to sudden space.

"There's nowhere to put your attention," they add. "And then suddenly — silence. Relief."

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Another ode to peace, "it is our understanding that Zoltan Almashi wrote his *Almost Variations* from confinement underground during bombing in Ukraine " says MoVE.

The deliberate omission of a theme searches for the existence of God. MoVE further discusses the metaphor, "Our lines are wandering, taking turns leading, while also at different times playing in groups of unison — almost like choruses of conviction..."

They add, "this music gives us a window into the uncertain emotions of those experiencing war first-hand."

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Traversing cultures, playing Veronica Jang's *Gobi-Desert Splendor* is a deep immersion into the Inner Mongolian landscape and culture.

"We listened to the Mongolian traditional stringed instrument called the *morin khuur*, also known as the horsehead fiddle. Through this piece, we learned the significance of the horse in Mongolian culture, and about the indigenous voice of these people within China." MoVE adds,

“The haunting melodies immediately pulled us into this culture.”

Poignantly written for four equally virtuosic violinists, *In Equal Measure* by Jessica Meyer celebrates the energy of the ensemble while exploring equality in life and work.

As one of their earlier commissions, MoVE states “we felt honored to artistically memorialize a pivotal moment of forward momentum in the global fight for Women’s rights and Icelandic law.”

In Evan Chambers’ *what the tree knows*, the focus shifts to the natural world.

The piece invites the performers into a sonic landscape that feels almost primordial. “It’s like we’re conjuring ancient sounds,” MoVE explains — using paper, pencils, and unconventional techniques to evoke nature itself.

The impact extends beyond the stage. “Listeners have expressed to us years after the premiere” MoVE says, “how this piece changed their idea of what music could be.”

A different kind of vulnerability defines Jarek Kapuściński’s *Woven*.

“He didn’t want perfection,” MoVE explains. “He wanted fragility — the cracks, the human sound.”

For MoVE, the recording process became a moment of stillness within intensity: “We had to be incredibly quiet... holding sound for long stretches. It was almost meditative.”

That contrast — between activity and stillness — mirrors the album as a whole.

Core to some of the album’s themes are works that explore vulnerability in its most direct form.

In Ember I Miss You, Jordan Nelson intertwines text and sound, asking performers to speak as well as play. “Hearing your own voice makes you feel exposed,” says MoVE.

Yet the piece transcends specificity. “You can’t tell who is speaking to whom,” says MoVE. “And that’s the point — love is universal.”

In rehearsal, that universality becomes deeply personal. “This group was born out of friendship,” MoVE reflects. “So in a way, we’re saying those words to each other.”

Reflecting inward, Jess Julian’s *Life as a Lily* “is such a personal piece,” says MoVE.

“We felt that immediately as we worked through this work,” they added, “the beginning is so hushed, and pulsating, like a heartbeat... and it does in fact bloom like a flower throughout with its complexities and highpoints.”

Similarly, Tommy Dougherty’s *Extraordinary Instruments* creates what MoVE calls “purposeful chaos” — an overwhelming accumulation of sound that mirrors the complexity of its subject.

Yet, as MoVE emphasizes, “It’s not telling you what to think. It’s asking you to question.”

Taken together, MoVE Premieres resists a single narrative.

“It’s a journey,” MoVE reflects. The sequencing moves deliberately across extremes, revealing the full spectrum of what four violins can express.

Across all twelve works, one idea returns again and again: connection.

Between composers and performers.
Between individuals and communities.
Between sound and lived experience.

The violin, here, is not simply an instrument — it is a medium through which those connections are made audible.

And like all meaningful conversations, the music does not end with the final note.

It continues — in listening, in memory, and in the connections it leaves behind.

MoVE (Modern Violin Ensemble)

MoVE Premieres

Liner Notes

TITLE: *MoVE Premieres*

ARTIST: MoVE Modern Violin Ensemble

DISC 1

1. *As Snow Falls* * | Aftab Darvishi (b. 1987)—10:09

2. *Rain, Sleet, Gloom and Heat* * | Josh Henderson (b. 1988)—10:56

3. *Collapse* ⇄ | Daniel Wohl (b.1980)—8:38
Daniel Wohl, Electronic Sound Production

4. *Lullaby* ⇄ | Golfam Khayam (b.1982)—7:31

5. *Almost Variations* * | Zoltan Almashi (b. 1975)—10:09

6. *Gobi – Desert Splendor* ⇄ | Veronica Jang (b. 1992)—9:23

7. *In Equal Measure* † | Jessica Meyer (b. 1974)—10:22
Gabriela Diaz, Violin

DISC 2

1. *what the tree knows* † | Evan Chambers (b. 1963)—13:42
Evan Chamber, Vocals

2. *Woven* * | Jarosław Kapuściński (b. 1964)—10:32

3. *Ember I Miss You, I. The Corner Of Your Mouth* † | Jordan Nelson (b. 1984)—4:40
Evan Chamber, Vocals

4. *Ember I Miss You, II. But They Don't Understand Us* † | Jordan Nelson (b. 1984)—4:53
Evan Chamber, Vocals

5. *Ember I Miss You, III. And Every Memory (Interlude)* † | Jordan Nelson (b. 1984)—1:46
Evan Chamber, Vocals

6. *Ember I Miss You, IV. Do You?* † | Jordan Nelson (b. 1984)—4:02
Evan Chamber, Vocals

7. *Life As A Lily* * | Jess Julian (b. 1994)—10:21

8. *Extraordinary Instruments* † | Tommy Dougherty (b. 1990)—13:43

Recording and Production Credits

Skywalker Sound, California (2025) *

Producers: Hyeyung Sol Yoon, Stephen Prutsman

Recording Engineer: Leslie Ann Jones

Assistant Engineer: Dann Thompson

Editing: Stephen Prutsman

Mixing Engineer: Ryan Summers

Post-Production

Editing: Josh Henderson, Stephen Prutsman (Track 2)

Mixing Engineers: Ryan Summers, Josh Henderson, Mike Tierney (Track 2)

Schumann Studios, San Francisco (2023) ⇄

Producers: Owen Dalby, Stephen Prutsman

Recording Engineer: Cody Hamilton

Editing: Owen Dalby, Stephen Prutsman

Mixing Engineer: Ryan Summers

Post-Production

Editing: Owen Dalby, Stephen Prutsman, Daniel Wohl (Track 3)

Mixing Engineers: Ryan Summer, Daniel Wohl (Track 3)

University of South Florida, Tampa (2018) □

Production, Recording, Editing & Mixing: Svetovar Ivanov Recordings

Mastering

Oscar Zambrano

MoVE (Modern Violin Ensemble)

Lina Bahn, Livia Sohn, Carolyn Stuart, Janet Sung



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