



## SENIOR RECITAL SERIES | SPRING 2025

Saturday, April 26th, 2025, 8:00 PM

Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

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# Alessandro Troncoso '25

## Alto Saxophone, Flute, Voice

### A Whole Lotta Love

**In A Whole Lotta Love, Alessandro Troncoso celebrates the music he cherishes most in life, showcasing a wide variety of tunes from a diverse set of composers. The recital will feature compositions from Bobby Timmons, Charlie Parker, Toby Fox, James Moody and more!**

#### Featuring:

Sam Gerhard '25, Piano

Max Vinetz GS, Bass

Quinn Dorward '27, Drums

Marcello Troncoso '27, Sax

Cueyoung Lee '27, Trumpet

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#### About the Department of Music:

The Department of Music at Princeton University provides its undergraduates—whether they major or minor in Music—the opportunity to learn from a world-renowned faculty of scholars and composers. Performance opportunities include student-led and departmental ensembles like symphony orchestras, multi-genre choruses, jazz, contemporary music, African music, steel band, laptop orchestra, and much more, and students have access to private instrumental and voice lessons from eminent performing artists. The graduate program offers two distinct and prestigious Ph.D. programs in composition or musicology; graduate students receive fully-funded, immersive experiences conducting research, advancing their craft, and collaborating with faculty within Princeton University's inspiring, interdisciplinary campus.

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## PROGRAM

<b>Dat Dere</b>	Bobby Timmons (1935-1974), Arr. Toshi Clinch
<b>Anthropology</b>	Charlie Parker (1920-1955) & Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993)
<b>Lights, Camera, Action! (Death by Glamour)</b>	Toby Fox (1991-), arr. by Carlos Eiene (1998-)
<b>Misty</b>	Erroll Garner (1921-1927)
<b>Darben the Redd Foxx</b>	James Moody (1925-2010)
<b>My Little Suede Shoes</b>	Charlie Parker (1920-1955)
<b>East of the Sun (and West of the Moon)</b>	Brooks Bowman (1913-1937)
<b>Bob-omb Battlefield</b>	Koji Kondo (1961-)

*The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.*

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## PROGRAM NOTES

By Alessandro Troncoso

I want to begin by saying that music has been an integral part of my life, and holds a special place in my heart and soul. While I was classically trained, jazz has always been my favorite music genre bar none. That's why when I was granted the opportunity to put on a recital of my own, I knew I had to make it special. Over the last seven months I have put together a program that I believe best represents what jazz means to me, and in doing so, I learned so much not only about jazz but about myself. Hopefully these program notes will help you understand a little more about these beautiful pieces, and why I chose them. By the end of this recital, I'm hoping you'll love them (almost) as much as I do!

I knew I needed a strong opener for this recital, and as such, I chose Bobby Timmons' **Dat Dere**. Written in 1960, Dat Dere is a standard of the hard bop, a subgenre of jazz coined in the 1950s that served as an extension of bebop and as a response to the more European cool jazz, which at the time dominated the jazz scene. Hard bop slowed down and simplified bebop's chord progressions while also harmonizing lines and developing counterpoint melodies, incorporating aspects of both rhythm & blues and gospel music to create a funkier, more rhythmic groove. Dat Dere is a great representation of what hard bop has to offer, as its medium shuffle allows the harmonized horns to groove with a fantastic melody and shout chorus. While rehearsing this piece with the band, I learned how important it was to feel the groove and precisely articulate notes and rhythms so that everything stayed together. I've listened to this song ever since I played it with the Rockland Youth Jazz Ensemble 6 years ago, and I've been enamored with its groove since.

I felt it would be impossible to have a saxophone recital without including at least one tune from Charlie Parker, also known by his nickname "Bird", who I'd say is the greatest musician to ever play the alto saxophone. Parker practically invented the bebop genre, and over his tragically short life, composed some of the most fantastic tunes that I've ever listened to. It was an agonizing decision, but I decided to go with **Anthropology** as my bebop tune of choice. Written in 1949 by both Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, the tune uses "Rhythm Changes" a set of chord changes based on the tune "I Got Rhythm" by George Gershwin.

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I picked this tune as it is one I've worked on for over 3 years with a variety of teachers, and as such I will use it to showcase my ability to interpret and develop the language of the greats like Parker.

**Lights, Camera, Action!** is the name Carlos Eiene, known by his youtube handle Insaneintherainmusic, gave to his jazz arrangement of the song **Death by Glamour**, which was originally written by Toby Fox as a boss theme for his video game "Undertale", which came out in 2015. Video games have been a huge hobby of mine ever since I was a kid, so when I found out there were people doing jazz covers of video game music, I was instantly hooked. The video game jazz scene has seen a huge amount of growth in the last couple of years, and I even had the privilege to work with one of the leading artists in the genre, drummer Dom Palombi, who taught me that video game jazz is just as real and important a genre in jazz as any other. I've listened to Carlos Eiene's covers ever since I was young, and "Live at Grillby's", the album this tune is taken from, is the only album I've ever purchased. Lights, Camera, Action! (Death by Glamour) is a fantastic representation of the genius of both video game composers and video game jazz arrangers.

From here we slow it down to one of my favorite ballads, Erroll Garner's **Misty**. Reportedly Garner wrote the tune after seeing a rainbow through the haze on a flight from San Francisco to Chicago, and I can believe it, as it moves me the same way that rainbow moved him. I've played and listened to more iterations of this song than I can count, from Dexter Gordon to Kenny G, and each version gives me an even greater appreciation for it. Learning this song helped me better understand the importance of lyrics when learning a melody, as if you don't understand them, you'll never be able to convey their meaning through your instrument. What more can I say? Misty is an absolutely heartbreaking tune that will make you cry tears of happiness and joy.

As I stated before, I'm a classically trained musician. While I didn't start playing the alto saxophone until the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I've played flute since the 4<sup>th</sup>, and it is absolutely my main instrument. Even though the flute is not typically thought of as a jazz instrument, I've had the fortune of participating in ensembles that have let me continue my playing, with Princeton's Jazz Vocal Collective/Ensemble especially allowing me to foster my ability. The flute has been an incredibly important fixture in my life, so I knew I had to include at

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least one jazz flute tune in this recital. I decided to go with **Darben the Redd Foxx**, a relatively unknown tune written in 1959 by James Moody, who is in my opinion one of the greatest jazz flutists of all time. While this tune is just a simple blues in G, Moody has shown me the virtuosity and thoughtfulness that a flute player can put in to such simplicity. I would strongly recommend anybody with any interest in jazz flute to listen to this tune, I think it is one of Moody's best.

So I may have snuck in another flute tune with Charlie Parker's **My Little Suede Shoes**. Written in 1951, it is unusually approachable for a Parker tune, with relatively simple chord changes and a medium latin groove that makes the flute feel right at home (even if the tune wasn't originally written for it). I chose this tune first because I wanted to include at least one latin tune, and second out of nostalgia, as it was one of my favorites that I played with my high school band. I also decided to put this tune and Darben the Redd Foxx next to each other to show the dynamic range of the jazz flute. This tune also gave me the fun challenge of learning how translate Parker's language onto the flute, which helped me understand its intricacies even more.

The Jazz Vocal Collective (now known as the Jazz Vocal Ensemble) has been my home for the better part of 3 years. I seriously don't know what my jazz career at Princeton would've been without the people I met through it, and learning to play with singers was difficult but incredibly rewarding. As an homage to the group I love so much, I decided to sing a tune myself, that being **East of the Sun (and West of the Moon)**, written by Brooks Bowman of Princeton's Great Class of 1937 for the Triangle Show Production "Stags at Bay". This tune has seen many covers over the years, but my favorite has to be Frank Sinatra's, recorded in 1961. In attempting to emulate Sinatra's sardonic, swinging style of singing, I've learned just how hard singing really is, and that there is a lot of thought that goes into how phrases are dictated.

The final tune of this recital is one of the great standards of video game jazz, **Bob-omb Battlefield**, written by Koji Kondo, the composer of the "Super Mario" video game series. This song specifically was written as the level theme for the first level of the 1996 video game "Super Mario 64", and also serves as the game's main theme. If I'm being honest, I picked this tune (and all of the other tunes in this recital) because it's just so much fun! This funk tune gives

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the horns the chance to leave everything on the field, and serves as a great cap to the entire recital. At the end of the day, we play jazz because we love to play, and I can't think of many tunes I love more than Bob-omb Battlefield.

I'd like to end these program notes by thanking a whole lot of people, whom without their love and support I wouldn't be here performing for you today. First and foremost, I'd like to thank my mom and dad for instilling in me my love of jazz, and supporting me financially and by coming to all of my concerts. I'd like to thank my nana, who's love for my music has always motivated me to keep playing. To my friends who have come to see me play, you are all the best, and I love you all dearly. I also need to thank my little brother Marcello, who is one of the greatest saxophonists I know, and who it is always a pleasure getting to play with and learn from him. To the other members of the band, Sam, Quinn, Cueyoung and Max, thank you for doing a fantastic job coming together to create something I'm really proud of.

I'd love to thank my flute teachers Stefani Starin & Dr. Sarah Shin, who always encouraged me to keep playing jazz. As for my saxophone teachers, Steven Miller, Michael Humphrey, Ralph Bowen, Nicole Glover, and especially Professor Julius Tolentino, whose work with me over the last year and a half has prepared me for this day, thank you for making me want to play. I'd like to give a huge shoutout to my ensemble directors over the years, from my high school band director Sean McHugh, and the two directors of the Jazz Vocal Collective/Enesmble, Dr. Triniece Robinson-Martin and Michelle Lordi, both of whom were willing to take a chance on a relatively unproven musician and show him the way. Finally, I'd like to thank the sound and lighting crew of Taplin Auditorium, and the jazz department at Princeton, especially its director Rudresh Mahanthappa, for giving me this enormous opportunity to play the music I so deeply love.

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## ABOUT

**Alessandro Troncoso** is a senior in the politics department at Princeton University, pursuing certificates in Spanish Language and Culture as well as Jazz Studies. Born and raised in Rockland County, New York, Alessandro's passion for music was obvious from a young age, and was fostered by his friends and family, especially his parents. Throughout his music career he has dedicated himself to a wide variety of instruments, mainly the flute, piccolo, and alto saxophone. Alessandro has had the great pleasure of playing for a number of prestigious ensembles both classical and jazz, from the 2019 New York All-State Symphonic Band to the Rockland Youth Jazz Ensemble, where he had the opportunity to play and learn from the finest jazz musicians around. Graduating from North Rockland High School in 2021, he was given the "Best Overall Musician" award for the class of 2021 by the music department. At Princeton, he is a principle flute in the Princeton University Orchestra, principle flute of the Princeton University Wind Ensemble, a singer for the Princeton University Chapel Choir, a radio DJ for WPRB, and a flute, alto saxophone player, and singer for the Jazz Vocal Collective (now known as the Jazz Vocal Ensemble). Over the years Alessandro has had the privilege of studying under a wide variety of excellent mentors, such as his flute teachers Stefani Starin and Dr. Sarah Shin as well as his saxophone teachers, Steven Miller, Michael Humphrey, Ralph Bowen, Nicole Glover, and Julius Tolentino. After graduating from Princeton, Alessandro hopes to pursue a career in politics as a public official, with the overall goal of providing the same opportunities he had (both musical and otherwise) to less fortunate communities.

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