

# The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

April 7, 2021 1:00 p.m.

*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*



## Kirsten Jermé, cello

Suite No.1 for Cello, Op. 72 (1964)

Canto primo: *Sostenuto e largamente*

I. Fuga: *Andante moderato*

II. Lamento: *Lento rubato*

Canto secondo: *Sostenuto*

III. Serenata: *Allegretto (pizzicato)*

IV. Marcia: *Alla marcia moderato*

Canto terzo: *Sostenuto*

V. Bordone: *Moderato quasi recitativo*

VI. Moto perpetuo e Canto quarto: *Presto*

Benjamin Britten

(1913–76)

Suite VI in D major for Unaccompanied Violoncello, BWV 1012

*Prélude*

*Allemande*

*Courante*

*Sarabande*

*Gavottes I & II*

*Gigue*

J.S. Bach

(1685–1750)

La Suite dels Ocells (Hommage à Pablo Casals) (2015)

I. *Preudio. Nostalgico sognando*

II. *Moderato ma poco agitato, libero*

III. *Con brio*

IV. *Adagio sognando*

V. *Moderato*

VI. *Allegretto grazioso*

VII. *Sognando libero*

VIII. *Fuga*

Lera Auerbach

(b. 1973)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.

## Notes on the Program

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)  
*First Suite for Cello, Op. 72* (1964)

During the Cold War, a fruitful if unlikely friendship developed between English composer Benjamin Britten and two eminent Soviet artists: composer Dmitri Shostakovich and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Britten became acquainted with both men in an auspicious single-day encounter at the 1960 London premiere of Shostakovich's 1<sup>st</sup> Cello Concerto, given by the 33-year-old Rostropovich. Shostakovich – whom Britten had long admired but had only met for the first time while seated together in the audience – introduced Britten to Rostropovich after the performance, and without hesitating, Rostropovich asked Britten to compose a new work for him, though he admittedly knew little of Britten's music. Britten, for his part, was astounded by Rostropovich's playing, and on that day a spark was ignited that would fuel a series of extraordinary works dedicated to the great Russian cellist. Their first collaboration in 1961 on the *Cello Sonata Op. 65* laid the groundwork for what became a deep and intimate friendship spanning the next 15 years until Britten's death. Rostropovich also nurtured the friendship between Britten and Shostakovich – a seemingly unlikely pairing of composers, perhaps, yet one of deep mutual respect and admiration. Many of Britten's late works are markedly influenced by Shostakovich, and some contain overt references.

After the success of the cello sonata and the subsequent *Cello Symphony* of 1963, Britten embarked on a new venture of composing solo pieces for cello, beginning with the *Suite for Cello, Op. 72* of 1964, premiered by Rostropovich in June 1965 at the Aldeburgh Festival. Britten proceeded to write a *Second Suite for Cello, Op. 80* in 1967 (premiered at Aldeburgh Festival in 1968) and *Third Suite for Cello, Op. 87* in 1971 (premiered several years later at The Snape Maltings). The second and third suites in particular reflect the influence of Shostakovich upon Britten: the second suite opens with a direct quote from Shostakovich's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony, and the third suite more generally reflects Britten's cross-cultural connection to the Soviet artists, using as its basis three Russian folk songs and the *Kontakion*, or the Orthodox "Hymn to the Departed." That Rostropovich could not perform or record the *Third Suite for Cello* after Britten's death in 1976 is a testament both to the emotional depth of their relationship and to the intimately personal narrative of the piece.

Taken together, the three suites by Benjamin Britten are the most significant and celebrated body of solo suites written for cello since the six suites of J.S. Bach (separated by more than 230 years). Britten's *First Suite for Cello* is perhaps the most open – and ultimately the most celebratory – of the three. Like the first of Bach's suites, Britten's is ostensibly in G major, though his approach to tonality is highly individual and does not adhere strictly to traditional functional harmony. The suite is in a cyclic form, framed by a *Canto primo* and *Canto quarto* (first song and fourth song) comprised of essentially the same material. It is divided into three large-scale sections, initiated by the *Canto primo*, then the *Canto secondo* and *Canto terzo*, respectively; following each *canto* are two contrasting character movements. These sections may not be so clear-cut, however: the *Canto secondo* in particular elides with the end of the second movement while also ushering in the third, suggesting that the sections could be viewed even more symmetrically, with a first section framed by the *Canto primo* and *Canto secondo*, a pairing of two intermediary movements forming a shorter middle section, and a third section framed by the *Canto terzo* and *Canto quarto*. In the final movement, the *Canto quarto* bursts forth from the *Moto perpetuo* as though life itself springing from the kaleidoscopic motion of germinal motivic cells – an effect as stunning and cathartic as it is difficult to reduce to

words. While the four *canto* iterations establish a unifying structure and propel the narrative drama of the suite, the discrete movements interpolated into this overarching narrative are vastly contrasting and demonstrate the sheer range and virtuosity both of Britten's musical mind and of the performer who was his muse.

As the unifying *cantos* suggest, there is a pronounced element of the vocal in this suite, one not only of song but also of declamation and oratory. In the *cantos*, each melodic phrase is built through a series of resonant double-stops, such that two strings are played together to the near exclusion of individual notes. The *Canto primo* is particularly declamatory, setting the stage for an overarching narrative played out in the many scene changes and transformations of affect to follow. There is arguably more theatre in this suite than dance, and Britten makes reference to numerous historical forms in addition to mixing genres. Britten was a great composer of opera, and while the cello suites are certainly not on such a massive scale, Britten's mastery of the dramatic narrative structure is nonetheless apparent throughout.

The first movement to follow the opening *canto* is a *Fuga* (fugue), likely a nod to J.S. Bach, the great master of fugal composition (though he only included one fugue in all of the cello suites). Britten's fugue opens with a wispy subject whose coyness and almost jazzy off-beat articulations betray little of the drama and massiveness to come later in the movement. Two undulating episodes frame a climactic middle section built around an inversion of the subject, and the original fugue returns at the end, even softer and more coy now, closing with the wink of an eye in a series of harmonics. A *Lamento* follows, borrowing from a genre directly connected to 17<sup>th</sup> century Italian opera. The movement begins with a descending half-step that sets off a series of increasingly longer gestures full of sighing and lamentation. Each gesture attempts to reach higher than the one before it but every time ends in the same place, with a descending E minor arpeggio, which serves as a kind of "lament bass" figure recurring throughout the movement. In the middle section, the motion is inverted and the urgency increased – perhaps the upward-reaching gestures will break free of the E minor constraints? But no, the E minor arpeggio remains, now turned upward, now pulling back downward, until descending all the way to the lowest register and ushering in the *Canto secondo* on open C.

The *Canto secondo* is the most hushed, restrained, and reverent of the four *cantos*, and is also significantly truncated in length, adding to the sense that it creates an elision between the first and second large-scale sections of the suite. The ubiquitous E minor arpeggio heard in the *Lamento* is quickly evaporated by an E-flat, which ushers in the *Serenata*, a movement played in its entirety with a combination of pizzicato and flamenco guitar-like strumming. From Italian opera we have moved on to Spanish dance, with two voices interacting like dance partners, sometimes commenting, sometimes entreating, always rhythmic and suave. The simultaneity of the two voices requires some gymnastics of the left hand, as Britten indicates certain notes to be plucked with the left hand fingers even while other fingers are occupied with pressing down the strings. Fading away in the upper register, the *Serenata* gives way to another complete shift of character: a *Marcia* (march), beginning with arpeggiated harmonics like a bugle call from the distance. A brittle rhythmic response follows as the performer is instructed to play *col legno* (with the wood of the bow rather than the hair), sounding like a drum major in miniature. This alternation between harmonics and *col legno* sets up the start of the "march" – albeit more like the march of a school boy's toy soldiers than that of a real military unit. Any doubt about the seriousness of the movement vanishes in the middle section, however, which reaches dramatic heights and a fullness of expression indicating that some battle is taking place – whether real or imagined. The march of the toy soldiers returns in the final section,

and the sound of their tired steps fades off into the distance, as the bugle call becomes a reminiscence, or perhaps a call for sleep.

Emerging barely more than a whisper from the lugubrious depths of the cello, the *Canto terzo* is the most dissonant, compressed, and tightly-wound *canto*, setting the stage for a shift in the narrative and conveying a sense of viscerally-felt inward struggle. On a harmonic level, this movement begins the return to the opening “key” of G major; stuck on a low C-sharp and G tritone in the first two phrases, the third phrase finds the low D, and from there gradually expands outward without ever losing its grounding on D. Thus begins what is essentially a dominant prolongation stretching from this movement through the middle of the last movement, when the *Canto quarto* rises up as if from a swirl of dust and matter. The open D-string serves as the basis for the *Bordone* – literally “drone” – another allusion to Baroque performance practice, as it often references instruments that have additional strings for the sole purpose of droning. Though the D is continually present through this movement, the material around it – some plucked with the left hand, some bowed in rapid flurries of notes – systematically avoids resting on any consonant tonality that will reassure the listener. In the muted second half of the movement, a simple folk-like melody is played against the D drone, but the clash of keys and extremely suppressed sound create a chilling effect, as though hearing a boys’ choir from a distance through a shroud of dense fog, giving the sense of something terribly unsettling just beneath the surface.

It is from this surreal mist that the *Moto perpetuo* begins, at first oscillating in two-note half-step gestures around the D-string, then gaining dizzying momentum and continuing at breakneck speed until the *Canto quarto* blooms from the perpetual motion texture in a stunningly virtuosic display. Richly interwoven into the *moto perpetuo*, the *Canto quarto* reaches an apotheosis in the glorious harmony that opens the suite, before a final maniacal half-step oscillation hugs the open G-string, thwarting any hopes for a purely “tonal” resolution.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Suite No. 6 in D major for Unaccompanied Violoncello, BWV 1012*

Numerous unknowns surround the composition of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Violoncello*. Famously, the manuscript copy in Bach’s own hand is lost, and the remaining source nearest to the original is a manuscript in the hand of his second wife Anna Magdalena Bach, a mostly studious and faithful copyist whose imprecision with slurs and articulation markings – judging from copies she made of the violin sonatas and partitas, for which a manuscript in Johann Sebastian’s hand does exist – leaves specialists reeling. Moreover the exact years of composition remain unknown, though the suites are generally assumed to have been written between 1717 and 1723, during Bach’s years as Kappellmeister at Prince Leopold’s court in Anhalt-Cöthen, a period in which he produced a great deal of instrumental chamber music. Anna Magdalena’s manuscript appears to date from several years later – between 1727 and 1731 – and the cello suites are included alongside her copy of the *Six Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin*, dated 1720 on the manuscript. While many scholars believe the cello suites to predate the violin sonatas and partitas based on the relative stylistic complexity of the latter compared to the former, it remains unknown which pieces actually arose first, or whether the cello suites were even composed within a single period. Some suggest that the more complex suites – namely the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> – may have been written later than originally suspected.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Suite calls into question an even more fundamental aspect: for which instrument was this piece actually written? Anna Magdalena's indication at the top of the 6<sup>th</sup> Suite reads “à cinq cordes” – with five strings – notated C-G-D-A-E, the high E-string being an additional string beyond the normal 4-string cello. While 5-string cellos may have been common in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, they are certainly not in abundance today, and cellists throughout the centuries have grappled with the challenges (and the thrill!) of playing the suite on a 4-string instrument when its writing clearly favors the upper register afforded by the addition of an E-string. Baroque performance practitioners today acknowledge several possible instruments Bach may have intended, including the *violoncello piccolo* – a smaller version of the cello, also played between the legs – the *viola pomposa*, or perhaps even more likely, the *violoncello da spalla*, sized between a viola and cello and played on the shoulder or collar bone with a leather strap around the player's back to support the weight of the instrument. Were this the intended instrument, Bach himself could have played the 6<sup>th</sup> Suite, as the *violoncello da spalla* is closer in technique to violin and viola than to a cello played between the legs.

Needless to say, the extensive range of possible instruments aggravates those in search of definitive answers, but it also allows for a wide base of players to lay claim to the suite. Innumerable modern cellists, violists – even some violinists – and a whole array of period instrumentalists perform and record the 6<sup>th</sup> Suite, resulting in additional layers of richness to an already deeply complex and profound piece. For modern players who have at their disposal both a 5-string Baroque cello and a 4-string modern cello, the choice sometimes comes down to a trade-off between the expanded resonance and ease of realizing the densely-textured chords on a 5-string instrument, versus the richness, brilliance and varied color palette attainable with a modern 4-string cello. Regardless of which instrument one chooses to perform on, it is worth noting the D-string's symmetrically central placement on a 5-string instrument, as the suite is in D major. Though proportionally the strings above D are used more frequently (the low C-string in particular is used relatively little in this suite), the centrality of the D-string is apparent in certain compositional aspects, most notably in the Prelude.

Relative to the earlier suites, the 6<sup>th</sup> Suite is not only vastly expanded in register but also in size, scope, and arguably expression. The Prelude bursts forth with exuberant abandon in a *bariolage* effect against the central D-string (*bariolage* generally entails a melodic line on one string being created in rapid alternation with a neighboring open string). Exploring each register of the instrument in turn, the *bariolage* moves up to the A-string, then to the E-string (posing a particular challenge for cellists playing on a modern 4-stringed instrument without an E-string, which requires that the E-string drone be created instead using the left thumb). Finally the *bariolage* drops down to the G-string, after which begins a sublime ascent against the open A, reaching higher heights than at any other point in the suite, and far higher above the top string than in any other suite (even taking into consideration the added E-string). An exultant descent follows, with cascading runs reaching dizzying speed. This swirl of energy gathers force behind a succession of chords before the tension dissolves into the sweetness of D major, tinged with a hint of reverence in an upward-reaching plagal sonority, then settling back into the resounding fullness of a D major arpeggio spanning the four lower strings.

The successive dance movements, ordered Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gavottes I and II, and Gigue, follow the same pattern as in the other five cello suites. The Allemande and Sarabande of this suite stand out as particularly intimate, deeply moving and transcendent, and the Allemande is further distinguished by being the only one of its kind throughout the six suites. Considerably more expansive than its counterparts, this is the only Allemande to contain written-out ornamentation in the Italianate style, creating an exquisitely spun-out melody articulated with appoggiaturas and

sonorous chords. With heightened pathos, introspection, reverence and soul-searching, the 6<sup>th</sup> Suite Allemande – often played quite slowly – is generally the longest single movement in the entire cycle of six suites. Though Anna Magdalena’s manuscript contains no tempo marking, an early copy by an acquaintance of Bach’s dating back to 1726 labels the movement “*Allemande adagio*”, and several subsequent editions mark the movement *Molto adagio*, or “very slow.” Shortly into the second half of the movement, an unexpected harmonic turn temporarily halts the motion on the open C-string – the only time the lowest open string is heard in the entire suite. The effect is arresting, and conveys the deepest, most intimate of sentiments.

Likewise, the Sarabande is supremely meditative and unabashedly lyrical. Far more than any other sarabande in the suites (and in particular contrast to the sarabande of the 5<sup>th</sup> Suite, which famously contains no chords at all), the 6<sup>th</sup> Suite Sarabande has double-, triple- or quadruple-stop chords on most of the main beats in 3/2 time. This Sarabande conveys simultaneously a sense of serene motion and of timelessness, as well as a pure, unadorned vocal quality. As though to balance the profound inwardness of the Allemande and Sarabande, the Courante, Gavottes and Gigue are each joyous and extroverted in their own right – the Courante fleet and exuberantly upward-reaching, the Gavottes sunny and pastoral, and the Gigue nearly bursting with rustic elation.

Lera Auerbach (b. 1973)

*La Suite dels Ocells (Hommage à Pablo Casals) for Violoncello solo* (2015)

In 1971, at the age of 94, the great Catalonian cellist Pau (Pablo) Casals broke his politically-motivated 40-year hiatus from the public stage to perform *El Cant dels Ocells* (“The Song of the Birds”) for the General Assembly at the United Nations. A traditional Catalan carol made famous by Casals through his poignant cello arrangement and soulful performances, the work came to represent for Casals a greater humanitarian mission, articulating his grief at the suffering of his people under the tyranny of fascist Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, whose nationalist forces captured Catalonia in 1939. Introducing *El Cant dels Ocells* to the General Assembly while receiving the UN Medal of Peace, Casals spoke fervently of the music and the universality of its message, saying, “Birds sing when they are in the sky, they sing: ‘PEACE, PEACE, PEACE.’” As he reaches the word “peace,” his voice cracks with emotion, a powerful indication of the significance of his message and his deeply personal connection to this folk melody, which he describes as “born in the soul of my people, Catalonia.”

Of Casals’ innumerable achievements and contributions as the preeminent cellist of the first half of the twentieth century, one of his most lasting impacts was his rediscovery of the *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Violoncello* by J.S. Bach, which he brought to the forefront of the solo cello repertoire. In a turn of fate sounding more like legend than sheer happenstance, the young Casals discovered a score of the Bach Suites in a music shop in Barcelona in 1890, at a time when they had been essentially lost to history. Casals spent the next 12 years learning the suites before venturing his first public performance of a single suite in the early 1900s; he then proceeded to play a suite every day for the rest of his long life. Casals’ iconic recordings of the Bach Cello Suites date back to the late 1930s, amidst the Spanish Civil War, a time so politically and personally fraught as to lend even greater depth and urgency to his artistry.

Lera Auerbach's luminous work *La Suite dels Ocells* for solo cello pays homage to Casals, blending the haunting beauty of *El Cant dels Ocells* and the vitality of the Bach Cello Suites in a stunning emotional and technical tour de force for the instrument. Commissioned by Washington Performing Arts to commemorate the hundred-year anniversary of Casals' 1915 U.S. tour, *La Suite dels Ocells* was premiered by Israeli cellist Amit Peled on Casals' 1733 Gofriller cello – the same instrument on which Casals performed and recorded throughout his career. Prior to the Kennedy Center premiere in November 2015, Casals' cello underwent a significant year-long restoration, an effort to return the cello as closely as possible to the fullness of its original voice, which was so intimately associated with Casals' voice.

Auerbach's primary melodic source material comes from "The Song of the Birds," and she evokes, explores and transforms its themes through the course of eight richly hued and intricately textured movements. Whereas Casals' rendition for solo cello and orchestra (or piano) features the cello in its rich baritone and tenor register, Auerbach's version often evokes a bird song ascending to the heavens. Utilizing the highest register of the cello and extended techniques to expand the palette of tone colors – such as *flautando* (an airy flute-like sound produced by a bowed instrument), harmonics, *glissandi* (audible slide sounds) and *sul ponticello* (bowing close to the bridge to produce a glassy, distorted tone) – Auerbach's music seems to elicit an ethereal spirit realm parallel to our material plane of existence, and in juxtaposing the two she brings into relief the richness embodied in the life of this cello, and in the life of the artist-humanitarian who left such an indelible mark on the world.

While influences of J.S. Bach can be heard throughout *La Suite dels Ocells*, Auerbach does not directly model the piece on Bach's Six Suites, each of which contains a Prelude followed by five ordered dance movements: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Minuets or Bourées, and Gigue. *La Suite dels Ocells* contains eight discrete movements, beginning with a *Preludio* (Prelude) and ending with a *Fuga* (Fugue); inner movements are not explicitly labeled as dance movements, though many contain dance-like elements. The work is also cyclical in nature, connecting it more to the cello suites of Benjamin Britten (written in the latter half of the twentieth century) than to suites of the Baroque period. The totality of the work is felt not only in the through-line of "The Song of the Birds," but also in the recurrence of ethereal upper-register passages.

The *Preludio: Nostalgico sognando* (nostalgic and dreamy) begins with a trill-like *tremolando*, or a rapid oscillation between two notes, in a high register of the cello, with the indication "fragile, shimmering." This opening nearly replicates that of Casals' orchestral version of *El Cant dels Ocells*, in which the *tremolando* is played by the violins. After this brief introduction, Auerbach indicates "Libero" and "very free, as if composing this or remembering," searching this upper register as though trying to summon *El Cant dels Ocells* out of the cello itself. Does Auerbach suggest that the spirit of Casals still resides within his cello? The entire movement is played muted, using *flautando* and similar effects to create an airy sheen. Wispy fragments weave in and out of the texture before a full phrase of melody emerges – altered from the minor mode to the major, then ending in the highest region of the cello, as though it might drift off the edge of the fingerboard and dissipate into the ether.

From this realm of air and spirit we are whisked back to the material world in movement II, *Moderato ma poco agitato, libero*. Descending for the first time to the deep, earthy register of the cello, the major-mode theme just heard in the stratosphere appears double tempo, now with a firm sense of pulse, energy and vitality. Later in the movement, we hear a longer quote from the song in its original key and minor mode, written one octave above Casals' version; then it breaks off into Baroque figurations idiomatic to the string writing of Bach and Vivaldi. In a heightened state of drama, the

theme is declaimed once again in the major mode, until, as before, we nearly float away to the dream world beyond the edge of the fingerboard.

The third movement, *Con brio*, enters with swagger and jocularly, almost gypsy-like in character. Emphasizing the mode mixture heard in the first phrase of “The Song of the Birds,” this movement is vigorous throughout, a folk dance articulated with grace notes, off-beat accents and short glissandi. Like the previous two movements, this movement culminates by rising upwards towards the end of the fingerboard, this time increasing in volume and intensity through a progression of trills.

From the forceful drama of this conclusion, we enter fully into the dream world of movement IV: *Adagio sognando*. Utilizing artificial harmonics, slow glissandi, and echo effects, this movement is to me the most mournful, though seemingly from a distance – a haunting lament from the spirit world. The only passage played with solid tones (rather than harmonics) enters like a plaintive birdsong, with gentle grace notes and swooping glissandi. The final phrase, marked *nostalgico*, again seems to summon the voice of Casals from another realm, ending with a question mark on the highest point heard yet.

The fifth movement, *Moderato*, enters coyly with a glissando spanning a tritone, from which the register expands outwards in sinewy phrases. Full of quicksilver changes of character from the rhapsodic to the learned keyboard style of the Baroque, this movement includes references to a Bach Cello Suite and Violin Partita alongside quirky harmonies reminiscent of Prokofiev. A dramatic build-up towards the end of the movement leads to a charming glissando descent, ending *fortissimo* in a major key, and raising the question, was this all a joke?

With its *scherzando* (playful) indications and near balletic qualities, the sixth movement *Allegretto grazioso* is one of the most overtly dance-like in the suite. Light on its feet, this is also the shortest movement, a fleeting morsel with an air of mischief. Even this charming movement ends with flair, in a grandiose passage reminiscent of 1940’s Hollywood film music.

The seventh and eighth movements are the most complex in the piece, and taken together might be considered a nod to the genre of fantasia and fugue typical of organ works in the Baroque. The seventh movement contains five sections, with the second section recurring in exact repetition after a contrasting middle section. In the introductory *Sognando libero*, the *tremolando* effect from the opening of the entire suite returns; then in harmonics “imitating whistling,” we hear the major-mode second melody from *El Cant dels Ocells* (up to this point, we have only heard the first phrase directly quoted). The door then opens to a grand, solemn prelude-style *Moderato* in C minor, highly evocative of the Baroque era. In vivid contrast to the sonorous C major chord closing this section, *Poco piu mosso, sognando magico* begins *flautando*, extremely soft, airy and improvisatory. Through rocking, wave-like gestures, the music gradually intensifies until opening into one of the most gloriously lyrical passages, reaching upwards towards a climax on a half cadence before plummeting back to the deepest register in the return of the solemn prelude section. The final passage, *Adagio misterioso, tragico*, has a hollow, harrowing effect. A lamenting melody marked *sul ponticello* is articulated with drum-like *pizzicati* of the C-string, giving a foreboding quality; but the foreboding melts away into a lullaby, with *dolce* harmonics ending suspended once again past the edge of the fingerboard.

Harkening back to the contrast between the *Preludio* and second movement, the eighth movement *Fuga* resounds with the earthiness of the material realm following the ethereal ending of the seventh

movement. A fugue in C minor on the first phrase of *El Cant dels Ocells*, this movement is fiery and resolute, with rhythmic intensity and syncopated accentuation evoking Catalan dance rhythms. Fugal passages are interspersed with fantasy-like episodes of increasing length and varied character, before returning to a modified recapitulation of the opening fugue. As happens so frequently in this piece, a grandiose half cadence arrival is left hanging, unresolved, instead leaving us suspended far above the grounding of the expected low C. Marked *Adagio nostalgico, libero*, the piece ends much like the end of the *Preludio*, with the major-mode melodic fragment played in the upper reaches of the cello, a haunting minor suspension inflecting an air of yearning before resolving downward and traversing the end of the fingerboard in a glissando nearly to the last audible note on the cello. It is as though the spirit is released back into the ether, illuminating the material realm in its path as it drifts away.

-Kirsten Jermé

### About the Artist

Cellist Kirsten Jermé enjoys a multifaceted career as a chamber musician, recitalist and educator, and is an advocate of arts in the community and expanding access to chamber music opportunities for students of all backgrounds. As a chamber musician, Kirsten has performed internationally in venues such as Weill Recital Hall, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., Harlaxton College in England and La Pieve di Gropina in Arezzo, Italy. She is equally at home performing in concert halls and in less traditional spaces, and her collaborations have led her to venues as far afield as the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, a winery in southern Oregon, the Joyce Dance Theatre in New York, and a coffeehouse in southern Indiana, in addition to numerous series including Dame Myra Hess Concert Series in Chicago, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, Sarnia Concert Association, Chamber Music Raleigh, and the Strad for Lunch Recital Series in New York.

Kirsten was formerly cellist of the Larchmere String Quartet, touring nationally and internationally presenting concerts and masterclasses while holding the Eykamp String Quartet Faculty Artists-in-Residence position at the University of Evansville. With clarinetist Wonkak Kim, the Larchmere Quartet recorded the string quartet and clarinet quintet of Stephan Krehl for the Naxos label, released in 2016. Kirsten also served for four seasons as Principal Cellist of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra and as Eykamp String Quartet Artist-in-Residence at the University of Evansville, where she developed and directed a chamber music course for undergraduates. The Eykamp Quartet was featured twice as soloists with the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra during her tenure, and Kirsten appeared as a soloist in Beethoven's Triple Concerto with the University of Evansville Symphony Orchestra in 2018.

Kirsten is currently an Applied Lecturer of Cello at North Carolina State University. She has given masterclasses at UNC-Chapel Hill, Western Kentucky University, Otterbein University and Middle Tennessee State. Deeply committed to youth chamber music education, Kirsten serves as faculty for the North Carolina Chamber Music Institute and Kidznotes, an *El Sistema*-inspired program. She recently served as Director of the Honors Division for Lamar Stringfield Music Camp in Raleigh, and she also serves as faculty of the Chapel Hill Chamber Music Workshop. She was previously on cello faculty for Greenwich House Music School in Manhattan and Frank Sinatra High School of the Arts after-school program in Queens. As a freelancer in New York City, Kirsten performed in venues such

as Carnegie, Zankel, Merkin and Alice Tully Halls, Le Poisson Rouge, the United Nations and Madison Square Garden, and recorded Mohammed Fairouz's opera *Sumeida's Song* with the Mimesis Ensemble for Bridge Records. She spends summers in Oregon as a member of the Britt Festival Orchestra.

Kirsten is currently pursuing her D.M.A. at the CUNY Graduate Center as a pupil of Marcy Rosen. She received her M.M. and Arts Leadership Certificate from the Eastman School of Music as a student of Steven Doane and Rosemary Elliott, and a B.A. from Stony Brook University, where she studied with Colin Carr and members of the Emerson String Quartet.

## Spring 2021 Events

### March

- 8 Ari Livne, piano
- 12 Han Chen, piano

### April

- 7 Kirsten Jermé, cello
- 16 Audrey Chen, cello
- 23 Carrie Frey, viola
- 26 Federico Diaz, guitar
- 28 Antonio Valentin, piano
- 30 Austin Lewellen, double bass

### May

- 3 Thapelo Masita, cello
- 5 Clare Monfredo, cello
- 7 GC Composers
- 12 Julia Danitz, violin
- 14 GC Composers
- 17 Isabel Fairbanks, cello
- 19 Jeremy Kienbaum, viola
- 21 Fifi Zhang, piano

All events begin at 1:00pm and will be live-streamed free of charge at this link:

<https://gc-cuny.zoom.us/j/95813229159>

For detailed concert information, please visit our website at: <http://gcmusic.commonsgc.cuny.edu>