

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

April 23, 2021 1:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall Online



Carrie Frey, viola Robert Fleitz, piano

Zastrugi (2021)

Adrienne Munden-Dixon
(b. 1990)

Morpheus (1917)

Rebecca Clarke
(1886–1979)

Wending (2001)

Jeffrey Mumford
(b. 1955)

INTERMISSION

Five Bagatelles (2018) (version for solo viola)

Itzá Garcia
(b. 1993)

Suite for Solo Violin No. 1 in A Minor

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Gigue

Johann Paul von Westhoff
(1656–1705)

If there is no longer anything where one has to go, return brings good fortune
Composition for Viola and Piano (1994)

Reiko Fütting
(b. 1970)

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

Notes on the Program

***Zastrugi* by Adrienne Munden-Dixon**

Adrienne Munden-Dixon's compositions often incorporate elements of improvisation and field recordings. Best known as a violinist, her own performance practice centers on exploring the instrument's capabilities, interacting with the sonic world of a performance space, and redefining lyricism. Her notation encourages a wide range of rhythmic flexibility, allowing for spacious rubato in Ysaÿe-like moments of arpeggiation, and snapping into a groove for fiddle-inspired passages. While *Zastrugi* is purely acoustic, the scrape and bounce of the bow across the string in circular bowing and *jéte* techniques and the curves of the written shapes illustrate the natural phenomenon of the title, which describes the ridges and ripples of wind-sculpted snow.

***Morpheus* by Rebecca Clarke**

Named for the Greek god of sleep and dreams, this impressionistic work unwinds slowly, passing through several layers of lucidity and bookended by sections that use a mute to elicit a darker viola sound (this effect also appears in two other works on this program: Mumford and Fütting). Taking advantage of the deep instrumental knowledge afforded a composer-performer, Rebecca Clarke expertly interweaves the covered sound of a flat key, whose notes share less resonance with the viola's open strings, with brighter, flute-like melodies that take advantage of the instrument's natural harmonics. Clarke premiered the piece herself, performing it twice in New York City in February and March of 1918. Although she included her own Lullaby and Grotesque on the same recital, *Morpheus* is listed in the premiere program as a work by 'Anthony Trent.' Tellingly, critics raved about Trent's work while disregarding Clarke's other compositions. Her Sonata of 1919, which tied for first place with Ernst Bloch's in a composition competition sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, was similarly well received, although some reporters, skeptical that such a masterful work could have been produced by a woman, speculated that 'Rebecca Clarke' might in fact be the pseudonym of Bloch or another man. *Morpheus*'s flurries of whole-tone harmonies and idiomatic exploration of the instrument's range offer a sort of warm-up to the next year's Sonata, cementing Clarke's well-deserved place in the standard viola repertoire.

***wending* by Jeffrey Mumford**

Born in DC and currently living in Ohio, Jeffrey Mumford's music has been played around the world and earned him numerous accolades, including the "Academy Award in Music" from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, a Fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation, and the inaugural National Black Arts Festival/Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Composition Competition. The first time I heard Mumford's music performed live was in a Miller Theater Pop-Up Concert by Mivos Quartet, and what impressed me most was the density of musical lines, which nevertheless left room for each player to act expressively. Mumford says in an interview with Frank Oteri that he coached them to "imagine the Ravel Quartet meets Carter's Second," a description which I think also offers a window into this work. Like Carter (who Mumford studied with for a few years), he uses a hyper-romantic language that connects melodies across wide leaps and interweaves intensely contrapuntal textures; and like Ravel, he paints with a vast range of textures and tone colors. This lush, rhapsodic solo, *wending*, was written for violist Wendy Richman and premiered on November 11, 2001 at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC (which also happens to be Mumford's hometown). Making it even more personal, the work's harmonic material derives from the letters in Wendy's name (wEnDy riCHmAn). The initial slow-moving material is interrupted by accented chords and individual notes that form an independent layer, and by the entrance of fast-moving passages that transform into tremolos before once more revealing aspects of the opening material.

Five Bagatelles (version for solo viola), by Itzá García

Itzá García, originally from Acapulco, Guerrero, México, is a fellow student at the Graduate Center. In addition to composing, she also hosts a radio show, creates archives to promote contemporary classical composers' work, and gives pre-concert talks to help audiences connect more deeply with what they hear. Her Five Bagatelles are the perfect prelude to the Westhoff Suite that follows; both take the form of a series of short vignettes that are related and coherent, but clearly distinct. Each bagatelle has its own character - leaping, sliding, oozing, sidling. The first movement is declamatory but volatile, switching at a moment's notice from arco to pizzicato and jeté (bouncing bow). The second is upbeat and dance-like, but disarmingly irregular. The third is more lugubrious, with glissandi and dynamic shifts that tilt the sonic floor. The fourth, marked "risoluto," abandons its initial short gestures for longer lines and thick chords. The fifth and final movement brings together the sudden changes of the first movement, the upbeat rhythms of the second, and the legato lines of the fourth. García writes: "This work is concerned with various levels of continuity and interrelation. For each movement either a harmonic or linear hexachord is always maintained while rhythm, character and timbre define the unique and contrasting personality of every movement. The goal is to convey a unifying thread of sounds highlighting different qualities at the different stages of the piece."

Suite for Solo Violin No. 1 in A Minor, by Johann Paul von Westhoff

Johann Paul von Westhoff, like several other composers on this program, was also a well-regarded performer, considered one of the best German violinists of his era. Born in Dresden, he toured widely, tutored princes, and performed for Louis XIV. My interest in Westhoff was sparked by the Graduate Center's German language exam, for which I was asked to translate part of an article that suggested that Bach's Partitas and Sonatas were inspired by Westhoff's works, including his 1683 Suite for Solo Violin — the earliest known multi-movement work for unaccompanied violin. Westhoff and Bach were colleagues in Weimar, where Bach began composing his own Partitas and Sonatas. Fans of Bach's Partita No. 2 in D minor may hear similarities between the minor chord that begins this work's first movement and that of Bach's famous chaconne, and the unison followed by a rising tetrachord (D, D... E F G A) that opens the Courante of Westhoff's and the Allemande of Bach's partita. This suite is the first in a set of six, published in 1696, which may be a reprint of an earlier collection that was published in 1682 but is now lost. It includes a typical late Baroque collection of dances: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue. All four movements use double-stopped chords liberally, filling out the harmonies as much as possible for a solo work. The first movement, allemande, features courtly dotted rhythms and a solemn dialogue between upper and lower voices. The Courante continues the interplay between bass and soprano, keeping a lively scale pattern running almost constantly in quarter notes and marking each bar with a full chord as if playing both the lute part and the violin part at once. The sarabande, danced in three with the emphasis on the second beat, introduces a chromatic melody, ascending seductively by half-step. Finally, the Gigue takes that chromaticism and runs with it, carrying on descending and ascending melodies simultaneously in a virtuosic display of both composerly and violinistic technique.

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Composition for Viola and Piano by Reiko Fütting

Reiko Fütting's compositions explore the experiences of time, memory, and temporal perception, and the psychological and sociopolitical potential of associations and quotations. This piece was written right after his arrival in the United States in 1994, for violist Eberhard Stoll, a classmate both at Rice as well as the music conservatory in Dresden, Germany, which they both had attended before coming to the US. He writes, "The title is taken from the 40th hexagram of the I Ching, which I consulted in order to name the composition. Its content could not have been more relevant

to the situation in which I composed the piece.” Fütting plays with sparseness and density in the texture of this piece, alternating extended sections that feature the viola or the piano alone with sudden surges of activity that layer the instruments either in competing splashes of motion or long swells. There is a moment when a high, sweet viola melody emerges, like a reminder of a long-lost song, or a music box, but it remains hauntingly incomplete and soon vanishes, replaced by a thicket of strict sixteenth notes that pass echoes around like an image in a hall of mirrors. The piece, like the Mumford and Clarke, ends with muted viola, a distant dream.

About the Artists

Violist **Carrie Frey** is an active performer and educator, focused on working with open, inquisitive musicians and composers and encouraging creativity in her students. A founding member of string trio Chartreuse and string quartet Desdemona, and a recent addition to The Rhythm Method String Quartet, she coordinates the chamber music program at Bloomingdale School of Music. Carrie can be heard with a number of New York City’s notable groups, including Wavefield Ensemble, Talea Ensemble, Cantata Profana, Heartbeat Opera, Wet Ink Large Ensemble, toy piano/toy viola duo Wind-Up Elephant, and Quartet Metadata. As an orchestral musician, she has played with the Greenville Symphony and the Savannah Philharmonic and at festivals around the world, including the Lucerne Festival Academy and Alumni Orchestras in Switzerland; Britten-Pears Festival in the UK; Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC; and Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan. Her debut sonata album, *The Grey Light of Day*, with pianist Robert Fleitz, was released by Wild Iris Productions in 2016. Carrie is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory (BM) and the Manhattan School of Music Contemporary Performance Program (MM). She is currently pursuing a DMA at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, studying with Daniel Phillips.

Pianist and composer **Robert Fleitz** performs, commissions, and writes music to curate evocative, surprising, and often multi-disciplinary experiences for audiences. To this end, he has personally commissioned 120 solo, chamber and performance art pieces, and has given the world premiere to hundreds more, notably including composers Tan Dun, Paola Prestini, and Liisa Hirsch. Active in performing both classical and new music, his career includes appearances in 24 US states and 13 countries across North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Praised for “mesmerizing” and “commanding” playing (*The New York Times*), and for musicality with “a delightful ease and lightness” (*I Care If You Listen*) and “groovy tendencies”, Robert is the winner of the 2021 Pro Musicis International Prize; as well as the André Boucourechliev Prize in the 2020 International Piano Competition of Orléans. As composer, Robert’s oeuvre has been recently performed or commissioned by a diverse array of artists, including the Metropolis Ensemble (NYC), Jumblies Theatre Company (Toronto), Orkest de Ereprijs (Netherlands), the Druskomanija Festival (Lithuania), Festival Osmose (Belgium), and Hilary Easton Dance Company (NYC). He is the founder of the Swan City Piano Festival in Lakeland, Florida, his hometown. He completed BM and MM degrees at The Juilliard School and is based in New York City, where he lives with his partner, the composer Krists Auznieks.

Spring 2021 Online 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>