

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

April 6th, 2022 1:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Chelsea Lane, harp
with Maren Rothfritz, viola and Dr. Ginevra Petrucci, flute

Hoyt-Schermerhorn (2010)

Chris Cerrone
(b. 1984)

Spin Bird (2008)

Kate Moore
(b. 1979)

Falling Berceuse (2020)

Falling Pairs (2017)

Nico Muhly
(b. 1981)

In a Landscape (1948)

John Cage
(1912–1992)

INTERMISSION

Suspensions for viola and harp (2022)

Ellis Ludwig-Leone
(b. 1989)

Spiegel im Spiegel arr. viola and harp (1978)

Arvo Pärt
(b. 1935)

Submerged for flute, viola and harp (2013)

Miguel del Águila
(b. 1957)

Notes on the Program

This program features contemporary works that figuratively and literally explore the concept of “suspensions.” I was motivated in part to perform these pieces, many of which draw on the traditions of minimalism, to process the feelings of inactivity and stasis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and to find, through repetition, peace and acceptance of events beyond human control.

Australian-Dutch composer **Kate Moore’s** compositional oeuvre is inspired by “the organic shapes and sounds found in nature and lost objects of the natural biosphere, both sonic and visual,” of which *Spin Bird* is a prime example. Specifically, the piece draws upon Richard Bach’s novel *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* (written in 1970) to tell a musical story of a bird’s journey to flight, or, metaphorically, an individual’s path to self-mastery through dedicated practice. The expression of this trajectory in *Spin Bird* can be found in the gradual harmonic modulation of the harp’s quick, arpeggiated motives. Moore accomplishes this drawn-out progression by replacing one note at a time in each chord after a variable, but carefully notated, number of repetitions. Almost imperceptibly, the piece morphs through many different keys, ending up in a very different place from where it began. Highly symbolic, this piece represents the road to self-actualization.

Conceived as companion pieces, *Falling Berceuse* and *Falling Pairs* (originally written for piano by **Nico Muhly**, and edited for harp by Chelsea Lane), as their titles suggest, both feature descending patterns. Loud chords herald the opening of *Falling Berceuse*, only to be quickly replaced by a soft treble figuration that creates a convex downward curve. Upon a second sounding of loud chords, the pattern changes slightly to curve in the opposite direction, only to return to its original shape several measures later. These ostinato patterns create a pulsed regularity, a *berceuse*, or lullaby, which could almost lull one to sleep, were it not for the interjections of the *forte* chords. A gradual crescendo over pedal notes (first an A-natural, then a C-sharp) leads to the final climactic chords of the piece. These are followed by a swift dynamic drop that accompanies the return of the opening material motives, which are recalled in a slightly altered, dream-like manner. In *Falling Pairs*, the “descending patterns” are primarily expressed as appoggiaturas, which sometimes serve to destabilize strong beats and other times to produce the sensation that the piece is constantly moving somewhere (and yet nowhere). The opening section strongly gives the impression of “falling” with its parallel descending lines, and then a transitional passage hints as to the texture of the middle part of the piece, which consists of a soaring, *cantabile* melodic line above a chorale-like accompaniment. An ascent to the highest registers of the harp in the melodic line eventually brings the piece back to the introductory material, although in a transposed and *ottava* form. A fade out to *pianississimo* ends the piece.

Named after the subway station in which **Chris Cerrone** spent many nights waiting for the train, *Hoyt-Schermerhorn* (edited for harp by Lane and Cerrone from the original piano version) is a “tribute to the New York nightscape.” The piece explores the contradictory feelings one (including the composer himself) might experience while waiting for an evening train: “nostalgia, anxiety, joy, and panic.” The piece begins in a very slow tempo with sparse, ringing chords, which coalesce little by little to create a stable, ostinato-like line by the middle section. In this denser part of the piece, the right and left hands play in two different tempi: while the right hand continues in a descending ostinato pattern, the left hand effects a hauntingly beautiful chord progression. The texture becomes increasingly complex with the addition of a third line of single-note F-natural and E-flat interjections that become more insistent with time. Suddenly, the piece thins out once more to feature the low chord progression, evoking a cradle song. This quietude is then interrupted by fragmented electronics, which usher the piece to its final conclusion. Performance of this work calls for a midi foot pedal,

audio interface, two microphones, and a computer running Max (to trigger patches which amplify the sound of and increase the reverb on the performing instrument, play back an extra layer of notes, and create a granulation effect).

John Cage's *In a Landscape* was originally intended to be accompanied by choreographed dance, although since the premiere, it has more often been performed by various solo instruments. Interestingly enough, the piece is written for harp *or* piano, even though the writing is much more idiomatic for the latter. This can be seen, for instance, in Cage's instructions to depress the piano's damper and sustain pedals together for the duration of the piece, only to be released in the last bar of music. Likely taking a cue from some of Erik Satie's early minimalist music, Cage repeats similar motives throughout the piece that ascend and descend to form a cyclic, hypnotic melody. Added to this, there are no written dynamics in the piece, which creates a still, calm atmosphere throughout. Such a desired effect could in part be a result of Cage's interest in Zen Buddhism in the late 1940s. However, given Cage's later aleatoric music, I like to imagine that he also omits these markings in order to leave room up to the performer to interpret a landscape of their own choosing—one that can constantly change depending on the instrumentalist and their surroundings.

This performance marks the world premiere of **Ellis Ludwig-Leone's *Suspensions*** for viola and harp, commissioned by Chelsea Lane and made possible in part by The American Harp Society, Inc. The piece explores two different kinds of musical suspensions, horizontal and vertical. The first movement is composed of horizontal suspensions: little hiccups in a sinewy lullaby melody made of 5ths and 2nds lead to wrinkles in the rhythmic footprint of the piece as the tempo progressively increases. The second movement profiles vertical suspensions, relying on shocks, absorptions, and trills that keep the harmony teetering between two chords. Both movements start off simply, and with time, grow in intensity and density, only to resolve to satisfying and harmonious ends, a formal progression mirrored in the interplay between viola and harp.

Although the Estonian composer **Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel*** was originally composed for piano and violin, the piece has been performed on many different instruments, including bassoon, cello, double bass, clarinet, flugelhorn, flute, horn, oboe, percussion, trombone, and in today's performance, harp and viola (arr. Chelsea Lane). Written in a minimalist and tintinnabular style, Pärt pits slowly arpeggiated triads in the accompaniment line (the harp) against sustained F major scales in the melodic line (the viola). The meditative repetitiveness (albeit with slight variations) of the piece evokes its title, that of the infinity mirror (or "mirror(s) in mirror").

Miguel del Águila's *Submerged* is a musical retelling of both the renowned, pioneering female writer Alfonsina Storni's imagined childhood in the Argentine Andes and her surrealist poem "Yo en el fondo del mar" ("Me at the Bottom of the Sea") from *Mundo de siete pozos* (*World of Seven Wells*), written in 1934. The piece begins with a lively folkloric section in which all three instruments imitate South American instruments: the pedal harp acts as a Paraguayan harp (a diatonic frame harp that is played with one's fingernails) through the use of fingernail glissandi and fast arpeggios, the viola portrays a Charango (a lute-like Andean stringed instrument) by playing multiple stop pizzicati, and the flute evokes the Quena (the traditional flute of the Andes, typically made of wood or cane) with its playful, upbeat melodies and ample trills. Águila sets a light-hearted tone in this homage to Andean culture and Storni's carefree youth before plunging into the depths of the ocean, and in turn Storni's darker poem, in the middle of the piece. Prophetic of Storni's own suicide in the sea in 1938, "Yo en el fondo del mar" paints a sombre picture of artistic isolation, a mood which Águila summons through the use of ample extended techniques in all instruments. These effects include, but are not limited to, soundboard knocking, pedal buzzes, fingernail playing, flute multiphonics, slap tongue sounds, key

slaps, pick glisses, pin vibratos, whistling sounds, viola string glisses, and harmonics. However, Águila does not leave us underwater for the remainder of the piece; instead, he utilizes a music box Ländler to guide the music back to the “real world,” or a recapitulation of the playful opening section.

Yo en el fondo del mar

Alfonsina Storni (1892-1938)
(from *Mundo de siete pozos*, 1934)

En el fondo del mar
hay una casa
de cristal.

A una avenida
de madréporas
da.

Un gran pez de oro,
a las cinco,
me viene a saludar.

Me trae
un rojo ramo
de flores de coral.

Duermo en una cama
un poco más azul
que el mar.

Un pulpo
me hace guiños
a través del cristal.

En el bosque verde
que me circunda
—din don...din dan...—
se balancean y cantan
las sirenas
de nácar verdemar.

Y sobre mi cabeza
arden, en el crepúsculo,
las erizadas puntas del mar.

Me at the Bottom of the Sea

Alfonsina Storni (1892-1938)
(from *World of Seven Wells*, 1934)

At the bottom of the sea
there is a house
made of glass,

at the edge
of a coral-lined
road.

A big golden fish
comes to greet me
at five;

it brings me
a red bouquet
of coral as flowers.

I sleep on a bed
somewhat bluer
than the sea.

An octopus
now winks at me
through the glass.

In the green forest
that surrounds me
swaying mermaids sing
—ding, dong ... ding, ding—
in their nacre and aquamarine.

And above my head
glow in the twilight
the prickling pins of the sea.

—Translation by M. del Aguila (2014)

About the Artists

Chelsea Lane graduated *magna cum laude* from Yale University with a B.A. in Music, completed her M.A. in Harp Performance *met grote onderscheiding* at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, and is currently pursuing her D.M.A. in Music Performance at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her primary mentors have included the harpists Emmanuel Ceysson, Jana Boušková, June Han, and Gretchen Van Hoesen, and her dissertation advisor Dr. Emily Wilbourne. Chelsea was a co-chair of the 2019 *Christmas Spectacular Starring the Radio City Rockettes*, and has performed with various other professional orchestras on a per-service basis, including the Czech Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, and New World Symphony. She is a prizewinner of several international and national harp competitions, including the American Harp Society's Young Professional Division, ASTA National Solo Competition, and the Lyon and Healy Awards, and has performed concertos in New York City, Brussels, New Haven, Minnesota, and Pittsburgh. Chelsea currently resides in Brooklyn, NY, teaches harp privately, and serves as adjunct faculty at the College of Staten Island, CUNY and Rowan University. For more information, visit www.chelsealaneharp.com.

Violist **Maren Rothfritz** is a passionate artist and educator who is equally at home on the concert stage and in the teaching studio. As violist in the Argus Quartet since 2019, Maren enjoys seeking colorful musical expressions across a wide range of repertoire old and new. From 2016-2018 she was a Fellow with Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, performing and teaching throughout New York City. Previously, she completed her Master's degree with Kim Kashkashian at New England Conservatory, where her concentration was Music-in-Education. Her festival credits include Yellow Barn, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, the Lucerne Festival Academy, and Keshet Eilon. Born in Paderborn, Germany, Maren began violin studies at age of four. At sixteen, she entered into the Hochschule für Musik Detmold and joined the viola class of Diemut Poppen a year later. She subsequently attended the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid (2011-13) and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (2013-14), where she studied with Nobuko Imai. She moved to the United States in 2014 and is now working towards a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where she was awarded the prestigious CUNY Graduate Center Fellowship and is mentored by Ettore Causa. Currently, she teaches at Brooklyn College as a Teaching Fellow, and is on faculty at the annual festival "Point Counterpoint" in Vermont.

Dr. Ginevra Petrucci is a flutist performer, collaborative artist, and advocate of new music projects. She has appeared as a soloist throughout Europe, the Americas, and the Far East, released numerous highly acclaimed recordings and premiered many contemporary works. She served as guest professor at several major musical institutions throughout Europe, in the US, China, and Japan. She serves as Principal Flute at Chamber Orchestra of New York, and as Artistic Director of the Flauto d'Amore Project. Her studies include Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, Ecole Normale in Paris, and Yale University, and she holds a DMA in Flute Performance at Stony Brook University. www.ginevraperuucci.com