

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

April 5, 2024 6:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Clare Monfredo, cello

*Note: Please hold your applause until the end of the Bach and the Marais.

Beyond the order of things (2021)

Missy Mazzoli
(b. 1980)

Suite IV for Unaccompanied Cello in E-flat Major, BWV 1010 (c. 1720)

J. S. Bach
(1685–1750)

Prelude

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Bourrées I & II

Gigue

Brief pause

Arpeggiata (Prelude) for viola da gamba, arr. Clare Monfredo

Carl Friedrich Abel
(1723–87)

Ricercare No. 7 (c. 1689)

Domenico Gabrielli
(1659–90)

Ai limiti della notte (“At the edge of night”) (version for cello, 1984) Salvatore Sciarrino
(b. 1947)

Grāmata ģellam (“The Book”) (1978)

i. Fortissimo

ii. Pianissimo

Pēteris Vasks
(b. 1946)

Les Voix Humaines (“The human voice”), arr. Clare Monfredo

Marin Marais
(1656–1728)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

Notes on the Program

General note

This recital is meant to present ideas from my dissertation research, which attempts a systematic understanding of creativity and individual expression in cello playing. In both my dissertation and this program, I deliberately sought to absorb and understand individual performers and their original interpretations — an approach that departs from the way I have learned music in the past, namely, by exclusive study of composers and their scores. This alternative approach has enabled me to see the selected music (and even music more generally) beyond the confines of written notation, and thus has suggested ways to create new interpretations and more imaginative playing.

The first half of the program features J.S. Bach's Fourth Cello Suite, the focus of my dissertation studying creativity in interpretations of cello music. This performance is heavily influenced by many cellists, in particular Gavriel Lipkind, Pieter Wispelwey, Quinine Viersen, Thomas Demenga, and Jean-Guihen Queyras, as well as the gambasts Jordi Savall and Paolo Pandolfo and the Baroque violinist Rachel Podger. I have paired the Suite with a short piece by Missy Mazzoli that itself is a reconstruction (or "*beautifully corrupted translation*") of musical ideas of the Renaissance composer Josquin de Prez, also heavily based on E-flat major.

The second half spans three centuries of music that traverse the expressive range of the cello. Inspired by eclectic selection of programming from recorded viola da gamba recitals of Jordi Savall and Paolo Pandolfo, this part of the program is bookended by arrangements I have made of two famous gamba pieces, one virtuosic (*Arpeggiato*), one deeply expressive (*Les Voix Humaines*). In between these pieces are works that I also find to invite great creativity and imagination from performers. Domenico Gabrielli's *Ricercare* (ca. 1689) is an exploration of the cello written when the cello was still a young instrument. Salvatore Sciarrino's *Ai limiti della note* (1979) explores the indistinct yet richly textured boundaries between audible and inaudible sounds. Pēteris Vasks's *Grāmata Ķellam* (1978) pushes the bounds of the cello's timbres and emotive range, from relentless screaming to otherworldly song. My relationship with these pieces is also deeply influenced by the performances of the cellists Tanya Teztlaff, David Geringas, Sol Gabetta, and Matt Haimovitz, each of whom introduced me to new ways of imagining this music.

Program Notes

Beyond the order of things was commissioned by cellist Matt Haimovitz as part of his 2021 Primavera Project, itself a part of a series of commissioned works in response to Charline von Heyl's paintings. This piece is a response to a particular 2020 painting by Charline von Heyl, painted by von Heyl as a response to Botticelli's Primavera painting from the late 1400's. Von Heyl's work uses images and figures from Botticelli, though smudged, faded, and obscured. In composing *Beyond the Order of Things*, I replicated, in music, von Heyl's technique of erasing and recontextualizing source material from the Renaissance. I transcribed a vocal motet, *Praeter rerum serium* (translation: *Beyond the Order of Things*) by Botticelli's contemporary Josquin des Prez. Like von Heyl, I reworked this material, repeating fragments and chopping up phrases, to create a new work that is a "*beautifully corrupted translation*" of the original.

—Program note by **Missy Mazzoli** (b. 1980, USA)

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750, Germany) Six Cello Suites are inarguably the most widely played and best-known music for the instrument. Likely written around 1720, during a period in which Bach lived in the town of Köthen, the Suites are a cornerstone works of cello repertory and have had a singular influence on subsequent cello music, technique, and performance. All six of the suites follow the traditional form of the Baroque dance suite: an exploratory prelude, followed by Baroque dances from across the European continent. The Cello Suites are also unusual in that there exists no known version of the manuscript written in Bach's own hand. Today, we are left only with four conflicting early copies, one made by Bach's second wife Anna Magdalena, one by his student Johann Peter Kellner, and two by later anonymous copyists. This textual predicament leaves us without an "authoritative" source for this music, and, in its own way, invites performers to rely instead upon their own judgment and imagination.

The **Fourth Suite, BWV 1010 in E-flat Major**, is known for the many challenges it presents due to its technically tricky key, which prevents the convenient use of certain open strings and thus demands great flexibility and stamina from the fretting hand. In this performance, I have taken a number of liberties with the music, particularly in repeated passages — at times I add harmonies (particularly in the Allemande) and ornamental embellishments (particularly in the Courante), at other times altering the harmonic texture and timbre of the music (Sarabande and Bourrée 2). My aim in these modifications is to create a unique interpretation of the Suite that highlights integral dimensions of the music: harmonic richness, instrumental virtuosity, lyrical melodicism, and musical wit.

This performance was influenced by many musicians, but particularly recordings by Paolo Pandolfo (Allemande), Gavriel Lipkind (Courante), and Jordi Savall (Bourrée 2), as well as ideas and guidance from Jeremy Corren.

Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-1787, Germany) was a prolific composer and renowned viola da gamba player who lived at the cusp of the Baroque and Classical eras. From 1743, Abel was director of music at the Dresden court (a job to which J.S. Bach had unsuccessfully applied). Later, in 1759, Abel moved to London, where he worked as a chamber musician in London to Queen Charlotte. *Arpeggiata*, the opening movement of Abel's D minor suite for viola da gamba, is one of his most famous and alluring movements, skillfully evoking a rich sonorous landscape with a single instrument.

Continuing with the theme of D minor is **Domenico Gabrielli's** (1659-1690, Italy) *Ricercare 7* (1689), the last of seven pieces he wrote in the ricercare form for the cello. Gabrielli was one of the first cello virtuosos, and his music for the instrument was among the earliest ever published. A ricercare, meaning "to seek" or "to search out," is a musical form that predates the development of the fugue. *Ricercare 7* begins with a sparse, descending D minor arpeggio, a passage to which many cellists add improvised embellishments. After this stately opening, the piece unfolds with a series of intricate melodic lines interwoven with virtuosic passages, showcasing the cello's expressive range.

Savatore Sciarrino (b. 1947, Italy) writes that his music "leads to a different way of listening, a global emotional realization, of reality as well as of one's self." Initially a self-taught composer who writes that he was "born free and not in a music school," Sciarrino is one of the most imaginative and influential composers of the latter half of the 20th century. *Ai limiti della notte* ("At the edge of night") (1979), originally written for viola but transcribed by the composer for cello, explores the liminal space evoked by dusk, here expressed through intensely quiet unmeasured fast bows (or *tremolo*) of alternating harmonics (high overtones of the string excited by lighting touching a certain interval above either the nut or a depressed string). The effect alternates between a hushed and nearly inaudible

buzz to bright and steely piercing sounds. At times, the shift between these two extremes is so gradual as to be almost unnoticeable, other times it is jarringly abrupt.

Grāmata Čellam (1978) (“The Book”) consists of two contrasting sections. The first, extremely vigorous section “fortissimo” (Allegro, free sonata form) works through raw and aggressive musical material in an unbroken state of tension, ultimately reaching a despairing climax. The second part “pianissimo” begins in a free, *quasi* improvisational style giving way to an “Andante cantabile” with a long extensive melody over a pedal point. The movement culminates very softly in a reprise of the musical events as a reminiscence of its beginning.

—Program note by **Pēteris Vasks** (b. 1946, Latvia), translated by Lindsay Chalmers-Gerbracht

Les Voix Humaines (“The human voice”) by **Marin Marais** (1656-1728, France) felt to me like a fitting conclusion to this program, particularly in the wake of Vasks’ work for singing cellist. Marais, a master of the viol, wrote several books for the instrument. *Les Voix Humaines* is a short movement from his second book and is unusually named: an instrumental piece titled for the human voice. The music that follows beautifully exemplifies the singing quality of the French baroque, yet also feels timeless in emotional depth and wondrous simplicity.

About the Artist

Clare Monfredo is a cellist originally from Seal Harbor, Maine, currently living in Brooklyn where she is pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the CUNY Graduate Center and is the recipient of the Graduate Center Fellowship. Clare has performed as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral leader all over the world, has performed with groups including Ensemble Intercontemporain, International Contemporary Ensemble, and A Far Cry.

Clare holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Yale University where she graduated with distinction and was a multiple-time winner of the Yale Friends of Music competition. She holds a Master of Music degree from the Shepherd School at Rice University as a recipient of the Graduate Arts Award from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation where she studied with Norman Fischer, and studied with cellist Peter Bruns at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Leipzig, Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship. Clare’s other significant mentors include David Gebor, Julia Lichten, and Natasha Brofsky. Clare has appeared at Chamber Music Northwest, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, Tanglewood Music Center, Lucerne Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Cello Akademie Rutesheim, Kurt Weill Fest, and Music Academy of the West. She was awarded the Karl Zeise Memorial Prize by the Tanglewood Music Center, the Gebor Rejto Prize from Music Academy of the West, and the Chamber Music Prize from the Fontainebleau Conservatoire Américain.

Clare teaches cello at Hunter College and is a member of the Sonora chamber music collective, the Sprechgesang Institute multi-disciplinary artist collective, and the Victory Players, a western Massachusetts based Pierrot ensemble focused on commissioning new works. She also co-directs DownEast New Music, Maine’s first chamber music festival dedicated solely to contemporary music.