


Compact disc

F 737  SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

2017  
-5-13

# FREQUENCY: *Bach Refractions*

FREQUENCY

Michael Jinsoo Lim, violin

Melia Watras, viola

Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, cello

7:30 PM

May 13, 2017

Brechemin Auditorium

UW MUSIC

2016-17 SEASON

PROGRAM  
CD # 17,768

- 1 From *Partita in E Major, BWV 1006* ..... 4:01 ..... Johann Sebastian Bach  
Prelude (1685-1750)
- 2 From *Goldberg Variations, BWV 988* ..... 10:42 ..... J. S. Bach  
Selections announced from stage arr. Dmitry Sitkovetsky
- 3 Prelude for cello solo (2014) ..... 2:53 ..... Melia Watras  
(b. 1969)
- 4 From *Suite in C Major, BWV 1009* ..... 3:16 ..... J. S. Bach  
Prelude
- 5 From *Sonata No. 2, Op. 27* ..... 2:39 ..... Eugène Ysaÿe  
Obsession (1858-1931)

INTERMISSION

- 6 Bach Browser (2017)\* ..... 5:58 ..... J. S. Bach  
arr. Melia Watras
- 7 From *Viola Sonata, Op. 11, No. 5* ..... 13:06 ..... Paul Hindemith  
Passacaglia (1895-1963)
- 8 From *Goldberg Variations, BWV 988* ..... 14:19 ..... J. S. Bach  
Selections announced from stage arr. Dmitry Sitkovetsky

\*World Premiere

## Program Notes

Welcome to *Bach Refractions*! Refraction occurs when a wave of light or sound passes from one medium to another. When the wave passes through the second medium, it deviates from the straight path it would have otherwise taken. Tonight, Frequency takes a look at Bach from different angles. You'll hear works by Bach in their original instrumentation, arrangements of Bach, and works by other composers who were inspired by Bach.

Bach wrote the iconic Goldberg Variations for keyboard. Tonight, we'll perform selections from Dmitry Sitkovetsky's transcription for string trio. Two Bach Preludes, one from a solo violin partita and one from a solo cello suite, are presented tonight, along with works that they directly influenced. Legendary Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe wrote a set of six solo violin sonatas (inspired by Bach's six works for solo violin). In the first movement of his second sonata, Ysaÿe shows his obsession with Bach, quoting the master, while weaving in the *Dies Irae* chant from the traditional Requiem mass. Melia Watras wrote her *Prelude* as an homage to her beloved former teacher, Atar Arad, and to Bach's *Prelude* from his Third Cello Suite.

Also among the Bach-inspired pieces is Paul Hindemith's *Passacaglia*, from his *Viola Sonata*, Op. 11, No. 5. The work is influenced by Bach's famed *Chaconne* for solo violin, with notable similarities in form and structure. And it wouldn't be a Frequency concert without something new on it, so tonight you'll hear the world premiere of a creative arrangement by Melia of several themes from Bach's solo cello and violin works. Program notes on Melia's pieces are below.

Many thanks to the University of Washington School of Music and Director Richard Karpen.

—Michael Jinsoo Lim

### **Melia Watras: Prelude for cello solo (2014)**

When I was a student at Indiana University, I had the great honor to study with the renowned violist and composer Atar Arad. I vividly recall a lesson with him where I began with the *Prelude* from Bach's Third Suite. Atar's concept for this movement was creative, unusual and very personal. I think of it every time I hear or play the piece, and I share it with my students today. Bach's *Prelude* begins with a simple descending C major scale, which Atar described as a string player gently warming up, a sort of private ritual that we do every day. It then unfolds as a daydream, before returning to the same C major scale to end the movement, bringing us out of the dream state and back into reality, where we began.

I decided to compose a piece for viola solo, dedicated to Atar, with this vision of his in mind; my resulting *Prelude* is an homage to both my dear professor and J. S. Bach. The work opens with long tones on open strings, which is my daily warm-up. In my daydream, influences of Arad and Bach float into the piece. The work focuses on the pitch C (as does Bach's Third Suite), which is emphasized by the use of scordatura tuning in which I ask the violist to tune the D string down to a

C. *Prelude* is infused with a 6-note quote from Atar's solo viola sonata. The end of the piece, with its sixteenth-note arpeggio figures, is another nod to the Bach Prelude that sparked the imaginings Atar described to me in his studio in Bloomington, Indiana years ago.

As violists, we borrow the Bach suites from cellists. It seems fitting that cellists could borrow this Bach-inspired piece from violists, so I made this version for them. Thank you to the brilliant cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir for her insight.

–Melia Watras

### **Bach Browser for violin, viola and cello (2017)** (J. S. Bach, arranged by Melia Watras)

Do you ever quit your internet browser with a bunch of windows open, and when you click it back on later all of the windows start playing different pieces of music at the same time? This often happens to me, and I love hearing the resulting Ives-ian mashup of music from multiple styles and time periods, unfolding in unexpected ways.

I was thinking of this technological happenstance, and in addition, had the desire to incorporate space: something to emulate the calls and discussions of birds around the neighborhood after a rainfall. In this arrangement, I imagine all of the browser windows as types of birds, perched throughout the hall, singing Bach. Some bird/windows have their own take, and some files are corrupted with viruses.

–Melia Watras

## **Biographies**

**Frequency** is a new Seattle-based ensemble, joining together distinguished artists from two acclaimed chamber groups, the Corigliano Quartet and Decoda. Made up of Michael Jinsoo Lim (violinist and artistic director), Melia Watras (violist) and Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir (cellist). Frequency is a modular chamber music group, breaking into different parts to present solos, duos and trios, while also expanding with renowned guest artists to perform in a variety of formations. Frequency members have performed as soloists and chamber musicians worldwide, in leading concert halls such as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Suntory Hall, and Disney Hall. The ensemble begins presenting innovative, invigorating and intriguing concerts in the 2016-17 season.

Violinist **Michael Jinsoo Lim** has been praised by *Gramophone* for playing with "delicious abandon" and described as "bewitching" and "masterful" by the *Seattle Times*. He is concertmaster and solo violinist of the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra ("surely the best ballet band in America" –*New York Times*) and is in-demand as a chamber musician and performer of new music. Hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as a "conspicuously accomplished champion of contemporary

music" for his work as co-founder of the renowned Corigliano Quartet, Lim is also artistic director and violinist of the Seattle-based ensemble Frequency.

Recent performance highlights include the world premiere of Andrew Waggoner's violin concerto (written for Lim), live performances on Danish Public Radio and appearances as soloist for the Stravinsky violin concerto at New York's City Center, as part of Pacific Northwest Ballet's 2016 NYC tour. Lim's 2016-17 season includes performances of concertos by Prokofiev and Stravinsky with PNB.

As a member of the Corigliano Quartet, Lim has won numerous awards, including the Grand Prize at the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition and the ASCAP/CMA Award for Adventurous Programming, and has performed in the nation's leading music centers, including Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and the Kennedy Center. The quartet's Naxos label CD was honored as one of *The New Yorker's* Ten Best Classical Recordings of the Year.

As a theater artist, Lim appeared in director Nick Schwartz-Hall's *Tempo of Recollection*, a show about composer Erwin Schulhoff, and served as music consultant for Seattle Repertory Theatre's production of *Opus*, directed by Braden Abraham. Lim has performed onstage with Pacific Northwest Ballet in George Balanchine's *Duo Concertante* and Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain*. Lim has also worked as a record producer on three critically acclaimed albums by violist Melia Watras and co-producer on a fourth.

Lim attended Indiana University, where he was a pupil of the legendary Josef Gingold. He later studied chamber music at the Juilliard School and taught there as an assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet. He currently serves on the faculty of Cornish College of the Arts. Lim has recorded for Naxos, DreamWorks, Albany, Bridge, CRI, Bayer Records, RIAX and New Focus, and has been heard on NPR programs such as Performance Today and All Things Considered.

Hailed by *Gramophone* as "an artist of commanding and poetic personality" and described as "staggeringly virtuosic" by *The Strad*, violist **Melia Watras** has distinguished herself as one of her instrument's leading voices. She has performed in major venues such as Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and Alice Tully Hall, while achieving acclaim as an important recording artist. Watras has recorded five albums, while performing on thirteen others as a chamber musician. Recent and upcoming highlights include the release of her latest disc from the Sono Luminus label, *26*, which features world premiere recordings of her own compositions, and video projects with violist Garth Knox (performing with Knox on his duos, *Viola Spaces for Two*) and video artist Ha Na Lee.

Watras's discography has received considerable attention and praise from the media. *Ispirare*, which features the world premiere recording of Pulitzer Prize-winner Shulamit Ran's *Perfect Storm* (a piece that was written for Watras), made numerous Best of 2015 lists, including the *Chicago Reader's* ("Watras knocked the wind out of me with the dramatically dark beauty of this recording"). *Short Stories* was a *Seattle Times* Critics' Pick, with the newspaper marveling at her "velocity that seems beyond the reach of human fingers." Of her debut solo CD (*Viola Solo*),

*Strings* praised her “stunning virtuosic talent” and called her second release (*Prestidigitation*) “astounding and both challenging and addictive to listen to.”

As a composer, Watras’s music has been performed in New York City, Chicago, Seattle, Bloomington (IN), Denmark and Spain, by artists such as violist Atar Arad, cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir and violinist Michael Jinsoo Lim, and has been recorded for two upcoming CDs. With the Corigliano Quartet, Watras has concertized and recorded extensively, with the ensemble’s Naxos label CD being named one of the Ten Best Classical Recordings of the Year by *The New Yorker*. She is violist of Frequency, for whom she has also composed, and a member of Open End, with whom she has performed in France, Denmark and the United States and recorded for Albany Records.

Watras studied with Atar Arad at Indiana University and served as a teaching assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet while at the Juilliard School. She is currently Professor of Viola and chair of Strings at the University of Washington School of Music, where she holds the Adelaide D. Currie Cole Endowed Professorship and was previously awarded the Donald E. Petersen Endowed Fellowship and the Royalty Research Fund. Watras has given viola and chamber music classes at schools such as Indiana University, Cleveland Institute of Music, Strasbourg Conservatoire (France), and Chosun University (South Korea). She is a frequent guest professor at her alma mater, Indiana University.

“Riveting” (NYTimes) cellist, **Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir**, has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Toronto and Iceland Symphonies, among others, and her recital and chamber music performances have taken her across the US, Europe and Asia. Following the release of her debut recording of Britten’s Suites for Solo Cello on Centaur Records, she has performed in some of the world’s greatest halls including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall and Disney Hall. The press have described her as “charismatic” (NYTimes) and praised her performances for their “emotional intensity” (LATimes).

Highlights of the 2016-2017 season include the premiere of a new concerto written for Sæunn by Páll Ragnar Pálsson, co-commissioned by the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well appearances at the Seattle Chamber Music Society and Iceland Symphony’s Friday Series. In addition to having worked closely with Daníel Bjarnason on his award-winning composition “Bow to String”, she is currently working with composers Halldór Smárason, Melia Watras, and Þuríður Jónsdóttir on new pieces for solo cello.

An avid chamber musician, she has collaborated in performance with Itzhak Perlman, Mitsuko Uchida, Richard Goode and members of the Emerson, Guarneri and Cavani Quartets and has participated in numerous chamber music festivals, including Prussia Cove and Marlboro, with whom she has toured. She is cellist of the Seattle-based chamber music group, Frequency, and cellist, founding member, and co-Artistic Director of Decoda, The Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

In the fall of 2015, Sæunn joined the faculty of the University of Washington in Seattle, teaching cello and chamber music. From 2013-2015, Sæunn was Artist-in-Residence at the Green Music Center's Weill Hall in Sonoma, California, presenting concerts, masterclasses, lectures and informal discussions at Sonoma State University.

Sæunn has garnered numerous top prizes in international competitions, including the Naumburg Competition in New York and the Antorrio Janigro Competition in Zagreb, Croatia. She received a Bachelor of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music, a Master of Music from The Juilliard School and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from SUNY Stony Brook. Her principal teachers include Richard Aaron, Tanya L. Carey, Colin Carr and Joel Krosnick.

Sæunn is an alum of Ensemble ACJW (now known as Ensemble Connect) – a program of Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education—performing chamber music at Carnegie Hall and bringing classical music to students in the New York City Public Schools.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Sæunn first moved to the states as a child however, she still has family in Iceland and enjoys going back, both for concerts and family visits. For more information, please go to [www.saeunn.com](http://www.saeunn.com)

**Thanks to:**

**[www.artsuw.org](http://www.artsuw.org)**

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*Special thanks to longtime School of Music friend Mina B. Person, whose legacy of generosity has made possible free admission to UW Music concert seasons events presented in Brechemin Auditorium.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- MAY 13 IMPFest IX. 7:30 PM, Ethnic Cultural Theater.  
15 Voice Division Recital. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
17 Jazz Innovations, Part I. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
18 Jazz Innovations, Part II. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
20 Barry Lieberman & Friends Master Class: Catalin Rotaru. 2:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
21 Barry Lieberman & Friends Recital: Catalin Rotaru. 2:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
22 Studio Jazz Ensemble & Modern Band. 7:30 PM, Meany Studio Theater.  
22 Gospel Choir. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.  
23 Percussion Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Meany Studio Theater.  
23 Baroque Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
24 University Chorale & Chamber Singers. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.  
25 Wind Ensemble, Symphonic, & Alumni Bands. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.  
26 Guitar Studio Recital. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
26 Modern Ensemble. 7:30 PM, Meany Studio Theater.  
26 UW Sings! 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.  
27 Scholarship Chamber Group: Corda Quartet. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
30 Ethnomusicology Visiting Artist Concert: Manimou Camara. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
- JUN 1 Brechemin Piano Series. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.  
2 UW Symphony & Combined University Choirs: *Defiant Requiem: Verdi at Terezín*. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.  
3 UW Symphony & Combined University Choirs: *Defiant Requiem: Verdi at Terezín*. 7:30 PM, Tacoma Armory.