

Compact Disc

W39

2018

3-28

PAIRS:

Atar Arad & Melia Watras

Atar Arad and Melia Watras, violas

Michael Jinsoo Lim, violin

Cristina Valdés, piano

7:30 PM

March 28, 2018

Meany Theater

UW MUSIC

2017-18 SEASON

CD1 - #17,992

PROGRAM

1 remarks - Arad, 4'

2 from 12 Caprices for Viola.....11:39..... Atar Arad (b. 1945)

Caprice One (Rebecca)

Caprice Three (Béla)

Caprice Twelve (Unknown)

Atar Arad, viola

from Folk Style Project (2016-18)..... Melia Watras (b. 1969)

3 William Wilson for voice and violin (2016)*, text by Edgar Allan Poe 3:27

4 The Lesson for recorded voice, violin and viola (2017)* 6:13

5 Lament for viola solo (2016) 3:28

6 Viola for narrator and viola (2017)*, text by Atar Arad (dead P.A.) 4:25

7 remarks - redo

8 Viola - Take 2

4:11

Atar Arad, recorded voice, narrator

Michael Jinsoo Lim, voice, violin

Melia Watras, viola

9 Cadenza per viola sola (1984).....8:26..... Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933)

Melia Watras, viola

CD2 - #17,993

INTERMISSION

1 remarks Arad, 2:15

2 from 12 Caprices for Viola.....7:57..... Atar Arad

Caprice Five (Krzysztof)

Caprice Seven (Franz)

Atar Arad, viola

3 Doppelgänger Dances for violin solo (2017)* 15:06 Melia Watras
Double I - Double II
Fantasia - Doppio
Doppelgänger
Double III - William

Michael Jinsoo Lim, violin

4 Lachrymae, Op. 48, reflections on a song of Dowland 4:44 Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
for viola and piano

Atar Arad, viola
Cristina Valdés, piano

5 from 12 Caprices for Viola 2:05 Atar Arad
Caprice Nine (Benjamin)

Atar Arad, viola

* World premiere

PROGRAM NOTES

Welcome to *PAIRS*, which features works composed by Atar Arad and Melia Watras. Melia studied with Atar and served as his teaching assistant at Indiana University, and has drawn much over the years from Atar, her fellow violist/composer. Tonight's program includes a number of Atar's Caprices for viola, which he describes as "thank you notes" to the composers that inspired him. Among the caprices you will hear are *Benjamin* and *Krzysztof* which are paired with the compositions that inspired them (Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae* and Krzysztof Penderecki's *Cadenza*).

You'll also hear a pairing of Melia's song *William Wilson* (from *Folk Style Project*) with *Doppelgänger Dances*, her solo violin piece that grew out of that song. Other selections from *Folk Style Project* include songs that combine Atar Arad's recorded voice with live instrumental performance, and a memorable tribute to Melia's father, who passed away in 2016.

This evening's concert celebrates the friendship of Atar Arad and Melia Watras. They are a unique pair, with their ability to combine their considerable talents as violists with their highly creative voices as composers. I know Melia is thrilled to welcome Atar to the University of Washington, and tonight, Seattle will be a better place for it.

Notes by the composers are below.

--Michael Jinsoo Lim

Atar Arad: Twelve Caprices for Viola

While the set of Twelve Caprices for Viola is written in my own musical language, each of the Caprices, with the exception of the very last one, is related in one way or another, to a known viola piece; a little personal "thank you" note to the author.

According to the Harvard Dictionary of Music, a Caprice is "a humorous, fanciful or bizarre composition, often characterized by an idiosyncratic departure from current stylistic norms." With composer-performers like Paganini and others, caprices were used also as instrumental show off pieces and their transcendental difficulties were at the heart of their *raison d'être*. (Not surprisingly, the cadenza, the performer's own corner in a concerto, was originally named *Capriccio*.)

I wrote my Caprices over a span of several years, whenever I was in a "humorous, fanciful or bizarre mood" or whenever I felt like challenging myself (or others) with some instrumental hurdles. As the Caprices were slowly piling up the number 24 came to my mind, but only briefly. Truth be said half of Paganini's magical number seems good enough for me.

--Atar Arad

Melia Watras: Folk Style Project for various voices and instruments (2015-2018)

I never heard a folk song I didn't like. (Note to self: that might be a good lyric for a folk song...) Communicative and often spiritual, they have been agents for change and social justice. Folk songs connect us to a direct way of sharing; they invite us to be part of how people have been making music for centuries.

In 2015, I wrote a piece in the style of a folk song called *Berceuse with a Singer in London* for voice and viola. Writing *Berceuse* struck a chord with me (no pun intended). I enjoyed the process and knew I wanted to do more, and so it became the genesis of my *Folk Style Project*.

With *Folk Style Project*, I set upon the task of writing music in a folk style; a collection of songs for various combinations of voice and instruments, each one inspired by some personal, artistic connection in my life. The idea was for me, as a composer, to create my own "folk" material, that I could develop, expand and quote in larger musical works.

Written from 2015-2018, *Folk Style Project* consists of thirteen songs, intended to be performed on their own, in different combinations, or as a complete set.

William Wilson for voice and violin (2016)

The macabre works of Edgar Allan Poe hold a special place in my heart. I remember a hot summer evening from my childhood when I was up very late, hours past midnight, reading *The Fall of the House of Usher*. All of the windows were open, and as I read the passage where the house collapses, an unusually strong wind entered my room, blowing over things in its path, and giving me such a fright. It felt like a scene from a Poe story!

The idea of doubles in music and literature led me to using excerpts from Poe's *William Wilson* as a text for this folk style song, written for my kindred spirit, violinist Michael Jinsoo Lim.

The Lesson for recorded voice, violin and viola (2017)

Anyone who knows me knows how meaningful Atar Arad is to my life. My former professor at Indiana University, Atar inspires me as a performer, composer, teacher and human being. I am grateful to have been his student, and to be his friend.

The Lesson is an homage to Atar. As a teacher, Atar is second to none. He is a supreme violist and musician who knows what each of his students needs to become better. He delivers words of wisdom and encouragement, often with a touch of his trademark humor. I decided to write a piece that would feature audio clips of Atar's voice (from viola lessons in his studio at Indiana) that would be played back alongside a violinist and a violist performing live.

I travelled to Bloomington in the fall of 2017 and spent two days recording Atar's lessons. As I observed his teaching, I saw remarkable transformations in each student, in just the one hour they spent with Atar. Atar's patience, generosity and relentless pursuit of excellence truly make him a master teacher. Many thanks to Atar and his wonderful students, for allowing me to observe and record their lessons.

No matter how many times I listen to the recordings of Atar's teaching, his words always fill my heart, and put a big smile on my face.

Lament for viola solo (2016)

Lament was written in memory of my father, Joseph Watras, who passed away in 2016 after battling cancer. It is impossible for me to express how much my father meant and continues to

mean to me and my music. My dad was a philosophical man, and following his lead, I began to think of the loss we all experience as human beings when someone close to us passes away. The piece became not only a lament for him, but an expression of a shared sense of mourning that we all feel as part of humanity.

Viola for narrator and viola (2017):

The text for *Viola* comes from Atar Arad, who explains: "In 1996 we had a box full of separate words with a magnet, to hang on the fridge door. I whimsically hung the words on the door, liked the results, and copied down the 'poem.' The only words I added now are the title (there wasn't, of course, any 'viola' in the box) and 'horsehair.'"

In the spirit of the creation of the text, I had fun generating some of the pitch material for the viola part, using a cryptogram system based on one created by Arthur Honneger. I spelled out words related to the text, as well as Atar's name (and his nom de plume, Arthur Iron!).

--Melia Watras

Viola

An elaborate picture of essential love
Crushing into thousand frantic whispers
As we manipulate through bare roads
Worshiping some sad moments
Tiny lies smeared about as rusty beauty

Wicked witch
My queen of the night
Waxed old skin beneath a gorgeous dress
A dark symphony of mean shadows
Pounding me with mad music
And your enormous lust

Move your anxious fingers
Wag your horsehair tail
Play the sordid fiddle
Moan an ugly chant
Your aimless melodies
Songs of love and grief
With no strings attached

Weep
True love is behind and above
Life and death
And sweet dreams

--Arthur Iron (1996)
© 1996 by Atar Arad

Melia Watras: Doppelgänger Dances for violin solo (2017)

Doppelgänger Dances is a work that explores aspects of doubles, in both literary and musical senses. I've long had a fascination with doppelgänger stories (those written by Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Poe in particular): the conflicted soul, the intertwined dance of good and evil, questioned reality; and the musical use of the double: a variation, usually twice as fast as the original movement, with notable practitioners such as Bach, Handel and Biber, among others.

In my piece, I experiment with these concepts of the double, using pairs of themes, at times in conflict, and other times in harmony. I also play with the idea of musical doubles, creating variations

on thematic material quoted from my earlier composition, the folk style song *William Wilson*, which includes text and takes its title from Edgar Allan Poe's doppelgänger story.

Doppelgänger Dances was written for my better half, violinist Michael Jinsoo Lim.

--Melia Watras

BIOGRAPHIES

ATAR ARAD is an internationally renowned viola soloist, chamber musician, composer and educator. A Cum Laude First Prize-winner at the Geneva International Music Competition (1972), he has performed worldwide as a soloist with major orchestras, as a recitalist and as a member of the famed Cleveland Quartet. Arad's compositions include Sonata for Viola Solo, two String Quartets, Twelve Caprices for Viola, Viola Concerto (which he premiered in Bloomington, Brussels and Stockholm), and *Tikvah* for viola solo, commissioned for the Munich International Viola Competition. His concerto, string quartet and viola sonata are recorded on RIAX. He recently presented his viola caprices on several USA, Canada, Israel and European concert tours. The Caprices are published by Hofmeister Musikverlag, Leipzig. Arad currently serves as Professor of Music (viola) at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. Arad plays on a viola by Niccolo Amati. He uses a set of P1 strings by Thomastik. Please visit atararad.com for more info.

Hailed by *Gramophone* as "an artist of commanding and poetic personality" and described as "staggeringly virtuosic" by *The Strad*, violist/composer MELIA WATRAS has distinguished herself as one of her instrument's leading voices. She has performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and Alice Tully Hall, while achieving acclaim as an established recording artist. Watras has released 5 solo albums, with her next recording due this summer, while performing on 13 others as a chamber musician. As a composer, her works have been performed throughout the United States and in Europe. 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 was awarded the Adelaide D. Currie Cole Endowed Professorship, the Donald E. Petersen Endowed Fellowship and the Royalty Research Fund. Please visit meliawatras.com for more info.

Violinist MICHAEL JINSOO LIM has been praised by *Gramophone* for playing with "delicious abandon," described as "bewitching" and "masterful" by the *Seattle Times*, and hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as a "conspicuously accomplished champion of contemporary music." Concertmaster and solo violinist of the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra ("surely the best ballet band in America"—*New York Times*), Lim is

also artistic director of the Seattle-based chamber ensemble Frequency, now in its second season. For twenty years, Lim toured and recorded extensively with the award-winning Corigliano Quartet, a group he co-founded. The quartet's Naxos label CD was honored as one of *The New Yorker's* Ten Best Classical Recordings of the Year. Lim attended Indiana University, where he studied with the legendary Josef Gingold, and the Juilliard School, where he taught an assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet. He serves on the faculty of Cornish College of the Arts. Please visit michaeljinsoolim.com for more info.

Considered one of today's foremost interpreters of contemporary music, pianist CRISTINA VALDÉS is known for presenting innovative concerts. She has performed across four continents and in venues such as Lincoln Center, Le Poisson Rouge, Miller Theatre, Jordan Hall, and the Kennedy Center. Ms. Valdés has appeared as a soloist with the Seattle Symphony, Johns Hopkins Symphony Orchestra, the Binghamton Philharmonic, the Seattle Philharmonic, the Eastman BroadBand, and the Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared at festivals worldwide including the Foro Internacional de Musica Nueva in Mexico City, Brisbane Arts Festival, the Festival of Contemporary Music in El Salvador, Havana Contemporary Music Festival, and the Singapore Arts Festival. An avid chamber musician, Cristina has toured extensively with the Bang On a Can "All Stars," and has performed with the Seattle Chamber Players, the Mabou Mines Theater Company, the Parsons Dance Company, and Antares. She is currently an Artist-in-Residence at the University of Washington, and Director of the UW Modern Music Ensemble.