

Program
 Master's Recital in Finger-Style Guitar
 Rachael Carlson
 Greene Hall
 April 22, 2017, 7:30pm

The Staten Island Ferry (2017)	Rachael Carlson (b. 1988)
Studio N. 5 (2011)	Pino Forastiere (b. 1966)
Black Moon/Westward Move (2004)	Clive Carroll (b. 1975)
Partita No. 3 in E Major: III. Gavotte en Rondeau (1720, c. 1736)	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) arranged by Rachael Carlson
Ants (c. 2008)	Leo Kottke (b. 1945)
Watch the Tiger Walk (2016)	Rachael Carlson
<i>Intermission</i>	
Guitar Chimes (1929)	Arthur “Blind” Blake (1896 – 1934)
Six-String Suite: Eggtooth/Grim to the Brim/Orange Room (c. 1982)	Leo Kottke
The Happy Couple (1981)	Michael Hedges (1953 – 1997)
Madness (2012)	Matt Bellamy (b. 1978) arranged by Luca Stricagnoli (b. 1991)

Program Notes

“The Staten Island Ferry” by Rachael Carlson

This composition started as an homage to Hawaiian slack-key guitarist and composer Keola Beamer, however, instead of making one think of a serene Hawaiian beach, the intent is to remind one of a jostling ferry ride to Staten Island in New York City. Instead of the smell of sea salt and prehistoric volcanic ash, one smells the distinct and inimitable garbage of New York City in the sweltering summer heat. While the listener is waiting to board the Staten Island Ferry she sees someone in Bermuda shorts and a Hawaiian shirt, visibly upset by the heat. She packs into a ferry which seems to be older than the islands from which it departs and arrives. The ferry is a smooth enough ride. The listener thinks that she could do this on a daily basis. Suddenly the first wave rocks the ferry. Then the listener sits back in the hard, wooden seating and looks for something tied down in order to steady herself. After a moderately uncomfortable ride she looks out the window of the ferry and sees the Statue of Liberty seemingly enjoying the fright that the listener is experiencing. The thought which keeps the listener going through this experience is the delectable pizza and beer that is awaiting at the end of the Staten Island Ferry.

The jostling nature of the ferry ride is conveyed in this composition through a sense of shifting meter. The composition is played with a swing, meaning that two beamed eighth notes equal, roughly, a triplet quarter note followed by an eighth note. The introduction is placed in 7/4 with a feeling that the downbeat of the measure is on the second beat. The main theme arrives with a measure of 2/4 which acts as a pickup into two measures of 3/4. The next measure acts as a pickup into three measures of 4/4 and a measure of 3/4. Just when the listener is beginning to think that she understands the meter of the piece it shifts; this is an unexpected wave which produces a bump in the hopefully enjoyable journey.

“Studio N. 5” by Pino Forastiere

Released in 2011 on the album *From 1 to 8*, a collection of etudes for finger-style guitar, this composition explores the coalescence of meter and melody. In a conversation with the composer, it was noted that this composition could be considered to be a rondo in form. The first subject in the rondo is written in a 7/8 with sixteenth-note groupings of 2, 2, and 3. It has a mechanical, almost robotic feel. The second subject of the rondo, written in 6/8, elicits a flowing, melodic sensibility while the mechanical component of the previous subject continues as accompaniment. This flowing subject is then played an octave higher with a different intervallic relationship and the same rhythmic placement. The composition explores the relationship between the mechanistic 7/8 and the flowing 6/8.

“Black Moon”/“Westward Move” by Clive Carroll

The inspiration for this composition came from the realization that after every break-up with a significant other the composer found himself moving westward in the city of London, England. This composition is a representation of this realization.

An intriguing component of this composition is its treatment of melody. In “Black Moon” the melody is presented in a slow, stark, and free manner. This presentation allows the listener to hear the main melody and potentially recognize this melody when it appears again later in the composition. This re-presentation of the melody occurs at the climax of the composition.

Partita No. 3 in E Major: III. Gavotte en Rondeau by Johann Sebastian Bach, arranged by Rachael Carlson

In preparing the arrangement of this movement, I used two different manuscripts as sources. The first comes from a manuscript dated 1720. The second comes from a manuscript dated circa 1736. The first is orchestrated for solo violin without basso continuo, without bass or accompaniment. The second arrangement is orchestrated for a solo keyboard instrument. The arrangement from 1736 has been the source of much confusion in the plucked fretted-string instrument world. At its first discovery, it was thought that the arrangement was for lute. Some of the latest research shows that it might have been orchestrated for *Lautenwerk*, a type of harpsichord which uses gut strings, or some other keyboard instrument, not the lute as previously believed. Other researchers assume that the *Lautenwerke* are a set of pieces that J. S. Bach wrote for the baroque lute. Engaging with this conversation, Peter Williams states in a recent biography of J. S. Bach that he “had a *Lautenwerk* made in Cöthen and again in Leipzig” he also had one made by his cousin Johann Nicolaus Bach of Jena in 1715 in Weimar. Williams highlights a curious component of the 1736 arrangement of BWV 1006: the dynamic markings from the 1720 manuscript are kept in this arrangement. This is curious because the *Lautenwerk* is described as producing a dynamic range of “soft to very soft.” The ability of this instrument to produce a *forte* dynamic is questionable. The debate over which instrument Bach composed the 1736 arrangement continues.


The inspiration for the arrangement comes from the magical arrangements of Bach by Tony McManus for steel-string guitar tuned in D₂ A₂ D₃ G₃ A₃ D₄ which can be heard on his album *Mysterious Boundaries* (2013). My hope is that my arrangement might be considered as existing within the school of daring arrangements for the guitar by figures such as Kazuhito Yamashita, Roland Dyens, and Francisco Tárrega.

“Ants” by Leo Kottke

Kottke has not released “Ants” on an album, though he has performed it in concerts since 2006. The formal structure of this composition is quite interesting. There are 224 measures in this piece. An analysis of the form would reveal that the ending or coda begins in m. 113, which is roughly the middle. There are few compositions which begin to end halfway through. The performer needs to ensure that listener feels that end is beginning at m. 113. There is a melodic motive in this piece which seems to elicit a sense of ants marching. After the first two chords, you can hear the ants begin their march. This melodic motive is a descent. It reappears throughout this composition in different guises with different intentions.

“Watch the Tiger Walk” by Rachael Carlson

The primary thought in this composition is the manner in which a tiger’s shoulder blades move up and down while it is walking; it is deliberate, relaxed, and with conviction. Each placement of a paw on the ground seems to be done skillfully and with careful thought. This composition is a meditation on intention.

This piece is written in B minor. The meter is mostly in 4/4 with an occasional measure of 6/4. The introductory material of this composition establishes the primary rhythmic motive: . This rhythmic motive is repeated throughout. It reappears several times in the introductory material in several different iterations in an effort to establish its presence throughout the piece.

Intermission

“Guitar Chimes” by Arthur “Blind” Blake

This composition represents an often overlooked aspect of finger-style guitar. There are few guitar solos from this era of recorded music. The guitar solos of Blind Blake and Lonnie Johnson stand out as distinctive, daring compositions which hold the ear of the listener. Some of these early guitar solos are quite virtuosic such as “Got the Blues for the West End” by Lonnie Johnson or “Blind Arthur’s Breakdown” by Arthur “Blind” Blake. Blake’s guitar solos, in particular, demonstrate an uncanny ability to sound like at least two guitars. He was advertised during his time as sounding like a piano.

“Guitar Chimes” was recorded in Chicago, Illinois in 1929 for Paramount Records, headquartered in Grafton, Wisconsin. It is one of Blake’s slower compositions. The slower tempo allows this composition to be more accessible to a new performer of this style of playing. This composition follows a fairly regular harmonic structure with a few harmonic substitutions. The

focus of the left hand is to place the fingers in the form of the chord that is being played or implied in order to ensure that the harmonic structure is not dismantled through incorrect harmonies. The thumb of the right hand performs a brushing motion on beats 2 and 4, generally. This brushing motion reinforces the harmonic structure. On beats 1 and 3 the thumb plays a single bass note. This is a foundational component of finger-style guitar. This convention is present in the music of John Hurt and Gary Davis. One of the reasons why Blake's music has such an entrancing quality is that he subverts this convention. One manner in which Blake does this is by having the thumb of the right hand perform a bass note on the *and* of beat 4. These bass notes propel the composition forward.

Six-String Suite: "Eggtooth"/"Grim to the Brim"/"Orange Room" by Leo Kottke

Kottke has performed these three compositions as separate tunes for many years. There was a short period of time in the early 1980s when Kottke was presenting these three pieces as a medley he entitled "Six-String Suite." In a concert in 1982, Kottke notes that he wrote this

over the period of many years, actually unbeknownst to me, instead of being three separate and distinct pieces, this is actually one piece with three movements. I just discovered that they were all there without predetermining that they would be. It was a happy circumstance for me. We can all pretend that I've written something longer than three and a half minutes.

The first movement is now known as "Eggtooth." It was written as a duet with Michael Johnson for the short film, *A Little Snow Starts to Fall Again*. "Grim to the Brim" was written for Kottke's father. In a concert, Kottke talked about how he frequently had to move as a child. In Cheyenne, Wyoming, he would get beaten up by his peers. He went to his father, who taught jujitsu, and asked "would you teach me how to defend myself? And he took me to the backyard—took a mattress to the backyard and beat me up. What a fine man." It is difficult to convey the humor with which Kottke speaks about his father. The third movement, "Orange Room" was written for Kottke's son.

"Madness" by Matt Bellamy, arranged by Luca Stricagnoli

This song originally appeared on the album *The 2nd Law* (2012) by the English rock band Muse. In an interview with *Metro*, a free tabloid published in the United Kingdom, Matt Bellamy stated that he wrote this song after a fight with his girlfriend at the time, American actress Kate Hudson.

Luca Stricagnoli was born in Varese, Italy. He began studying classical guitar at the age of 10. At the age of 22, Stricagnoli signed a contract with the Menomonee Falls-based record label, CandyRat Records. His unique and diverse arrangements of popular and rock music have garnered praise from

people all over the world. The arrangements range from “Sweet Child o’ Mine” by Guns N’ Roses to Dick Dale’s arrangement of the traditional song “Miserlou” and “Thunderstruck” by AC/DC to “The Last of the Mohicans” by Trevor Jones and Randy Edelman. Stricagnoli did not always feel that he wanted to play the guitar. He notes in an interview in *Acoustic Magazine* that he vacillated between becoming a judo master or becoming an acoustic guitarist:

I had two posters in my room, one was a famous judo player, and the other was a famous acoustic guitar player, and I used to wake up and look at the two pictures, trying to decide which I wanted to do. The picture of the acoustic guitar player was always smiling, with this really happy expression, whereas the judo player was ready to fight, with a very serious expression. I knew which of those I wanted more.

“The Happy Couple” by Michael Hedges

Klangfarbenmelodie is a term coined by Arnold Schoenberg in *Harmonielehre* (1911) in which it is discussed that one can use timbre as a structural element of composition similar to pitch in the create of melodic motives. Arnold Schoenberg states:

tone becomes perceptible by virtue of tone color, of which one dimension is pitch. Tone color is, thus, the main topic, pitch a subdivision. Pitch is nothing else but tone color measured in one direction. Now, if it is possible to create patterns out of tone colors that are differentiated according to pitch, patterns we call ‘melodies,’ progressions, whose coherence (*Zusammenhang*) evokes an effect analogous to thought processes, then it must also be possible to make such progressions out of the tone colors of the other dimension, out of that which we call simply ‘tone color,’ progressions whose relations with one another work with a kind of logic entirely equivalent to that logic which satisfies us in the melody of pitches.

In “The Happy Couple,” Michael Hedges emphasizes the unique capacity of the guitar to explore this concept by composing a melodic motive which plays unisons on two and sometimes three strings. The ability to play the same pitch on different strings allows the performer the opportunity to explore different tone colors of each unison.