

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 (b. 1988)
Ants (c. 2008)	Leo Kottke (b. 1945)
Watch the Tiger Walk (2016)	Rachael Carlson (b. 1988)

Intermission

Guitar Chimes (1929)	Arthur “Blind” Blake (1896 – 1934)
Six-String Suite: Eggtooth/Grim to the Brim/Orange Room (1982)	Leo Kottke (b. 1945)
The Happy Couple (1981)	Michael Hedges (1953 – 1997)
Madness (2012, 2013)	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. The listener is then packed 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 with 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 act 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 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 which is played on the *and* of beat 2, the downbeat and the *and* of beat 3, and the downbeat of beat 4. 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 Blake and Lonnie Johnson stand out as distinctive, daring compositions which hold the ear of the listener who may or may not be patiently waiting for a singer to begin singing. 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 billed 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 either being played or implied with the right hand 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. Blake does not completely conform to this convention—one of the reasons why Blake’s music is so entrancing. Blake subverts this convention in several different manners. One manner in which Blake subverts this convention 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.” It is this presentation that I am including in my recital. 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. In an introduction to this piece Kottke stated that he was sitting around with his son one day:

thinking in the living room, waiting for something to happen, you know. And he said, “gee Dad, some day I want to...” and I thought he was going to say “I want to be a fireman or a policeman or a guitar player.” He says “some day, Dad, I want to drink a whole can of beer.” What a kid. I’ve seen him staring wistfully at the six-packs in the kitchen. I don’t know if I should be concerned

or not. Somebody asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up and he said “nothing, like my Dad.” Smart kid.

“Madness” by Matt Bellamy, arranged by Luca Stricagnoli

The impetus to perform this arrangement is centered around innovations in finger-style guitar notation by John Stropes and Raj Chaudhuri. This new form of notation is being called grid notation after the visual component of the display of its information. This arrangement is well-suited for this new type of notation due to several factors in its execution. First, the arrangement uses a partial capo on the sixth fret on strings 5 through 1. This poses a challenge to the notation of the music. A partial capo makes it near impossible to read standard notation; one would not know whether the pitches indicated are in front of or behind the capo. Second, the percussion on the body and strings of the guitar are not easily notated in finger-style guitar notation. There has not been any established procedures for the notation of percussion on the guitar. Frequently, the composer or engraver of finger-style guitar music which utilizes percussion create their own system for each composition. This creates problems for students of these compositions as the student needs to learn a new system of percussion notation for each composer.

Among its numerous innovations, grid notation removes traditional barlines from the notation. This allows for the synchronization of the score with an audio/video performance. Barlines in traditional notation take up space in the notation but do not occupy time. This makes the synchronization of traditional notation and audio/video performances a nontrivial activity. Even when one is able to synchronize the audio/video to the notation, the beginning of every measure starts with a jump as the playhead skips over the space occupied by the barline. Grid notation removes this issue by redefining the barline as the first beat of each measure.

Stropes and Chaudhuri have taken advantage of this redefinition of the barline by syncing the video Stricagnoli posted on YouTube to the grid notation. This was done as a means to facilitate the instruction of the performance of this arrangement. When the student is learning the arrangement if she has a question about a certain note in the piece she is able to go directly to the point in the video by referring to the synced audio/video/notation presentation. The ability to sync notation with audio/video sources represents a fresh, new direction in the notation of finger-style guitar.

“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.

This composition explores this technique through the use of two different strings playing the same pitch in a melody. The ability of the guitar to play a single pitch on several different strings usually poses issues for the performer and the composer. In order for the composer to ensure that a performer is going to play a pitch on a certain string of the guitar she must tell the performer upon which string she must play through the use of editorial methods. In standard notation, the convention of a circled number is utilized to convey this information: ①, ②, ③, etc. Tablature inherently solves this problem by telling the performer exactly where to place her fingers. In "The Happy Couple," Michael Hedges emphasizes this unique capacity of the guitar to explore the concept of *klangfarbenmelodie*. Hedges also utilizes a unique characteristic of the steel-string guitar, the ability to alter the tuning of the strings. The standard tuning of the guitar is E₂ A₂ D₃ G₃ B₃ E₄. Hedges changes the sixth-string, E₂, down to G₁. Steel-string guitar is capable of reproducing such a low note through a combination of the high tension of steel strings and the integration of electronic sound reinforcement intrinsic to the performance of finger-style guitar. It is also interesting to note that the interval between the fourth and third strings, E₃ and F₃ respectively, is two half-steps and the interval between the third and second strings, F₃ and A₃ respectively, is three half-steps. The proximity of these strings to each other facilitates playing the same pitch on different strings.