

Illinois State University  
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts  
School of Music

Charles W. Bolen Recital Series

**Katherine Lewis, *Viola***

Center for the Performing Arts  
January 23, 2024  
Tuesday Evening  
8:00 p.m.

This is the ninety-seventh program of the 2023-2024 season.

## Program

Please silence all electronics for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Sephardic Suite for Solo Viola (2003)

Elaine Fine  
(born 1959)

- I. Introduction
- II. Endecha: *O madre mia*
- III. Veil Dance

Viola Power for Viola and Max (2012)

Mark Phillips  
(born 1952)

~ Pause ~

Tres Mensajes Breves (1966)

Roque Cordero  
(1917-2008)

- I. Allegro comodo
- II. Lento
- III. Molto allegro

Daniel Baer, *piano*

Sonata in E-flat, Op. 120 No. 2

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

Allegro amabile  
Allegro appassionato  
Andante con moto

Geoff Duce, *piano*

Special thanks to Greg Corness in Creative Technologies and  
Mark Babbitt for their assistance with Max.

## Program Notes

In 1995 or 1996 I heard “O madre mia” being sung on a recording made in 1986 by a Boston-based early music ensemble that specialized in Sephardic music called Voice of the Turtle. I thought “O madre mia” would sound wonderful as an instrumental fantasy with variations, so I transcribed the melody from the recording to play on the viola and improvised some variations, which I notated. A few years later, after learning something about composition, I decided the piece might sound good on the cello, so I revised my original notations. Those notations grew into a three-movement piece with “O madre mia” at its physical and emotional center. And it was published by Seesaw Music in 2003. At some point I made a transcription of the Sephardic Suite for viola, and I probably shared it with a few friends, but I neglected to send it to my publisher because of some difficulties that made it clumsy to play on the viola.

In 2020 Molly Gebrain contacted me about that viola transcription and encouraged me to revive and revise it, which I did. In 2021 the viola transcription was published by Seesaw, which is now distributed by Subito. There has been a lot of scholarship about Sephardic music during the past several decades. Sephardic music is music of the Jewish people (of various nationalities) who lived on the shores and in the area of the Mediterranean Sea, and particularly in the Iberian Peninsula. The name Sephardim comes from a Medieval Spanish word meaning “swine,” and the Sephardim are descendants of the Jews who were expelled from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. Sephardic songs are sung in a Spanish-based language called Ladino (notated using Hebrew letters) and were mostly passed through the generations orally. The subject matter of the songs seem to focus on matters of love, war, home, historical events, and domestic concerns. My feeling is that it is a body of music that has been passed from mother to daughter, and that it was not a body of music that particularly concerned men. The first collection of Sephardic music *El bukieto de romansas* was published in Istanbul in 1926. (note by the composer)

## Translation of O madre mia:

Oh my mother,  
My beloved mother,  
Why are you so sad,  
This day?  
Beloved children,  
I cry for the tragedy  
That embittered  
our family.  
Your eldest brother,  
He was a soldier,  
Killed,  
In Lule Burgas.  
It is in this war  
One can see  
The cruelties  
Of Bulgaria

The Turkish armada  
Was commanded  
By the Minister  
Enver.  
Forward, forward,  
They cried!  
To Edirne!  
They were invading.  
Cursed be you,  
You King Ferdinand!  
You have caused  
All this misery.  
The bitter sighs  
Of children  
Reached up  
to the skies.

**Viola Power** is composed for viola and interactive media. The accompaniment consists of three main components: 1) many layers of granular synthesis of the opening few measures of the viola solo; 2) nearly continuous doublings, distortions, and filtering of the solo line that mimic those used by many rock guitarists; 3) percussive outbursts and bass tones created from processing noise-based viola samples (tapping, bow scratching, etc.)  
(note by the composer)

**The *Tres mensajes breves for Viola and Piano*** serve as an excellent example of a mid-century twelve-tone work for viola and piano. One of very few dodecaphonic pieces for our instrument, the three short movements all use the same prime row. Unlike many of his other compositions which incorporate elements of Panamanian folk music, the composer purposefully did not use explicit folk elements in the piece but did incorporate techniques such as polyrhythms which can be found in some folk songs of Panama. The same prime row is used in all three movements, and in general the rows do not exchange notes between instruments. Cordero often repeats small units of two or three notes within a row to highlight a phrase or create a sense of arrival. Despite the chromaticism inherent to the twelve-tone approach, the *Tres mensajes breves* exhibit a wide variety of ever-changing characters and emotions, at times intense, playful, and energetic and other times lyrical and yearning. Cordero wrote his *Tres mensajes breves for Viola and Piano* for Manuel Díaz and Pauline Jenkin in 1966, the year he arrived at Indiana University (Jeremy Orosz)

## Composer Biographies

**Elaine Fine** began musical life as a violinist but received a Bachelor of Music Degree in flute performance from The Juilliard School of Music, where she was a student of Julius Baker. She also studied recorder in Vienna, baroque flute in Boston, and composition at Eastern Illinois University. In addition to being on the reviewing staff of the American Record Guide since 1993, she is the program annotator for the New Philharmonic of DuPage County, and teaches at Lake Land College, in Mattoon, Illinois. Elaine is active as a performing violinist and violist and plays in the viola sections of the Prairie Ensemble, the Champaign-Urbana Symphony, and also plays the viola d'amore and the recorder. She has over 70 pieces of chamber music published by the Seesaw

Music in New York (now owned by Subito Music in New Jersey) and has some woodwind pieces published by Jeanné in Minnesota. She has worked extensively with Amoris International in Switzerland and as an editor and arranger for the International Music Company in New York. Elaine has also written three operas, orchestral music, several songs and song cycles, and a great deal of chamber music, some of which has been recorded on Capstone Records (as part of the 2003 60x60 project) and Crystal Records (on Susan Nigro's 2008 recording "Original tunes for the Big Bassoon"). Elaine has written numerous articles for The Instrumentalist, Strings Magazine, The Journal of the American String Teachers' Association, the Maud Powell Signature, and contributed several articles to Classical Music: The Third Ear--The Essential Listening Companion published in 2002 for Backbeat Books. Awards include listings in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in American Women, a special commendation for The Snow Queen in the 2003 Nancy Van de Vate International Composition prize for opera, and yearly ASCAP Awards from 2003 through 2008.

Ohio University Distinguished Professor **Mark Phillips** won the 1988 Barlow International Competition for Orchestral Music, leading to collaborations with conductor Leonard Slatkin. Following a national competition, Pi Kappa Lambda commissioned him to compose a work for their 2006 national conference in San Antonio. His music has received hundreds of performances throughout the world—including dozens of orchestra performances by groups such as the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra—and has been recorded by Richard Stoltzman and the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lark Quartet, and several solo artists.

Born in Panama City, **Roque Cordero** studied composition under Ernst Krenek and conducting under Dimitri Mitropoulos, Stanley Chapple, and Léon Barzin before becoming director of the Institute of Music and Artistic Director and conductor of the National Symphony of his native country. Later he was assistant director of the Latin American Music Center (LAMúsiCa), professor of composition at Indiana University, and, from 1972, distinguished professor emeritus at Illinois State University. His students included Panamanian composer Marina Saiz-Salazar.

## Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 27

**String Project Honors Recital**

Noon

Kemp

**Illinois Symphony Orchestra Concert: Tunes from Toons**

**Yaniv Dinur, *conductor***

7:30 pm

ISU Center for the Performing Arts

Sunday, January 28

**Bands Concerto Competition**

3:00 p.m.

CPA

Free

Monday, January 29

**Jury Recognition Recital**

7:00 p.m.

Kemp Recital Hall

Tuesday, January 30

**Charles W. Bolen Faculty Recital Series: David Gresham, *clarinet***

8:00 p.m.

CPA

Wednesday, January 31

**Orchestra Concerto Aria Finals**

7:00 p.m.

CPA

Free

Monday, February 5

**Charles W. Bolen Faculty Recital Series: Cora Swenson Lee, *cello***

7:30 p.m.

Kemp

Tuesday, February 13

**Orchestra Valentine's Day Concert**

8:00 p.m.

CPA