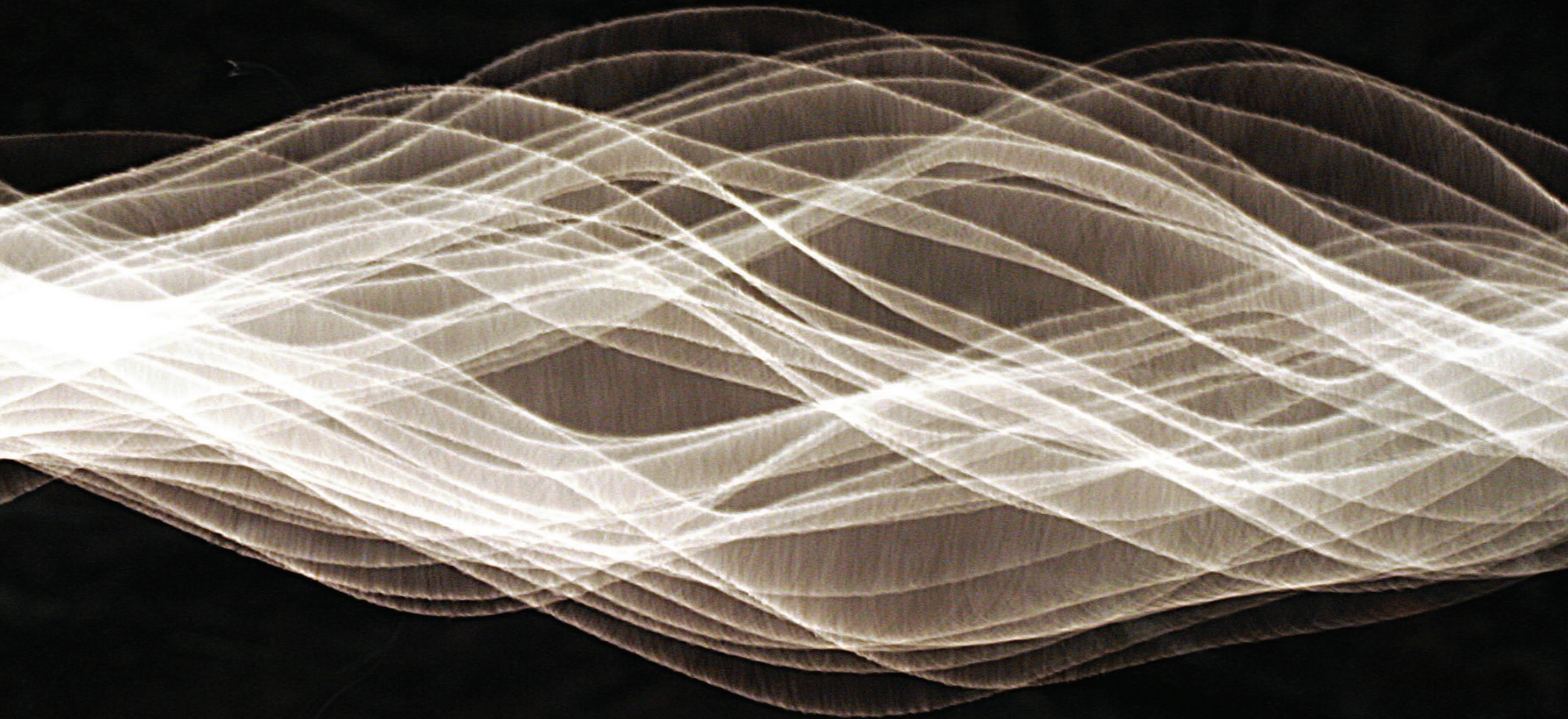


DRAW THE STRINGS TIGHT

KENNETH MEYER
guitar



1. A Still More Excellent Way 9:25 James Piorkowski

Draw the Strings Tight Edie Hill

2. Draw the Strings Tight 1:48

3. Open the Window to the West of You 3:35

4. Waves Are Coming In 3:00

5. Sound of Big Sea Shells! Sound of Bells 4:36

6. Roses Don't Need Perfume 15:53 Kevin Ernste

O Viole Elastique

La Casa de las Flores

Compana de palo

Drei Tentos

7. Du schönes Bächlein 2:23

8. Es findet das Aug' oft 1:28

9. Sohn Laios' 2:17

10. Ricordanza 10:39

Offering of the Five Senses

11. me long 2:42

12. pi wang 2:31

13. spos snod 2:44

14. shing tod 2:48

15. dar 4:00

Hans Werner Henze

Jesse Jones

Nicolas Scherzinger

—69:52—

Dear Listener,



Thank you for taking the time to sit and listen to a few new compositions for guitar written by very dear friends of mine. The title of the recording, **Draw The Strings Tight**, shares its name with the composition included here by Edie Hill. It is also a wonderfully evocative phrase that alludes to the challenges facing a composer, performer, guitar, and listener, as they work together to realize something of substance, meaning, beauty, and truth. Ideally, as we each get closer to and more comfortable with these truths, familiarity enables us to draw a little less.

In addition to the five new compositions commissioned for this recording, I have included the **Drei Tentos** of Hans Werner Henze. These “three sketches” come from Henze’s **Kammermusik** (1958), a larger composition for tenor, guitar and eight instruments set to the writings of Friedrich Hölderlin. According to Henze they are “...the vision of a poet who has clouds of madness around his head, and who stammers in fragments, with beautiful, seemingly dislocated, phrases.”

The **Drei Tentos** are included here as an homage to Julian Bream and the memory of how captivated I was the first time I heard his recording of these pieces. It opened my ears to the intimate language of my beloved instrument and placed a seed in my musical conscious flowering now in the recording you have before you. Thank you again for listening and I hope you enjoy it.

Most sincerely,

Ker Meyer



A Still More Excellent Way (2006) was inspired by a comment that Ken Meyer had made to me in regard to another composition of mine. Ken attended a rehearsal of my choral and guitar work, **The Greatest of These**, and mentioned that he imagined a potential piece for two guitars based on that music. Years later, when Ken requested that I compose a new solo guitar piece for him, I recalled his comment about **The Greatest of These**.

I revisited my choral work, and wondered if a solo guitar composition could be birthed from it. I decided that it could, and so I went to work. While some passages are similar to the choral piece, other passages were reinvented, and new material was added (e.g., the ending).

The libretto of **The Greatest of These** was excerpted from the biblical letter known as First Corinthians, (the text illustrates love, e.g., “love is patient; love is kind; it does not envy...”). The verse that immediately precedes the selected text that I used for **The Greatest of These** is “a still more excellent way,” which leads to the upcoming discourse on love.

-James Piorkowski

Draw The Strings Tight (2006)

The character of the guitar as a solo instrument is intense in its coloristic possibilities and its ability to draw the listener into a soundscape. This intensity and the intimacy of the instrument lead my imagination to lines of poetry from Robert Bly’s versions of Kabir. These lines were the impetus behind each movement as were ideas of connectivity, contrast and flow from one movement to the next.

The first movement is a leaping off point – as if one were trying to take off, as if one were going to fly. The second takes the imagination out of a window and is actually suspended, leaving the ground and moving beyond the confined space of a room. The third is a statement about what comes in if this window is opened. The fourth movement, a dreamscape recollecting the previous three movements, is meant to fly, recalling suspension and the intensity of the first movement bringing the piece full circle.

-Edie Hill

Ricordanza (2012)

Written for guitarist Kenneth Meyer, **Ricordanza** is a reflection on the nature of musical memory. Over the course of the piece, different musical characters come in and out of focus: some are solemn, some are dancelike, some are pained and poignant, some are discursive, some are static, some return while others do not, and perhaps a new music arrives toward the end, shedding a new light on what came before. The unifying factor in the piece is that all these disparate characters are made from six different, though related chords, forming a harmonic frame that joins everything together into a single hazy memory.

-Jesse Jones

Roses Don’t Need Perfume (2006/ rev. 2009) takes its title from a quotation by Uruguayan writer, philosopher, journalist, and historian Eduardo Galeano. In a recent interview, Galeano reflected on his work and on the importance of listening, of hearing reality and finding truth in its many voices: truth for the writer, for the historian, and for our collective social and political discourse. How, in a world of spin and manipulated language, does a writer recognize the truth and how does one know the difference?

My piece sets this idea literally as the guitar is treated like a sounding board, almost never “touched”/manipulated by the player. Nearly every note is a natural harmonic and the entire electronic part (minus the use of spoken text) is derived from the instrument. The opening phase initiates this act of listening as the guitarist gradually releases two fretted/stopped B naturals, allowing the natural harmonics directly above them (also B naturals) to sound. The whole motion, therefore, is that of release, of lifting the hand to allow the guitar to speak. All three movements are continuous (attacca).

I. O Viole Elastique (The Toy Guitar)

This movement is a setting of a photograph of the same title by an anonymous photographer. In it a boy climbs a hill with a large bowl of laundry atop his head. A toy guitar strung over his shoulder waits to be played. The title contains a word-play that makes my direct translation deceptive: it refers to the instrument (a guitar/viol with elastic or plastic strings) as well as the idea of the fabric/clothing and of “violation”.

II. La Casa de las Flores (The House of Flowers)

The title comes from Pablo Neruda’s poem “Explico algunas cosas” (“I explain a few things”), particularly its opening reference to his childhood home, destroyed during the Spanish Civil War: “My house was named /the house of the flowers, because everywhere / geraniums exploded: it was /a beautiful house / with dogs and little children. /Remember, Raul? /Eh, Rafel? /Federico, do you remember?” This text, spoken by Neruda himself, appears within the electronic part. The final name he calls to, “Federico”, is Federico García Lorca and my music here refers through Lorca to George Crumb’s “Ancient Voices of Children”.

III. Compañera de palo (Wooden Bells)

Galeano uses the phrase “compañera de palo” to describe the voiceless people, the poor whose village tower contains only a “wooden bell”, a silhouette cut to appear real but unable to make any sound. There is a secondary reference to the Argentine anarchist cultural magazine of the same title “Le Compañera de Palo”, published in 1925-27 and including lively debates on art, literature, music, and social anarchy in South America.

-Kevin Ernste

Offering of the Five Senses (2006) is a series of five pieces or movements for solo guitar. Each movement is loosely based on one of the five qualities of enjoyment (or five senses) from Tibetan Buddhist practice. In order, the five symbols for the senses are **mirror**, representing sight which captures form, **lute**, representing a sweet sound that soothes the ears and delights the mind, **incense**, representing smell or pleasant fumes arising, **fruit**, representing sweet taste, and **silk**, representing smooth, cool touch. The titles of each movement are in the original Tibetan, me-long, pi-wang, spos- snod, shing-tog, and dar.

What struck me about the senses listed in this order is the purely musical implication of the set, and though I initially began my work by trying to depict each sense, the piece is not intended to be programmatic, nor is it intended to be religious or spiritual in nature, though music often has its own spiritual power, and that is probably a topic for a dissertation. These five senses or qualities of enjoyment make a wonderful resource for musical setting, with the specific reference to a lute, and the symbolism of the number five. The piece has five movements, the interval of the 5th plays an important role throughout the piece, and much of the harmony is often based on five-note collections. In the second movement, I decided to quote a John Dowland lute song, “Mr. Dowland’s Midnight,” for I could think of no one better to represent the sweet sound of this instrument.

This piece was composed in the summer of 2006 for guitarist Kenneth Meyer, and is dedicated to him with much admiration and thanks. I would also like to thank the Barlow Endowment for their generous support through a 2005 commission.

-Nicolas Scherzinger

Kenneth Meyer, the national first-prize winner at the Music Teacher's National Association Collegiate Artist Competition, is regarded by the Washington Post as, "A thinking man's guitarist – he focuses on the inner structure of a piece...and plays with impressive gravity and power." The Buffalo News has called him, "Impeccably articulate with superb technique."

Since his professional concert debut at the Teatro de la Opera de Maracay, Mr. Meyer continues to appear in recital, as a chamber musician, and soloist with orchestra in venues throughout North America, South America and Europe. Highlights include concerts in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and Zankel Hall (New York City), Wolf Trap (Virginia), the Skirbal Cultural Center (Los Angeles), the historic Basilica di San Clemente, (Italy), the Museo de Barquisimeto, Museo del Teclado, the Sala José Felix Ribas, the Teatro de Teresa Carreño (Venezuela), Liviu Rebreanu, Gheorghe Dima Music Academy, the National College of Art Ion Vidu (Romania), the Fészek Művészklub (Hungary) and the Ford Center for the Performing Arts (Canada). In addition to live concerts, his performances have been featured on television, film, radio and most recently, on the Albany and innova record labels.

Frequently in demand as a guest artist at colleges and universities across the country, Meyer has given concerts and lectures at, among others, the Eastman School of Music, the State University of New York College at Fredonia, Syracuse University, Cornell University, the University of Southern Mississippi, North Carolina School of the Arts, the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, Hochstein School of Music, Delta College, Canisius College, Finger Lakes and Saint Joseph's Community Colleges and the University of Caracas in Venezuela. In addition, he is an active performer and teacher at music festivals and has been featured at the Rome, Alexandria, Eastman Guitar Summerfest and the Alirio Diaz Guitar Festivals.

Mr. Meyer's commitment to the cultivation and performance of new music has led to awards from the Barlow Endowment, the Argosy Foundation, and the Eastman School's Hanson Institute for American Music, interpretive instruction from Milton Babbitt and premiere performances of compositions by among others, Leslie Basset, Edward Green, Andrew Waggoner, Gregory Mertl, Edie Hill, Kevin Ernste, Nicolas Scherzinger, Jesse Benjamin Jones, Donald J. Sparr, James Piorkowski and Canadian composer Robert Baker. His diversity as a musician has led to performances on mandolin, banjo and electric guitar with among others, the Syracuse Opera, the Syracuse Society for New Music and the Broadway touring production of the Who's rock opera, "Tommy." In addition to performing new concerti for Electric Guitar and Wind Ensemble, Meyer was recently featured with Cornell University's Ensemble X under the direction of Pulitzer Prize winning composer Steven Stucky in a new concerto for guitar and chamber ensemble composed by Andrew Waggoner.

Kenneth Meyer holds degrees in Music Composition and Performance from the State University of New York at Fredonia and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the Eastman School of Music. He has served on the faculties of East Carolina University and SUNY at Fredonia and most recently held visiting professorships at the Eastman School of Music and SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music. Currently, Dr. Kenneth Meyer directs thriving guitar programs at Onondaga Community College and Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music.

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