



The Postcard Scores

Composed by Ryan Charles Ramer

Thursday, April 30th, 2020 | 7:00-8:00pm

A Concert on Zoom

Solo performances for 15 players: cello, organ, piano, trumpet, violin, and voices

Ryan Charles Ramer is a Cleveland-based composer, director, producer, playwright, and private teacher. He studied music composition at Eastern Michigan University and Baldwin Wallace College. He is a 2019 Cleveland Arts Prize Verge Fellowship Recipient. Ramer's works have been premiered by the NY Treble Singers, The Cleveland Opera Theater, Cleveland Public Theater, New Music Society Orchestra, The Cleveland Guitarist's Guild, The Greater Cleveland Flute Society, and the distinguished Almeda Trio. Recordings of his compositions have received radio play on WCLV's program of new music, 'Ideastream'.

ryancharlesramer.com

The idea for this concert came about while writing postcards to friends to keep in touch during the quarantine. I thought, "why not send some to colleagues with a little piece of music on the front?" This carries on a tradition of writing pieces on postcards started in the early 20th century with American composers like Charles Ives. It renders music in exceptionally short-form with compositions ranging from 20 – 60 seconds. The art form of postcard pieces receives a timely revival with a modern twist.

The amazing players in this concert represent a performance consisting entirely of volunteers. This stands as a testament to the driving force of talent in the Cleveland community. For many performers, this online performance platform is a first. Their willingness to continue performing during this national health pandemic makes them unstoppable. It has brought us together to premiere over 30 new pieces of music.

–Ryan Charles Ramer

PROGRAM

Angela Dunning violin
 –*Allegro*
 –*Con Gusto*
 –*Vivace*

T. C. Biggs piano
 –*Rooms*
 –*A Blue Coat*
 –*Pastry*

Ariel Clayton Karas violin
 –*Allegretto*

David Ellis cello
 –*Beowulf*
 –*Skerryvore, the Parallel*
 –*The Celestial Surgeon*

Jessica Firing McGrath violin
 –*Adagio*
 –*Larghetto*
 –*Con Moto*

Leah Frank violin
 –*Jubiloso*
 –*Moderato*
 –*Scherzo*

John Gamin organ
 –*The Myth of the Vanishing Family*

PROGRAM

Liz Huff soprano
 –*Druid Song*
 –*XXXVI*

Rob Kovacs piano, voice
 –*Envoy*
 –*On Being Lovesick*
 –*Requiem*

Shaun Mcgrath heldentenor
 –*Jaegermeister Motto*

Ryan Charles Ramer piano, voice
 –*XXXI*
 –*A Camp*
 –*Skerryvore*

Brian Skoog tenor
 –*Skerryvore, the Parallel*

Ken Wendt trumpet
 –*Adagio*
 –*Allegro con Gusto*

Jennifer Woda alto
 –*May Basket*

Ben Malkevitch piano, voice
 –*Los 33*
 –*To Minnie (With a Handglass)*
 –*Haiku*

Liz Huff
Druid Oath

We swear by peace and love to stand
Heart to heart and hand in hand
Mark, oh spirit hear us now,
Confirming this our sacred vow.

–[unknown authors]

XXXVI.

My house, I say. But hark to the sunny doves
That make my roof the arena of their loves,
That gyre about the gable all day long
And fill the chimneys with their murmurous song:
Our house, they say; and mine, the cat declares
And spreads his golden fleece upon the chairs;
And mine the dog, and rises stiff with wrath
If any alien foot profane the path.
So, too, the buck that trimmed my terraces,
Our whilome gardener, called the garden his;
Who now, deposed, surveys my plain abode
And his late kingdom, only from the road.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
(13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

Rob Kovacs
Envoy.

Go little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore!

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
(13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

On Being Lovesick

I cover the cold dog
And each night
He passes out.

–Terry Stokes (b. 1945)

Requiem.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
(13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

Shaun McGrath

Jaegermeister Slogan

Das ist des Jägers Ehrenschild
 Daß er beschützt und hegt sein Wild
 Weidmännisch jagt,
 Wie sich's jagt,
 Wie sich's ge-hört,
 "Den Schöpfer im Geschöpfe ehrt."

Ryan Charles Ramer

XXXI.

Sing clearer, Muse, or evermore be still,
 Sing truer or no longer sing!
 No more the voice of melancholy Jacques
 To wake a weeping echo in the hill;
 But as the boy, the pirate of the spring,
 From the green elm a living linnet takes,
 One natural verse recapture-- then be still.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
 (13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

A Camp.

The bed was made, the room was fit,
 By punctual eve the stars were lit;
 The air was still, the water ran,
 No need was there for maid or man,
 When we put up, my ass and I,
 At God's green caravanserai.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
 (13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

Skerryvore.

For love of lovely words, and for the sake
 Of those, my kinsmen and my countrymen,
 Who early and late in the windy ocean toiled
 To plant a star for seamen, where was then
 The surfy haunt of seals and cormorants:
 I, on the lintel of this cot, inscribe
 The name of a strong tower.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
 (13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

Brian Skoog*Skerryvore: the Parallel.*

Here all is sunny, and when the truant gull
 Skims the green level of the lawn, his wing
 Dispetals roses; here the house is framed
 Of kneaded brick and the plumed mountain pine,
 Such clay as artists fashion and such wood
 As the tree-climbing urchin breaks. But there
 Eternal granite hewn from the living isle
 And dowelled with brute iron, rears a tower
 That from its wet foundation to its crown
 Of glittering glass, stands, in the sweep of winds,
 Immovable, immortal, eminent.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
 (13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

Jen Woda
May Basket

I first saw my love in his garden
As he stood in the splendor of May,
And though his face was in shade,
'twas the garden he'd made
That first captured my heart on that day.

My lover, he tended his garden
Though patience and love did betray
That for roses he's waited
With care unabated
The promise of flowers one day.

I see my true love in his garden
As his flowers surround him today.
The rose blossoms gift him
With sorrow, yet lift him
With joy in the brilliance of May.

I wait for my love in the garden
My thorns ever sharp on display.
For I am a rose, not yet bloomed, not yet formed.
My promise still hidden away.

I last saw my love in his garden
As he stood in the splendor of May.
A posey of rose, I'm the one that he chose
For his true love to hold on her day.

–[unknown author]

Ben Malkevitch
Los 13

Estamos bien en el refugio -- los treinta y tres.
(We are well in the shelter -- the thirty-three.)

–Jose Ojeda (b. 1967)

To Minnie. (with a handglass)

A picture-frame for you to fill,
A paltry setting for your face,
A thing that has no worth until
You lend it something of your grace.

I send (unhappy I that sing
Laid by awhile upon the shelf)
Because I would not send a thing
Less charming than you are yourself.

And happier than I, alas!
(Dumb thing, I envy its delight)
'T will wish you well, the looking-glass,
And look you in the face to-night.

–Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson
(13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894)

Haiku

Why am I content
To never taste her lipstick
Outside of my dreams?

–[unknown author]

TC Biggs (piano) has been teaching piano lessons since 1997. He has composed 3 books of original piano pieces, and continues to compose. He plans to start performing more in the near future. Follow him on YouTube at TC Biggs/YouTube.

David Ellis (cello) is also a viola da gambist and conductor based in Cleveland, Ohio. As an instrumentalist, he has played with numerous early music organizations around the country on baroque cello and viola da gamba. As a conductor, he is the director of the Cleveland-based ensemble, Earth and Air: String Orchestra, and he directs the Case Camerata Chamber Orchestra.

Ariel Clayton Karas (violin) is founder & director of OPUS 216 and director of Classical Revolution Cleveland, as well as a veteran Musician in Residence at the Cleveland Clinic. She performs and manages more than 200 private events annually and maintains a small private studio of violin students out of her home on the west side. During quarantine, she has performed more than a dozen livestreams and YouTube concerts for retirement homes and senior living facilities, as well as happy hour performances on Zoom for businesses and families. She's also wrangling her three and four year old daughters and trying to keep them from watching too much Disney Plus.

Jessica Firing McGrath (violin, piano) is an arts administrator and educator. She is the Assistant Director of Education at Beck Center for the Arts and also teaches in their visual art and music programs.

Leah Frank (violin) is a pianist, organist, violinist, & violist who is currently studying at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She is the current music director at Heritage Congregational Church and is on staff at Baldwin Wallace University. She is also a current member of the music fraternity, Mu Phi Epsilon.

John Gamin (organ) is an artist & pianist who lives in Wooster. He is accompanist at First Mennonite Church in Wadsworth, and spends his free time filmmaking. He has written, directed and produced two short films shot entirely on Super-8 film and provided scoring for Raythe's Hollow (Coy Truman, 2018). He is currently in pre-production for his feature, Cool Air, to be shot in Cleveland sometime in 2021.

Liz Huff (soprano) does concert work, theater, improv, and collaborative arts projects all over the place! She also teaches improv, leads storytelling and communication workshops, and coaches voice. Liz adores working on new theater pieces and music, especially if they are written by Ryan Charles Ramer.

Rob Kovacs (piano, voice) is an award-winning composer, pianist and singer/songwriter. As a pianist he's performed with No Exit, FiveOne Experimental Orchestra, Mark Mothersbaugh, the Lima Symphony and many others including his own project, 88bit, where he performs note-for-note piano arrangements of original Nintendo soundtracks. As a singer/songwriter, he's fronted the bands Return of Simple and Math + Logic, and has a new record on the way.

Ben Malkevitch (piano, voice) is music director of Lakewood Congregational Church and a staff pianist at Baldwin Wallace University. He is a proud promoter of new music and an occasional composer himself.

Shaun Mcgrath (heldentenor) was born in Denver, CO and raised in the Willamette Valley under the snow caps of Mt. Hood. This one man would find his path to singing the most heavy metal of operas through the most metal of all heavy metal bands. Please welcome the inspiration that Metallica made when they created S&M! (Not sure everyone knows Jagermeister translates to Hunting Master!)

Angela Penrose (violin) has her bachelors in Music therapy and performance and is the concert mistress for the Detroit Gay Men's and Allies Chorus Orchestra. She freelances with various metro Detroit orchestras and leads the VSO string quartet.

Brian Skoog (tenor) has recently sung roles with Central City Opera, The Cleveland Opera, Cleveland Opera Theater, Dayton Opera, Nashville Opera, Toledo Opera, and Utah Festival Opera, Next season, in addition to singing Ferrando in Mozart's Cosi Fan Tutte with The Cleveland Opera in Playhouse Square, he will make house debuts at Opera Maine and Pensacola Opera.

Ken Wendt (trumpet) is a native Northeast Ohio musical artist, educator, and multimedia specialist. He earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Memphis and specializes in performing trumpet and drum set. He currently teaches Music Technology related courses at Case Western Reserve University, regularly collaborating with artists of all media, composes, records, and performs. As owner of media216.com, a Cleveland based audio and video production company, he works with leading creatives in the Cleveland area to bring their creative visions to life while promoting and representing the vibrant artistic community of Northeast Ohio.

Jennifer Woda (alto) is a classically trained mezzo-soprano and actress who has performed with many different organizations in the Cleveland area, including all the local opera companies, Cleveland Public Theater and The New World Performance Lab. She has been in quarantine at home in Cleveland Heights since September 12, 2019, when she received a new kidney from her friend Jennifer Bromagen. She is happy to be holed up with some of her favorite people: her husband Brian Thornton, a cellist with the Cleveland Orchestra, and her daughters Maya (16) and Madelyn (11). Her border collie Owyn is pretty awesome, too.

Thank YOU

There are many ways people are viewing this Zoom concert; some people are quarantining alone, others are sheltering-in-place with six kids. We are lucky that tonite's music can be enjoyed from the comfort of our own homes.

This proves to be a uniquely intimate concert. We get to listen to live music while sitting on own furniture. And most notably, we can see our performers behind-the-scenes.

Classical music concerts are normally in broadly prepossessing venues, but our concert tonite shows that -with quality musicianship- it can be shrunk down to be computer-sized and still thouroughly appreciated.

Thank you to the players for the passion and thoughtfulness put into this performance.

Ryan Charles Ramer