



Plucked & Bowed

**Co-presented by The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center
and Orchestra of St. Luke's**

Monday, April 26, 2021 at 6:30 PM EDT

Streaming Live from The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center

Performers

Elizabeth Mann
flute

Alex Fortes, Josh Henderson
violin

Kaya Bryla-Weiss
viola

Khari Joyner
cello

Sara Cutler
harp

Program

CARLOS CHÁVEZ

Trio for Flute, Viola, and Harp

MARCO-ADRIÁN RAMOS

Jarochito o Capricho

CLAUDE DEBUSSY / DAVID NOON

Three Pieces

L'Isle Joyeuse

La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin

Danse (Tarantelle styrienne)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat Major "Harp"

Poco adagio – Allegro

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Danses sacrée et profane

Program Notes

Trio for Flute, Viola, and Harp

In 1938, Philadelphia lawyer and music advocate Samuel Rosenbaum commissioned Carlos Chávez to pen a harp concerto for Edna Phillips, Rosenbaum's wife and the Philadelphia Orchestra's principal harpist. Chávez, however, found himself quickly diverted by a Guggenheim Fellowship to compose his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Not easily dissuaded, Phillips instead asked the composer for a chamber work for harp, flute, and viola to perform with her fellow Philadelphia soloists. Chávez, himself no stranger to chamber music, turned to works of Claude Debussy and Manuel de Falla for material, crafting a set of transcriptions that highlight the virtuosic capacities of each instrument and their complementary strength as an ensemble. (It is worth noting that Debussy wrote a sonata for the same forces as Chávez's arrangements.) Taken from Debussy's famous suite *Children's Corner*, "The Snow Is Dancing" weaves the players together with a range of melodic and harmonic effects reflecting the piece's impish and mysterious moods. Two pieces from de Falla's *Siete canciones populares españolas* exude similar contrasts. The melancholic "Asturiana" plumbs the instruments for depths of emotion and register before the viola and flute take up the plaintive cries of a jilted lover in "Polo" as the harp envelopes them in dazzling rhythmic figures.

Jarochito o Capricho

The *son jarocho* music of Veracruz provides both influence and a title to composer Marco-Adrián Ramos's *Jarochito or Caprice*. (The root term *jarocho* describes both the people and customs

of the Mexican port city.) Dance and percussive movements are characteristic elements of *son jarocho*, as is the use of the special *arpa jarocho* for intricate melodies. In Ramos's score, such melodies flit across the strings in ever-shifting forms and bold flourishes. All the while, they are accompanied by percussive knocks evoking the *zapateado*, the footwork improvised on wooden platforms during *son jarocho* performances. For this composition, Ramos received one of the 2016 ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Awards.

Three Pieces

The harp was a central instrument of Claude Debussy's orchestral arsenal, though the composer gave it prominence in only a small number of chamber works. David Noon's arrangements of three piano pieces by Debussy add to this number without losing any sense of the composer's spirit. The *Tarentelle styrienne* was an early piano work from 1890, which Debussy later revised and republished under the more generic name *Danse* in 1903. It presents a typical Italian tarantella with hints of the Styrian region of Austria. A sprightly theme bookends the piece and serves as a keystone between two contrasting internal episodes. Next comes the delicate and unadorned *La fille aux cheveux de lin* (*The Girl with the Flaxen Hair*), one of the pearls of Debussy's first book of *Préludes* (1910). Inspired by Leconte de Lisle's poem of the same name about a Scottish maiden, the work gracefully builds its pastoral melody to a peak before serenely wafting to its conclusion. Finally, *L'Isle joyeuse* (*The Joyful Island*, from 1904) chromatically traverses entire octaves in Lisztian swells. Debussy himself marveled at the piece's complexity for a pianist, a challenge now distributed in Noon's arrangement.

String Quartet No. 10, Op. 47 "Harp"

Like many monikers given to Beethoven's compositions, the nickname "Harp" for the opus 47 string quartet did not stem from the composer. His distinctive use of pizzicato effects in its first movement, however, proved a memorable quality that has become part of the piece's legacy. Composed amid the busy year of 1809—Beethoven endured the French bombardment and occupation of Vienna while writing such works as the Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major ("The Farewell") and starting his Fifth Piano Concerto, also in E-flat Major—the opus 47 quartet employs many ingenious devices across its four movements. The sonata-form first movement commences with a *poco adagio* introduction before a bold *allegro* introduces the main subject. The telltale harp pizzicato gestures return at the end of the development and lead into the recapitulation, where they underlay the first violin's furious cadenza passages before the resplendent finale.

Danses sacrée et profane

Originally commissioned in 1904 to feature the newly invented chromatic harp, Debussy's *Danses sacrée et profane* has long outlived the instrument it was intended to feature. Developed by the firm of Pleyel, the chromatic harp's unique construction utilized two rows of strings to relieve the player of using foot pedals to achieve accidentals. Such notes are legion in both sections of Debussy's score, which can be played on the standard concert harp. While the opposition of "sacred" and "profane" here is potent, it carries little religious meaning. The world of the *Danse sacrée* is one of classical reverence and contemplation. The opening strophic theme, which recurs throughout and returns at the dance's end, evokes the soulful moods of Debussy's 1902 opera *Pelléas et*

Mélisande. The immediate segue into the *Danse profane* jolts us into a different musical space. Here Debussy employs waltz rhythms and melodic fragments that surge forward while highlighting the harp in many elaborate solo passages. An ecstatic finale ends on a whimsical note, the profane and the sacred brought back into balance.

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About Orchestra of St. Luke's

Called “[New York’s] hometown band” by *The New York Times*, OSL performs at venues throughout the city including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City Center, Merkin Hall, The Morgan Library and Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and many more. OSL is dedicated to cultivating a lifetime of engagement with classical music and offers free instrumental training and mentorship for students from elementary school through conservatory and beyond; produces guided community and educational performances for thousands of students and families; and owns and operates The DiMenna Center for Classical Music, New York City’s only rehearsal, recording, education, and performance facility expressly dedicated to classical music, serving more than 500 ensembles and more than 30,000 musicians each year. OSL has participated in 118 recordings, four of which have won Grammy Awards; has commissioned more than 50 new works; and has given more than 179 world, US, and New York City premieres.

Recent guests and collaborators include cellist Alisa Weilerstein, tenor Jonas Kauffman, composer Eleanor Alberga, violinist Christian Tetzlaff, and pianist Jeremy Denk. As *New York* magazine notes, the Orchestra has a “...reputation for being able to play virtually any score as if the musicians had all grown up with it under their pillows.” Learn more at OSLmusic.org or @OSLmusic on Instagram, Facebook, Spotify, and more.

About Temple Emanu-El

Founded in 1845, Temple Emanu-El is the third-oldest Reform Jewish congregation in the United States. Its odyssey mirrors that of the Jewish community in New York. Temple Emanu-El is also one of the great Jewish houses of worship in the world. Within our walls, an enormous range of social, educational, and cultural programs are offered. Awe and soaring spirituality are feelings that are invoked when one first steps into the majestic 2,500-seat Main Sanctuary. In the vastness of the space and the quiet dignity of the mood we feel the presence of God. The play of light refracted through the clerestory windows against the arched side walls is a luminous reminder that this sanctuary is expressive of God’s spirit.

About The Streicker Center

From history to culture, food to politics, music to Israel. Night after night, the Streicker Center offers opportunities for discussion and debate about the most challenging and important issues of the day, from anti-Semitism, fake news, immigration, and racism to the future of the Jewish people.

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