

A Journey through South Dakota

Stringscapes

10.09.23 | 8:00 P.M.

Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theatre

FEATURING

CRIMSON DUO

Jaymee Haefner, harp

Matt Milewski, violin

Photography by Joel Strasser

Artwork by Heather Cool



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A Journey through South Dakota

Stringscapes

Before the program begins, we invite you to explore and read about the art that you will hear and see, as this program is an interwoven presentation by many different performers, composers and visual artists.

Our program explores the seven natural elements (darkness, light, air, earth, water, fire, spirit) through images that are distinctly South Dakotan. The music is complete. The images are not meant to replace the music, but rather to provide a framework for the senses with recurring themes. You may be struck by dark stillness and a vast sense of wide-open space; other times by the cascading whirlwind of sounds. This program is meant to be a continuous journey through photography and sound of the natural elements, introduced by mandala artwork created by Heather Cool while she listened to Crimson perform the pieces on this program. Short notes about each composition and the accompanying mandala are provided below. Mandalas are an artform shared by many native and ethnic groups, including the Sioux, who were the first South Dakotans. Heather describes this

artform: “Each mandala is meant to illustrate movement to music, generally speaking. All pieces feature their individual elements, the seed of life, and partnership.”

“Stringscapes” is Crimson Duo’s most recent project, in which we collaborate with composers and visual artists to join images of nature with newly commissioned pieces. This experience in nature is the genesis for the world premieres of compositions by Libby Larsen (Minnesota), Jeffrey Paul (South Dakota), and Kirsten Soriano (Dallas-Fort Worth) on this program, along with our recent commissions by Paul Patterson (London), Patricio Da Silva (Los Angeles) and Henriette Renié, all made possible through generous grants from the American Harp Society and the University of North Texas College of Music.

DARKNESS ICE

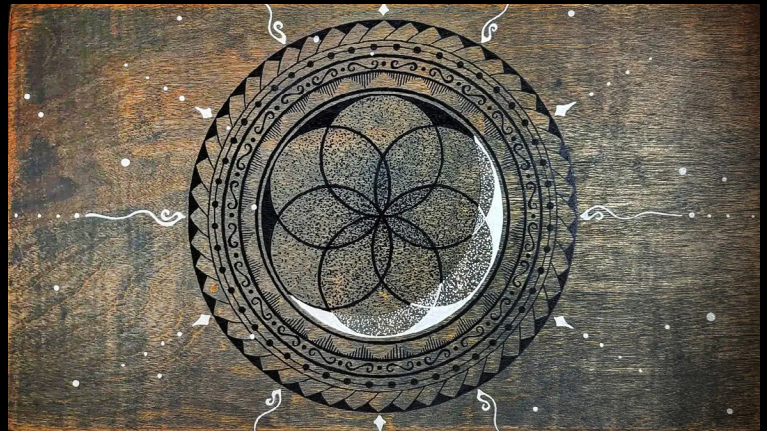
...snow-haze, moonlight
(2020, world premiere)
Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

Begin in darkness, stillness, silence, space. Snow, falling. Crystalline down, a million frost-pins pricking skin—so cold they're hot—each with a nanosecond's life span. All felt, unseen, until moonlight. — **LIBBY LARSEN, 2022**

To purchase this piece and/or other works by Libby Larsen please contact Libby Larsen publishing at info@libbylarsen.com



Darkness features the seed of life at its core. Life



begins in darkness. Simple as that. Partnership is illustrated through the light and dark of the moon. No matter how much of the sun's light is reflecting off the moon for us on Earth to see it better, it is always whole. Sometimes it shows us its brilliance fully, and sometimes we only glimpse a sliver, but it is always there keeping the earth in ebb and flow, with the sun, essential to life as we know it. — **HEATHER COOL, 2022**

REFLECTION LIGHT



Canonic Crimson was premiered shortly after Crimson Duo met Paul Patterson during the 2017 World Harp Congress in Hong Kong. The canon is a lilting melody which weaves between the two instruments throughout the piece. Like the reflection of light, it imitates and inverts itself, until the differences between the mirror and the original are only slight. — **JAYMEE HAEFNER, 2022**

Canonic Crimson (2017)
Paul Patterson (b. 1947)



The specific motivation behind the light reflective piece was to illustrate a full-spectrum, light and whimsical piece. The light bubbles are reminiscent of light flares in a photograph or as we look through hazy eyes in the morning, with the seed of life ever-present. Partnership is illustrated through the two mandalas, both basking in the light of day, separate but sharing one space and moment. — **HEATHER COOL, 2022**

WIND AIR

Flutter (2017)

Kirsten Soriano (b. 1979)



Flutter, from the *In Search of Imagery* cycle, is a dance-like piece inspired by several haiku by Matsuo Basho - about two butterflies. Each haiku refers to a corresponding section in the music. The piece begins with the butterflies beginning a journey together. Later in the piece, a butterfly balances on willow leaves, floats above an orchid, and then joins the other butterfly once again as a “ballet in the air” between the two, during which they fly around with one another - as if chasing each other - slightly out of sync. Throughout the piece, timbres, colors, and envelope shapes are explored that feature ways the violin and harp can resemble one another - from the opening and ending pizzicato, to tremolo between stopped notes and harmonics in the violin coupled with *bisbigliando* (whispering *tremolandos*) in the harp part. — **KIRSTEN SORIANO, 2017**

*Lady butterfly
perfumes her wings
by floating
Over the orchid
With every gust of wind,
The butterfly changes its place*

*On the willow.
Ballet in the air ...
twin butterflies
until, twice white*

*They meet, they mate
Come, butterfly
It's late -
We've miles to go together.*



The following are the haiku by Matsuo Basho that inspired the sections of this piece:

*Wake up, wake up,
Sleeping butterfly,
And let us be companions!*

*April's air stirs in
willow-leaves ...
a butterfly
Floats and balances*

Air (Wind) features playful partnership, as two feathers dance through the environment, encountering and interacting with others, solo or partnered, growing, dancing, leaving and nearly forgetting the seed of life from which they sprung. They create and leave a trail of color in their path, memories more brilliant for themselves than their memories and interactions with their surroundings. Many paths cross, but the two feathers maintain their closeness as they journey together.

— **HEATHER COOL, 2022**

EARTH

Violin and Harp Music (2015)
Patricio da Silva (b. 1973)

I. West is this Way

II. We're not in Kansas Anymore

III. Hands On

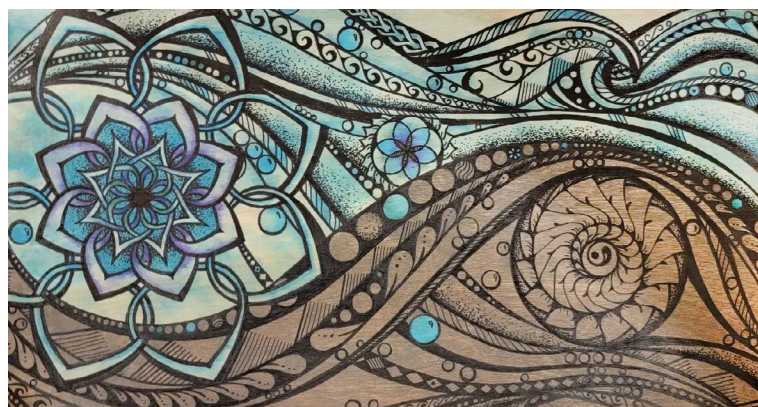
The first movement, *West is this Way*, is a postcard from California; a land of deserts, fertile valleys, Spanish missions, and high-tech culture. Imagine a scene in a classic western movie: you see the main character's silhouette, far away at the horizon, riding in your direction. You know they are coming your way, but you don't know what will happen next. In the second movement, *We're not in Kansas Anymore*, the listener is in for a wild ride, being set-up, influenced, misdirected and manipulated in a joyride of harmonic ambiguities and trickeries. The third and final movement, *Hands On*, is heavy on "manual labor" for the two players, requiring true hands-on virtuosity with an upbeat mood and a spirited tune. This is modern classical showmanship in a unique musical style. — **PATRICIO DA SILVA, 2015**



Earth is the piece of home. It features the land where



we were raised, with buffalo grass and sweetgrass, the pasqueflower, eagle feathers, and the badlands. A partnership between life and the heavens can be felt here, especially in the badlands. Though they appear desolate, they hold much life, great beauty, and strength. They are sacred. The seed of life resides at the center of the life mandala, with the heavens mandala interwoven through the life mandala. This illustrates that we are all comprised of stardust. We are just a conglomeration of elements, the atoms (also mandala) as intangible yet just as real as our spirit. The full spectrum of colors featured in the life and celestial mandalas, as well as in the simplistic compass rose, represent pride. Every spirit has value. Every spirit is sacred. To devalue one individual because they don't fit into a box built of fear is to devalue the whole of humanity. Every spirit is unique... The little compass rose, with the spectrum colors, means that pride belongs to everyone, everywhere. Be you, and let others be themselves, and if you embrace yourself and others as unique, valued individuals, you will find partnerships everywhere. — **HEATHER COOL, 2022**



Moonlight sparkling off of snowflakes, light glowing through swirling prismatic designs in ice, light refracting through drops of water and pappi, and rushing aqua colored waters are just some of the photographs by Joel Strasser that inspired my piece, *Aqua Luminous* (On Water and Light) for harp and violin. As the piece progresses, it journeys from the icy, crystalline images of winter to the thaw of springtime and ends with rushing waters. The sections of the piece are as follows: 1) "Crystalline" with harp harmonics evoking the sparkling flecks of snow and swirling gestures representing prismatic icy designs; 2) "Wispy, Whispering" with quiet, murmuring lines and harmonics describing the light through translucent and ethereal pappi; and 3) "Wellspring" with single resonating notes evoking single droplets of water

WATER

Aqua Luminous (2022, world premiere)
Kirsten Soriano (b. 1979)

to undulating melodic lines representing the rushing waters from the photographs. This piece is dedicated with gratitude and admiration to Crimson Duo and is also available for solo harp. — **KIRSTEN SORIANO, 2017**



Water again features a duality of spirit, in a sense. The seed of life is just below the surface, not too deep, right where it belongs. Without water, there is no life, so the partnership is life with the water itself. The blue mandala represents how life thrives in water, and the spiral, when examined closely, is both a complete mandala and a snail. This illustrates that mandalas are found literally everywhere - in nature, art, every single faith, and in the heavens. If you look closely, you cannot even walk ten yards without encountering mandala. Sacred geometry; it's everywhere. — **HEATHER COOL, 2022**

FIRE

Scherzo-Fantaisie (1895)

Henriette Renié (1875-1956)

"It was a day in 1895 after an exam in the class of Counterpoint and Fugue when I composed the *Andante religioso*. The day before, I had presented a Fugue which was appreciated, and I had been reproached for not composing enough. The next day, I told myself: 'They want me to compose? Well, then I will compose.' I sat at my desk, and without much difficulty, I wrote the *Andante religioso*. What was less easy was to show my composition. I was the only woman among a big class of men. At this time, the women did not compose. . . . For six weeks, I went to class with the piece in my briefcase without daring to show it to the Master. Finally, there was a day in the middle of Lent when only five or six of my comrades were in the class and there was not much work to show the Master, Théodore Dubois. I decided to take the piece out. Great interest from my comrades and the Master! While I was playing on the piano what I will play on the harp for you tonight, they half sung the violin part behind me. I still remember the exact words which Théodore Dubois said to me: 'It's very well written. You should do a lot more like that!' Encouraged by this success, I immediately started the *Scherzo-Fantaisie*, which took longer to finish, but which obtained at least as much success..."

— EXCERPT FROM RENIE'S PROGRAM NOTES PUBLISHED IN *ONE STONE TO THE BUILDING: HENRIETTE RENIE'S*



LIFE THROUGH HER WORKS FOR HARP



Fire is the sun. Again, the seed of life is at the core, since without the sun there would be no life on earth. Partnership is less evident here, but I decided to choose the sun to represent fire and partnership because within the sun both fusion and fission keep it burning. As a whole, and barely touched on, it's yin and yang - partnership. Newtonian. Physical law. We owe our lives to the sun, the sun was born of the galaxy, and the galaxy is the child of the universe. Finally, the sun represents the solar plexus. This is the most blatant pairing of the elements to the chakras, but all are represented, and that becomes an even broader conversation. But specifically, the solar plexus is what fuels the individual, giving the individual the power to produce art, music, theory/wisdom/intellect.

— HEATHER COOL, 2022

SPIRIT

The Dust in my Eyes, the Cracks on my Hands (2021, world premiere)

Jeffrey Paul (b. 1977)

You look out over the prairie, the farm, and the promise of a hard day's work. It's high summer, and there hasn't been enough rain. Another long drag from your cigarette. You squint, as you hear the wind approaching from miles away. You can almost see it. Ghosts of your ancestors—Lakotan and Scandinavian—hang in the air; they gently swirl in the smoke you just exhaled. You can hear their old songs, but can't quite distinguish which. You share a quiet moment with your furry friend, who understands the world better, and you listen, hoping to gain some of her wisdom. Time to tend to the livestock. Something in the air stirs them, and they strike up a lively dance, as if mocking a rodeo. — JEFFREY PAUL, 2021



The Spirit piece features the seed of life at its core, with two similar but distinctly different halves of the mandala, representing the partnership of a singular spirit. The monochrome surface represents our spirit as seen by the world - vibrant and playful but poised and refined. The underlying spectral mandala represents the spirit within - colorful, complex, nuanced. Tendrils spring forth from both halves of the spirit, touching others and making an impact in the world, sometimes reaching up to the surface from within to give others a glimpse of what is buried, and sometimes reaching down from the surface to give the individual a glimpse of what others see in us. — HEATHER COOL, 2022





About Crimson Duo

In their ten years of performing together, they have been featured in recitals in Hong Kong, New York City, New Orleans, Atlanta, and have released two compact discs, *Crimson* (2016) and *Renderings* (2019), featuring works commissioned by the duo. Collaborative composers include Libby Larsen, Paul Patterson, Gary Schocker, Patricio da Silva, and Kirsten Soriano.

JAYMEE HAEFNER is the Associate Professor of Harp and Director of Graduate Studies for the University of North Texas College of Music. Dr. Haefner has performed worldwide (Los Angeles, Colorado, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Russia, Hong Kong, New York City, New Orleans, Atlanta). She regularly writes for *The Harp Column* and has published two books: *The Legend of Henriette Renié* and *One Stone to the Building: Henriette Renié's Life Through Her Works for Harp*. She has served on the AHS Board of Directors and

Foundation, the World Harp Congress, the USA International Harp Competition, and has adjudicated harp competitions world-wide (USA, Hong Kong, Italy). She holds BM and MM degrees from the University of Arizona, and the DM degree from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

MATTHEW MILEWSKI joined the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in 2010 and performs regularly with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. He has performed on numerous soundtracks including *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *True Grit*, and *Did You Hear About the Morgans*. After studies with Julia Bushkova at the Interlochen Arts Academy, Matt attended Indiana University for undergraduate studies in performance and earned a Performer Diploma under the tutelage of Yuval Yaron. He received his MM in orchestral performance from Manhattan School of Music, where his teachers included Glenn Dicterow, Lisa Kim and Yoko Takebe.

ARTISTS & COMPOSERS

Crimson Duo

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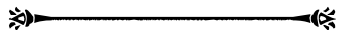


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