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Junior and Senior RecitalsConcert and Recital Programs

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11-10-2023

## Emma Ross, Senior Harp Recital

Emma Ross

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**THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MUSIC AND WORSHIP**

**PRESENTS THE**

**SENIOR HARP RECITAL**

**OF**

**EMMA ROSS**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2023  
7 P.M.**

**RECITAL HALL  
BOLTHOUSE CENTER FOR MUSIC  
DIXON MINISTRY CENTER**

## PROGRAM

*Lute Suite No. 1 in e minor*, BWV 996 ..... J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

- I. Praeludio. Passaggio-presto
- II. Allemande
- III. Courante
- IV. Sarabande
- V. Bourrée
- VI. Gigue

*Ballade fantastique pour harpe*..... Henriette Renié (1875–1956)

*Fantaisie pour violon et harpe, Op. 124*

..... Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Assisted by Megan Gorog, violin

*La fille aux cheveux de lin* ..... Claude Debussy (1862–1918)  
tr. Marcel Grandjany (1891–1975)

*Spanish Dance No. 1*..... Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)  
tr. Marcel Grandjany

Emma is a student of Jackie Davis.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment  
of the Bachelor of Music in performance degree.

*No flash photography, please.*

*Please turn off all cell phones.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Lute Suite No. 1 in e minor**

This is the first of only four lute suites written by Bach, later transcribed for harp (played in e♭ minor to imitate Baroque tuning). Lutes in the Baroque era were plucked string instruments, predecessors to the classical guitar of today. Baroque era suites were composed of a set of instrumental dances, typically consisting of at least the allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. Each dance is in binary form and the sections are repeated with ornamentation included the second time. This suite contains a prelude. The prelude introduces the key of the following movements, and often motives developed later. This prelude begins with a written-out improvisatory section—a “prelude to the prelude.” The practice of improvisation was quite common in Bach’s day. It allowed the player to warm up and get the hall to be quiet. I have loved making the “improv” sound free and experimental as if it was improvised. The rest of the prelude sounds like a strict mini-fugue complete with two voices, a subject, answer, and episodic material. The allemande is a quick dance in duple meter. My favorite characteristic of this allemande is when the melody is passed between voices during the middle of a phrase. The courante is a dance written in 3/2. I have enjoyed experimenting with different types of ornamentation in this movement to achieve a cheerful and quick sound. The sarabande is a slow court dance in triple meter. Bach loved the sarabande and often placed it at the heart of his suites—the perfect playground for trills, mordents, turns, etc. This sarabande is a gorgeous piece of music with contrasting textures and sounds. The bourée is a quick dance in double time that starts with a pickup beat and is characterized by a simple two-part texture. This dance makes me smile. My family grew up listening to a children’s album called Beethoven’s Wig: Sing Along Symphonies—a brilliant way of teaching kids great classical works by putting silly lyrics to the melodies. This bourée is featured as “Hey, Guitar Teacher.” Some of the lyrics for the first half include: “So guitar teacher thanks for this musical treat, / it’s got great counterpoint and I like the steady beat. / Yes, it’s a piece I will practice and play ‘round the clock / ‘cause it’s Johann Sebastian Bach.” Go give the album a listen, it will change your life. The gigue is a lively dance in compound meter that often appears at the end of a suite. This last dance is full of energetic imitation and sequencing, a fitting end to the rest of the gloriously varied suite.

### **Ballade fantastique**

This daunting, virtuosic harp solo was written in 1907 by Henriette Renié—a famous composer, teacher, and performer who was extremely influential in the development of the modern pedal harp. It is based on Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart,” a gothic short horror story. In the story, the narrator plots and prepares to kill an old man with “the evil-eye.” After perfectly executing the crime, the narrator dismembers the body of the corpse and buries it underneath the floorboards of the room. The police arrive after the old man’s solitary scream is reported. The narrator shows them that nothing is amiss—the old man is simply away visiting friends. The police believe the alibi and they all sit down to chat in the room where the murder was committed. The narrator soon begins to hear a thumping that grows into a terrifying roar—the beating of the dead man’s heart. Overcome with guilt, he removes the floorboards and confesses to his crime. This piece is just as dramatic as the story. After the introduction, a steady, calculated melody appears—the plotting of the murder. From there we hear various aspects of the crime—a jumpy, spooky theme which broadens into an expansive and passionate tune. The murderer plots his deed by spying on his victim each night accompanied by a low, slow, chromatic melody in the left hand played at the bottom of the strings.

*Continued on back*

When the murderer enters the room to commit his crime, we hear a dolorous and steady thumping of the heart begin to sound, moving into a passage with quiet harmonics. This grows into a climax when the deed is accomplished, followed by fragments of previous melodies as the murderer removes his traces. The police knock on the door and the original theme appears again—major this time—as they find nothing amiss. Soon the murderer begins to hear the beat of the heart in low octaves. The piece alternates with him suppressing his guilt, and his guilt creeping up and growing as the heart beats louder. His guilt cannot be hidden, and the piece culminates in the murderer desperately giving up. While I have thoroughly enjoyed finding and bringing out all the literary connections in this piece, it has made me incredibly thankful that as Christians we do not have to suppress our guilt or wait in fear for it to find us out because Christ has paid for and removed our transgressions.

### **Fantaisie pour violon et harpe**

This piece has been one of my favorites to put together! I love the blend of sonorities that the harp and violin create. It is a one-movement work which features many distinct sections. The opening is light and curious, turning into a gentle melody carried by the violin. We next hear an interlude that sounds like a faraway train, accomplished by the violin in thirds and the harp playing harmonics, before easing into a playful allegro. This builds into loud chaos that sounds like a gypsy tune with double stops and glissandos. After dying away, the next section features virtuosic scales for the violin making it sound like a fiddle. This brings us to a gorgeous melody and color change in the largamente, followed by a return to the fiddle theme. The next section is marked by a low ostinato in the harp while the violin shows off with dramatic trills, runs, and double stops. The piece ends with a nod to the opening theme and a sweet adagio, before melting away in soft glissandos. Megan is a wonderful and sensitive violinist and has become one of my closest friends. I am honored by the opportunity to collaborate with her on such an exciting piece.

### **La fille aux cheveux de lin**

The Girl with the Flaxen Hair is a short piece found in Book I of Debussy's solo piano *Préludes*, written around 1910. It is a short, dreamy piece that transports us away from the grind of daily life to a gentle and delicate soundscape. I love how peaceful the sound is (and that it is written for a fellow maiden with blond tresses). The title was inspired by a poem by Charles-Marie René Leconte de Lisle in which the first stanza says: "Sitting amidst the alfalfa in flower, / Who sings in the cool morning hour? / It is the girl with the flaxen hair, / the beauty with cherry lips so fair. / Love, in the summer sun so bright, / Sang with the lark for sheer delight." I hope you enjoy this brief little gem.

### **Spanish Dance No. 1**

This piece is from the second act of de Falla's 1913 two act opera *La vida breve* (Life is Short). This rarely performed opera is about a young gypsy girl, Salud, who falls in love with the wealthy Paco. Paco is already engaged to a woman of his social class and abandons Salud despite their vow of love. Salud crashes Paco's wedding and he orders her ejected—whereupon she dies at his feet. This dance comes from an orchestral interlude and carries the typical Spanish flair and idioms. It is very rhythmic, has a catchy melody and several color and texture changes. The fiery drama and sparkle illustrate the sound of toreadors and their bullfights, making this dance a favorite of mine.