



APOLLO

CHAMBER PLAYERS

Globally Inspired Music

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE



A z i c a

Music by J. KIMO WILLIAMS · PAMELA Z

CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS *and* MARK WINGATE · EVE BEGLARIAN



Apollo Chamber Players



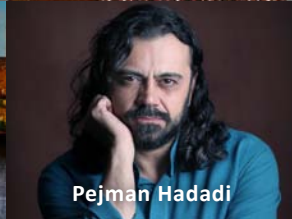
Tracy Silverman



Joan DerHousepian



Arsen Petrosyan



Pejman Hadadi

Houston TX based Apollo Chamber Players “performs with rhythmic flair and virtuosity” (The Strad) and has “found fruitful territory” (Houston Chronicle) through innovative, globally-inspired programming and multicultural new music commissions. Winner of Chamber Music America’s prestigious Residency Partnership award, the quartet has performed for sold-out audiences at Carnegie Hall, and it holds the distinction of being the first American chamber ensemble to record and perform in Cuba in over fifty years. Apollo is featured frequently on American Public Media’s nationally-syndicated program **Performance Today**.

A passionate advocate of contemporary music, Apollo launched a bold project in 2014 to commission 20 new multicultural works by the end of the decade. 20x2020 saw its triumphant conclusion in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with digital world premieres and global recording collaborations. The project features a diverse roster of the world’s leading composers and instrumentalists including **Jennifer Higdon, Libby Larsen, Pamela Z, Leo Brouwer, Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate, and Vãn Ánh Võ.**

--- apollochamberplayers.org ---

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE (2020) for string quartet and electric violin

J. Kimo Williams, composer • Tracy Silverman, electric violin

With this composition, I wanted to speak to the current social and cultural climate we now face. I also feel a commonality with Beethoven, who took his audiences on artistic journeys with thematic descriptions. Beethoven's hope that his musical expression could affect change was my inspiration for this piece, which is dedicated to the late Civil Rights leader John Lewis. Its premise is described by the following words written by social activist and artist Carol Williams:

A speech by a politician is not expected to be the equivalent of poetry, or to cast a lasting memory in popular culture; especially not one given 155 years ago. But that is precisely what the phrase, "with malice toward none, and charity for all," has become. It is the definition of politics seamlessly intersecting with art.

So should it be any different from having music intersect with politics? Not for Beethoven, as most students of his music are already aware. Today, there is still a critical need for "socially responsible pieces of music" that can address our human failures with as much hope as it does despair.

We are together here in 2020, facing challenges old and new, internal and external. And we have reached a new low point when a People, born more American than African, have to again demand that the value of their lives be recognized. It is obvious that their lives did not matter when they were kidnapped and brought here 400 years ago to provide free labor to a country that became the richest on Earth. Their lives did not matter during the war to set them free, when they were regarded as contraband or fugitives. Their lives did not matter when they were refused basic human dignity without enduring a century of struggle. And now their lives do not "matter" enough to allow them to choose that very word for themselves. And so continues the malice. To provide "Charity for all" would have cost nothing more than to have given them respect and equal opportunity.

But today, we celebrate those who remind us that we can speak up every time we think, breathe, talk, act, move, and live. We can use the language of music or the music of speech; we can do it from a podium at the US Capitol dome, or from a podium at a concert hall. Today, Beethoven would liberate style, modes, genres, and stereotypes with one angry eye. He would shout---not even hearing his own voice or the voices



of his opposition---that it is our world to change, and that we do not need to ask permission from above. He would write us an anthem we could all stand for. And using those words of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address of 1865, we could have another chance to make them True: "With malice toward none."

- KIMO AND CAROL WILLIAMS

With Malice Toward None was composed for Apollo Chamber Players and Tracy Silverman, generously underwritten by **DONALD AND RHONDA SWEENEY**.

THE UNRAVELING (2019) for string quartet, voice, and fixed media
Pamela Z, composer/voice/media

When Apollo director Matthew Detrick first approached me about composing a work for Apollo Chamber Players with a connection to folk/indigenous or cultural music, I told him that the "folk" tradition that holds the most resonance for me is that of the 1960s and '70s American folk and folk/rock. In my childhood, the first songs I learned to sing and play were songs by the likes of Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie and Malvina Reynolds, and my first forays into composing music were as a singer/songwriter very much influenced by these folk revival artists (protest songs and such) and folk rock artists (read Joni Mitchell, the Byrds, CSN&Y, Arlo Guthrie, Peter Paul & Mary, Joan Baez etc). So, when someone mentions "Folk Music", this genre is always the first thing to pop into my mind.



In the first movement of ***The Unraveling***, I couldn't resist the instinct to do something related to my penchant for sampling, layering, looping, and fragmentation. I'm essentially using the string quartet as a human sample-playback device – creating their phrases and motifs from chopped-up, layered, and looped fragments of the dulcimer accompaniment for *All I Want* on Joni Mitchell's Blue album. The second movement is a kind of "broken record" riff on an old folk standard made popular by Peter Paul and Mary. The third movement is a slightly skewed lesson in a common finger-picking style, and the final movement is a wistful reminiscence of my busking days during my early visits to the San Francisco, where I eventually relocated.

- PAMELA Z

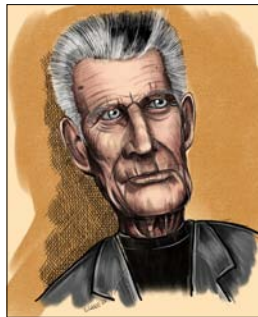
The Unraveling was composed for Apollo Chamber Players' 20x2020 project, generously underwritten by **JOE AND VENONA DETRICK**.

WHAT IS THE WORD? (2017) for string quartet and fixed media

Christopher Theofanidis and **Mark Wingate**, composers

Maura Hooper, actress

What is the Word? is based on Samuel Beckett's last poem of the same name, which was written in response to his own late encounter with aphasia. The actress, Billie Whitelaw, once said of Samuel Beckett's work, "I looked at his work like music, and to me it was rhythm and pauses, and lack of pauses." This approach guided Mark's and my own musical response,



Samuel Beckett by Lynn Lane



and our piece begins with the reading of the original poem in its entirety and unfolds over six subsequent movements which combine the abstracted voice with the quartet in a highly interactive and surreal way.

In the Beckett, the aphasic search for 'the word' becomes something which itself spins off rhythm and phrase in a kind of virtuosic dance, the text moving along a spectrum between meaning and pure musical sound. Music, then, seemed to us the natural way to amplify this search for this intersection of sound and meaning. - **CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS AND MARK WINGATE**

What is the Word? was composed for Apollo Chamber Players' 20x2020 project, generously underwritten by **DONALD AND RHONDA SWEENEY**.

"What is the Word" by Samuel Beckett

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THEMES OF ARMENIAN FOLKSONGS (est. 1915) **Komitas/Aslamazyan**

Arr. Matthew J. Detrick/Apollo Chamber Players (2021) with **Joan DerHovsepan**, guest viola

Pioneering Armenian ethnomusicologist and composer Komitas cultivated a renaissance in Armenian music, collecting and transcribing over 3,000 pieces of Armenian folk music during his lifetime. He believed it his mission to introduce Armenian music to a global audience, and his work was integral to community-building at home and across Armenia's multitude of diasporas.

The trio of Armenian folk songs chosen for this disc originate from a set of ten collected as field recordings by Komitas and subsequently arranged for string quartet by Sarkis Aslamazyan of the Komitas Quartet. Further editing, including the creation of a contemporary score and parts, occurred in 2021 by Apollo Chamber Players.

Festive Song (Habrban) is a buoyant, lighthearted dance with a melancholic undercurrent; a quasi-official state hymn, the intensely soulful music of **The Crane** (Krounk) symbolizes longing for one's homeland and the suffering of the of Armenian people wrought by the Armenian genocide; **Echmiadzin Dance** (Vagharshapati), a galloping folk hoedown partnering the first violin and viola, originates from the ancient Armenian city of the same name, the country's spiritual and cultural epicenter. - **MATTHEW J. DETRICK**

WE WILL SING ONE SONG (2020) for duduk, string quartet, percussion, and track



Eve Beglarian, composer • **Arsen Petrosyan**, duduk • **Pejman Hadadi**, percussion

As I was beginning to think about writing a piece for duduk, string quartet, and percussion, I happened to read *The Human Comedy*, by Armenian-American writer William Saroyan, one of those books I've had on my shelf forever, but hadn't gotten around to reading until recently.

There is a beautiful small scene where a young boy, four years old, named Ulysses, waves at a passing train, and no-one waves back at him until finally at the end of the train there is a black man singing a song, "My Old Kentucky Home." The man and the boy wave to one another, and the boy carries the memory of the singing man waving to him, he remembers it for the rest of his life. Given that the man is singing about returning to a much-loved place that is also the scene of many violent and difficult events for him and for people like him, I imagine the author is intimating how for people like Saroyan and me, singing about going home to, say, Van*, for example, is similarly fraught. It is undeniably a beloved and longed-for home on an ancestral level, but it is at the same time a very difficult home to actually embrace. The music of *We Will Sing One Song* starts with an exploration of the melody of those five words in the Stephen Foster original, and grows into a curious, deeply un-traditional dance, which releases into a percussion solo that resolves into an Armenian version of "My Old Kentucky Home." - **EVE BEGLARIAN**

We Will Sing One Song was composed for Apollo Chamber Players' 20x2020 project, generously underwritten by **PAMELA AUBURN**.

* *My father's ancestors come from Van, a town in what is now eastern Turkey.*

Neither he nor I have been there, not being as brave as the singing man in Saroyan's novel.



APOLLO CHAMBER PLAYERS

Globally Inspired Music

Matthew J. Detrick & Anabel Ramirez Detrick, *violins* • Whitney Bullock, *viola* • Matthew Dudzik, *cello*

J. Kimo Williams

- 1 *With Malice Toward None* (2020) 13:23
with **Tracy Silverman**, electric violin

Pamela Z

The Unraveling -- 20x2020 No. 16 (2019)

- 2 I. Joni 4:11
3 II. Lord I'm One 3:45
4 III. Travis 5:10
5 IV. Microbus 4:45
with **Pamela Z**, voice and electronics

Christopher Theofanidis & Mark Wingate

What is the Word? -- 20x2020 No. 11 (2017)

- 6 "What is the Word" (poem) 1:31
7 I. Extroverted 2:06
8 II. Edgy 0:43
9 III. Mercurial 2:04
10 IV. Noble 2:20
11 V. Very Fast 1:42
12 VI. Euphoric 3:00

Themes of Armenian Folksongs

Komitas/Aslamazyan

Arr. **Matthew J. Detrick/Apollo Chamber Players** (2021)

- 13 Festive Song 1:23
14 The Crane 2:42
15 Echmiadzin Dance 2:14
with **Joan DerHovsepien**, guest viola

Eve Beglarian

- 16 *We Will Sing One Song* 17:54
20x2020 No. 19 (2020)
with **Arsen Petrosyan**, duduk
Pejman Hadadi, percussion (tombak, kuzeh, dayereh,
bam-dayereh, senj, kanjira)
Joan DerHovsepien, guest viola
Eve Beglarian, digital track

Producers: **Ryan Edwards** and **Brad Sayles**

Engineers: **Ryan Edwards** and **Shannon Smith**

Digital Editor: **Ryan Edwards**

Mastering: **Alan Bise**

Graphic Design: **Teresa B. Southwell**

Cover Image: *A Juxtaposition* (1980)
by **J. Kimo Williams**

Recorded at: **The Clarion at Brazosport College**
Lake Jackson, TX

* *With Malice Toward None*: January 24, 2021

The Unraveling: July 16, 2019

What is the Word?: August 28, 2019

** *We Will Sing One Song*: February 1, 2021

* Electric violin recorded in Nashville, TN

** Duduk recorded in Yerevan, Armenia;
percussion in Los Angeles, CA



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