

4-20-2012

## Concert: The Music of Christopher LaRosa

Schwepe-LaRosa Orchestra

LaRosa Chamber Choir

Symmetries Double Quartet

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music\\_programs](https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs)

 Part of the [Music Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

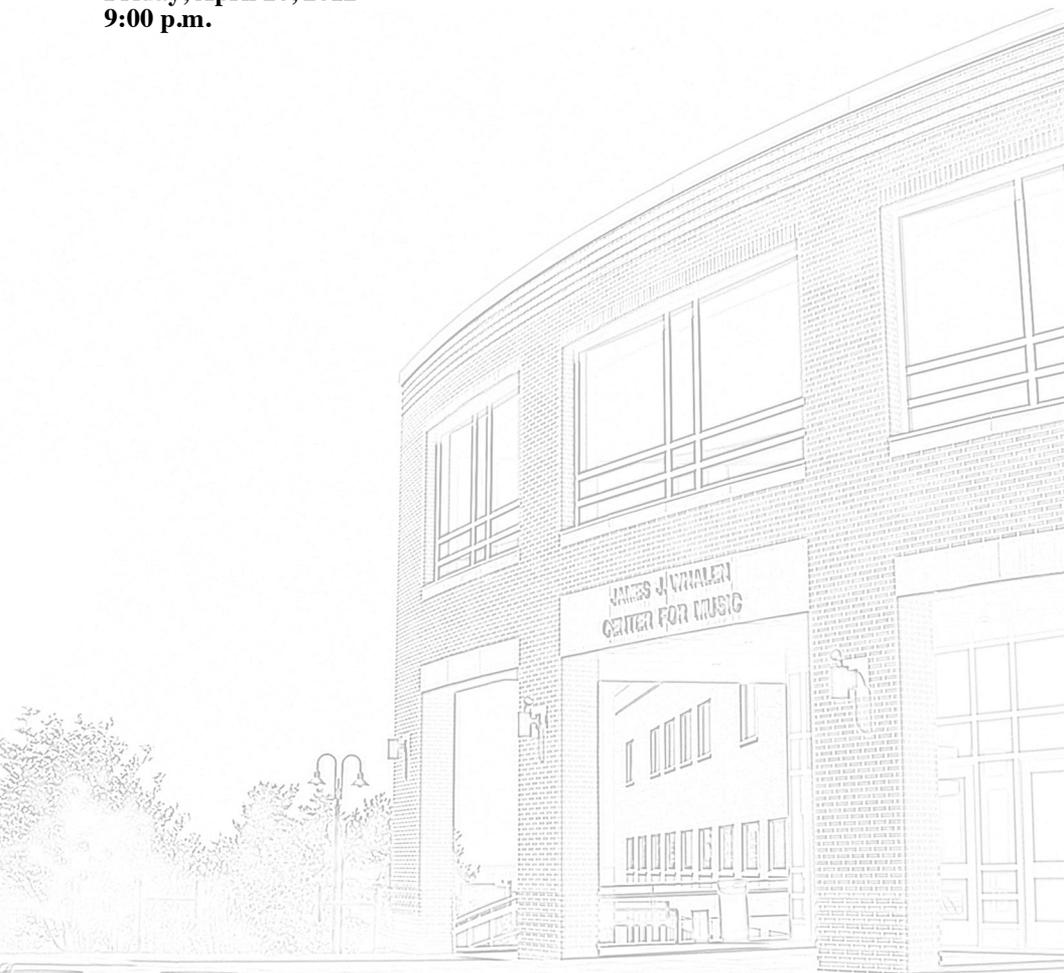
Schwepe-LaRosa Orchestra, LaRosa Chamber Choir, and Symmetries Double Quartet, "Concert: The Music of Christopher LaRosa" (2012). *All Concert & Recital Programs*. 3938.  
[https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music\\_programs/3938](https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs/3938)

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Concert & Recital Programs at Digital Commons @ IC. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Concert & Recital Programs by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ IC.

# The Music of Christopher LaRosa

Schweppe-LaRosa Orchestra  
LaRosa Chamber Choir  
Symmetries Double Quartet

Ford Hall  
Friday, April 20, 2012  
9:00 p.m.



## ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

# The Music of Christopher LaRosa

## Program

Coalescence

April 2011

Elegies and Laments

April 2010

*Schweppe-LaRosa Orchestra; Ned Donovan, speaker; Christopher LaRosa, conductor*

The Iris

May 2011

*Schweppe-LaRosa Orchestra; Patrick Valentino, conductor*

## Intermission

Songs for Nana

March 2010

- i. Memories
- ii. The Aging
- iii. Farewell

*LaRosa Chamber Choir; Andrew Mattfeld, conductor*

Symmetries

December 2011

- i. Dualism
- ii. Reflections
- iii. Intertwined

*Symmetries Double Quartet; Patrick Valentino, conductor*

---

This Senior Recital is in partial fulfillment of the degree Music Composition.  
Christopher LaRosa is from the studio of Dana Wilson.

# Personnel

## Schweppe-LaRosa Orchestra

### Flute

Corinne Shirk  
Sophie Ennocenti  
Savannah Clayton (Piccolo)

### Oboe

Ginny Dodge  
Michael Johnson  
Rachel Schlesinger (English Horn)

### Clarinet

Stephen Fasteau  
Matt Recio  
Brittany Gunther

### Bassoon

Michael Johnson  
Andrew Sak  
Meghan Kelly  
Marissa D'Ambrosio

### Horn

Liz Meade  
Robbie Oldroyd  
Margaret Kelly  
Ryan Chiaino

### Trumpet

Sam Thurston  
Alex Schwind  
Danny Venora

### Trombone

Riley Goodemote  
Tim Taylor  
Justin Oswald

### Tuba

Bill Connors

### Timpani

JJ Pereira

### Percussion

Julia Ross  
Daniel Pessalano  
Andrew Dobos

### Violin I

Kristin Bakkegard  
Jason Kim  
Sam Spena  
Nadine Cohen  
Jenna Trunk  
Sadie Kenny  
Natalie Brandt

### Violin II

Margaret Dagon  
Candace Crawford  
Alyssa Rodriguez  
Ryann Aery  
Alexas Esposito  
Aimee Lillienstein  
Timna Mayer  
Sarah Hoag

### Viola

Carli Rockenhauser  
Isadora Herold  
Angelica Aseltine

### Cello

Peter Volpert  
Tristan Rais-Sherman  
Ben Sharrin  
Thillman Benham  
David Fenwich

### Bass

Sam Verneuille  
John DiCarlo

### Bass Guitar

Peter Volpert

### Pianos

Johann Peiris  
Seth Waters

## **LaRosa Chamber Choir**

### **Soprano**

Xandry Langdon  
Nellie Morley  
Dana Ayers

### **Tenor**

Kevin Fortin\*  
Joey Kaz  
Brendan Kimball

### **Alto**

Haley Rowland  
Jessica Bennett  
Danielle Carrier

### **Bass**

Geoff Peterson  
Travis Pilsits  
Jeremy Platter

*\* Tenor Soloist*

## **Symmetries Double Quartet**

### **Quartet 1**

Sadie Kenny, violin I  
Margaret Dagon, violin II  
Kelly Ralston, viola  
Peter Volpert, cello

### **Quartet 2**

Sarah Hoag, violin I  
Jenna Trunk, violin II  
Mike Capone, viola  
Tristan Rais-Sherman, cello

## Notes

### Coalescence

A myriad of sounds often amalgamate in nature to create a pure and organic symphony. In particular, the power and homogeneity of the contrasting sounds of thunderstorms have always deeply moved me. In this piece, I further coalesce samples of thunderstorm sonorances with electronic complements. I utilized samples of wind, rain, and thunder, and created synthetic counterparts to each of these. In order to capture the random quality of raindrops falling on the ground, I applied stochastic techniques to a row of pitch classes. I derived the row from the date my house was struck by lightning and burned to the ground when I was a child. I further developed this row by utilizing transpositions procured from this same date, and created a chorale generated by the simultaneous sounding of these transpositions of the row. The piece is a coalescence of samples with samples, synthetic sounds with synthetic sounds, and samples with synthetic sounds, creating a homogeneous sonic world that leaves the listener wondering which sounds belong to which domain.

### Elegies and Laments

Texts by Ernest Hilbert

#### i. At the Grave of Thomas Eakins

The first visit I failed to find it, where  
Commodores and captains lie in brazen  
White vaults over humble Quaker enclaves.  
Five deer flashed in sun-streaked shade and paused there,  
Pure as stone in faint sun flicker, frozen,  
And then they dashed and leapt over worn graves.  
My formal heart, numb and flawed, was struck raw  
To learn life dies in art, yet such stillness  
Can stir so fast it seems to disappear:  
Time shown in a surgeon's blood shadowed saw  
Or summer's swift rowers slipping from us,  
While upriver, to others, they grow nearer.  
Wind rearranges sunlight through the pines,  
Sowing and destroying endless designs.

#### ii. Biglin Brothers Racing

Nimble Rowers, their art ancient as war,  
Raise their oars and ride gently on dented gold  
As sun shocks the river to ribboned fire.  
They haul hard and halt. Nothing prepares for  
Their clear and precise aim. They raise and fold  
Their blades under, pull, draw, rest, and respire.  
Simple flexed machines of doused oar, bright fleck,  
Trained across cold surfaces brisk as steel,

Delicate insect thrash, more than just life,  
More than we allow ourselves to expect;  
Polished slender shell and jet-drawn keel,  
Thrust through late noon light, fine as a knife.  
Muscled rowers glide on their mirrored sky,  
Winners, champions, built only to die.

iii. The Ancient Sailor Leaves his Heartless  
Patrician Lover to her Lyre

You moved against me like a new ocean,  
Beautiful—terrifying, and violent.  
You thrashed me for nights with your stinging waves.  
Like sand I dwindled and came loose; and then  
Your cruel music left its audience bent  
And wrecked with notes cut onto frost-flashed staves.  
I was a small ember you blew to flame.  
Now I'm stretched across an acre of bones,  
Supine and dizzy in a far inlet.  
A cold splendor will burn others the same.  
You clout your ice against my cliffs and stones.  
You struck my darkness with endless sunset.  
Your tempo crashes and pounds the dead land.  
Your song haunts me, and it can never end.

iv. Calavera for a Friend

When your heart is scorched out, the unruly world  
Will seal around you as a dark ocean  
Behind a ship at dusk—the wake will fade  
And spread wider, until fully unfurled.  
Love reserved for you will slacken. Your portion  
Of commerce ends with the last deal you made.  
A stranger will take your job, buy your home,  
Maybe wear your shirts and shoes, and the books  
You cherished will be thumbed by new readers.  
Young tourists will roam everywhere you roamed.  
Some small items might remain, artifacts,  
Footnotes, fingerprints, cuff links, little anchors,  
Small burrs that cling: initials carved in a tree,  
Your name inscribed where no one will see.

**The Iris**  
*for Laura*

(September 29, 1990 - June 3, 2010)

In late afternoon, we threw sunflowers,  
Iris, and lilies, your favorites.  
The flow swept them away in the sun's gleam,  
But one Iris defied the tide's powers  
With grace for five miraculous minutes,  
Then submerged, surrendering to the stream.  
A year later, I returned to the falls  
Where memories and thoughts of you still lurk.  
Unchanging trees with shallow roots listened  
To the dull roar echoing off the walls.  
Nearby, tiny streams trickled, latticework  
Along the forest floor. The ground glistened.  
A rainbow stretched across the broad cliff base.  
Everywhere I looked, I could see your face.

**Songs for Nana**

When I was eight years old, I played the piano for my grandmother, Virginia LaRosa, for the first time. Her eyes lit up with joy as she listened, and Nana (as my brothers and I called our grandmother) decided to share both her and her father's poetry with me in return. Nana asked me to set the poetry to music one day. The thought of creating my own original music had never crossed my mind, and shortly thereafter I sat down and wrote my first musical composition.

After composing that first piano piece, I decided that I would not set Nana and Great-Grandfather's poetry immediately. I kept the precious poems safely tucked away in a desk until I felt properly equipped to undertake such a meaningful endeavor. I allowed myself only to read the poems, and resisted the temptation of prematurely beginning work on them. Ten years after the day my Nana first inspired me, I finally felt ready to begin serious work on the poetry.

I wrote these songs in loving memory of Nana. If it were not for her, I might not have picked up a pencil and written that first composition—she truly gave birth to my creativity. Although she passed when I was only nine years old, I remember her blue eyes and loving nature quite vividly. Songs for Nana is a gift to the entire LaRosa family.

## I. Memories

Text by William R. Martin Sr.

Eagerly I follow the tracing  
As the sky and all appears,  
Painted with the brush of fancy  
Dipped in the coloring of years.

The perfume of the blossoms  
And the buzzing of it's bees,  
Is fancied in the scenes  
As it all comes back to me.

I see the path my feet have made  
Where bare of foot I trod,  
The old rail fence the gaping bars  
Where daisies friendly nod.

I feel again that something  
Which a tongue can never say,  
That departed with my youth  
And never comes again to stay.

Lost in the years behind me,  
Along the path of time,  
Where the dream of youth was brightest,  
And everything sublime.

I turn to scenes of boyhood youth  
Now framed with a golden glow,  
And long for days now past and gone  
All but forever this I know.

Quite often I find a pleasure  
And steal from the busy throng,  
Following fancies that wander  
To relive where they belong.

Oh could the years turn backward  
That made these temples gray,  
Could I escape the burdens  
And put these cares away?

Life could hold no pleasure  
To vie with that for me,  
To live the old dreams over  
If such a thing could be.

## II. The Aging

Text by Virginia LaRosa

She looks in her mirror, but the reflection she sees  
Bears no resemblance to the reflection what used to be;  
The once honey blond hair has taken an ashen hue,  
And glasses now aid the eyes of blue.  
Strands of gray have been showing through the hair for awhile  
And the dentures she wears completely have changed the smile;

The muscle tones are relaxing and the wrinkles creep  
Around the eyes and mouth as even she sleeps.  
She carries unwanted pounds totaling more than a few  
And these pounds have added a chin or two,  
The hips have widened from giving birth  
This, and the weight, has expanded both breadth and girth.

The years were filled with wonder as she lived them each day  
And never really noticed that person slipping away;  
But now she watches, as the image sheds one small tear  
Of requiem, for that countenance from yesteryear.

## III. Farewell

Text by William R. Martin Sr. and Virginia LaRosa

I wonder will they sing for me  
Upon that distant shore,  
Will I hear again that chorus  
When daylight fades no more,  
Reminding me of other days  
When I have crossed that sea,  
Shall I forget my land of dreams  
And all that's dear to me?  
When daylight fades forever  
I wonder will I care,  
For the things life's left behind  
Will they find a shadow there?  
And the scenes my heart doth treasure  
Will I dream of them no more,  
When smiles become eternal  
The sunshine as of yore,  
To lay the pangs of yearning  
When alas compelled to part,  
Will I bid farewell forever  
The sunshine of my heart?

## Symmetries

*for Drew Schweppe and Kerstin Vlcek*

Symmetries explores the meaning of existence by examining reciprocal relationships, reflective patterns, and intricate systems through the symmetrical manipulation of a variety of musical parameters, such as orchestration, timbre, texture, form, and pitch.

The agitated first movement, "Dualism," simplifies existence into complementary relationships. The movement exploits the symmetry of the ensemble itself in presenting reciprocal symmetries, juxtaposing left and right, high and low, long and short, and bright and dark. However, such a simplification of existence neglects the complicated nature of reality, and proves unsatisfactory. After turbulent struggles between the opposing forces of the ensemble, the movement merely withers away. The movement ends much like it began, revealing only a superficial notion of reality. Meaningful understanding requires more thoughtful consideration, and the proceeding two movements progressively approach existence with regard to its intricacy.

The meditative second movement, "Reflections," examines more sophisticated musical symmetries, such as melodic and harmonic inversion, canonic treatment of melodic subjects, and the palindromic form. Influenced by the mathematical concept of fractals (self-similar geometrical patterns that exist within fractional dimensions) the movement organizes these multiple levels of symmetry into a hierarchical layering of nested reflective patterns. While the elegance of such reasoning reveals more about existence than the first movement, it does not wholly model the seeming chaotic nature of reality and can therefore not fully explain existence.

Of the three movements, the elaborate third movement, "Intertwined," best embraces the complexity of life. The movement reflects back on the preceding movements, reinterpreting their motifs in the context of a truer representation of reality. The motifs combine, and a derived twelve-tone row alluded to in the preceding movements emerges. The derived row, a finite fractal, is symmetrical with five of its transformations. The members of both quartets state alternating and overlapping melodic manipulations of the symmetrical row. The quartets rapidly become entangled with one another in an interwoven texture rich in both order and complexity. The intersection of order and complexity serves as the most meaningful description of existence in the entire piece. Ironically, the first movement's examination of reciprocal relationships planted the seeds for this observation. Ultimately, however, the human pursuit of complete illumination proves overzealous and futile. Toward the end of the piece, the two quartets come together in a frenzied and reckless unison passage. Enlightenment gives way to desperation, and the beautiful logic amidst intricacy becomes lost. A contorted version of the opening material of the movement returns, and the piece closes with a devastating crash.

## **Ithaca College School of Music**

Ever since its founding in 1892 as a Conservatory of Music, Ithaca College has remained dedicated to attracting the most talented young musicians, and then immersing these students in an advanced culture of musical learning that positions them to be leading professionals in music. As the conservatory evolved into a comprehensive college with expanded academic offerings, the School of Music has continued to earn its reputation as one of the best in the nation.

Through a blend of world-class faculty, state-of-the-art facilities, professional performance opportunities, access to liberal arts classes, and a beautiful campus setting, students grow in a challenging yet supportive community.

Not only do students have access to our broad music curriculum, but they can also take classes in any of the College's other schools and divisions. As a result, graduates are well prepared for a host of careers and work in almost every music field imaginable. School of Music alumni include symphony, opera, and Broadway performers; faculty members and deans at prestigious universities and colleges; teachers in school systems through the country; music therapists, composers; publicists; audio engineers in professional studios; and managers in the music industry. The School of Music boasts a consistent 100% job placement for music education graduates actively seeking employment, and 98% placement for other graduates into jobs or graduate schools.

Since 1941, the Ithaca College School of Music has been accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music.

For more information regarding the Ithaca College School of Music, please visit us on the web at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music>

## Upcoming Events

### April

21 - Hockett - 4:00pm - Yusheng Li and the New Continent Saxophone Quartet

21 - Ford - 8:15pm - Chamber Orchestra - *Webstreamed at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music/live/>*

22 - Ford - 3:00pm - Chorus - *Webstreamed at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music/live/>*

22 - Ford - 8:15pm - Percussion Ensemble (GS)

23 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Woodwind Chamber Ensemble

23 - Ford - 8:15pm - Jazz Lab

24 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Faculty Recital: Ivy Walz/Brad Hougham/Jean Radice

24 - Ford - 8:15pm - Percussion Ensemble (CA)

25 - Ford - 8:15pm - Concert Band - *Webstreamed at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music/live/>*

25 - Hockett - 9:00pm - Piano Ensemble

26 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Piano Chamber Ensembles

26 - Ford - 8:15pm - Symphonic Band

27 - Hockett - 6:30pm - String Quartet Seminar Concert

27 - Ford - 8:15pm - Wind Ensemble

28 - Ford - 12:00pm - Campus Band - *Webstreamed at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music/live/>*

28 - Ford - 2:00pm - Campus Choral Ensemble - *Webstreamed at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music/live/>*

28 - Ford - 4:00pm - Conducting Masterclass Concert

28 - Ford - 8:15pm - Choir/Madrigal Singers

29 - Ford - 4:00pm - Symphony Orchestra, Concerto Concert - *Webstreamed at <http://www.ithaca.edu/music/live/>*

29 - Ford - 8:15pm - Brass Choir/Women's Chorale

30 - Hockett - 8:15pm - Jazz Vocal Ensemble