GUEST ARTIST SERIES RECITAL
“Works for the Modern Lever Harp”
Amelia Romano, harp

Sunday, September 10, 2023
Holsclaw Hall, 7:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Pistache ......................................................................................................................... B. Andres
(b. 1941)
Sonata, K. 298 .................................................................................................................. D. Scarlatti
(1685-1757)
Essence of Ruby ............................................................................................................... B. Younger
(b. 1983)
Santiago .......................................................................................................................... C. Horstman
(b. 1956)
Sonatina IV ..................................................................................................................... F.J. Naderman
(1781-1835)
Etude No. 7 ................................................................................................................... T. Labarre
(1805-1870)

INTERMISSION

Counterpoint .................................................................................................................... A. Romano
(b. 1988)
Sonatina for Harp .......................................................................................................... F. Handel
(1685-1759)
Beige Nocturne .............................................................................................................. P. Chertok
(1918-1981)
Etude No. 5 .................................................................................................................... T. Labarre
(1805-1870)
Metamorphosis ............................................................................................................ P. Glass
(b. 1937)
AMELIA ROMANO is an active soloist performing classical re-imaginations that defy convention in addition. She offers virtual workshops and seminars to equip lever players with tools for adapting and performing chromatic works on the lever harp. She is equally at home composing and adapting classical, Jazz, and Latin America inspired works for solo harp and chamber groups.

From her desire to merge folk and classical traditions, Amelia partnered with a classical trumpeter to form the group Luminance. When the pandemic upended the music industry, she returned to school to pursue a classical performance degree in lever harp at San Francisco State University.

This summer she will release a solo album, “Lever Engaged: Classical Works Re-imaged for Harp” and book “Classical Re-imaginations for Lever Harp,” featuring select works from her master’s recital series.

A BIT MORE ABOUT AMELIA:

A San Francisco native, she began her lessons on a lever harp, at the age of 9, with Diana Stork, who inspired early compositions, improvisation and playing in a variety of youth ensembles, including the Bay Area Youth Harp Ensemble. She graduated from the San Francisco School of the Arts High School, performing Laura Zaerrs’ Celtic Concerto, and releasing her first solo album, Seeking Peace, in her senior year.

Amelia earned a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Field Studies at U.C. Berkeley in 2010, with a thesis examining the legacy of the South Africa apartheid. She continued her harp studies while an undergrad, with Dr. Cheryl Ann Fulton and spent 2010-2011 at Ntonga Music School in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town, South Africa, sponsored by the Playing for Change Foundation.

Amelia’s time in Cape Town connecting and performing in the local music scene gave new purpose to her music life. Upon returning to the US, she formed StringQuake, merging rhythms with music from Latin America and Eastern Europe. A half dozen road trips and international tours later, she identified a burning curiosity for another language: classical music.

From her desire to merge folk and classical traditions, Amelia partnered with a classical trumpeter to form the group Luminance. Through this collaboration she quickly fell in love with the melodies and chromatic progressions of Chopin and Debussy. Her hunger to speak and understand this language grew by the day. When the pandemic upended the music industry, she returned to school to pursue a classical education at San Francisco State University.

While her formal classical education commenced in August 2020, the seed for her curiosity was born years prior. In 2014, she stumbled upon Barbara Brundage’s book, Classics on Request. This compilation of classics adapted for lever harp was her ticket to exploring this language. Brundage’s adaptation of Claire de lune and Premiere Arabesque were the perfect invitation to the classical realm. Craving repertoire that might complement the folk rhythms of her childhood, she worked through these compelling adaptations. Amelia sought a vocabulary that honored both traditions.

In January, Amelia completed her master’s in music with a focus in classical harp performance under the tutelage of retired second harpist of the San Francisco Symphony, Karen Gottlieb. Immersing herself in harp fundamentals — technique and tools to navigate classical works — she centered her studies around classical adaptations and repertoire, making her own adaptations where necessary. In this process, Amelia compiled a toolkit to approach and re-work music not intended for levers.

With only a couple dozen lever players internationally performing classical and chromatic works — Anne-Marie O’Farrell and Catriona McKay, to name a few — Amelia’s seminars aim to equip lever players with the tools necessary to advancing the lever harp in the classical world. She shares tips in this article published by the Harp Column Magazine, “5 Tips to Solve Chromatic Conundrums on the Lever Harp.”