



HarpSparks Festival 2024



March
3rd

Hymns of the Labyrinth

Two harps with electronics, voice, and improvisation

Emily Levin & Michelle Gott, Harp

Club SAW (67 Nicholas St.)

Doors open at 7 pm

Show at 7:30 pm

www.harpsparks.ca

@harp.sparks

Hymns of the Labyrinth

bachstro plutaños saarigeti* (2023)

for two harps and electronics
by Gabriel José Bolaños Chamorro

Mythos* (2020)

by Michael Ippolito
Emily Levin, harp

in between us, a sea (2021/rev. 2023)

by Andrew Staniland
Michelle Gott, harp

INTERMISSION

Freude (2005)

by Karlheinz Stockhausen

** Canadian Premiere*



**This concert is presented by the
inaugural HarpSparks Festival.**

**Founded by Michelle Gott in 2024,
HarpSparks is a creative community for
curious listeners, sonic explorers, and
artists of all kinds. Through education
days, exploration sessions, and harp-
centered performances, we celebrate
soundscapes that stretch our
imagination and challenge our
perceptions.**



FACTS

In *bachstro plutaños saarigeti*, a program called Max/MSP interacts with the live pitch, dynamics, and brightness from the harps' incoming signals.

Mythos is based on the mythological story of Theseus and the Minotaur, told from the perspective of the monster instead of the hero.

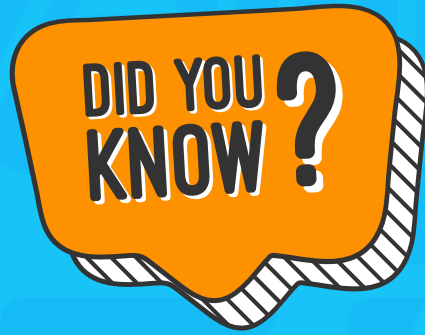
in between us, a sea uses several guitar pedals, including the EchoSystem (delay) and the Reverb, both made by Empress Effects here in Ottawa!

In *Freude*, Stockhausen uses two harps like one large, chromatic harp. The Latin text comes from the 9th-century hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

Where's Karlheinz?



Album Cover
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band



Michelle has been captivated by orcas since the debut of Free Willy. She believes that they deserve to thrive in the wild.

Emily taught herself woodworking during the pandemic. She has built many pieces, including a home bar.

Despite living in two countries, Emily and Michelle have been collaborating since 2018.

Emily's favourite holiday is Cereal Day, which is coming up shortly on March 7th. Prepare your spoons!

As a native of Las Vegas, Michelle's life path is proof that what happens in Vegas does not stay there.

Veni Creator Spiritus

Veni, Creator Spiritus,
mentes tuorum visita,
imple superna gratia
quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,
altissima donum Dei,
fons vivus, ignis, caritas,
et spiritalis unctio.

Tu, septiformis munere,
digitus paternae dexteræ,
Tu rite promissum Patris,
sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus:
infunde amorem cordibus:
infirma nostri corporis
virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius,
pacemque dones protinus:
ductore sic te praevio
vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem,
noscamus atque Filium;
Teque utrisque Spiritum
credamus omni tempore.

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator blest,
and in our souls take up Thy rest;
come with Thy grace and heavenly aid
to fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O comforter, to Thee we cry,
O heavenly gift of God Most High,
O fount of life and fire of love,
and sweet anointing from above.

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts are known;
Thou, finger of God's hand we own;
Thou, promise of the Father, Thou
Who dost the tongue with power imbue.

Kindle our senses from above,
and make our hearts o'erflow with love;
with patience firm and virtue high
the weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
and grant us Thy peace instead;
so shall we not, with Thee for guide,
turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow
the Father and the Son to know;
and Thee, through endless times
confessed,
of both the eternal Spirit blest.

Rhythmus 2. Stunde

1 Gruppen
 2 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12)
 3 (gr. Text 1)
 4 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12)
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Mentes tuorum
 Visita: **akk**
 Venerabilis
 Spiritus
 a 2
 ora prima
 + syuch.
 ora secunda, ora terza, ora quarta

Qui dicens domum dei
 paraditibus a throni,
 cantas
 III

et spiritalis
 exultio
 monere, digitus,
 gütura.

tu nite
 promissum
 patris
 gütura.

Sermo
 distans
 gütura.

Zweite Stunde am KLANG

Text 4 Zellen

Vers 10 8

Accende infunde
 Lumen ardorem
 sensibus, caribus,
 carnis

infirma
 nostri
 carnis

virtute
 firmam
 perfecti

FREUDE für 2 Harfen

4 Zellen

9 12

Hostem
 repellas
 lausius

pacemque
 dones
 protius;

4 Zellen

jede Seite eine Seele

4 Zellen

11 23 24

Parte
 Sciamus
 da Patrem

mos canis te
 atque
 Filium, Spiritum
 Florgenluft

4 Zellen

Erus te spiritum
 tuum et
 creabuntur
 et renouabis
 faciem terrae.

St.



Words from the Composers

Bachstro Plutaños Saarigeti was written for Michelle Gott and Emily Levin for the 2023 PRISMS Contemporary Music Festival at Arizona State University. The title of this piece is a portmanteau of the five composers whose music directly influenced it: JS Bach, Chris Castro, Sam Pluta, György Ligeti and Kaija Saariaho.

This piece is warmly dedicated to Chris Castro, who showed me some fascinating new discoveries in Bach's Well Tempered Clavier, which eventually led to this piece. Thanks Chris!

The electronics are entirely controlled and generated by the harps: the max patch detects the pitch, dynamics (amplitude) and brightness (spectral centroid) of the harps' incoming signals, and the electronics react independently in various ways to these parameters.

This work is part of an ongoing research-creation project that explores various approaches to technologically-mediated performance practice.

Mythos is in three movements.

First, a brief, improvisatory "Prologos" sets the atmosphere, introducing fragments of music that will reappear in the next two movements.

"Labyrinthos" is a musical depiction of Theseus running through the twisting paths of the labyrinth. In this movement, the structure of "turns" – shifts in harmony, or transitions between musical ideas – follows the structure and proportion of a classical seven-course labyrinth, a design found on coins and other artefacts from over two millennia ago. This movement ends at the center of the labyrinth, where I imagine a brief pause as Theseus and the Minotaur encounter each other, before Theseus dispatches the Minotaur with a single blow.

The final movement "Lyrikon" is an imagined song from the Minotaur's perspective. Since the Minotaur is dead, in my mind, the only way for its voice to be heard is through the instrument itself. So, the harp becomes a lyre – not formed from the entrails of Apollo's sacred cow, as another story goes, but from the body of the slain Minotaur.



Words from the Composers

Looking back from where we started, and seeing where we are now, it is hard to know what to say, or where to begin. It has been such a journey. Michelle and I had worked together in the past in chamber settings, and at one point, in some hot summer in Ottawa at some patio downtown, we declared we would work together on a harp solo. In between Us, a Sea is the result.

This piece was a collaboration between composer and performer right from the start. Writing for harp solo is probably amongst the most difficult tasks imaginable for a composer. The harp is so unique in its construction and techniques, that any composer who is not a professional harpist (most of us) absolutely needs help. The harp is diatonic, rather than chromatic nature, and the associated pedal system is surely one of the most idiosyncratic things in instrumentation. Further to these unique challenges, the way the hands and fingers play the instrument is not quite within grasp of pianistic intuition, nor is it similar to guitar. It is its own thing, with its own conventions and nuances. Even with experience, a trusted guide is needed, and Michelle was that guide.

At the start, we began with ideas - ideas about sounds, but mostly about story. Michelle was fascinated with whales, particularly orcas, and I was fascinated with stars and constellations. We talked about Callisto, Ursa Major, and myths related to the stars; We talked about whales and their journeys; Mahler's songs of a wayfarer; Cecil YoungFox's print Winters Journey; Greek myths. Through it all, everything coalesced. The night sky became an ocean, and the ideas of distance and journey became the delay lines, which begin in movement 1 at an enormous distance (8 second delay!), becoming so close in movement 3 that it is nearly unison, and then to finally into memory, as looping, in movement 4.

In the end, music is both about something, and not. It lies beyond what words say, traversing stories and abstraction on its own terms. I think there are a lot of ways of thinking about, and experiencing this piece. This is one of the magical things about music: It can both be abstract and defined at the same time, to different ends in different people. This is why Michelle and I chose to remove movement titles, and even change the main title of the piece to reflect this.



Words from the Composers

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

The First Hour of my new cycle KLANG (Sound), The 24 Hours of the Day, was a commission of ArtAche Milan, an institution of the Milan Cathedral with its artistic director Don Luigi Garbini. I named the work KLANG – Erste Stunde: Himmelfahrt (Sound – First Hour: Ascension) because it had its world premiere on May 5th 2005 for Ascension Day. The score is composed for organ or synthesizer, soprano and tenor.

Following this premiere, Don Luigi asked me if I could compose the Second Hour of KLANG for Pentecost 2006. I happily accepted the offer and innerly heard and saw a work for two harps. While composing, I imagined the two Dutch harpist-girls Marianne and Esther, both 21 years old, who live and perform together and are true idealists. One of them is the niece of the flutist Kathinka Pasveer for whom I wrote so many compositions for flute.

At first I chose the title Pentecost and decided to have the two harpists also sing – alternating or together – the main text of Pentecost, Veni Creator Spiritus, while plucking, caressing, stroking, pinching, rubbing, brushing, striking, hitting, jubilating. In accordance with the 24 lines of this hymn I have composed 24 musical moments like the 24 Hours of the Day, so that the Second Hour of KLANG is like a whole day within one hour of the Day.

In the course of composing, I changed the title to FREUDE (JOY). My fundamental feeling was Freude (joy). Again and again I imagined the premiere in the Milan Cathedral, the enthusiasm of the two girls, their playing, singing. The score certainly must have preserved this fantastic joy of my mind and soul during the many months of composing this work. There is something unique about the adventure of uniting two harps, which are normally tuned in diatonic scales, into one large chromatic harp.

Now I have also understood why I sent a drawing of an angel playing a Greek harp to Don Luigi: to remind him of the divine role of this instrument. Pentecost unites what was separated. My work FREUDE too.

Thank you!

**Thank you to everyone who came out to support
the inaugural HarpSparks Festival!
Your energy makes this dream a reality.**

**We also wish to thank several people who lent
their support and expertise to this weekend:**

Éloïse, Nick, Inès, and Cheri-jae at Club SAW

Jennifer and Mackenzie at 10,000 Hours

Sage Mosurinjohn

Meghan Herder Voice Studio

3 Sisters Bakeshop

Empress Effects

Ontario Harp Society

Alex Svetlovsky

Donna Jakowec

Natalie Hoffmann

Gabriel Bolaños

Andrew Staniland

Michael Ippolito

Chloe & Mika