

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a tan trench coat, stands against a blue background. She is smiling and looking back over her shoulder. She is holding a black violin case by its handle. The background is a solid blue wall with horizontal lines.

Mayumi Seiler
and Friends

SIX DEGREES

Music for violin and strings

Schubert

Davis

Oesterle

Delbaere-Sawchuk

Massenet



The title **Six Degrees** stems from the notion that we are all intertwined and connected. The group itself is spun from a fabric that brings together some of the extraordinary musical relationships that I have enjoyed throughout my career. Cellist Rachel Mercer, who is like a sister to me, has been a musical collaborator of mine on many enjoyable projects over the past few decades; Joe Phillips was my bassist in the Via Salzburg Chamber Orchestra, which I lead as Artistic Director for 14 years. I am also pleased to be introducing through this project two of my former students, Hee-Soo Yoon and Isabel Lago, who are now firmly established on the professional circuit and pursuing their own musical careers. Denise Ball has recorded and produced some of my concerts for the CBC, and we have shared a deep respect for each other over the years.

The connections also continue in my choice of repertoire. I have had the pleasure of commissioning and playing Michael Oesterle's wonderful works during my Via Salzburg years, including his superb Violin Concerto. Michael and I also share a great love for everything Schubert! Ryan Davis, violist and the composer of Lavender Jump, is a close friend of our recording engineer Pouya Hamidi and has become a dear friend to me. Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk, composer of A Search for Resonance, which was commissioned for this recording, was also formerly a violin student of mine at The Glenn Gould School. I met Ben Albertson, the harpist, while he was pursuing his postgraduate studies in Toronto. Ben played such an integral part in the piece "Méditation" on this album.

This album is the result of the close interpersonal connections I have come to enjoy with this unique group of composers and musicians through performances and teaching over the past decades. I am thankful to them all.

— Mayumi Seiler

Rondo in A Major, D. 438

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Schubert's music has always touched me deeply and remains very close to my heart. I love performing his works, whether in a sonata or a chamber music setting. I have played the Rondo several times with string orchestras, but it was Denise Ball who made the unique suggestion to record the Rondo with a string quintet. I think this more intimate setting creates a dialogue between the solo violin and the strings, which in turn gives one the feeling of witnessing a tale being told in a living room rather than a concert hall. Although it is played as a one-movement piece, this work comprises different segments, each with its own characteristics. I think of this work as a story told with every possible human emotion, but always ultimately connected to the Divine.

Lavender Jump

RYAN DAVIS

This piece was written by Ryan Davis for this album. His inspiration came from his home in Saskatchewan, where there are lavender fields that spread as far as the eye can see. I admire Ryan's music for its honesty and accessibility. He is comfortable with electronics, loops, and his own singing voice, but in Lavender Jump we are a violin and viola duo enjoying rhythm and melodies in a more conventional setting, with a definite "Ryan Davis feel" to the music.

"Lavender Jump, my first duet composed for the violin and viola, was heavily influenced by my upbringing in Saskatchewan. I was fortunate to witness several breathtaking landscapes when I'd leave the city, and certain colourful horizons left a lasting impression on me. I wish for the listener to imagine an overwhelmingly pungent scent of lavender, causing the ensuing music to waft to a place of elevated consciousness. Highlighted by rhythmic twists and jumps, the violin and viola venture together throughout the countryside and revel in the unexpected stops along the way."

— Ryan Davis

Duo for Violin and Violincello

MICHAEL OESTERLE

Michael Oesterle is a Canadian composer living in Montreal. I have performed several of his works in the past, some of which have been commissioned by Via Salzburg, such as his Violin Concerto, which I performed in the Via Salzburg Chamber Music series. His wonderful music possesses a highly unique language.

This Duo for Violin and Cello was composed in 2014. When playing and listening to this work, the word “purity” comes to mind. The repetition of the patterns reminds me of a mantra. Every time the melody returns, it feels like coming home in a meditative sense, while exploring something new each time.



A Search for Resonance

ALYSSA DELBAERE-SAWCHUK

Alyssa is a Metis composer and musician based in Toronto. Her mentor for this piece was Alice Ho, a well-known Canadian composer whose works I have had the pleasure of both commissioning and performing in the past.

“A Search for Resonance melds the enchanting melodies of Métis and Old-Time fiddle styles with the virtuosic elegance of classical elements. In this creative synthesis, the composition offers a distinctive perspective, reinterpreting high European art through the lens of Indigenous heritage.

At its essence, A Search for Resonance embarks on a captivating exploration of humanity’s profound connection with our planet, gracefully portraying themes of life’s fragility, disintegration, and subsequent renewal. It mirrors the ceaseless quest of individuals to transcend the immediate boundaries of existence, seeking deeper truths and self-discovery.

The first movement, “Dark Meets Light,” commences with deep, resonant tones that emulate the vibrations of galaxies, sparking celestial lights and evoking primal howls. It symbolizes the interplay of opposing forces, such as darkness and light, cold and heat, culminating in the creation of life’s deepest expressions of love.

In the second movement, “Earthly Loving Awareness,” the composition conveys an earthly mother’s serenade to her children. The mother gently reminds her children of their divine origin and their innate capacity to emanate love and return to it.

The third movement, “Sacred Womb of Creation,” delves deeper into consciousness, love, and unity, expanding these elements. It explores the profound intimacy and connectedness shared with all forms of life, ultimately leading to the attainment of wisdom”

— Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk

“Méditation” from the Opera

Thaïs

JULES MASSENET

This well-known and beautiful work, which is an instrumental entr’acte to be performed between the scenes in Act II of the opera *Thaïs*, has been transcribed for many different instrumental combinations. Marked *Andante Religioso* in Massenet’s score, it tells the story of *Thaïs*, an Alexandrian courtesan who is being persuaded by the monk *Athanaël* to renounce her sinful life.

Kuan-Yu Huang and I transcribed the version of “Méditation” on this recording for violin solo, string quintet and harp. Although strings-only transcriptions exist, I found it imperative to include the harp, which gives this arrangement significant pulse and atmosphere.



Mayumi Seiler

A violinist of impeccably tailored artistry, Mayumi Seiler is renowned for her exciting performances of concerto, recital and collaborative works, both live and on disc. She has appeared on stages including New York's Carnegie Hall, Toronto's Roy Thompson Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Vienna's Musikverein and London's Wigmore Hall and Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms. In performances renowned for their depth and their delights, she has collaborated with celebrated soloists and conductors, and created the distinguished concert series Via Salzburg, which played to sold-out houses in Toronto over 14 seasons.

Mayumi Seiler has appeared as a concerto soloist with major symphonies around the globe, including the Royal Philharmonic, Berlin Symphony, Moscow Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Toronto Symphony, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Academica Salzburg, City of London Sinfonia and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, among others. She has collaborated with such noted conductors as Kent Nagano, Peter Oundjian, David Atherton, Christopher Hogwood, Neville Marriner, Sandor Vegh, Hugh Wolff, Maxim Vengerov and Richard Hickox.

Ms. Seiler's extensive list of recordings includes performances of the Beethoven Violin Concerto, the two Mendelssohn Violin Concertos and three of the Haydn Violin Concertos with the City of London Sinfonia (Virgin Classics), Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la Fée* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic (Virgin Classics) and the recently released album *Six Degrees* (Leaf Music Distribution) with music for solo violin and strings available on all streaming platforms. Her many recordings of chamber music, including works by Schumann, Dohnanyi, Boccherini and Mozart, appear on the Hyperion and Capriccio labels.

A founder of Toronto's Via Salzburg – acclaimed as “One of the best roads to our musical hearts” (Toronto Star) – Mayumi Seiler led a string orchestra in regular sold-out performances at the Glenn Gould Studio. Through 14 seasons, she curated programs featuring renowned artists from Europe and Asia and combining varied art forms such as dance, pantomime and painting.

She has collaborated with many of the world's leading soloists, including violinists Maxim Vengerov and Ruggiero Ricci, violist Veronika Hagen, cellist Steven Isserlis, pianists Menahem Pressler, André Laplante and Ikuyo Nakamichi, clarinetist David Shiffren, and guitarist Elliot Fisk, among many others.

An active and passionate educator, Mayumi Seiler serves on the faculty of The Glenn Gould School in Toronto. She held a professorship at the Mozarteum University Salzburg, has given masterclasses worldwide and has adjudicated at numerous international violin competitions. She began learning music in Osaka, Japan, where she was born of Japanese/German parents. Having shown keen interest in the violin at the age of three, she spent her early childhood formative years in Salzburg, studying at the renowned Mozarteum.

In this recording, Mayumi Seiler is playing on a JB Guadagnini made in 1740.



Credits

Mayumi Seiler
Solo Violin & Director

Hey-Soo Yoon
Isabel Lago
Violins

Ryan Davis
Viola

Rachel Mercer
Cello

Joe Philips
Double Bass

Ben Albertson
Harp

Denise Ball
Producer

Pouya Hamidi
Recording Engineer,
Mixing Engineer,
Mastering Engineer

Tai Yokomori
Art Director

Ai Lynn Ang
Graphic Design & Layout

Rachelle Taylor
Copy Editor

Neda Navaee
Stelth Ng
Photographers

**Humbercrest United
Church**
Toronto, Ontario
March 17-18, 2023



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We acknowledge that Leaf Music's work spans many Territories and Treaty areas and that our office is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

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distribution

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1 Rondo in A Major, D. 438

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2 Lavender Jump

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3 Duo for Violin & Cello

ALYSSA DELBAERE- SAWCHUK

A Search for Resonance

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5 II. Earthly Loving Awareness

6 III. Sacred Womb of Creation

JULES MASSENET

8 "Méditation" from the Opera *Thaïs*