Widely known as an award-winning and compelling composer, Hannah Lash is first a harpist who has been widely praised for the virtuosity, "technical wizardry" (The Birmingham News), and expressive depth of her playing. As a soloist, Lash has been presented by Carnegie Hall, the Cabrillo Festival, Miller Theatre, the Alabama Symphony, the Yale School of Music, and the Bennington Chamber Music Conference. She recently premiered her first harp concerto at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall with the American Composers Orchestra under the direction of George Manahan, and this season will join David Curtis and the Orchestra of the Swan in England to perform her Concerto for Harp and Chamber Orchestra.

In 2016, New Focus Recordings will release an all-Lash disc (her debut album) featuring Lash playing with the JACK Quartet. Other upcoming projects include a concertino for harp with chamber ensemble (with Lash as the soloist), commissioned by Chamber Music Northwest. She also performed her piece Leaves, Space with bassist Samuel Suggs at the 2016 NY Philharmonic Biennial, as well as a faculty recital at the Yale School of Music, where she is a full-time member of the composition faculty.

Lash's music has been commissioned and performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Alabama Symphony, the JACK Quartet, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the Naumberg Foundation, and others.

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–George Grella, New York Classical Review

“During a Composer Portraits concert showcasing her music at the Miller Theater at Columbia University on Thursday, the harpist and composer Hannah Lash called her instrument a ‘good life partner.’ She said that while composing ‘Filigree in Textile,’ a three-movement piece for harp and string quartet inspired by medieval tapestry art, she spent many hours trying to create a sense of perpetual motion in the harp part. She gave the work’s premiere here with the excellent JACK Quartet. Her efforts paid off...”


“The standout piece of the evening was the premiere of Hannah Lash’s Concerto for Harp and Chamber Orchestra. Lash, who is a composer and a harpist, joined the orchestra on stage to perform as the soloist... The harp writing was particularly stunning, with beautiful melodies and moving cadenzas permeating the piece... After the final note resonated through the hall, Lash’s piece received three curtain calls (and it was only intermission!).”

–Sam Reising, I Care If You Listen

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THE COMPANY I KEEP

In this program, Lash performs some of the harp repertoire she feels most connected to alongside her own music. There are significant points of relationship between Lash’s compositions for the harp and that of Hindemith and Fauré. Both these standard pieces represent music that is tightly knit and that develops material in a way that Lash feels is close to her own process.

In the Hindemith, there is a real sense of motivic and thematic development which relates the piece deeply to the Sonata tradition, and yet Hindemith is setting up his own unique tonal and formal syntax. This sense of relationship to the repertoire of the past is also in Lash’s music, along with a similarly organic treatment of material in the way it develops.

In the Fauré, there is a combination of color, rhythmic play, and lyricism which Lash also feels deeply relates to her own music. Salzedo’s variations are all about virtuosity. They are exuberant, and often humorous, and most of all an extraordinary physical challenge to the performer. Virtuosity is something Lash enjoys thinking about in her writing, pushing the boundaries of what is physically possible on the instrument.

**Works on “The Company I Keep” include:**

- Paul Hindemith, *Sonata for Harp* (1939)
- Carlos Salzedo, *Variations for Harp in Ancient Style, op 30* (1911)
- Gabriel Fauré, *Une chatelaine en sa tour* (1918)

SONATAS FOR HARP

Lash presents four sonatas for harp, examining different ways in which these pieces interact with what it means to be a sonata. The CPE Bach reflects a highly changeable and detailed surface, with harmonic underpinnings that reflect the affective colors of the late baroque. The Hindemith is a tightly crafted piece whose form reflects a traditional sonata but reimagines the conventions in some important ways. The Tailleferre also engages with tradition, employing a straightforward gestural language and an almost diatonic harmonic world; but it does so with a lens reflective of the composer’s time and place, 1950’s Paris. Lash’s own sonata also plays with what it means to be a sonata, drawing inspiration from the expressive, chromatic, and mobile harmonies of Schumann and Schubert.

**Works on “Sonatas for Harp” include:**

- CPE Bach, *Sonata for Harp* (1762)
- Paul Hindemith, *Sonata for Harp* (1939)
- Germaine Tailleferre, *Sonata for Harp* (1957)
program offerings (cont.)

**BONES, MUSCLES, FILIGREE**

This program is entirely comprised of Lash's own compositions for harp. It is titled “Bones, Muscles, Filigree” for the way in which Lash thinks about her music: its background is defined and highly structured, while the materials, which are designed like musculature determine the trajectory of the piece and its tendencies. The surface of the music is highly detailed, often delicate and colorful, suggesting filigree.

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**Works on “Bones, Muscles, Filigree” include:**

Hannah Lash, Stalk (2008)

Lash, Concert Etude: Silk (2011)

Lash, Imaginary Preludes (2015)

Lash, Sonata for Harp (2015)
HARP IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AS PART OF A CONTINUUM

Hannah Lash's philosophy in approaching new music is that it is part of a musical continuum rather than a whole different species of music from our standard repertoire. In practicing and rehearsing new music, one can adjust one’s strategy to be sensitive to the particular challenges presented, but always from the basis of producing a beautiful sound, maintaining a relaxed and sustainable technique, and above all being a whole and sensitive musician.

When she teaches how to practice, rehearse, and perform new music, she does so in the context of an approach to standard repertoire. Students are asked to bring a piece of new music and a piece of standard repertoire, both of which will be worked on in juxtaposition.

PLAYING PIANO MUSIC ON THE HARP

Harpists play many transcriptions of music written for other instruments, particularly piano. Hannah Lash believes that transcribing is incredibly important, and that harpists can always push themselves and their instruments further than they might imagine. When teaching transcription, she challenges students to bring in scores they might not feel are possible to play on the harp, and she helps them re-imagine the music to make it possible and comfortable on the harp.

WRITING FOR HARP

This lecture demonstration is geared specifically to composers who wish to learn more about the harp and how to write their music in a way that will work with the instrument's unique constraints and qualities. Hannah Lash brings in a range of examples, from standard repertoire to transcriptions to new music, to demonstrate what the instrument is capable of and how to exploit its strengths.