

**Time Canvas to present  
“Silence, Space & Sound”**

by Mike Telin



One of the newer ensembles to emerge in the Northeast Ohio music scene is [Time Canvas](#) — Chiara Fasani Stauffer, violin, Joshua Stauffer, guitar and theorbo, and Roland Gjernes, cello — a group that brings together Baroque and contemporary repertoire, along with free improvisation.

This weekend they will present their most recent project, “Silence, Space & Sound,” on Friday, November 3 at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Ohio City and on Saturday, November 4 at Zygote Press. Both performances begin at 8:00 pm. The program includes modern works by Piazzolla and Bogdanovic, as well as a world premiere by Jeremy Allen, alongside Baroque works by Böddecker, Mealli, and Stradella. Click [here](#) to reserve a seat.

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“The project is designed to emulate an art installation,” Joshua Stauffer said during a telephone conversation. “We’ll perform from the middle of the room with the audience seated around the outside. People are encouraged to move around, in order to experience how the sound changes from different perspectives. And paper and pencils will be provided for those who want to write, sketch, or doodle. We want our creativity to be an inspiration for your own.”

Although many musicians are involved in the worlds of historical performance and contemporary music, Stauffer said that finding the group’s musical voice has been an evolutionary process. “My wife is the violinist in the ensemble and when we got

married she was primarily playing modern and baroque violin. I came from a jazz guitar background.” Fasani Stauffer studied modern violin at Basel University of Music, and Baroque violin at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in her native Switzerland, while Stauffer graduated from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia with a bachelor’s degree in jazz performance.

“After we were married we sat down and talked about what kinds of musical projects we could do together. We settled on one that incorporates our love of contemporary music and recently composed works, and music from the Baroque, as well as improvisation, because that is present in both.”

In the beginning Stauffer only played electric guitar but has since immersed himself in the classical guitar world, earning a master’s in classical guitar from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Jason Vieaux. “Classical guitar is an incredible instrument,” Stauffer said. “In fact, the classical guitar naturally does a lot of the things I was interested in doing with jazz, especially with respect to quiet music.”

The guitarist said that what truly rounded out the ensemble was when he took up the theorbo. “In many ways that was the culmination. When you play theorbo, you are part of the chamber ensemble but still able to freely improvise.” In addition to attending the Baroque Performance Institute at Oberlin and the Tafelmusik summer festival in Toronto, Stauffer also took advantage of the CIM/Case partnership and studied music history as well as earning a certificate in Historical Performance on theorbo. “It’s been a crazy two years, but a lot of fun. I think we’ve found our musical identity as an ensemble. After searching around and throwing paint on the wall, we’ve come to something that feels good and is working.”

The idea behind “Silence, Space & Sound” grew out of Stauffer’s experiences as an audience member. “I love going to concerts but very often I slip into a daydream, though I get some serious thinking done. There’s something about being around people who are performing at a high level that is very inspiring.” He now brings a small notebook to concerts and writes down any flash of inspiration. “I don’t want to be that person typing into their phone. But from talking with family members, who are not trained musicians, when they go to concerts they feel they need to hear everything a certain way. We want people to experience a new way of listening, so they will be encouraged to move around and take in the music however they feel most comfortable. The pencils and paper are there to allow everyone to enter into the creative process on their own.”

The show's title dates back to early 2013 when Time Canvas presented a program that combined Bach and free improvisations. "Every other piece was an improvisation, and while we were waiting for inspiration to strike there was silence. People said they enjoyed that because the anticipation was exciting. As musicians, we think about sound, but silence is equally important. It is the prerequisite for sound."

Stauffer noted that space is also an important factor in hearing music. "In the age of earbuds it's easy to forget that we do need space to hear. We tried to find venues with a good acoustic so you can hear how the sounds interact after they leave the instruments."

The guitarist said the ensemble is happy to present the world premiere of Jeremy Allen's *Time and Pressure*. "We've been wanting to commission something from him for a while and this piece fits in so well with the concert's concept. And while we're not always able to program early music, newly composed music, and improvisation in one concert, this time we've found a way to do it. And keep it to an hour and five minutes with no intermission."

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