

BlueWater Chamber Orchestra: Jason Vieaux plays Vivaldi & Dorman

by Mike Telin



“I’m really looking forward to this concert because the last time I played with BlueWater was around ten years ago, when I played Rodrigo’s *Concierto Aranjuez* with them,” guitarist Jason Vieaux said during a telephone conversation. “The Vivaldi concerto is very popular and well-known to audiences, and I think it will pair well with Avner Dorman’s concerto.”

On Saturday, May 4 at 7:30 pm at the Church of the Covenant, Vieaux will join the BlueWater Chamber Orchestra in

performances of Vivaldi’s *Concerto in D*, RV 93 and Avner Dorman’s *How to Love*. Under the direction of Daniel Meyer, the program also includes Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 7*. The concert is presented in partnership with the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society. Pay-what-you-wish tickets are available [online](#).

The Grammy-winning guitarist said that Vivaldi’s D-major Lute Concerto is recognizable for its famous second movement that has been featured in numerous television commercials. And although it was written for the lute, the work’s sparse texture makes it well-suited to be played on the guitar.

“It’s not at the same level of difficulty as playing a lute work by Bach or Weiss on the guitar,” Vieaux said. “There’s not a lot of polyphony in the solo part. There is the occasional bass line, but it’s very much about the melodies, and they adapt very easily to the guitar.”

Based on the book *How to Love* by Buddhist philosopher Thich Nhat Hanh, Avner Dorman's concerto of the same name was written for Vieaux as part of the Chamber Music Festival of Lexington. "One of the things that's a regular feature at that Festival is the composer-in-residence program," Vieaux said. "The first year I went was in 2015, and I premiered a work for guitar and string quartet by Jeff Beal. They invited me back the following year and Avner was there."

What prompted Dorman to write a piece inspired by Thich Nhat Hanh's book? "I stumbled upon it in a bookstore in Greensboro, NC and really loved the directness and simplicity and wisdom," the composer said via email. "He's both very insightful and also very real about love. There was a period that I had the book at the side of my bed and would read it daily. It's made up of short insights about love and relationships which I always found inspiring."

While Dorman's piece was originally for guitar and string quartet, he soon decided to make a concerto version. "It's really just the four parts of the string quartet broken out into a small string orchestra," Vieaux said. "The guitar part is challenging for sure, and the string parts are difficult too."

Vieaux said that the process of working with Dorman was typical for classical guitarists. "You tell the composer, 'I'm not able to play this, but would it be okay if I flip it up an octave and change the registration?' And then the composer says, 'Okay, that sounds fine.' It's really easy with iPhones, you just send it in a voice note. So we sent a lot of those back and forth, back and forth."

What does Vieaux find attractive about the piece? "I like the different characters that each of the movements project. The third is kind of like a love song. And the fourth is just fun, once you get your hands around it and figure out a way to play it. The fifth is kind of a dialogue back and forth between soloists and orchestra. And it's just a very exciting thing to play."

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