

# Daniel Pesca, piano

Friday, April 8, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.  
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Watercolors I: A Pair of Cats (2018/2020)

Daniel Pesca (b. 1985)

Isles (2017)

Alison Yun-Fei Jiang (b. 1992)

- I. As birds bring forth the sun
- II. Salt
- III. Undercurrent

Sonatine (1903-05)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

- I. Modéré
- II. Mouvement de menuet
- III. Animé

Six Line Drawings (2016)

John Liberatore (b. 1984)

## *Intermission*

Nocturne no. 6 in D-flat major, Op. 63 (1894)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Hyde Park Boulevard (2020)

Daniel Pesca

- I. Prelude
- II. Lakeshore Drive (Capriccio)
- III. The Lagoon at Dusk
- IV. Interlude: At Night
- V. Boblink Meadow (Little Scherzo)
- VI. The Wooded Isle
- VII. Promontory Point

## Notes from the Composers:

The works in my own ongoing cycle of piano pieces *Watercolors* each evoke a specific image, scene or environment. In “A Pair of Cats,” the pianist’s hands mirror each other, often playfully, sometimes aggressively. Gestures in the piece suggest various cat-like behaviors, such as pouncing, meowing, batting, and skittering.  
— *Daniel Pesca*

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*Isles* resulted from my reading of the *Lost Salt Gift of Blood*, a collection of short stories by the Canadian novelist Alistair MacLeod. Drawing inspirations from the writer’s hauntingly beautiful depiction of the Canadian maritime landscapes, this piece displays three musical “isles” in three movements set in contrasting landscapes and moods: shimmering and light, resoundingly violent, and silently turbulent. — *Alison Yun-Fei Jiang*

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Unlike many of my recent pieces, the six short movements in this piano piece are not consciously organized into a larger form. Still, though each movement is self-contained, the pieces in this collection share some aesthetic link. I think of these pieces as drawings. They are meant to be immediate—a two-dimensional space that enters the eye at once, but that the mind may comprehend more gradually. At the same time, each piece is a continuous line of some kind. The first piece, for instance, is a pseudo-hocket in which the persistent eighth-note pulse obfuscates the composite texture; it is deliberately ambiguous as to how many lines have been disbursed across the registers of the piano. A listener may perceive an upper “descant” between the highest notes, a bass line between the lowest notes, and any number of internal voices. Thus, many lines and shapes may emerge from what is really just a succession of eighth notes. — *John Liberatore*

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I composed the suite *Hyde Park Boulevard* during the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring and summer of 2020. During these months, I hardly left the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, where I took many long walks. This suite memorializes some of the neighborhood’s characteristic sights and sounds: the bustle of Lakeshore Drive, a main artery through Chicago, full of horns and sirens; the contemplative quiet of the lagoon at Jackson Park; small creatures at play in Bobolink Meadow, also in Jackson Park; and the same park’s Wooded Isle, which contains an exquisite Japanese Garden. The piece concludes with the swirling dynamism of Lake Michigan at Promontory Point, a favorite site for gatherings. The temporal setting of the piece is from noon to noon, with a set of nocturnal movements enclosed by brighter, more extroverted music.

In the early weeks of the pandemic, I frequently played Bach’s six Keyboard Partitas, and the structure of this suite reflects the contours and tonality of the first Partita. *Hyde Park Boulevard* is dedicated to my husband, André J. Washington. — *Daniel Pesca*



**Daniel Pesca** is a composer, pianist, and improviser whose interpretations stand out for their creativity and dynamism. A champion of contemporary music, Daniel is a founding member of several ensembles noted for their innovative approach to the development of new work, including the Grossman Ensemble and the Zohn Collective. Daniel has performed the premieres of over one hundred pieces, many composed for him. He has performed as concerto soloist with the Eastman Wind Ensemble, Oberlin Sinfonietta, Aspen New Music Ensemble, Orchestra of the League of Composers, and Slee Sinfonietta. He has been hailed as “the perfect composer-virtuoso pianist” (*All about the Arts*) and “equally talented as pianist, composer and advocate of his peers’ works” (*Fanfare*).

Daniel’s performances are on recordings from Urtext Classics, Centaur, Albany, New Focus, CCCC, Nimbus, Furious Artisans, and Oberlin Records. His solo album Promontory, released to critical acclaim in Fall 2021, includes world premieres of works by Augusta Read Thomas, Alison Yun-Fei Jiang, and Aaron Travers, plus compositions by Daniel.

Recent projects have included large-scale new works for the Grossman Ensemble at the University of Chicago and Constellations Chamber Concerts (Washington, D.C.). In the Fall, he looks forward to upcoming performances of Stravinsky’s *Petroushka* with Inscape Chamber Orchestra and Messiaen’s epic *Des Canyons aux étoiles* with the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh.

Since August 2019, Daniel is Assistant Professor of Music at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he teaches piano and composition and leads the new music ensemble. Previously, he was artist-in-residence at the University of Chicago, and also held teaching positions at Ithaca College, Syracuse University, and Northeastern Illinois University. Daniel holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied piano with Nelita True.

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