Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 7:30 PM EST

SEVEN LIMBS
BY DOUGLAS J. CUOMO
Featuring Nels Cline, guitar, and the Aizuri Quartet
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I. Prostration
II. Offering
III. Confession and Purification
IV. Rejoicing
V. Requesting the Turning of the Wheel of Dharma
VI. Beseeching the Spiritual Guides Not to Pass Away
VII. Dedication

Seven Limbs is a virtuosic tour de force for string quartet and the guitar, shot through with melodic beauty and rhythmic urgency, celebration and serenity, solemnity and unbridled joy. Juxtaposing Nels Cline’s wildly inventive guitar playing and use of electronic effects with the Aizuri Quartet’s classically based, forward thinking musical outlook, Seven Limbs sets these five expert musicians in a landscape that is slightly unfamiliar—where the ground under their feet is always shifting a bit in unexpected ways. Cline plays electric guitar with effects and acoustic guitar. His music is partially notated but largely improvised following specific direction and guidelines in the score. The quartet’s music is entirely notated, utilizing the full range of techniques, colors, and effects available to the 21st-century string quartet. Both strings and guitar are shapeshifters in that the roles of soloist and accompanist will be fluid.

Based on the Seven Limbs, a fundamental Tibetan Buddhist practice of purification, the piece is a ritual in seven movements. The limbs are prostration, offering, confession, rejoicing, requesting the turning of the wheel of dharma, beseeching the Buddha not to pass away, and dedication.

This evening is the world premiere performance of Seven Limbs.
NELS CLINE, guitar

Guitar explorer Nels Cline is best known these days as the lead guitarist in the band Wilco. Cline’s recording and performing career—spanning jazz, rock, punk, and experimental—is well into its fourth decade, with over 200 recordings, including at least 30 for which he is leader. He has received many accolades, including *Rolling Stone* anointing him as both one of 20 “new guitar gods” and one of the top 100 guitarists of all time. Beyond Wilco, Cline performs in a duo project with guitarist Julian Lage in addition to a quartet, the Nels Cline 4 (featuring Lage, plus bassist Jorge Roeder and drummer Tom Rainey); collaborates with his partner Yuka Honda as the duo CUP; performs as Stretch Woven with percussionist Scott Amendola; leads the Nels Cline Singers (featuring Amendola, plus bassist Trevor Dunn and percussionist Cyro Baptista); and plays with Stained Radiance (an improvisational live project with performance painter Norton Wisdom). Cline also periodically presents concerts of his concept album *Lovers*, which involves a 17-person ensemble and collaborates with dozens of composers/improvisers.

AIZURI QUARTET

Praised by *The Washington Post* for “captivating” performances that draw from its notable “meld of intellect, technique and emotions,” the Aizuri Quartet was awarded the Grand Prize and the CAG Management Prize at the 2018 M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition, along with top prizes at the 2017 Osaka International Chamber Music Competition in Japan and the 2015 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition in London. The quartet’s debut album, *Blueprinting*, featuring new works written for the Aizuri Quartet by five American composers, was released by New Amsterdam Records and nominated for a 2019 Grammy Award.

Through its engaging and thought-provoking programs, branded by *The New York Times* as “genuinely exciting” and “imaginative,” the quartet has garnered critical acclaim for bringing “a technical bravado and emotional power” to bold new commissions and for its “flawless” (*San Diego Union-Tribune*) performances of the great masterpieces of the past. In the 2019-2020 season the group toured extensively across North America, giving both debut appearances at Lincoln Center and at Carnegie Hall as part of CAG Winner’s Series.
DOUGLAS J. CUOMO, composer

Douglas J. Cuomo has composed for concert and theatrical stages, television, and film. Cuomo’s music, with influences from jazz, world music, classical, and popular sources, is as personal, distinctive, and recognizable as it is wide-ranging. His compositions range from evening-length works for theatre, including the opera *Doubt*, (premiered at Minnesota Opera in 2013); *Arjuna’s Dilemma*, a chamber opera based on the story of the Bhagavad Gita, (premiered at BAM’s Next Wave Festival in 2008); *Black Diamond Express Train to Hell* (premiered 2010 at Carnegie Hall by American Composers Orchestra), a single movement concerto featuring cellist Maya Beiser and a sampled recording of a 1927 preacher’s sermon; and *Savage Winter* (premiered 2018 at Pittsburgh Opera), a staged interpretation of Wilhelm Mueller’s *Winterreise* poems for tenor, electronics, loops, electric guitar, keyboards, and trumpet. His concerto for saxophone and orchestra will premiere in London in 2022 with further performances planned in the U.S. Cuomo composed the music for *Sex in the City* and seven seasons of *Homicide: Life on the Street*, as well as over 20 feature films. His last film score was for the award-winning film *The Pollinators*. Cuomo is published by Schott Music.
Engagement Events

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021
VIRTUAL CLASS VISIT: MUSIC COMPOSITION
Composer Douglas J. Cuomo presented on his work, musical history, and compositional process to Virginia Tech students in this seminar.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2021
A CONVERSATION WITH NELS CLINE
Nels Cline—composer and guitarist, best known for his inventive playing in the alternative rock band Wilco—participated in this lively virtual discussion moderated by Karl Precoda, senior instructor in the School of Performing Arts, with a joint appointment in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021
VIRTUAL WORKSHOP
Virginia Tech students from the School of Performing Arts learned from the Aizuri Quartet in this session tailored for string players.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021
POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A
Charles Nichols, associate professor of composition and creative technologies in the School of Performing Arts, moderates this discussion with the musicians.

Special thanks to John Irrera, Charles Nichols, Karl Precoda, Alan Weinstein, and Molly Wilkens-Reed

Go Deeper

The Seven Limbs prayer in Tibetan Buddhism consists of prostrations, offerings, confession, rejoicing, requesting to teach, requesting to live long, and dedication. Why do you think composer Douglas J. Cuomo titled his piece Seven Limbs? How did members of the Aizuri Quartet and Nels Cline manifest and explore these components of the prayer, sonically?
In the Galleries

UNBEARABLE BEAUTY
James Balog | Daniel Beltrá | Edward Burtynsky | Chris Jordan | Steve Norton
Through Saturday, April 24
All galleries

Expansive in theme and panoramic in scope, this exhibition presents works of art that are visually engaging, impactful, and even beautiful, while conveying the difficult reality that the consequences of human activity have imperiled the Earth. Featuring large-scale photographic works by five nationally and internationally recognized artists, a stunning film installation of one of the largest arctic glacier calving incidents to date, and an arresting soundscape of birdsongs of species that no longer exist, the exhibition articulates in striking, aesthetic terms the damage inflicted on our ecosystems by human activity. This exhibition presents a visual journey, poignantly bringing into focus a number of critical ecological issues, the enormity of which is difficult for most of us to grasp or fully comprehend.

For the most up to date gallery hours, please visit our website.
Online Resources

Join us for a special series of events featuring notable artists live from their homes and studios. Not another livestream or pre-recorded performance that’s widely available to everyone, our HomeStage series is exclusive to the Moss Arts Center and designed specifically to be presented online. For a full list of our online events and resources, please click here.

Reopening Updates

The health and wellness of our community is our top priority, and you can be assured that we are doing everything we can to keep you and our staff safe and healthy. Please visit our 2020-2021 FAQs for more information.

Box Office Hours
Wednesday-Friday, 10 AM-5 PM
Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

For more information, please call the box office at 540-231-5300 during these hours, or email us anytime at mossartscenter@vt.edu.

Land Acknowledgement

The Moss Center acknowledges the Tutelo and Monacan people, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognizes their continuing connection to the land, water, and air that Virginia Tech consumes. We pay respect to the Tutelo and Monacan Nations, and to their elders past, present, and emerging.

We also acknowledge the university’s historical ties to the indentured and enslaved whose labors built this institution. We pay respect to these people for their contributions to Virginia Tech.

As you engage with one another and the arts we present, we invite you to reflect on the history of this space and its possibilities for reconciliation, truth, and humanity. In the spirit of Ut Prosim, let this acknowledgment be but a single step in the Moss Arts Center’s commitment to these values.
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