

Melia Watras: Kreutzer for violin, viola and cello (2016)

World Premiere:

Frequency Ensemble (Michael Jinsoo Lim, violin; Melia Watras, viola; Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, cello); October 23, 2016, Seattle, WA

Duration: 14:05

Program Notes:

Kreutzer for violin, viola and cello traces a path of influence of Beethoven's ninth sonata for violin and piano: Beethoven inspired Tolstoy's novella *The Kreutzer Sonata*, which in turn inspired Janáček's String Quartet No. 1 (subtitled *The Kreutzer Sonata*); all three of these works have inspired countless other artists in many mediums.

My piece, *Kreutzer* consists of four movements, each containing related source material. Janáček opens the third movement of his string quartet with a reference (in canon) to Beethoven's second theme of the first movement of the sonata. I created a motive that I derived from the above two phrases, and use all three to form the DNA of the piece.

Rudolphe Kreutzer, the French violin virtuoso to whom Beethoven dedicated his sonata, never performed the piece, though he is known to virtually every string player today, through his important *42 Etudes* for violin. In part due to this immense contribution he made to the art of violin playing, I wanted to include a reference to Kreutzer himself, by including a quote from one of his famed etudes. Dazzling and meaningful in its own way, it is, at first, unrelated to everything else in the work, reflective of the violinist whose name is forever connected to a masterpiece that he never played.

—Melia Watras