

## Jacobs School of Music to present faculty and guest recital Oct. 12

By Gino Diminich

The Jacobs School of Music will present a faculty and guest recital featuring professor of music, Atar Arad and celebrated Jacobs alumni Yuval Gotlibovich, Duncan Steele, Melia Watras and Rose Wollman.

The recital will be held at 8 p.m. Oct. 12 in Auer Hall and will be livestreamed on IUMusicLive!

The recital will feature the world premiere of a composition by Arad inspired by Bach's chaconne — often described as the greatest piece of music ever written for the violin. Originally commissioned for the Hindemith Competition, Arad's piece melds a Bach influence with his own spirit, using a 12-tone row on the viola.

"My ultimate goal was to be inspired by the viola," Arad said. "Its character, range of sounds and also its technical possibilities."

Four of Arad's former students from different generations of his teaching career — Gotlibovich, Steele, Watras and Wollman — have composed movements not only modeled after Bach, but also referencing Arad's chaconne to form a partita for the solo viola. The collaboration process was something Arad found to be indicative of the Jacobs school, seeing it as a creative space for those who love music and wish to devote themselves entirely to it.

"The collaboration between myself and the four Partita Party's former students began at the first year of them studying with me and gradually evolved from collaboration between students and teacher into collaboration between colleagues," Arad said. "No, more than colleagues — a collaboration between musical brothers and sisters."

Watras, professor of viola at the University of Washington, first studied under Arad in the fall of 1991 at IU. As Arad's oldest student, his impact on her life was indescribable. From influencing her composing to her teaching methods, he inspired Watras to pursue her love for music.

"It's really profound. He lit the fire," Watras said. "It wasn't that I didn't love music before I met him, but it was

frustrating. I didn't feel like I was being heard or seen or that someone believed in me."

The sarabande composed by Watras was a blend of Arad's composition with allusions to Bach's chaconne, a delicate balance of reference without direct imitation. Watras took what she felt to be essential components of a sarabande and directed the notes outward, then wove in elements of Arad's work.

"With the reference to Atar's 12-tone, I took a feeling that I got from his chaconne and the 12-tone row," Watras said. "It just takes those elements, and there's plenty of room to push and open while remaining grounded."

Wollman, a violist and professor at St. Mary's College, studied for her doctorate with Arad from 2009 to 2012 at IU. Contacted by Arad about the composition around 2022, Wollman felt honored to be able to participate in the recital.

"Having your teacher realize that your relationship has morphed from teacher and student to colleagues is really exciting," Wollman said. "That he thinks highly enough of my work to ask me to be a part of his project is a really nice feeling."

The composition Wollman created is the fourth of the five total movements called a gigue. The traditionally high energy baroque-style found in Bach's giges was a feeling that Wollman tried to maintain in her piece. She referenced Arad at the beginning of her score and Bach at the end, bookmarking her composition with two unique and influential presences in her musical consciousness.

Reflecting on her time as Arad's student, she remembered how he would work with every young musician in his studio, allowing them to get what they needed from him to evolve their own musical techniques and future careers.

"He has a way of seeing his students for who they are and who they can be, helping them become themselves," Wollman said. "Atar just has this really incredible sense of how to get each individual student to be the best that they can be."