

Meet the Artist: Melia Watras



Melia Watras (photo by Rosemary Wagner)

University of Washington faculty violist Melia Watras will perform Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* with Seattle Modern Orchestra on May 19, 2012. She shares her thoughts on contemporary music and other non-musical interests.

What draws you to contemporary music?

It's really exciting to play a role in bringing a piece of music to life: whether it's enjoying the wonderful opportunity of collaborating with a composer on a new work, adding to the performance history of an existing piece, or improvising or writing my own music. Classical music is an ever changing and expanding art form, and I find it invigorating to be a part of the ongoing search for new ideas and new sounds. I think that performing and listening to contemporary music leads to a better understanding of music of the past, and vice versa.

When were you first interested in contemporary music?

I grew up listening to a lot of classical music, and got a chance to experience many different pieces. In particular, I remember in high school, listening to Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima by Krzysztof Penderecki and thinking that I wanted to make that kind of music.

What are your non-musical interests?

I enjoy doing Pilates, reading, and eating yummy food!

If you weren't a musician, what would you be?

I would have loved to have been a dancer or a visual artist...but the siren call of the viola was too strong!