



*presents*

J I J I

GUITARIST

2020-2021 SEASON DISCOVERY CONCERT SPONSORS

Charles and Virginia Clark

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation is the sponsor of our 56th Season.

This evening marks the 973rd presentation by the Harriman-Jewell Series  
and Jiji's first appearance on the Series.

*This is our 54th free Discovery Concert since 2004.*

Founded by William Jewell College in 1965,  
Harriman-Jewell Series' commitment to Kansas City  
has been to bring the best of the performing arts.

7:00 P.M., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021  
PARKWAY ROOM, 1900 BUILDING  
MISSION WOODS, KANSAS

# J I J I

## GUITARIST

*Occhi io vissi di voi*

**CLAUDIA SESSA** (1570–1617)

arranged by Jiji

*Asturias*

**ISAAC ALBÉNIZ** (1860–1909)

*Dynjandi*

**GULLI BJÖRNSSON** (b. 1991)

excerpt from *Harp of Nerves*

**HILARY PURRINGTON** (b. 1990)

*Bailarín*

**TANIA LEÓN** (b. 1943)

*COR*

**KRISTS AUZNIEKS** (b. 1992)

*Everyone Wants a Piece of You*

**J I J I** (b. 1993)

*For Patty*

**J I J I**

## ARTIST STATEMENT BY JIJI

■ What does it mean to be a musician living in the 21st century? I have asked myself this question over and over since I first enrolled at a conservatory. I was interested in listening to pop music and experimental electronica, and I loved dancing and attending live shows. But I also liked going to orchestra concerts and hearing my colleagues play great string quartets and sonatas. Would my interests always have to remain separate?

Tonight's program was conceived when I realized that it was no longer fulfilling to perform only works from the classical guitar repertoire. I started to play my Fender Strat with Filter'Tron pickups in recitals, using effect pedals and live processing software—I wanted to be loud!

I am over the moon to share a special preview of my upcoming album *UNBOUND* with you. *UNBOUND* is a commissioning project/album concept/recital program and it is to explore what virtuosity looks/sounds like in the 21st century.

I've asked eight amazing composers from all over the world—Australia, Brazil, Iceland, Latvia, and the United States—to each write a virtuosic solo guitar piece for me. Fast arpeggios, fast scales, or complex rhythm? It's totally up to the composers' interpretations. I'm challenged to push my limits as a guitarist and I'm very excited for this challenge! You will get to hear two pieces from the album.

I met Gulli Björnsson during grad school; we were in the same guitar program. We totally connected through a mutual appreciation for minimalism music and electronica. One day Gulli just straight up showed me a piece that he wrote (I didn't know he composed), and I remember being sucked into his music and finding myself completely speechless afterward. Time stopped. His music has that power—it's very special and personal.



credit: Marty Bra

*Dynjandi* is named after a massive waterfall in the west of Iceland, Gulli's homeland. The falls cascade down a mountainside and seven individual streams, each of which appears to flow in its own dimension of time. Like its eponymous waterfall, *Dynjandi* is in seven sections. Its arpeggios and harmonies reflect each stream, the slow sections represent the still pools between the waterfalls and the tone-clusters link it all together.

(continued on next page)

When Krists Auznieks first showed me *COR*, I was blown away. It was one of those pieces that was just a masterpiece right off the bat. There was one problem though—it was really, really difficult. A lot of leaps, fast runs, and stretches. I was determined to get this piece under my fingers. I am glad that I approached it with a different technique; it really pushed me as a performer. One of my favorite sections is in the middle, as you will hear and “see.” I don’t want to spoil too much before. Here is a text from Krists about piece:

“Words, their meanings, and the stories that they tell fascinate me. At the same time, I recognize that music has the capacity to tap into that deeper part of our being that precedes language. *COR* is no exception. In various languages it is at the root of words meaning “body,” which for me taps into the physical part of our existence: in this piece you hear the sound waves, you look at the body of the guitar, and, perhaps most importantly, you recognize the musician on the stage who is alive, flesh and blood, directed towards the body of the instrument to produce invisible physicality. In other contexts, *COR* becomes heart: to me this symbolizes Jiji’s will to sacrifice her time (and time is a part of life) for an idea and without this living, breathing, feeling, thinking human being, a piece of music is merely an idea. Heart is love: towards music we make and love towards people we work with; love towards life in its myriad shades. *COR* is also where we get our word for courage from: and it takes a tremendous amount of courage to approach music that asks your body and mind to come together, approaching the limit of what is possible. One of the joys of working with Jiji has been exactly her courage to dig deeper, to seek the unknown, to get closer to the edge of our existence. Her courage lies at the root of what this piece has become.”

Hilary Purrington is one of my closest friends/ collaborators. We used to live together in a giant pink house with eight people. I was a fan of Hilary’s music for a long time before we worked together and I went to her shows whenever I could. A concert that struck me was one that premiered her piece *Likely Pictures in Haphazard Sky* in 2016. It’s such a drop-dead gorgeous piece, I felt like I was inside a wall of sound. The textures and the way she pulls you in—it’s magic. Hilary is also writing for the *UNBOUND* project, but her piece on tonight’s program is actually an excerpt of the guitar concerto *Harp of Nerves* she wrote for me in 2019. We premiered it in November 2019 with American Composers Orchestra and conductor George Manahan at Carnegie Hall. I wore my holographic platform shoes. I wanted to be like a sci-fi Korean girl from the 2000s (the whole aesthetic was inspired by my favorite K-pop idol Lee Junghyun - WA). As the soloist, I am the central nervous system of the orchestra in this concerto setting. It is one of my favorite guitar concertos in the whole world. It really is a privilege to work with her.

The two female composers also highlighted in my concert are Claudia Sessa and Tania León—they are my inspiration. When I first heard Claudia Sessa, I was totally mesmerized; sadly, a lot of her music was lost. I arranged *Occhi lo vissi di voi* for solo guitar. It is a delicate piece yet powerful, with shifting harmonies to draw us in more and more. It is truly a gem.

Tania León is a legend; I’ve always wanted to perform her music. She wrote *Bailarín* for my former teacher David Starobin. I picked this piece just last fall and I love performing it. I had a phone call with Tania to talk about her music, and it was one of the most insightful conversations. I was sweating profusely from nervousness. Here I was, talking to a legendary woman on the phone! She was the kindest person and gave such great direction; it’s truly an honor to perform her piece for you.

What can I say about *Asturias*—the kindling of the fire—it is the reason I started this whole journey. I first heard it when I started playing guitar at the age of 8; it was the only piece I wanted to play. I begged my teacher to allow me to play *Asturias* but I did not have the right technique to perform the piece. It took three years to finally receive permission to play it. I remember feeling so excited to learn the piece and I practiced all day. I was overjoyed. I still get that giddy feeling whenever I perform it.

I hope this concert allows you to experience the scope of my world. You will get a bit of virtuosity and solemnity; quiet, then amplitude; distortion and pure sounds; Baroque and chaos.

This is basically my all-time mixtape for you—live.

Love,

Jiji

## JII, GUITARIST

■ Applauded by the *Calgary Herald* as “talented, sensitive...brilliant,” Jiji is an adventurous artist on both acoustic and electric guitar, playing an extensive range of music from traditional and contemporary classical music to free improvisation. Her impeccable musicianship combined with compelling stage presence and fascinating repertoire earned the Korean guitarist First Prize at the 2016 Concert Artists Guild International Competition.

*The Kansas City Star* described Jiji as “A graceful and nuanced player,” adding that “...she presented an intimate, captivating performance.”

Career highlights include a wide array of venues, including Carnegie Hall, 92ndStreet Y, Festival Napa Valley, Krannert Center, Purdue Convocations, Virginia Arts Festival, National Sawdust, Miller Theater, Mass MOCA, Subculture NYC, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Princeton Sound Kitchen, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A passionate advocate of new music, Jiji has premiered a duo piece *Talking Guitars* by renowned composer, Paul Lansky, released on Bridge Records. She has premiered works by numerous emerging composers, including Nina C. Young, Gabriella Smith, Riho Maimets, Kristis Auznieks, Gulli Björnsson, Andrew McIntosh, and Farnood HaghaniPour. She also performs her own compositions, incorporating electronic media and acoustic music.

Her music is influenced by her regular activities as a DJ, where she highlights the electronic dance styles of happy hardcore and Berlin experimental electronica. As a chamber musician, she performed with members of Eighth Blackbird, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Wild Up, and the Aizuri Quartet. Her performances have been featured on PBS, NPR’s *From the Top*, WHYY-TV, FOX 4-TV, *Munchies*, and *The Not So Late Show*.

For more information, see her website at [jijiguitar.com](http://jijiguitar.com).



credit: Marty Bra

# HARRIMAN JEWELL S E R I E S

THANK YOU TO OUR LEADING COMMUNITY, PUBLIC,  
AND CORPORATE SPONSORS FOR THE 56TH SEASON

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# HARRIMAN JEWELL SERIES

## OUR MISSION IS TO BRING THE BEST OF THE PERFORMING ARTS TO THE KANSAS CITY COMMUNITY.

Founded by William Jewell College in 1965, the Harriman-Jewell Series continues to carve out an enviable legacy as a performing arts presenter of international importance.

Many know that the Series presented tenor Luciano Pavarotti in his professional recital debut in 1973, but the story of discovery neither begins nor ends here. Few Kansas Citians had seen New York City Ballet's Patricia McBride and Edward Villella before they danced in the Series' first performance in 1965. Nor had the community heard violinist Itzhak Perlman play, unless one counts *Ed Sullivan Show* appearances that preceded his first Series recital in 1971.

*Discovery*, along with its co-tenets *quality* and *variety*, run the full length of the Series' existence. These principles set by the Series' late founder and artistic director Richard Harriman will continue to guide its service to the community.

An enduring aspect of the Series, drafted by founders Richard Harriman and Dean Dunham, Jr., is the availability of the performing arts as an integral part of a superior liberal arts college curriculum for William Jewell College students.

More than 970 performances have come to Kansas City by way of the Harriman-Jewell Series, including 24 American recital debuts by prominent artists. With the addition of its free Education Events that allow interaction with musicians and dancers, and its free Discovery Concerts that eliminate the barrier of cost, the Harriman-Jewell Series offers even more life-enriching opportunities for its community's youth and lifelong learners.

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McBride and Villella



Itzhak Perlman



Richard Harriman