

WIU CENTENNIAL HONORS COLLEGE
Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day 2023

Abstract

Performance

Major: Music Performance

Faculty Mentor(s): Istvan Szabo

Jessie Montgomery: The Importance of Underrepresented Composers in Contemporary Music.

João Pedro Maciel Motta Rocha

Alice Müller

Gisselle Marie Sanchez Diaz

Maria Fernanda Rodriguez Hurtado

This presentation will discuss the life and works of female African-American composer Jessie Montgomery and how her music embraces themes such as race, gender, multiculturalism, and social justice. The discussion will be set on how important it is to the classical music world to perform underrepresented living composers such as Montgomery, and how we as an ensemble - the President's International String Quartet - can relate to the discussed themes as international students in America. After the presentation, our quartet will perform Jessie Montgomery's "Strum", a vibrant piece of music that incorporates improvisational elements, folk motifs, and innovative voicing. Its title comes from the guitar-like plucking of the strings, known as "strumming", very common in American folk music, masterly transcribed to classical strings by Montgomery.