

Statement of Mentorship – CCA Mentored Research Award 2023

Dr. Erin Ellis

Gerardo Sanchez Pastrana

Golijov's *Hebreische Milonga* for cello and piano

When Gerardo brought this piece to my attention as an option for his final recital, I was completely unfamiliar with the work. Right away, there were many challenges we encountered in preparing this work, and Gerardo tackled this complexity with enthusiasm and excitement. Not only does this work present a very distinctive musical language and technical approach, the cross-cultural implications provided an opportunity for a more in-depth research project. I guided Gerardo extensively in lessons on how to interpret the score in order to leave the listener with a clear sense of the tango rhythms, klezmer-style ornaments, and other rhetorical devices that are unique to this work. Above all, we worked to ensure that the technique of playing the score on the cello did not interfere with these elements. There are not many pieces (at least, that I know about) that combine Jewish and South American cultural influences so effectively. I suggested that he reach out to Osvaldo Golijov directly to possibly clarify questions of influences, intentions, and even a few notational idiosyncrasies. Golijov graciously agreed to work with Gerardo, giving us both new ideas and clarity on the piece. I have truly enjoyed hearing Gerardo's confidence in performing the piece grow while engaging in this scholarship.