

Everything Is an Illusion

Elizabeth Dorazio, Video Art
Connor Heraghty, Pianist

Everyting Is an Illusion

Everything Is an Illusion is a video artwork projected alongside a live piano performance.

The story began in London in 2001, when Brazilian artist Elizabeth Dorazio became friends with Michael and Mary Somers, the grandparents of British pianist Connor Heraghty. She dedicated a painting, Everything Is an Illusion, to them, inspired by a phrase Michael often said.

Following their passing, the artwork was rediscovered and returned to Elizabeth, just as Connor was moving to Brazil. Inspired by this connection, Elizabeth and Connor have created a new work that brings live piano and visual art into dialogue.

The video art and music are linked through their shared themes of nature and transformation, each changing the way we experience the other. Through the superimposition of images derived from drawing-collage works, the video art will engage with movement, allowing time to unfold into layered presence rather than linear sequence: as an illusion, not as a stable or objective reality.

Music Programme

Heitor Villa-Lobos
Impressões Seresteiras

Ludwig van Beethoven
Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2 ("Moonlight")

Sergei Rachmaninoff
Prelude in D major, Op. 23 No. 4 Prelude in C-sharp minor, Op. 3 No. 2

Claudio Santoro
Prelúdio No. 12 & No. 2

Erik Satie Gnossienne
No. 1

Claude Debussy
L'isle joyeuse

Programme Notes

In Everything Is an Illusion, music and visual art come together to explore nature, transformation, and perception. The music and video art respond to one another, creating an emotional dialogue in which what we hear changes how we see, and what we see changes how we hear.

Written after Villa-Lobos's extensive travels through Brazil, Impressões Seresteiras reflects his deep engagement with the country's landscapes and cultures. Its melancholic melodies keep returning, each time taking on new colours and characters. This idea of transformation connects with Elizabeth Dorazio's visual language, shaped by her upbringing in the interior of Brazil. In her work, fragments of nature and organic forms are cut, layered and reassembled to create something new. Together, Villa-Lobos's musical expression of Brazil interacts with Dorazio's visual exploration of the natural world.

Nature also played a profound role in Beethoven's life and was a source of refuge. As he lost his ability to hear the world around him, he increasingly relied on his imagination to create the sounds he could no longer hear. Dorazio similarly asks us to look beyond what is immediately visible, encouraging us to think about the difference between the world around us and the world we create within ourselves.

Rachmaninoff's Prelude in D major unfolds with warmth and expansive lyricism, its singing lines supported by rich, sonorous textures. In contrast, the Prelude in C-sharp minor, Op. 3 No. 2 creates a darker, more monumental atmosphere with its powerful, bell-like chords. Together with the video art, they reflect the contrasting sides of nature – its warmth and beauty, but also its power and darker unpredictability.

Brazilian composer Claudio Santoro's piano preludes capture vast emotional worlds within just a few short moments. Their delicate, falling melodies are paired with Dorazio's expansive Fountains and Waterfalls series, where the plunging movement of the water mirrors the music's descending melodic lines. Together, the intimate scale of the preludes and the expansive imagery of the water explore the smallest details of the natural world alongside its vastest forms.

Written without conventional bar lines and shaped by hypnotic repetitions, Satie's Gnossiennes seem to suspend time, with the music unfolding without a fixed beginning or end. Dorazio's layered visual world similarly challenges a fixed sense of time, as sound and image drift together, inviting us to experience time not as a linear progression, but as something fluid.

Debussy's L'isle joyeuse (The Island of Joy) brings the programme to its conclusion with a journey towards a mythical island. Image and sound dance together, intertwining and building towards an ecstatic celebration as we reach the Island of Joy.

