

detailed creative explorations of the microtonal fabric of the speaking voice – but also highlighting the potential for gender fluidity inherent in the performance of these works. *A Dream* (first performed vocally by Rudolphine Radil in 1931) is presented by Chris Rainier, whereas some of the shorter settings of the Chinese poet Li Po (Li Bai) originally sung by Partch himself (and later George Bishop and William Wendlandt) are expressed from a feminine perspective. The performance also includes a solo presentation of the third version of *Barstow* – echoing the composer's own pragmatism when presenting this work scored for three performers throughout 1942 and 1943 – as well as an arrangement of the first version of *The Letter* (*Letter from Hobo Pablo*) for voice, the first Adapted Guitar 1, Adapted Viola and Adapted Guitar 3.



Hochschule der Künste Bern  
Haute école des arts de Berne  
Bern Academy of the Arts



## Deux regards sur Harry Partch

Dienstag, 24. Januar 2023, 19:00

HKB-Grosser Konzertsaal,  
Papiermühlestrasse 13d, 3014 Bern

### Mit

Charles Corey (Voice, Adapted Guitar 1)

### Scordatura Ensemble:

Chris Rainier (Voice, Adapted Guitar 1)

Elisabeth Smalt (Adapted Viola)

Alfrun Schmid (Voice, Adapted Guitar 3).

In Kooperation mit der IGNM Bern

Teil der Konferenz «In hommage from the multitude»

[www.hkb-interpretation.ch/mikroton](http://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/mikroton)

## Program

### Harry Partch (1901–1974)

*Come Away, Death* from *December, 1942* (1942)

### Charles Corey (\*1984)

*Come to Dust* (2017)

### Harry Partch (1901–1974)

*The Heron* from *December, 1942* (1942)

*U.S. Highball* (Version A, 1943)

### Charles Corey – voice, Adapted Guitar 1

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### Harry Partch (1901–1974)

*The Rose* from *December, 1942* (1942)

*By the Rivers of Babylon* (Psalm 137) (Version A, 1931)

From: *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po* (1931–33):

- *A Dream* (1932)
- *The Long-Departed Lover* (1930)
- *The Night of Sorrow* (1931)
- *The Intruder* (1931)

*Barstow: Eight Hitchhikers' Inscriptions from a Highway Railing at Barstow, California* (Version C, 1943)

From: *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po* (1931–33):

- *A Midnight Farewell* (1933)
- *On the City Street* (1931)
- *An Encounter in the Field* (1931)
- *On Hearing the Flute at Lo-cheng One Spring Night* (1932)
- *I am a Peach Tree* (1933)

*Letter from Hobo Pablo* (1943)

### Scordatura Ensemble:

**Chris Rainier – voice, Adapted Guitar 1; Elisabeth Smalt – Adapted Viola; Alfrun Schmid – voice, Adapted Guitar 3**

## Notes

*Come to Dust* connects philosophically, though not aesthetically, with Partch's own Shakespeare settings, "Come Away Death" from *December 1942* and *The Potion Scene*. I have followed a mostly natural inflection for the text, and offset that with voiceless, atmospheric passages that take advantage of the tuning and configuration of the Adapted Guitar.

An autobiographical setting of his 1941 journey to Chicago, *U.S. Highball* is an honest depiction of the hobo experience. Slim, the protagonist and Partch's stand-in, celebrates leaving each stop on his journey, as it represents another town he has survived without winding up in jail (or worse), and puts him one step closer to his arrival in Chicago. The question of what he will do on arrival hardly merits consideration.

Partch wrote his first draft of *U.S. Highball* for Adapted Guitar and Intoning Voice from February 14 to March 24, 1943 in Ithaca, NY. It is a nearly complete setting of the work, missing only a few passages where he thought other instruments – Kithara and Chromelodeon – would be required. Since, at the time, he did not have access to these instruments, he wrote only the vocal lines here, leaving no instrumental accompaniment. My approach to performing this draft was to take the harmonies provided for these sections in the completed first version (later that same year for Adapted Guitar, Kithara, Chromelodeon, and Intoning Voice) and incorporate them when they still form a natural fit for the Guitar, as well as to take out some passages that Partch cut from this completed version of the work. That aside, my performance adheres completely to Partch's draft – it is amazing to hear how fully-formed this piece was, even in these early stages.

Charles Corey

The selection of early Partch chamber works presented by Scordatura Ensemble commences where Charles Corey's performance of the first two 'movements' of *December, 1942* (1942) – for voice and the composer's first Adapted Guitar 1 – concludes. *The Rose* (the triptych's final 'song') combines nuanced harmonic shifts with percussion utilising the body of the guitar itself, momentarily creating the illusion of a duet presented by a single performer. Following this is a presentation of a number of the composer's earliest acknowledged compositions for voice and Adapted Viola, illustrating not only his