

Dylan  
HAMME

WILLIAM SUSMAN

Nicole  
BRANCATO

**SCATTERED**

**THREaDS**

  
belarca  
records  
belarca-010

<b>1</b>	<b>Aria</b> (2013)	14:12
<b>2</b>	<b>Duo Montuño</b> (2004)	6:40
<b>3</b>	<b>Seven Scenes for Four Violins</b> (2011) I Build II Swirl III Echo IV Weave V Drift VI Jagged VII Shimmer	12:25
<b>4</b>	<b>Motions of Return</b> (1996)	9:54
<b>5</b>	<b>Scatter My Ashes</b> (2009)	13:38
<b>6</b>	<b>Katrina Ballerina</b> (1974)*†	1:45
		Total Time 58:36

**Musicians**

Dylan Hamme, *violin; track 3, multitracked violin*

Nicole Brancato, *piano*

\*William Susman, *piano*

**Music by** William Susman

**Produced by** William Susman

**Recording and mixing by** John Kilgore

**Recording Assistant** Michael Hickey

**Piano Tuning by** Ed Wedberg

**Mastered by** Alan Silverman at Arf! Mastering, New York City

**Liner Notes by** Vanessa Ague

**Album Design by** Valeria Di Matteo


**Recorded** May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at The Power Station BerkleeNYC

All compositions © 1996–2013 by William Susman, Susman Music (ASCAP) available at Universal Edition

† Katrina Ballerina © 1974 by Woody Shaw, Celestial Harmonies Music (BMI)

© 2026 Belarca Records

*In memory of Katrina Krinsky (1938–2025)*



Life is colored by the many connections gathered along the way. A fleeting moment from an hour or decades ago may end up making a significant return; a new person you meet may know another you hold dear. These contacts gradually weave a web of invisible strings that tie you to the world around you, one that becomes more intricate with every day lived.


This is the web William Susman weaves on *Scattered Threads*, an album of six meditative pieces for violin and piano united by several serendipitous musical and personal connections. At the heart is Katrina Krinsky, a pianist and composer who, in her lifetime, collaborated with several leading figures of the 20th century avant-garde, including Karlheinz Stockhausen, Terry Riley, and Luc Ferrari. Susman, also a composer and pianist, sought Krinsky to be a piano coach while hoping to return to playing the instrument. The two bonded through so many shared connections to the avant-garde and became fast friends. Years later, Susman met her grand-nephew, a violinist named Dylan Hamme, and the pianist Nicole Brancato, and found the perfect combination of voices to present the music of *Scattered Threads*.

*Scattered Threads* surveys the breadth of Susman's compositional practice, the life of Katrina Krinsky, and the human connections that make existence so meaningful. The album's six pieces span several

decades of Susman's career, providing a broad overview of his ardent music. Trained in both classical and jazz piano, and with interests ranging from avant-garde composers like Iannis Xenakis to polyrhythmic musical traditions, Susman blends ideas across musical spheres, maintaining a deep sense of melodicism and rhythm throughout.

*Scattered Threads* celebrates Susman's sweeping style and is rooted in playful conversation between violin and piano. It's also a showcase for Hamme and Brancato, who both bring technical excellence and a refined performance style to the music. Brancato has been interpreting Susman's music since the two met five years ago, becoming a skilled performer of his works through a shared interest in synthesizing influences across genres. Hamme has ties to Krinsky, who was his great aunt, and shares Susman's early interests in the avant-garde, having won the 2024 Juilliard Concerto Competition performing Ligeti's Violin Concerto. Hamme brings a studied approach to performing the composer's music rooted in technical prowess and a passion for the violin's modern repertoire.

The pieces on *Scattered Threads* highlight the piano and violin in conversation with each other, inspiring close listening to their fluidity as they glide from each chord to the next. The album begins with "Aria," a



piece adapted from Susman's in-progress opera, *Fordlandia*, which tells the story of a power struggle between Henry and Edsel Ford.

As such, the five-part work narrates an energetic conversation between piano and violin. It begins with an oscillating piano melody paired with a sweetly ascending violin, and as the music progresses, sharp plucks, taut bowings, and brisk rhythms swirl among each other. Brancato and Hamme savor each note, together propelling the music with excitement and anticipation through these progressions. Later, "Scatter My Ashes" unfolds with similar resonance, but broadens and expands the piano's fluctuations and accesses the violin's richest registers. It's a more melancholy take until it erupts, slowly and surely, into an energetic melody catapulted by the piano's rapidity.

Elsewhere, the album finds a speedier, sharper sound. "Duo Montuño" flies through staccato, punctuated phrases. Violin and piano often bounce between each other, building anticipation through syncopated rhythms. Brancato and Hamme effortlessly seesaw between these nimble moments to lush melodies to quiet moments of surprise and uncertainty. "Motions of Return" similarly explores dynamic communication between piano and violin, shifting from gossamer melodies to breakneck speeds.

With "Seven Scenes for Four Violins," Hamme's violin expertise is on full display. Hamme plays each of four parts, which layer into intricate lattices of vivid melodies that grow as the piece unfurls. It begins with simple melodies introduced at the start of each movement; they then evolve with effervescence, layering on top of and through each other. Hamme's playing is elegant and light to the touch, foregrounding Susman's careful rhythms with precision and grace.

*Scattered Threads* closes where it begins: with a piece named for Katrina Krimsky. There's a hidden connection here, too: Susman first heard "Katrina Ballerina" years ago performed by Woody Shaw, his jazz combo leader in high school and one of Krimsky's partners during her lifetime. A tribute to Krimsky's memory, the short-and-sweet work embodies her open, poignant piano playing. It's also the piece that, through space and time, connected all these people and all this music. Music has the power to transcend across decades, space, and memories. With *Scattered Threads*, Susman celebrates and harnesses this bit of magic, and invites us to join the web, too.

**Vanessa Ague**



## Aria

Aria is adapted from a larger work-in-progress, an opera, called Fordlandia about the struggle for succession of power between Henry Ford and his son Edsel at the Ford Motor Company. The title comes from an aria sung in the opera by Evangeline, Henry's secretary and mistress for several decades. Henry built her a home down the road from his that included a secret passageway to her room. In this five-part work for violin and piano, the first four sections imagine a dialogue and interaction about their complicated relationship. The fifth and final section of Aria reveals Evangeline's expression of love and triumph.

The first performance was at Spectrum NYC, 2014 with Karen Bentley Pollick, violin & William Susman, piano. Aria for this album was recorded in 2025 at The Power Station BerkleeNYC by Dylan Hamme, violin and Nicole Brancato, piano.

## Duo Montuño


*Duo Montuño* was composed in 2004 and premiered in 2007 at The Knitting Factory in New York City by Demetrius Spaneas, clarinet and Elaine Kwon, piano.

This version for violin and piano was recorded in 2025 at The Power Station BerkleeNYC by Dylan Hamme, violin and Nicole Brancato, piano.

## Seven Scenes for Four Violins

*Seven Scenes for Four Flutes* was written at the behest of a commissioning consortium headed by Patricia Zuber with generous support from Philippe Kahn, Uptown Flutes, Wendy Stern and, Patricia and Greg Zuber.

The first performance was by flutists Denis Bouriakov, Bart Feller, Maron Khoury, Patricia Zuber on September 18, 2011 at Symphony Space in New York City. Subsequently, Patricia Zuber recorded a



multi-tracked version for the album *A Quiet Madness* (Belarca Records).

This version for violin was multi-tracked in 2025 at The Power Station BerkleeNYC by Dylan Hamme, violin.

The piece is divided into 7 sections or scenes:

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| I. Build  | V. Drift     |
| II. Swirl | VI. Jagged   |
| III. Echo | VII. Shimmer |
| IV. Weave |              |

## Motions of Return

*Motions of Return* was composed in 1996 and premiered at Old First Concerts in San Francisco in 1997 by Esther Landau, flute and Lee Nolan, piano.

This version for violin and piano was recorded in 2025 at The Power Station BerkleeNYC by Dylan Hamme, violin and Nicole Brancato, piano.

## Scatter My Ashes

*Scatter My Ashes* was composed in 2009 and premiered the same year at ICO Art & Music Gallery in New York City by Jacquelyn Familant, mezzo and Elaine Kwon, piano.

This version for violin and piano was recorded in 2025 at The Power Station BerkleeNYC by Dylan Hamme, violin and Nicole Brancato, piano.

## Katrina Ballerina

**by Woody Shaw**

*Performed by Dylan Hamme and William Susman*

This piece is named for Katrina Krinsky who we are all connected to. I first heard Woody play this piece live with his band at The Jazz Showcase in Chicago when I was in high school. A year later, we played it together when he was my combo leader at the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Clinic.



### **DYLAN HAMME**

Rising young violinist Dylan Hamme was winner of The Juilliard School's 2024 Ligeti Violin Concerto Competition and performed as soloist at Alice Tully Hall with Juilliard's AXIOM Orchestra conducted by Jeffrey Milarsky. As winner of the 2025 Waldo Mayo Violin Competition, he made his Carnegie Hall concerto debut in October performing Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with Constantine Kitsopoulos and the Senior Concert Orchestra of New York. In November, Dylan won third prize in the 2025 Joseph Bologne International Violin Competition. Currently Dylan is pursuing his Master of Music degree at The Juilliard School under Catherine Cho on full tuition scholarship, following the completion of his bachelor's degree at Juilliard under Areta Zhulla. His other teachers and mentors include Scott Yoo, Ying Fu, Ray Iwazumi, and Amelia Gold. An avid chamber and orchestral musician, Dylan is in demand with leading ensembles including the New York Philharmonic and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.


### **NICOLE BRANCATO**

Nicole Brancato makes music to unlock wonder. Fascinated with contemporary expressions of our shared human experience, the NYC-based pianist merges curation, composition, and performance in collaborations across the arts. Described as "brilliant" and an "immense talent" (*New York Magazine & Connect Savannah*), Nicole is "redefining the very notion of classical music" (*Atención San Miguel*). Her credits range from the Guggenheim Museum (NYC), Rai Italia, and the Banff Centre (Canada), as well as Lincoln Center,

Bellas Artes (Mexico), and HBO. As an educator, Nicole's extensive experience includes the Gesellschaftshaus Magdeburg (Germany), Lunigiana International Music Festival (Italy), and dozens of universities across the US. Recognized by over 50 international honors and grants, she is an awardee of NYFA (multiple years), NYSCA (multiple years), Pure.Art Circle Italy (2024), IPaT at Georgia Tech (2024), and National Sawdust's Hildegard Competition (2022 Finalist). She is a Yamaha Artist and Artistic Director of Seven Hills Chamber Music.

### **WILLIAM SUSMAN**

American composer William Susman has created a distinctively expressive voice in contemporary classical music. AllMusic calls him an exemplar of "the next developments in the sphere . . . [of] minimalism," and *textura* describes him as "not averse to letting his affection for Afro-Cuban, jazz, and other forms seep into his creative output." His music has earned praise from *The New York Times* for being "vivid, turbulent, and rich-textured," from *Gramophone* as "texturally shimmering and harmonically ravishing," and from *Fanfare* for being "crystalline . . . and gloriously lyrical." Susman's training as a pianist in both jazz and classical traditions was influential in his evolution as a composer, and his music is notable for its integration of a variety of influences, including free jazz, Afro-Cuban music, and other non-Western folk traditions. With this toolkit, he crafts a sound world that is both familiar and complex, with highly energetic grooves and hypnotic, modal-based harmonies.



About five years ago, I attended a wonderful performance at Old First Concerts in San Francisco, where my friend Jed Distler performed alongside several outstanding pianists. After the concert, we went out for drinks, and I struck up a conversation with one of the performers, Nicole Brancato. About a month later, she reached out to let me know she wanted to program some of my music at the Seven Hills Chamber Music Festival, which she co-founded with violist Dudley Raine IV. That moment marked the beginning of a rich and rewarding musical relationship.

Since then, Nicole has performed many of my works, including the ensemble pieces *Camille* and *The Starry Dynamo*, as well as *Aria*, a duo for viola and piano with Dudley. Each time, I've been struck by the beauty, depth, and elegance of her musicianship. We share similar roots in both jazz and classical traditions, and she instinctively understands and deeply feels the rhythmic foundation of my music. So when it came time for this recording project with Dylan, it felt only natural that Nicole would be the perfect pianist. I was thrilled when she agreed to join us. She and Dylan worked together beautifully, and I couldn't have asked for two more thoughtful, expressive collaborators.

My connection with Dylan began through Katrina Krinsky. Katrina, Dylan's great-aunt, was a major influence in his life and had been telling me about him for years. She introduced me to Dylan a few years ago when they both came over for lunch, followed afterward by some spontaneous score reading. A week later, Dylan texted me about recording my music, and I thought, *carpe diem!*

Now 23, Dylan is clearly on the path to great things. You can hear his remarkable performance of the Ligeti Violin Concerto on his website, learned in just a month, played entirely from memory, and featuring an improvised cadenza. Dylan's passion for 20th- and 21st-century music shines throughout this recording. He recently won a major competition in New York and made his Carnegie Hall debut performing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.

Katrina and I met about 15 years ago when I was looking for a piano coach to help me return to performing. I had written the first two books of *Quiet Rhythms*, and my frequent collaborator Joan Jeanrenaud recommended her. Katrina

was an extraordinary pianist who worked with everyone from Stockhausen to Riley and taught at both Eastman and Mills. With her deep roots in the avant-garde and jazz worlds, we quickly became close friends.

There is another thread to this story. In 1977, when I was sixteen, I attended Jamey Aebersold's jazz clinic at Northern Illinois University. After an audition process, I was thrilled to be selected by James Williams for the top combo, which was led by the great trumpeter Woody Shaw. To give you an idea of the level of talent Jamey attracted, the second combo, out of forty, was led by Dave Liebman.

It was an inspiring experience, and I still remember the sense of awe I felt when we played *Katrina Ballerina* during one of our daily sessions. The moment was especially thrilling because I had heard Woody perform the piece at Chicago's Jazz Showcase, which at the time was located at Rush and Delaware. During high school, it had become my regular destination to hear all the jazz greats.

A few years earlier, Katrina and Woody had been together in San Francisco. Katrina was teaching at Mills at the time and played piano before shows at Keystone Korner, where she crossed paths with many of the jazz legends who performed alongside Woody. He eventually composed a piece in her honor, naming it *Katrina Ballerina*. The title came from the way he described her touch at the piano. As Katrina once recalled to me, Woody had said, "Your fingers looked like little ballerinas dancing on the keys."

As a tribute to her memory, I have included *Katrina Ballerina* on this album, performed by Dylan and me. It felt like the most fitting way to honor her, through the music, the relationships, and the unexpected connections that have shaped this project. When Katrina and Dylan visited my home, we took turns playing *Katrina Ballerina*. It was a joy to witness her and her grandnephew sharing a moment of music-making with the very piece that, in its own quiet way, had brought us all together.

All of these moments of serendipitous meetings, shared histories, and artistic crossings have come together on this album titled *Scattered Threads*.

**William Susman**

