

... and under every deep a lower deep opens... (2020)

.... ir kiekvienoje gelmėje atsiveria gilesnė gelmė...

for cello and piano

When I came across this Ralph Waldo Emerson quote from "Circles", I knew right away that it will become a piece. At that point I didn't yet realize what is awaiting when composing it and why I was attracted to such imagery. Soon everything became clear. As though this darkness that is a focal point of the piece predicted the coming of the global coronavirus pandemic. It resonates with the McLuhan idea of art as a DEW line - "a Distant Early Warning system" which is a reference to radar stations that acted as an early detection during the Cold War.

In addition to the daily consumption of horifying macabre images from around the world, during quarantine everyone was forced to face their own inner depths. When all outer impressions and freedoms are limited, the things dormant inside tend to surface. Sometimes there was a feeling of falling deeper and deeper into a bottomless well....more and more with every passing day... and in this free fall one could still grasp for the light...The majority of the piece takes place in the zone of darkness where both instruments play in their lowest registers and the cello is even tuned down to A instead of C. Yet there are recurrent fragments of light as well...I was aware that this piece will be premiered along with the chamber music of Beethoven and it subconsciously influenced the choice of the mixture of classical forms such as sonata form with many deviations from its traditional model.

The piece was commissioned by pianist Gabrielius Alekna. I composed and dedicated to him "Chiaroscuro Trilogy" for piano and chamber orchestra in 2017. We have many things in common along with our Lithuanian heritage and life in New York.

"Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson "Circles"

Duration 12'30"

Premiere on January 22nd, 2022 at the Baldwin Auditorium, Duke University by Gabrielius Alekna (piano) and Caroline Stinson (cello).