

Roman Holiday Blues

Lisa Bielawa

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Note

Premiere: February 11, 2011, Issue Project Room, Brooklyn, NY
Duration: 6'
Instrumentation: Cello, two bow technique

American-born cellist Frances-Marie Uitti has lived in Amsterdam for many years, where she has developed a whole repertoire for her signature two-bow cello technique. Developed in collaboration with a custom bow-maker, this style of playing requires the cellist to hold two bows with the right hand, one of which plays on the strings in the traditional way and the other of which bows the two outside strings from underneath. The physics of the construction of the cello are such that the four strings form an arc, such that it is possible with these two bow to play all four strings at the same time – the inside two from above and the outside two from below. *Roman Holiday Blues* draws its musical moods from a particularly “blue” Christmas that Frances-Marie and I shared in Rome. Far from loved ones, we spent this “orphan” holiday consoling each other for a number of life’s petty woes. We also found a way to have fun – and both sides of our adventure come through in this short but dense musical exploration. Towards the end, the cellist must detune the lowest string down while playing, for a ponderously murky last word.

–Lisa Bielawa

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