

---

Senior Projects Spring 2023

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

---

Spring 2023

## Songs for Strings

Jayla Kai Smith  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2023](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2023)



Part of the [Composition Commons](#), [Music Performance Commons](#), and the [Other Music Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Smith, Jayla Kai, "Songs for Strings" (2023). *Senior Projects Spring 2023*. 357.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2023/357](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2023/357)

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Projects Spring 2023 by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

# SONGS FOR STRINGS



Senior Project submitted to The Division of Arts of Bard College

by Jayla Kai Smith

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York May 2022

## ABOUT SONGS FOR STRINGS

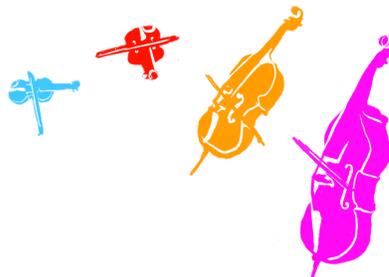
At Bard, I have had the opportunity to continue my pursuit of folk and rock music in the form of songwriting while simultaneously developing skills around composing, arranging, and scoring.

By writing for classical instruments, I have taken advantage of Bard's developed programs around more classical composition. Simultaneously, I have taken composition lessons and classes, worked within electronic music and production, played many kinds of music with friends and in concerts, had pieces of mine performed, sang in Bard's Chamber Singers, taken vocal lessons, and more.

Working both inside and outside of my comfort zones has been essential to this process. Instead of playing a show like the ones I play outside of Bard (guitar and vocals, playing my songs, solo or with a small band), I wanted to do something that was uniquely supported by the mentorship and resources I have access to here at Bard. With conservatory string players, composition mentorship from Kyle Gann, and the support of Franz Nicolay as an advisor, mentor and fellow songwriter, I created a set of arrangements of my songs for an altered string quartet (violin, viola, cello, bass) and sang with them.

Working with incredible string players from the conservatory program, Katherine and Elizabeth Chernyak, Jing-Yi Sutherland and Njya Lubang, I rehearsed and performed this set of songs. I made posters and postage-stamp posters and put them all around campus, constructing not only a concert but a creative and aesthetic world around it that I welcomed the audience into. We began with an instrumental piece, then performed five songs arranged for voice and quartet (adding guitar on the last one), and then transitioned and played two songs (guitar and vocals) with my friends jumping in on guitar, banjo and violin.

The project was about decentralizing my experience of performance from just myself and my own work, and creating a situation that was collaborative, trusting and open, where I did not have absolute control over the output. This relinquishment was more meaningful than giving a perfect, controlled performance. I am excited by the results.



**SETLIST:**

**Cheetah Family Jog**

Quartet

**Love letter to everyone**

Quartet, vocals

**O World**

Quartet, vocals

**Love artifact**

Quartet, vocals

**Salt on a Snail**

Quartet, vocals

**Relatable Song**

Guitar, quartet, vocals

**The Apple**

Guitar, second guitar, banjo, violin, vocals

**What A Shame**

Guitar, second guitar, banjo, violin, vocals

*All songs and compositions by Jayla Kai Smith.*