
Journal

● of the
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international alliance for women in music



Anne LeBaron

In this issue:

Gail Archer
Victoria Bond
Kyong Mee Choi
Violeta Dinescu
Katherine Eberle
Yayoi U. Everett
Ellen Frankel
Juliana Hall
Anne LeBaron
Zachary Milliman
Rita Southworth Moerschel
Emma O'Halloran
Eva Havshøj Ohrt
Wang Qiang
Roberto Reale
Patricia Surman
Line Tjørnhøj
Sabrina Peña Young
Reviews
Reports
IAWM News
Members' News

Table of Contents

Volume 19, Number 1 (2013)

Opera in the Twenty-First Century

<i>Crescent City: A Hyperopera</i>	Anne LeBaron	1
Victoria for <i>Mrs. President</i> : Modern Women at the Opera	Zachary Milliman	7
Reflections on Writing a Libretto	Ellen Frankel	10
<i>The Eternal Tao</i> : A Multimedia Opera by Kyong Mee Choi	Yayoi U. Everett	13
Virtual Opera Production: The Making of <i>Libertaria</i> , Part 2	Sabrina Peña Young	16
Laboratories for Opera: A Danish Experiment Called coOPERATION	Eva Havshøj Ohrt	18

Articles on Other Topics

Juliana Hall: A Remarkable Art Song Composer	Katherine Eberle	21
Wang Qiang: A Composer In Tune With Her Times		23
Oldenburger Komponisten-Colloquium	Roberto Reale	25
<i>Nosferatu</i> : A Symphony of Horror by Violeta Dinescu	Roberto Reale	25
Meet Three New IAWM Members		
I Wanted to Be a Cheerleader but I Couldn't Jump	Rita Southworth Moerschel	26
Accidental Music	Emma O'Halloran	27
My Path as a Flutist	Patricia Surman	28
The Muse's Voice: A Survey of Women Organists in North America	Gail Archer	29

Book Reviews

Deborah Hayes: <i>Ruth Shaw Wylie: The Composer and Her Music</i>	Beth Christensen	32
Sharon Mabry: <i>The Performing Life: A Singer's Guide to Survival</i>	Julie Cross	32
Monique Buzzarté and Tom Bickley, eds.: <i>Anthology of Essays on Deep Listening</i>	Jean Wald	33

Compact Disc Reviews

Judith Lang Zaimont: <i>Eternal Evolution</i>	Kimberly Greene	34
Cynthia Green Libby: <i>The Lotus Pond: Exotic Oboe Sounds</i>	Susan H. Borwick	35
<i>Oasis</i> : Music of Tsippi Fleischer	Meira Warshauer	36
<i>In The Library of Dreams: The Electroacoustic Dream Theatre of Frances White</i>	Susan Frykberg	37
Elizabeth Vercoe: <i>Kleemation and Other Works</i>	Laura Kafka	38
Lori Laitman and Steve Heitzeg: <i>Wild Songs</i>	Cheryl Coker	39
Airi Yoshioka: <i>Stolen Gold</i>	Elizabeth Vercoe	39

Reports

Melodia Women's Choir of NYC: A Reflection on a Decade of Change in Women's Choral Music ...	Teri Duerr	40
The Kapralova Society Annual Report 2012	Karla Hartl	41
The 2013 Women Composers Festival of Hartford	Jessica Rudman and Susan Mardinly	42
Women in Music UK	Sarah Cole	43
Japan: Women Composers of Latvia, South Korea, and Japan	Taeko Nishizaka	45

IAWM News

IAWM Annual Concert: Review	Pamela J. Marshall	46
IAWM Annual Concert: Pre-Concert Panel Discussion	Carrie Leigh Page	47
IAWM Announcements and Reports		48
Congratulations to Award Winners		48

Members' News	Anita Hanawalt	49
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Crescent City: A Hyperopera

ANNE LEBARON

One year ago, a hurricane nearly destroyed Crescent City.¹ Now, a larger, darker, meaner one rumbles in the distance, while anarchic revelers and roving ghosts of murderers take over the city, a shell of its former self. Desperate to save her beloved hometown, the legendary voodoo queen, Marie Laveau, emerges from her tomb. She summons the Loa, deities from the voodoo pantheon, pleading for their help. In order to come to her aid, they stipulate one condition: at least one good person among the ragtag and reckless citizenry must be found. As the Loa disperse to search for that person who will make the city worthy of salvation, a perilous, nightmarish urban adventure ensues. Will Marie Laveau, two lone cops (one of them no longer alive), and the cynical Loa succeed in preventing the looming mega-storm from destroying Crescent City?

In two acts and fifteen scenes and with a duration of two hours, *Crescent City* is without a doubt the most personal work I've ever composed. As a native of Louisiana, I grew up hearing jazz, bluegrass, zydeco, blues, rhythm and blues, folk, and Cajun/Creole music. Hurricanes were an ever-present threat; the devastation all along the Gulf Coast wrought by Camille in 1969, when I was sixteen years old, is still fresh in my memory. When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, my opera *Wet* (which happened to involve a deadly flood) was being produced in Los Angeles. The effects and aftermath of this catastrophic storm were exacerbated by shrill opinions expressed in national print and broadcast media that questioned the wisdom of spending federal funds in order to "save" New Orleans. These devastating events, along with a lifelong fascination with Marie Laveau, combined to ignite the creation of *Crescent City*. Douglas Kearney, who wrote the libretto, captured the lurking sense of danger, the shards of dark humor, and the hubris surrounding the opera's quietly apocalyptic ending.²

During the first three years of the opera's evolution (2006-2009), three concert performances of selected scenes took place. Two were programmed on New York City Opera VOX concerts, and a third, *Phan-*

tasmagoriettas from Crescent City, was presented by the Loos Ensemble during the Dag in de Branding Festival in The Hague. Finally, in May 2012, guided by the vision of the brilliant young director Yuval Sharon, *Crescent City* was fully staged in Los Angeles. As the first initiative of The Industry,³ Yuval's newly formed company, it was a litmus test. Could *Crescent City*, a new opera billed as a hyperopera,⁴ attract the sizable audience we needed to an unfamiliar venue, for a production by an unknown company, over the course of eleven performances?

Ambitious in scale and audacious in spirit, the production of *Crescent City* involved tactics rarely embraced by opera companies. For example, a different approach to the creation and building of a set was taken, expanding the responsibilities expected of a set designer into that of a collective, but one in which the artists retained their autonomy. Visual artists based in Los Angeles were invited to design and implement individual installations, collectively building a cityscape that referenced the real Crescent City. Six artists were each assigned a specific location—cemetery, hospital with a helipad roof, junk heap, dive bar, wooden shack, and swamp—and were charged with creating a sense of that place.⁵ Prior to the fabrication process, the group of visual artists met several times with the lighting designer, sound engineers, video projectionist, costume designer, director, producer, music director, librettist, and myself. These gatherings were essential for acquainting the artists, some of whom had never attended an opera, with the story, characters, and music, and for facilitating dialogues among them and other members of the production and design team.

Meanwhile, a search was underway for a venue large enough to contain sizable

installations, sculptures, and even functional buildings, while allowing enough additional space for performers, orchestra, and audience. (A proscenium arch simply wouldn't do.) After months of scouting potential locations, we settled on Atwater Crossing, a 25,000-square-foot warehouse (of which we used about half) connected to a restaurant and bar in Atwater Village, near downtown Los Angeles. Despite a few personnel shifts during the months prior to opening night, compounded by a stream of challenges erupting from the unconventional warehouse space, we ultimately ended up with a dynamic group of over seventy individuals⁶ who contributed to the remarkable success of *Crescent City*. Our city-in-a-warehouse attracted a full house every night; some audience members flew in from the East Coast and from Europe. Over a dozen reviews were written, with press, online media, radio, and even billboards generating buzz for us prior to opening night, and throughout the run. Mark Swed, in a couple of *Los Angeles Times* reviews, described the music as "weirdly exuberant... always captivating...breathhtaking." *Opera West* wrote, "A totally unforgettable event and a superb score." My favorite, from Culture Spot LA: "LeBaron has cooked up a complex, exotic, polyrhythmic gumbo of sound. The images are indelible, and it is a production you will not soon forget... Preservation Hall on acid." (See Example 1: Marie Laveau's polyrhythmic invocation of the Loa.)

How did we manage to accomplish the seemingly impossible? The extreme dedication and focus of the director, Yuval Sharon, along with our energetic producer, Laura Kay Swanson, inspired everyone—cast, crew, creative teams—to go beyond perceived limitations. Wielding an



Ex. 1. *Crescent City*, Marie Laveau invokes the Loa

arsenal of fundraising techniques and activities related to fundraising, we were able to attract enough funding to produce the lengthy run of *Crescent City* with a budget of \$250,000. The cultivation of donors, and of an eventual audience, began about fifteen months prior to opening night. A packed benefit performance was held in Culver City, followed a few months later by another in Hollywood and a concert reading in Santa Monica. Funds were also raised from foundations (the MAP Fund), a Kickstarter campaign, and individuals. In-kind contributions, yet another means for getting the opera into production, were indispensable to its success.⁷

As the artists' installations were taking shape over the course of about six weeks, Yuval published a blog, "Daily Dispatches from a City-in-the-Making," illustrating their progress, along with updates related to the piano/vocal rehearsals. During this period I was feverishly orchestrating; reading his blow-by-blow account helped assuage my frustration at being chained to my desk and missing all the exciting bits of everything coming together. Yuval's colorful reports, spreading the word of our endeavor, may have indirectly contributed to our fundraising efforts. His picturesque blog can be accessed here: <http://theindustrylosangeles.wordpress.com/>

Once we had secured the enormous warehouse space we could begin to imagine where, and how, the audience might be invited to witness the goings-on in *Crescent City*. The Chit-Hole, our dive bar, was one obvious location for an immersive experience. Audience members seated in the red beanbag chairs (placed on either side of the long tongue that formed the performer's runway) would be privy to an up-close-and-personal view of the star entertainer, the world-weary Deadly Belle. Prancing to and fro in her dress constructed entirely of pink condoms while belting out her



Fig. 1. *Crescent City*, Deadly Belle in the Dive Bar (photo by Steve Gunther)

signature tune, she mocked, cajoled, and sometimes served drinks to the audience. (See Figure 1 and Example 2: Deadly Belle in the Dive Bar.)

There were three other seating possibilities to choose from: the elevated Skybox, offering a bird's-eye overview of the cityscape; seats on the perimeter of the city at ground level (essentially, three sides of a rectangle, with the junk heap, swamp, and Skybox taking up the fourth side); or the choice to roam around on platforms constructed behind the ground floor seats. These "pedestrian" tickets were the least expensive, but afforded the advantage of moving in parallel with wherever the action was taking place.

Sightlines, as one might imagine, would be limited, depending on where an audience member was sitting (or standing). In fact, there were no seats that offered completely unobstructed views. (That's the nature of a city—views are often blocked!) To mitigate this problem, a large projection screen was hung on each wall of the rectangular space. These four screens were absolutely integral to the production. The Revelers, while marauding, pillaging, and generating chaos, were continuously capturing the live action with handheld video cameras, streaming the footage instantly onto the screens. Therefore everyone, regardless of their vantage point, could see what was happening. The screens served another function: surtitles, projected at the bottom of each screen, clarified the sung text.⁸

ooo What a dame, that Belle. She drowns you in
kis - ses and sinks you down to Hell!

Ex. 2. *Crescent City*, Deadly Belle in the Dive Bar

The projection screens were crucial in yet a third capacity: pre-recorded video was blended with the stage action taking place in real time, heightening dramatic intensity in parts of the opera. The Loa (Baron Samedi, Erzulie Fréda, and the two Marassa Jumeaux) were introduced via this method. Pre-recorded close-ups of each Loa, hovering above the cityscape, portrayed them as though not of this earth. In response to Marie's impassioned pleas for their help, their faces suddenly appeared on the four screens. Casually munching away on chicken legs, they were in no hurry to rush to her assistance. When the Loa subsequently entered the performance space, singing as a chorus and moving forward to engage with Marie, their individual personalities and quirks had already become familiar to the audience. In another scene, Marie addresses the Bound Ghost, an invisible presence that only she can "see" in the live space. The audience, however, sees this ghost projected on video. By cleverly combining live choreography with filmed action, the Bound Ghost scene was full of entrancing, magical, sleight-of-hand moments. When the Homesick Woman, a passenger on an actual bus filmed on location, travels back to the home from which she fled, her entire scene unfolds solely on video. As the bus ferries her home, she mourns the loss of her children, swept away by the flood. Arriving at a rural destination, she disembarks (still on video, projected into the darkened space) and enters the live

space, rushing toward the wooden shack that had been her home, where she briefly reunites with her husband, the Good Man.

The eighteen-piece orchestra, completely hidden from view, was situated in a loft above and to the side of the performing space. (Anyone seated in the Skybox had a clear view of the orchestra to their left.) The conductor, Marc Lowenstein, had to glance backwards and down over his shoulder when he needed to see the singers. Live video feeds of his conducting were strategically placed among the installations for the singers to reference. On several occasions, selected musicians descended from the loft to perform in the stage area. When a Loa took possession of Deadly Belle,⁹ the accordion player moved down to the chromelodeon,¹⁰ situated in the dive bar. Pumping away on the organ, he provided a background of microtonally-inflected music for this pathos-ridden scene. In the rollicking blues duo with Marie and Baron Samedi, three of the brass players formed a marching band, winding their way through the city while the orchestra played along in their upstairs “pit.” During the video of the Homesick Woman returning to Crescent City, two musicians playing didjeridus¹¹ wandered through the darkened streets. Their haunting moans formed an unsettling counterpart to the intricate piano passages accompanying her aria. Other unusual instruments included a tack piano and a musical saw (with a dedicated player). In addition to these unorthodox instruments, instrumentation included two reed players (with a range of instruments from E-flat clarinet to baritone sax); trumpet, trombone, and tuba; two violins, viola, cello, and bass; piano and celesta; accordion; electric guitar; drum kit; and percussion with mallets, drums, and smaller instruments. Electronica files,¹² a vital component of the orchestration, were triggered in several scenes by a laptop player. Many of the more rhythmically driving files were precisely notated in

order to synchronize the electronica with orchestral forces. (See Example 3: Nurses at the Hospital with Electronica.)

The last scene of *Crescent City*, “Party at the End of the World,” consists solely of a bittersweet, passionate a cappella aria for Marie, accompanied by a spatialized chorus of frog calls. Filled with gospel shouts, groans, and wails, her final foreboding words carry the previous scene, “Judgment at the Swamp,” to its conclusion: “Tell your children ’bout the monsters that you’re keeping under their beds. ’Cause you know morning ain’t coming and tomorrow got shot in the head.” (See Figure 2: Marie in a Boat at the Swamp.)

Representing the culmination of my work in opera thus far, *Crescent City* incorporates and further develops elements from my previous operas, such as live and pre-recorded electronics; improvisation related to experimental jazz; integration of non-standard instruments into the orchestra; exploration of vocal techniques beyond the norm; a lead female character who is a mythological, historical, or iconic figure; topics of spirituality/religion; and ecological/environmental concerns. Before discussing one of these prior works—my cyborgopera, *Sucktion*—I’ll share some thoughts about “hyperopera.”

Hyperopera

A fluid, shape-shifting term, primarily applying to operas that are “de-hierarchized” and intensely collaborative in one or more respects, hyperopera brings Wagner’s ideal of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total art work) into a twenty-first century context. *Crescent City* turned out to be my most ambitious experiment with hyperopera thus far. With a set that functioned as an art gallery by day and a cityscape filled with installations, singers, musicians, and audience by night, *Crescent City* also embodied a novel approach to the opera-going experience.

My ongoing exploration of hyperopera involves a deliberate rethinking of

collaborative relationships, ultimately coalescing into a more holistic process of artistic collaboration among composer, librettist, director, designers, musicians, and vocalists.¹³ *Crescent City* exemplified a revision of the hierarchical structure that usually forms the scaffolding upon which the creative and production personnel of a project are distributed. At an earlier stage than is customary, we brought the creative voices of the composer, writer, and director together with those of the visual artists,



Fig. 2. *Crescent City*, Marie in a Boat elevated above the Swamp (photo by Steve Gunther)

plus the lighting, video, and sound designers. Opening up possibilities for these relationships, in the context of opera pre-production, resulted in a web of ever-evolving criss-

crossing networks of influence with members of our creative team—something that might be most aptly described as a “growth mind-set” (as opposed to a “fixed mind-set”).¹⁴ Hyperopera, resistant to containment, might therefore be explained as a growth mind-set, with nearly no limitations imposed.

Too slippery to be a genre, or to refer to a type or style of opera, hyperopera might be considered as a postmodern *Gesamtkunstwerk*-ian¹⁵ model, taken to new extremes and/or fragmented in various ways. But what’s significantly different here? After all, forms of visual projection have been integrated into live performances for nearly eighty years. Furthermore, relationships among the creative personnel powering opera are often particular to a given production (although they usually adhere to a general template). With *Crescent City*, as I noted above, we took more liberties

than usual with certain kinds of boundaries found in most collaborations. The evolution of our libretto reflected a more deeply collaborative process as well. After departing from a first attempt at the libretto by an earlier writer, Yuval Sharon and I drew up a storyboard for the opera. Douglas Kearney, who agreed to write the new

Ex. 3. *Crescent City*, Nurses at the Hospital with Electronica

libretto, found that having the story and its structure laid out (fifteen scenes, each with a detailed description and a duration) was immensely helpful to his writing process.¹⁶

To my knowledge, “hyperopera” wasn’t in the lexicon until I developed a course at CalArts,¹⁷ beginning about ten years ago: “Hyperopera: Song Beyond Borders.” Open to composers, singers, instrumentalists, actors, designers, dancers, and writers, the course was conceived as a supportive environment and launching-pad for creative experimentation with the conception and production of new opera. The original works that emerged were tailored to the overriding interests of the students who enrolled, with as many as half a dozen composers sometimes working on one opera.¹⁸ These productions have ranged from an adaptation of Robert Chamber’s horror story, *The Repairer of Reputations*¹⁹ (with its government-sanctioned legal suicide booths and now-prophetic “reputation repairing”), to a psychological thriller about a young man’s dream-life paramour who was “dreamt into life” (*Seer/Seen*), to the politically topical *AER*²⁰ (this one spun out of a class that studied psychogeography in tandem with hyperopera), to *A Room of One’s Own* (inspired by the lives, deaths, and poetry of Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Virginia Woolf). Bound by a limit of about eight months for creating and producing an opera, and illuminated each year by the exceptional skills and creative visions of the students, these classes served as invaluable laboratories for the refinement and evolution of hyperopera.

Factors that might illuminate a work of music theater or opera as a hyperopera: collaborative formations that depart from the general standard, triggering deeper, more intense exchanges among creative personnel; productions mounted in site-specific venues; integration of all or part of the audience into the space to engage the audience more actively, thereby counteracting audience passivity; and a dynamic deployment of visuals and audio to enhance the unfolding of dramatic elements in ways that go far beyond mere embellishment.

One might wonder if hyperopera could be just another term for “experimental” opera. Well, yes and no, depending on the definition of experimental in the context of opera, and that’s a topic that I’m not able to investigate here in detail. Hyperopera,

as I mentioned, is more of a mind-set (on the growth side) than a category or genre. Nonetheless, composers are now applying the term to their own work. Philip Blackburn, a composer based in Minneapolis, recently wrote and produced *The Sun Palace: Hyperopera Tribute to Cragmor TB Sanatorium*.²¹

Experimental Opera

“Experimental” opera often manifests as an alternate version of what opera could be if it were not tethered to institutional endeavors that are risk-averse. Yet, since the inception of the operatic form, experimentation has been essential to the evolution of opera. In their compelling argument for a historical/categorical term defined in part by its exclusion of traditional opera and musicals, Salzman and Desi make the case that *new music theater* is in “mid-evolution and comprises different streams and styles.”²² They equate new music theater with experimental opera, and proceed to examine the music of quite a few com-

posers whose work in this realm exhibits one or more hallmarks of practices such as microtonality; improvisation; various types of non-standard visual, audio, and spatial strategies; non-linear narrative (or no narrative at all); and extended vocal and instrumental techniques.

The notion of experimentalism changes with the times. In the twentieth century, Scott Joplin, George Gershwin, and Kurt Weill were intensely remolding the mechanism of opera, each in highly individual ways. A few decades later, works by Robert Ashley (most notably with his television opera, *Perfect Lives*), John Cage (with *Europerras*), and the marathon Philip Glass collaboration with director Robert Wilson (*Einstein on the Beach*) became touchstones for experimental approaches to opera, while radically redefining opera itself. Other composers who have made use of experimental forms and techniques in their operas include Braxton, Davis, Feldman, Griffin, Johnson, Johnston, Krausas, Monk, Oliveros,

The image displays three musical score examples, each with staves for Soprano (Sop), Percussion (Perc), and Laptop. The first two examples are marked 'ca. 20"' and the third is marked 'ca. 15"'. The first example features vocal lines with lyrics ':SCHM' and ':OOTZ? -Z'. The second example features vocal lines with lyrics ':SCHMMMM'. The third example features a vocal line with lyrics ':HRRR' and ':HRRRHRRRHRRR', and a percussion line with lyrics 'RATCHET' and 'SHEKERE'. A legend indicates that rectangular blocks indicate static sounds, and provides examples of sound types: sssssh; tssss (more delicate); zzzzz (vocalized); cccch (lots of air); fffff; sheeee (vocalized or not). The third example also includes a 'Cyborgasm' label at the bottom.

Ex. 4. *Sucktion*, *Cyborgasm*

Partch, Reynolds, Rosenboom, Shields, Zorn, Czernowin, Berio, Busotti, Cerha, Chin, Globokar, Goebbels, Kagel, Ligeti, Maderna, Neuwirth, Saariaho, Stockhausen, Tal, Vivier, and Weir.²³

Sucktion

Another opera I've written, also in collaboration with writer Douglas Kearney, follows a woman's cyber-erotic transformation from abject housewife into a self-sufficient cyborg via the subversive use of a vacuum cleaner. Is *Sucktion* a cyborgopera? A monodrama? An experimental opera? A new music theater work? A hyperopera? Probably all of the above. Scored for soprano, laptop, and percussion (vibes and drumset), the quasi-narrative arc progresses through six scenes. The visually arresting text itself almost becomes a score in the final section ("Cyborgasm"), and the contributions of the performers, who alternate between playing scored segments and guided improvisations, generate a vigorous collaborative mix. (See Example 4: *Sucktion*: "Cyborgasm")

The impetus for *Sucktion* came from soNu, an ensemble specializing in improvisatory performances. I was invited to compose a work for their forces (Nina Eidsheim, soprano; Gustavo Aguilar, percussion; Phil Curtis, laptop), and had already embarked on writing an opera incorporating vacuum cleaner sonorities that I had been collecting and electronically manipulating. I decided to revisit my extensive audio work with the vacuum cleaner sound files, much of which was accomplished during a residency at STEIM.²⁴ *Sucktion*, the result, featured these performers in a 2008 workshop production at REDCAT in Los Angeles. Subsequent performances with four different companies have taken place in England, Sweden, New York, and Vienna.

Using elements of satire and science fiction, *Sucktion* critiques sexism rooted in mid-twentieth-century America, focusing on how socially reinforced female dependence on male economic dominance reduces women to domestics without agency: "clean machines." When we first meet Irona (the housewife), she speaks in a patois of jingles, daytime television soap operas, and soft rock. *Sucktion*'s text enacts her metamorphosis into a cyborg via her adoption of an artificial language imagined as creolized English, German, and onomatopoeic approximations of appliance sounds. The visual depiction of her cyborgian transfor-

mation takes place when her body merges with the appliance itself. (See Figure 3: Nina Eidsheim as Irona in *Sucktion*)

Sucktion furthers investigations of the intersection of written text and aural performance by fusing a typographically performative libretto with experimental concert theater. With its visual collisions of careening type, the text encapsulates lyrics, stage directions, and environment. In one scene, it recreates daytime television's barrage of housekeeping advertisements, chat shows, and melodramas; in another, Irona's appliance destroying rampage; and it turns recited statistics for the robotic vacuum cleaner (the Roomba) into an erotic tour-de-force.

The Future of Opera

Living in Los Angeles, I'm fortunate to be in physical proximity to nimble companies that embrace risk-taking, companies that are beginning to make history (or have been doing so for some time) by presenting challenging new work. Long Beach Opera, The Industry, and Opera Povera provide an eclectic and stimulating smorgasbord of contemporary work.²⁵ By offering audiences other choices in opera—choices that are relevant to their lives, or that address current controversial issues, or that highlight obscure historical developments that continue to have political and sociological relevance today—the distinctive visions embodied by these companies point to a dynamic future for opera. I like to think that my course at CalArts, "Hyperopera: Song Beyond Borders," also feeds into future developments for twenty-first century opera, in its own small but significant way.

It is common knowledge that funding for new work is far more generous in Europe. Lately, the English National Opera has been particularly prolific in commissioning composers. Michel van der Aa, one of the most celebrated younger talents whose work has been co-commissioned by the ENO and a slew of other companies (in-



Fig. 3. *Sucktion*, Nina Eidsheim as Irona (photo by Steve Gunther)

cluding one in Canada, but none from the U.S.), was recently awarded the Mauricio Kagel Music Prize, on the heels of winning the Grawemeyer Award. Also a film-maker and director, Van der Aa has composed *Sunken Garden*, a 3-D film opera, slated for production in the spring of 2013. This composer, and the ENO, might well represent a mother lode for the future of opera!

Except that we have another kind of goldmine closer to home: support for experimental opera creation and production is alive and thriving on the West Coast, as exemplified by three companies I've already mentioned, and their directors. Andreas Mitsek is the artistic and musical director of Long Beach Opera, with a terrific track record and adventurous spirit. LBO's latest project was a critically acclaimed production of *Camelia le Tejana: Only the Truth*, a "docu-opera" by Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz. Yuval Sharon is the founder and artistic director of The Industry.²⁶ The striking setting for the second opera he will produce in LA, *Invisible Cities* by Christopher Cerrone, will be a first: historic Union Station in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. Sean Griffin's company, Opera Povera, recently performed the rarely seen *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation*, an opera by Pauline Oliveros.

My experience as the composer of the first work to be produced by The Industry was immensely rewarding, despite difficulties and obstacles one always encounters when attempting to forge a new way. I'm still struck by the scale of what we all accomplished last year in Los Angeles, with the unconventional, site-specific production of *Crescent City*. By transforming an industrial warehouse space into an extreme and highly variegated landscape built by six of LA's most exciting visual artists, we were able to metaphorically reflect the history of New Orleans as an ever-shifting confluence of people, cultures, and events. A groundbreaking experience for everyone involved in the production (and for our audiences, invited to experience opera in 360 degrees), *Crescent City* amplified our collective imaginations. By moving out of the opera house—literally and figuratively—we proved that, in the twenty-first century, opera's very malleability insures that it will continue to function as a vital, relevant, and passionately rendered artistic force.

Biography

Anne LeBaron has composed six operas and is completing her seventh: *Some Things Should Not Move*, an autobiographical monodrama. Her compositions embrace an exotic array of subjects encompassing vast reaches of space and time, ranging from the mysterious Singing Dunes of Kazakhstan, to probes into physical and cultural forms of extinction, to legendary figures such as Pope Joan, Eurydice, Marie Laveau, and the American Housewife. Acclaimed for her work in instrumental, electronic, and performance realms, she has earned numerous awards and prizes, including a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the Alpert Award in the Arts, a Fulbright Full Fellowship, two awards from the Rockefeller MAP Fund for her operas (*Sucktion* and *Crescent City*), and a Cultural Exchange International Grant for *The Silent Steppe Cantata*, commissioned by a major foundation in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Her works have been performed around the globe, most recently by the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and by Musikwerkstatt-Wien in Austria. Upcoming premieres include *Breathtails*, a work written in collaboration with the poet Charles Bernstein, scored for baritone, shakuhachi, and string quartet. Her works will be featured in several profile concerts in New York and Los Angeles during the 2013-14 season. A professor at CalArts, LeBaron teaches in the Composition Program. She also performs as a harpist, renowned for her explorations in improvisatory forms that have led to developments of many extended techniques. Recordings of her music are available on Mode, New World Records, Ear-Rational, Innova, and Music and Art.

NOTES

1. One of several nicknames for New Orleans, "Crescent City" refers to the crescent shape formed by the Mississippi River as it curves around the city.

2. A synopsis can be found at: annelebaron.com/Crescent_City_synopsis.pdf

3. Formed to support the creation of new and experimental productions merging music, visual arts, and performance, The Industry aims to expand the traditional definition of opera and forge a new paradigm for interdisciplinary collaboration. A central goal of the company is to cultivate curiosity through the unexpected audience experience.

4. Essentially a meta-collaborative theatrical production that takes opera and de-hierarchizes it, "hyperopera" is not necessarily a type or category of opera. Rather, it is a more elusive

term, as discussed later in this article.

5. Brianna Gorton, the curator and artist who created the cemetery, selected the other artists: Mason Cooley (Good Man's shack), Katie Grinnan (junk heap), Alice Könitz (swamp), Jeff Kopp (hospital), and Olga Koumoundouros (dive bar).

6. In addition to the 6 visual artists, there were 8 singers in the cast, 5 Revelers, 18 musicians in the orchestra, 26 members of the design and production team, 6 composer and conductor assistants, two copyists, plus composer, librettist, director, conductor, and producer.

7. The Los Angeles Opera was an especially generous in-kind contributor, and ultimately made it possible for us to record several live performances with over two dozen tracks, using state-of-the-art equipment. Thanks to this opportunity, we will soon have a live recording of *Crescent City*, with a planned release on Innova.

8. One of our most formidable challenges was the implementation of sound design in such a cavernous space. Achieving the right balance among the amplified singers, orchestra, and electronics, required a constant adjustment of levels throughout each performance.

9. In their quest to find a good person in Crescent City, the Loa would mount, or possess, people in the city such as the Cop, the Nurses, and the Good Man. This was done to see directly into their souls, and led to a spectrum of hybrid characteristics that emerged from each character during possession.

10. The American composer Harry Partch invented the chromelodeon, a pump organ with keys that are mapped to 43 tones within each octave.

11. The didjeridu (or didgeridoo) is a conical instrument developed by the Aboriginal peoples of northern Australia.

12. I built these highly charged and often pounding rhythmic passages using Reaktor, a modular software studio developed by Native Instruments.

13. In Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi, *The New Music Theater* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 283, the writers make a similar point: "One of the characteristics of the new 'total theater' is the far more equal use, even in relatively modest contexts, of other disciplines and other media, which often operate on parallel tracks and may complement or even contradict the score and text. This is a major difference from the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which all art forms merge into one big affirmative message stream. The modernist and postmodernist versions are fragmented and even contradictory in their use of the various disciplines and their artistic applications."

14. Carol Dweck describes the difference between fixed and growth mind-sets in her book, *The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Random House, 2006). She shows that the key to why some people are able to achieve their potential, while others who are equally de-

serving do not, is the way that ability is considered. A fixed mind-set refers to inherent ability that needs to be demonstrated; a growth mind-set, to inherent ability that can be developed.

15. The principal at the core of Wagner's idealized "total art work" is that every detail of a work must serve to further the dramatic purpose. The union of music, words, design, architecture, and movement would create an organic whole, while each of these elements would still maintain its autonomy.

16. Although unusual, putting a storyboard together for an opera isn't entirely new. The director Robert Wilson often first conceives of his productions by creating a storyboard.

17. The California Institute of the Arts (otherwise known as CalArts), internationally recognized for performing and visual arts, is located in northern Los Angeles County.

18. The Schools of Music, Art, Theater, Film/Video, Dance, and Critical Studies—indeed, all the métiers offered at CalArts—are represented by students who have taken my course.

19. This story by Robert W. Chambers is one in a collection of his stories, *The King in Yellow*—also the name of a play that, if read, would induce madness in the reader. The class titled their hyperopera *The Queen in Yellow*.

20. AER is the acronym for "Artists' Environmental Resources."

21. A multimedia event first performed in Colorado Springs in 2012, *The Sun Palace* (with delights such as the "Germ Requiem") also has a life as a stand-alone video.

22. Salzman and Desi, p. 5.

23. In her richly researched *Historical Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Classical Music* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), Nicole Gagné ferrets out most of these composers and others, even Milhaud and Ginastera, who have taken opera down the experimental path.

24. STEIM (Studio for Electro-Instrumental Music) is located in Amsterdam. The audio files I brought to STEIM included a variety of homeless vacuum cleaner sounds. (I had been collecting homeless vacuum cleaners and eliciting as many different sounds as possible, sometimes by abusive practices such as feeding them nails.) At STEIM, these were blended with recordings of an on-site vacuum cleaner and processed using LiSa, a software instrument for live sampling and realtime audio manipulation.

25. There are exceptionally inventive initiatives on the East Coast as well, headed by visionaries such as Beth Morrison, who has commissioned more than 24 operas and music theater pieces during the last six years.

26. Yuval Sharon directed the NYCO VOX program for several years and will bring this valuable experience to bear on a terrific endeavor that his company is now undertaking. "(First Take) – A West Coast Workshop of New Operas," modeled on the New York City Opera VOX program, will present excerpts from emerging composers as well as those who are known.

Victoria for *Mrs. President*: Modern Women at the Opera

ZACHARY MILLIMAN

This fall I had the opportunity to participate in the world premiere of composer Victoria Bond's masterful opera *Mrs. President*.¹ The premiere took place in my hometown of Anchorage, Alaska. I was asked by the chorus master if I might help bolster the tenor section. The novelty of being involved in the creation of a work intrigued me and I am happy that I participated; it was an experience that renewed my faith in American opera and proved that the genre is alive, well, and relevant.

For weeks as a chorus we worked out our parts, and luckily Victoria Bond was in residence to give needed direction and facilitate any changes necessitated by the rehearsal processes. As a chorus member, I did not have a chance to hear the score in its entirety until the first orchestral rehearsal. There, all the disparate pieces that we had worked out in isolation coalesced into a stunning whole. The beauty of the work impressed me, as did the appropriateness of the score and the libretto for the operatic stage, more so than almost any other American opera that I had sung or seen. The chorus in this semi-staged production was set on risers at the back of the stage; thus I had ample time to digest the work as night after night I watched and heard the drama unfold from my unique vantage point. As I did so, my appreciation for the multiple facets of the work, from musical to philosophical, deepened. I knew that I wanted to spend more time with this work, and with Ms. Bond's encouragement, I began exploring some of the ideas this opera inspired in me. Of course, the opera provides ample opportunities for personal interpretation, and its transcendental nature is one of its great strengths. However, for the sake of space, what follows is a discussion of the opera's timely aspects, from its fidelity to operatic traditions in contrast to modern conventions, aspects of ritual and corporeal-

ity, and our current societal climate vis-à-vis personal choice and the advocacy of freedom.

The opera presents the story of Victoria Woodhull, an early feminist and proponent of free love,² and, in 1872, the first woman to run for president. While based on actual



Victoria Bond,
photo by Luke Ratray

events, librettist Hilary Bell had to condense what Bond referred to as a messy history to form a succinct portrait of Woodhull's run for presidency and create, as Bond put it, "a taut storyline that had one focus."

The cast includes Victoria Woodhull (soprano), Isabella Beecher (soprano), Elizabeth Tilton (soprano), Woodhull's mother Roxie (mezzo soprano), Henry Ward Beecher (tenor), Joseph Treat (tenor), and James Blood (baritone). The characters are based on historical figures, but Bell found it necessary to form composite characters: e.g., the character of Joseph Treat is fabricated from many different men, and Isabella was conceived as a combination of Isabella Beecher and Woodhull's sister Tennessee Claflin. Bond is very clear that "this is an opera—it's not history, it's not a biopic."

Part of the strength of the opera rests in the ironic subversion of our expectations of a modern American opera by being unapologetically tonal and respectful of operatic traditions. A feeling of reverence permeates the score, yet it never succumbs to pastiche or operatic taxidermy. There are moments that evoke *La Traviata* or *Der Rosenkavalier*, for example, but in an organic way born out of the exigencies of the drama.

This debt to operatic convention is also evident in the organization of the opera. The action progresses in seven scenes over two acts, after the fashion of a number opera. Bond claims *Wozzeck* as an influence in this regard—a mosaic of vignettes that tells us about each of the characters. Each scene is a self-contained unit, but the incursion of intricately interwoven themes and motifs unifies them and provides a dramatic thrust that is often lacking in the traditional number opera style, creating what

Bond calls "vivid pictures of moments—moments that move and are not static."

Bond, like the successful opera composers of the past, understands the archetypal and ritualistic nature of opera. "If we want realism we go to film," Bond points out. "Opera started out in the church and the stylized nature of the church service—I think retaining that quality, even though we take it in different directions, is still very important." Bond claims the influence of and artistic fealty with Harry Partch in this approach. Bond, an accomplished singer in her own right, performed the role of the Old Goat Woman on the world premiere recording of Partch's *Delusion of the Fury*, and this performance had a tremendous impact on her development and views on theatrical work.

These elements led me to examine the seven scenes of the opera as a series of self-contained rituals. The notion of ritual befits an opera about a woman running for president, Bond told me, as the office of president is filled with rituals, from campaigning and speeches to ceremonies and the inauguration, which we as a nation recently witnessed. The first scene, in which Woodhull is exploited as a child clairvoyant in traveling circuses, acts as an invocation, and con-



Victoria Woodhull

secrates her as a visionary and prophetess. The music of the trio of the male characters in the scene foreshadows their role in the rise and fall of Woodhull's attempted presidency. The second scene, set during a service presided over by Henry Ward Beecher, begins with an ecstatic presentation of a hymn followed by an auction in which the congregation "purchases" a slave girl in order to grant her freedom. This scene functions as a pseudo-sacrament and features



Soprano Valerie Bernhardt
as Victoria Woodhull

and corporeal-

incantations of Christian spirituality. The third scene, a séance followed by Woodhull's announcement of the publication of *Woodhull's Weekly*, on the other hand, features incantations of a new order of spirituality, not only that of Woodhull's clairvoyance, but also of her feminist doctrine of free love. The accompanying female chorus evolves from psychic mysticism to political activism in a kind of primordial chant hovering beneath the surface. The fourth scene, and final of the first act, presents the rite of confession and absolution for Henry Ward Beecher, who admits his true nature and devotes himself to free love. He is initiated into Woodhull's order.

The second act opens with the scene in Steinway Hall where Woodhull publicly announces her run for president. It quickly turns into a sacrifice as Woodhull is decried as a false prophetess and symbolically stoned by her denouncers. The sacrifice is not only that of Woodhull's dreams of presidency, but also that of Beecher's support of Woodhull, the latter is cast in relief by the orchestra playing the slave auction music from the second scene—he has sold his integrity. The sixth scene, which Bond calls the quartet of disappointment, is an attempted exorcism by Blood and Beecher of Woodhull's and Isabella's drive to continue their mission. The last scene, referred to by Bond as Woodhull's "sane scene," culminates in the benediction and sanctification of Woodhull's vision for the future.

Although strong ritualistic aspects permeate the work, Bond succeeds, like Parth, in grounding the abstract in the corporeal. This is accomplished in several ways, one being how Bond sets the libretto. Bond preserves a naturalistic declamation and speech rhythm that clearly communicates the text. Every word is understood—a rare feat in operatic achievement. This is achieved not only rhythmically but melodically as well in the way Bond writes for the voice. Roxie's aria "Wise as Solomon" from Act I (see Example 1) is a prime example of Bond's excellent vocal writing. The rhythms of the vocal line mirror those that would be used in speech, and thus the audience is able to catch every word. The syncopations add a visceral quality portraying the moxie of Woodhull's mother. The vocal line is inflected in a way that is indicative of someone gathering a crowd at a carnival.

As a singer, I am often perplexed at the unidiomatic treatment of the voice by modern composers. Singers are often required to break rules of "bel canto" in order to realize the music: wide and angular leaps, articulating in difficult registers, uncomfortable tessituras, etc. Bond, however, avoids this, in part due to her aforementioned success as a singer in her early career. As such, she has a first-hand understanding of how to write for the voice, as everything she wrote as a young composer was for her to sing herself. Bond also collaborated with acclaimed soprano Ellen Shade in creating the final version of *Mrs. President*. This collaboration benefited the score, the well-crafted vocal lines in particular. These elements are evident in the expert treatment of the voice. For example, Bond does not

force the singer to over-articulate in high registers and makes sure what is sung is done so in a way that can be understood. "One of my icons there is Mozart," Bond relates. "Mozart always set texts so that you can really understand them. When there are important things said, they are done so in a register that you can understand. If it was in a higher register—and as tenors and sopranos know, you can't be understood above the staff—[it was] repeated so you can get the emotional content and the beauty of the voice, but you already know what they are singing about, you don't have to catch a word on a high A."

Another way the opera is saved from heady abstraction is in the characterizations. By fixing the focus on the emotional lives of the characters, these rituals contain

Wise as Solomon

Allegro $\text{♩} = 116$

Roxie

Piano

R.

Pno

4

7

10

14

mf (with swagger)

f

f

pp

p (boldly)

You heard her talked up in

ev - ry town, the lit - tle Sphinx from Ho - mer, O - hi - o.

She tell the fu - ture, just put your mon - ey down, and then you'll

see this cur - tain rise! She just a ba - by,

on - ly eight years old but for a dime you'll get your for - tune told... be - cause she's

Ex. 1. *Mrs. President*, Roxie's aria "Wise as Solomon" from Act I (piano/vocal score)

a visceral quality that is the principal impact, where the ritual itself provides the framework. For the sake of space I shall examine how this is realized in the characterization of Victoria Woodhull.

Bond endeavored to create in Woodhull a character who transcends the historical figure and is one with whom any woman can identify. Bond says, "As a creator, what I want to do is make a role flexible enough so that the person singing it can put their own autobiography in it—where they can find that element in that character that they have lived, that they know personally. That's what I want to create: something that has enough universality that whoever sings it, and hopefully it will be sung differently with each person, will be able to identify something in his or her own life that resonates with that character. Because I think all great operatic characters have that universality about them, they're not just historic figures."

Woodhull emerges from the fecund musical mind of Bond as a dream role for any soprano and an operatic heroine on par with any Elvira, Tosca, Brunhilde, or Carmen. As Bond said on many occasions, Carmen was in fact a major inspiration. Her unabashed sensuality at once seduces and threatens the men around her and is her liberation and undoing. However, I also found elements of the sublime woman in her. But unlike tragediennes such as Anna Bolena or Lucia, Woodhull is the master of her fate.

This is an opera about a woman who finds her strength on her own terms, not by adapting a sense of masculinity, but in discovering her own authenticity. Woodhull was truly a Modern Woman, and as Jung tells us in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, those who live such a life "run counter to the forces of the past, and though [she] might thus be fulfilling [her] destiny, would none the less be misjudged, derided, tortured and crucified." In operatic terms, Modern Woman is usually portrayed as Mad Woman. In her book *Feminine Endings*, musicologist Susan McClary showed that in the traditional operatic treatment of Mad Women there is a need to prevent the spread of the "contagion" that is the diva's madness—thus the mad woman's music must be contained or "framed." In *Mrs. President* Woodhull unleashes this contagion onto future generations, such as when she sings, "from my ashes a thousand more will rise" (see Example 2). Woodhull's triumphant music, consisting of continually ascending lines, shows not a woman whose "sexual excesses" have brought about a madness in need of containment, but a truth that must infect others with the germ of equality.

In the hands of a more traditional male composer, Woodhull's character may have demanded a traditional mad scene; after all, the drama is ripe for it, and the audience has been conditioned to expect it. She is imprisoned, abandoned by her friends and lovers, her reputation destroyed, and all chance of attaining her goals seems smashed. But true



Cartoon by Thomas Nast depicting Victoria Woodhull as Satan

to her spirit as a Modern Woman, she faces these trials as the ineluctable outcome of her truth. She does not descend into madness, but transcends her surroundings with a final prophecy of a future where women will rise up from the ashes of the auto-da-fé of her anachronistic visions, the embers of which would ignite the torch of suffrage. In the staging of the Anchorage Opera production, prominent women from the Anchorage community were brought onto the stage to show the fulfillment of that prophecy in our day. It was a stirring moment.

Mrs. President's timeliness and applicability to our time was also striking as the premiere coincided with the final stages of the presidential election. As I listened to the opera night after night from my place in the chorus, I was unfortunately not surprised that the same issues dogging American politics in the time of Victoria Woodhull are with us today. Over a century later our government is still concerned with who is allowed to love whom, and what rights women have over their bodies. Free love, as understood in Woodhull's time through to the present, concerning the right to love whomever we choose and be allowed to form and dissolve legitimate, recognized relationships, is an issue that continues to dominate the political landscape. The actors might have changed, but the crux of the argument remains the same. We have an insatiable appetite for discrimination, and no matter how many boundaries we break down, that drive is redirected. The truth is that we are still in need of Victoria Woodhulls. We need someone who will stand up for the disenfranchised and oppressed and expose the hypocrisy of

As she sings, the jail dissolves, and from the darkness emerge ghostly Victorias, one after the other until there are dozens of them, each with a white rose at her throat, marching forward. They sing softly, building in volume as they approach.

13 $\text{♩} = 120$ *p*

VW *A - rise, a - rise from my ash - es a thou - sand*

Pno *pppp*

21 *piu mosso* $\text{♩} = 132$ *mf* *f*

VW *more will rise. They will seize what I've be-gun, car-ry it on.*

Pno *mp espress.*

Ex. 2. *Mrs. President*, Victoria Woodhull sings "from my ashes a thousand more will rise."

the policy makers who would hold a nation hostage on the bases of their biases. This opera reminds us of that.

The prescription advocated by Woodhull herself, proposed in the September 23, 1871 publication of *Woodhull's Weekly*, remains apropos today. On the question of whether there is a remedy for the ills of society, she stated:

[There is] none, I solemnly believe; none, by means of repression and law. I believe there is no other remedy possible but freedom in the social sphere. I know that it looks as though this were going in the direction of more vice. Conservatives always think that freedom must conduce to licentiousness; and yet freedom has a way of working out the evils begotten by the previous slavery, and its own evils also. Freedom is a great panacea. It will be when women are thrown on their own resources, when they mingle on more equal terms with men, when they are aroused to enterprise and developed in their intellects; when, in a word, a new sort of life is devised

through freedom, that we can recover the lost ground of true virtue, coupled with the advantages of the most advanced age.

As the voice of Woodhull remains surprisingly germane today, Bond's opera proves that the genre is as well. This is not an elitist museum piece, but a theatrical work that is as viable in our day and in our cultural climate as opera was in earlier times. *Mrs. President* works on both the micro and macro levels as a personal and socio-political statement. It succeeds both in the realm of idealism, and from a purely musical standpoint. Two short reasons, of the many worthy of exploration: the orchestration wonderfully celebrates the contribution of each member of the orchestra to the drama unfolding in the inner life of the characters. The construction of themes and their deployment provide boundless possibilities for interpretation that evolves with each new listen. In short, this is an opera with the capacity to reach any audience member, and it should unreservedly claim a space in the standard operatic repertoire.

A quote by Isabella Beecher from the *Cincinnati Commercial* of June 1, 1872 after hearing Victoria Woodhull speak at

a convention vividly presages my own experience with the opera *Mrs. President*: "I heard the voice of Mrs. Woodhull resounding through the hall...and declaiming in the most impassioned style, before a crowded audience of men and women who had been wrought up to a very high state of excitement. The scene was really dramatic, and to those who were in sympathy with it, it was, doubtless, thrilling, glorious, sublime."

Zachary Milliman earned an M.M. from the University of Utah after completing his B.M. from Brigham Young University in vocal performance. His writing has been featured in two conferences for the American Musicological Society as well as the Confutati Symposium. His research focuses on marginalized opera repertoires, specifically Hungarian. He currently resides in Alaska, where he works as a musician with various organizations.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Victoria Bond for her input in this article and for talking with me about the opera. Quotes from our conversation can be found throughout the article. For a synopsis and other information about the opera, please visit the website: mrsresidenttheopera.com.

2. This term in modern parlance references the sexual revolution of the 1960s, but in Woodhull's time it referred to women's rights, specifically in marriage and property.

Reflections on Writing a Libretto

ELLEN FRANKEL

How many opera librettists can you name? Before I became one myself, I could not name a single one. Seven years and several completed librettos later, I can still name only a few. In the classical repertoire, two names stand out: Arrigo Boito (1842–1918), who wrote the text for Verdi's *Otello* and *Falstaff*, and Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749–1848), the pen behind three of Mozart's most celebrated operas, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Of course, many composers wrote the words for their own music, including Richard Wagner, Gian Carlo Menotti, Hector Berlioz, Scott Joplin, and Vaughan Williams, to name only a few. And although many famous writers tried their hand at libretto-writing, e.g. Gertrude Stein (*Four Saints in Three Acts*, for composer Virgil Thomson), E. M. Forster (*Billy Budd*, written with Eric Crozier, for Benjamin Britten), and Doris Lessing (*The Making of the Representative for Planet Eight*, for Philip Glass), either adapting their own works or starting from scratch,

we don't generally associate them with opera.

Indeed, despite the occasional celebrity of contemporary librettists, the truth is that the composer still takes center stage. Recently, I went to see the HD simulcast production of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest*, which premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in October 2012. As I entered the theater, I was handed a one-page synopsis of the show, which listed, along with the composer, the names of the costume designer, make-up designer, and stage manager—but not the librettist. I was shocked. Imagine presenting a production of *The Tempest* with no words! And in the case of this opera, the librettist, Meredith Oakes, has done a masterful job



Ellen Frankel

of adapting Shakespeare's play for opera, compressing five acts of spoken Shakespearean English into an accessible contemporary version. Doesn't she deserve some credit? But the membership department at the Met was not sympathetic to my complaint. I can't say that I was surprised. As a librettist, I have become accustomed to playing second fiddle.

The art of libretto-writing has received little attention in the field of writing. In 1914 the German musicologist and composer Edgar Istel wrote a little book called *The Art of Writing Opera Librettos*, which was translated into English in 1922 and reprinted in 2012. Despite its subtitle, "Practical Suggestions," the book is academic and narrowly focused. And although there have been articles, encyclopedia entries, and web posts published on the topic, there is as yet no modern book-length work on the subject aimed at practitioners. Anyone writing a new libretto for opera still has to pretty much make it up as she goes along. This may explain why so many new operas

fail. Unlike musicals, which are typically developed through a long process of workshopping and previews, including liberal input from audiences, producers, directors, investors, and collaborators, opera remains a largely hermetic practice, primarily restricted to a private collaboration between librettist and composer, and usually limited to a few public performances before it dies on the vine.

What I'd like to attempt in this brief essay is to shine a light on this secret world and expose the arcane alchemy of writing the text for an opera. My purpose is not only to share my knowledge but to stimulate a more open dialogue among all those who practice this art and to raise the profile of and respect for librettists in the opera industry.

So, how does one write an opera libretto? Many people, especially those new to opera, don't realize that operas begin with words, not music. As an opera aficionado friend once told me when I was feeling somewhat marginalized in my new profession as a libretto writer: "First comes the libretto!" His enthusiastic words often lift me when I'm feeling down.

The truth is that even if the initial idea for a new opera originates with a composer or the artistic director of an opera company, the work begins with words on a page before any musical notes are written. It is up to the librettist (or the composer-cum-librettist) to come up with the initial shape of the story, its beginning, middle, and end, and to sketch out the characters who will act out that story on stage. If the writer is beginning with a previous version of the story—a film, a novel, a play, a news story—she needs to decide which piece of that earlier work to use as the raw material for the opera. In almost all cases, the opera story will only be a limb of the original tree. For one of the essential features of opera is its compressed form. Opera libretti are remarkably short. Stripped of stage directions and frontmatter, they typically run only ten to twelve printed pages. It's hard to tell a story in so few words, especially if you want to present rounded characters, big themes, and plot twists and turns. But since it takes three times longer to sing words than to speak them, the librettist must economize and make every word count. Thus, much of the work of writing a libretto involves cutting out words. (A thin-skinned writer would make a terrible librettist.)

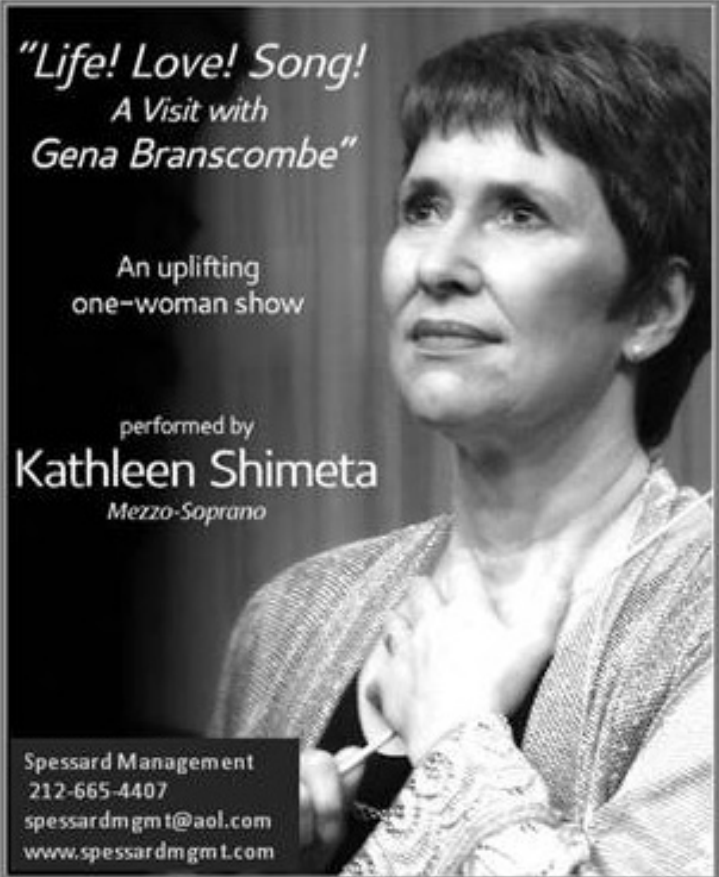
When a librettist sits down to write a new opera, there are first a few general questions she must ask herself: What story am I telling? Why should this story be sung instead of spoken or read? How can this story best be told, given the special constraints and conventions of opera? And then there are the real-life concerns: How can I keep expenses down (by restricting the number of singers, limiting the cost of stage sets, using works out of copyright and in the public domain)? Other questions will emerge once the composer joins in the process, but this first draft is a solo act, the only time, in fact, that the librettist has the opera to herself. Once the composer reads the text, it is henceforth perpetually in negotiation, a process that grows ever more complex as more ears, eyes, minds, and hearts weigh in. Which is both exhilarating—and challenging for the librettist.

The first question—what story am I telling?—is much trickier than it first appears. Whether the librettist is working from a story previously crafted by another writer, say, a novel or a screenplay, or a true story, the challenge is to figure out what part or aspect of the story the librettist wants to focus on. Because the story will necessarily have to be compressed, there may be no room for a backstory to the plot and characters. To tell only part of the story may require the librettist to give a different spin to the original story to make it more intelligible to the audience. The librettist also needs to decide whether to adopt the same sympathies as the original author, or to transfer those sympathies to a different character, or perhaps to sharpen the character dynamics of the original to make the hero grander and the villain darker. If the original story took place over a long time or on a

large landscape, the opera version needs to narrow the lens, sometimes to a single day or place, without doing violence to the story arc. In filtering these questions through the sieves of artistic constraint and adaptation, the librettist begins to find the new story she can and wants to tell in the idiom of opera.

Part of the process of crafting the core story of the opera involves a kind of *translation*. The librettist must *translate* from one genre into another, substituting one set of narrative conventions for another. Even if the writer chooses to violate the conventions of classical opera, she does so "against the grain" of these conventions, playing on the audience's expectations in order to achieve certain effects. Thus, the librettist functions as a cultural interpreter, always both an insider and outsider between artistic forms and idioms.

When the writer has decided upon her story (which will inevitably undergo many changes from the first to the last draft), she needs to ask herself a further question: Why is this particular story the stuff of opera? Could it just as well be a play? Or a piece of performance art? Or a film? Why does it need to be sung?



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In the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner characterized his ideal for opera as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, literally, a “total work of art,” an integrated dramatic work expressing a universal story, preferably one emerging from folk origins. He designed his own operas to meet this ideal, combining music, theater, narrative, dance, set design, costumes, and other artistic elements into a unified whole. Other classical operas likewise aspired for such multi-media effect. In our own time, operas have added video and electronic elements to the mix. But more than any of these elements, opera in its essence is about the trained classical voice. So the basic question remains: Why does any particular story demand to be sung?

I would like to suggest two reasons. First, a sung story offers a kind of *lyric intensity* that is absent in other kinds of storytelling. Because the singing voice holds a word, sustaining it in the air, three times longer than the speaking voice (and even longer than the reading mind), words’ meanings resonate more richly in our imagination, just as the plucked string of a violin lingers in the ear. The word, “lyric,” which means “relating to the emotions,”

derives from lyre, whose vibrating strings imbued the words of Greek poets with just such resonance. When opera singers express thoughts and feelings, even information, through their finely tuned voices, the audience is transported into a different mind-space than that they inhabit when reading a book, watching a movie, or attending a play. Time slows; action hesitates. Plot possibilities vacillate. Dramatic ironies sharpen their sting. This dreamier pacing suits certain stories better than others. That is why the librettist needs to think carefully about pacing when choosing and plotting an opera story.

A second reason to sing a story is to provide an aesthetic experience that can only be realized through this medium. Just as the novel is unique in featuring inner psychological speech, and film offers unique narrative perspectives through techniques like cross-cutting and depth of field, so opera has its own unique artistic methods, most notably the trained human voice. Opera singers often refer to their voices as their “instruments.” Indeed, the human voice is a tool that can be used many different ways. The words of Othello sound very different when sung by Plácido Domingo as opposed to being declaimed by James Earl Jones. Furthermore, operas allow multiple voices to speak at once—in duets, trios, quartets, and choruses—producing an aesthetic effect unique to this genre.

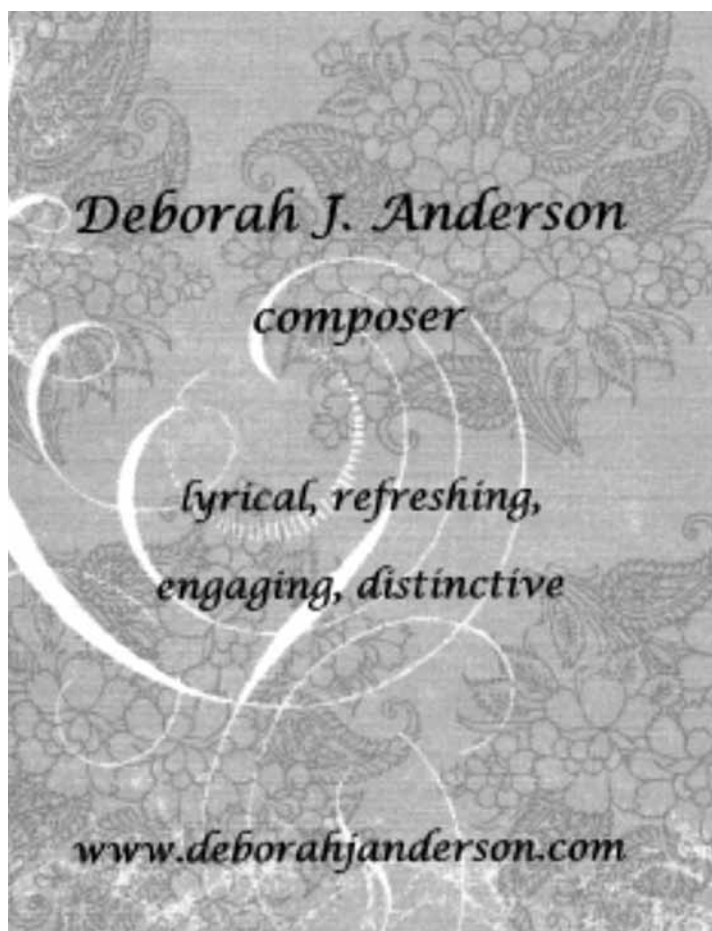
Finally, the librettist must ask herself: Now that I have my story, how can I best tell it? Like the sonnet form in poetry, opera imposes considerable constraints upon the libretto writer. The primary constraint is length. For a two-hour opera, the average length of the text is 10,000-15,000 words. That’s the length of a short

story. Many operas are much shorter. Every word must count. And words that don’t count must go. In my own experience, I have found that the final draft of my text is typically half as long as the first. As I revise, I cut with a scalpel, not a hatchet. Full sentences become fragments, phrases, interjections, single words. Dialogue between characters becomes a series of one-liners. Arias go from multiple stanzas to one or two stanzas with repeated lines. I repeat words or phrases from an early scene in a later one to function like musical leitmotifs. Language thus becomes denser, allusive, almost telegraphic in its sparseness.

Not only plot and dialogue but character development must also be compressed. An opera cannot accommodate the gradual unfolding of characters’ personalities over time. Instead most characters emerge almost full-blown from their first appearance. As a result, characters usually flatten in opera until they resemble archetypes. They become allegorical figures, symbols of character types: the damsel in distress, the trickster, the gallant, the rogue, the Don Juan, the seductress, the woman spurned. There are many examples of such character types in literary tradition: the Commedia dell’arte, Noh and Kabuki theater, nineteenth-century melodrama, comic books, genre fiction. Contemporary opera has generally resisted such allegorizing of characters, not always successfully. We might learn some valuable lessons reviving this time-honored technique of character compression. It’s hard to present realistic, rounded characters in the compact crucible of opera.

There is one aspect of opera, however, that requires an expansion beyond other storytelling genres: the expression of emotion. In this dimension, opera exceeds the bounds of its competitors. The primary technique for such extension of feelings is the aria, defined as “an accompanied elaborate melody sung by a single voice” (Merriam Webster). Arias pull a character out of the narrative stream so that she or he can express a deeply felt emotion, often at great length. When effective, arias provide moments of intensity, focus, meditation, or tension that energize the audience like an electric shock, and punctuate the flow of the story like a good page-turner novel.

The gearbox of opera narrative basically shifts between two settings: recita-



tive and aria. Recitative, like the dialogue of a play, advances the plot. Arias are rest stops along the way. After an aria, the gears shift a character back into the narrative flow to rejoin the ongoing action. Learning how to skillfully shift between these two gears, how to create a rhythm and balance between the two is the true art of libretto-writing.

Unfortunately, there is no formula to tell the librettist when to insert an aria, but one learns to recognize when they are not appropriate. I learned this lesson from composer Michael Ching, with whom I wrote my first opera, *Slaying the Dragon*, which premiered in Philadelphia in June 2012. When he received the draft of my libretto, one of the first calls he made to me from his home in Iowa was to ask me for a few more lines of recitative before a character's aria. "He hasn't yet earned this aria," he told me. "I don't understand," I replied. "We don't know why he should be expressing such remorse. We need to understand what he's done and why he now regrets his actions. Give me a little more backstory."

I've since come to understand what Michael meant when he said that a character has to "earn an aria." For the audience to believe a character, to take his

feelings seriously, they have to find these feelings credible, genuine, realistic. It is during arias that characters show their true colors. They address the audience directly and bare their hearts. A character must not lie during an aria, no matter how dark his soul. If we cannot trust a character's sincerity during an aria, we will not suspend our disbelief and enter wholeheartedly into the world of the story. The opera will fail.

Once the first draft of the libretto is done, the job of the librettist changes dramatically. The balance of power shifts to the composer, who begins to reshape the text to fit his musical vision. This can be a challenging time for the librettist, who has worked so hard to craft a story, populate it with characters, find a workable narrative rhythm, balance the flow of recitative and arias, and be mindful of market considerations. In a successful partnership, composer and librettist will negotiate respectfully over changes to the text, the librettist cutting, adding, reshaping, even reconceptualizing the story to meet the needs of the composer. In such productive collaborations, the experience can be thrilling, as the music fills the words like helium swells the skin of a balloon, lifting the writer's vehicle heavenward to reveal a wider vista and new

possibilities for her imagination. The work grows and deepens, becoming more integrated as its different aspects cohere with the connective tissue of the composer's music. I have been very fortunate in working with composers who have afforded me this kind of satisfying creative experience. As a writer who is used to working in isolation, I've found the collaboration of opera-writing liberating. And I've learned so much from each composer.

May those of you who write librettos find the same joys and rewards as I have. And may you who compose music for these texts appreciate how much goes in to generating an opera story and celebrate the sower along with the harvest.

Dr. Ellen Frankel, former CEO and now Editor Emerita of The Jewish Publication Society, currently works as a freelance writer, librettist, editor, and lecturer. She is the author of ten books, including The Classic Tales, The Five Books of Miriam, and The JPS Illustrated Children's Bible; and several librettos, including the text for Andrea Clearfield's Golem Psalms. Frankel's first opera, Slaying the Dragon, with composer Michael Ching, had its world premiere in Philadelphia in June 2012. Frankel travels widely, speaking at synagogues, schools, and conferences.

The Eternal Tao: A Multimedia Opera by Kyong Mee Choi

YAYOI U. EVERETT

It seems only natural that Kyong Mee Choi, whose artistry is not confined to music, would create a mesmerizing multimedia opera called *The Eternal Tao*, which integrates acoustic instruments, electronics, voices, dancers, video images, and lighting. Born and raised in South Korea, Choi earned degrees in chemistry, science education, and Korean literature prior to studying composition at Georgia State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her works prior to 2010 demonstrate her imaginative use of multimedia to comment on the human condition: *Tao* (2002) for voice, piano, and live electronics; *Condolence* (2003) for video image and electronics—a commentary on the Iraq War; and *Gain* (2007)—triggered by a photo of children pointing guns at each other. In addition to composing music, Choi is an avid painter, poet, and videographer. *The Eternal Tao* was supported by grants from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and Roosevelt University. For the premiere, which took

place on October 22, 2010, her paintings—inspired by Taoist themes—were exhibited in the foyer outside Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University for the audience to see.

The Eternal Tao provides an aesthetic and socio-political commentary on today's world through Taoism. Tao, which refers to the "way" or "path," is a philosophical tradition that emphasizes living in harmony with forces in nature and exercises action through non-action (*wu-wei*). When Choi was asked in the pre-concert interview what inspired her to compose the opera, she responded by quoting from the Taoist text: "if you are caught by desire, you are only seeing the manifestations." Indeed, *The Eternal Tao* invites the viewer to grapple with fun-



Kyong Mee Choi

damental dualities (being vs. non-being) essential to Taoist philosophy. Through her ritualistic integration of media, Choi explores these dualities that govern all aspects of the human condition. At times, the multimedia effect is serene and ethereal. At other times, the effect is visceral in its reenactment of violence and pain. By moving seamlessly from one extreme to another, Choi makes a vivid socio-political commentary on the society in which we live: the beauty of the natural world (Tao) existing in counterpoint with destruction brought on by war, drought, starvation, and other forms of social unrest associated with the Ego world.

The text and the source of inspiration come from *Tao Te Ching*, a classical treatise on Taoism written by Lao Tzu, circa Sixth Century, BC. It is divided into eighty-one chapters or sections of aphoristic prose, often juxtaposing contradictory ideas to bring the essential points across. Choi selected five chapters based on particular themes that comment on the opposition between

Section	Title	Media combination
I	The Transcendental Tao	[I/D]
II	The Granaries Are Empty	[E/V/D]
III	With No Desire	[Vo(TTC 1)/Pe1/P/E]
IV	Armed with Sharp Weapons	[E/V/D]
V	The Supreme Good is like Water	[E/V]
VI	Colors Blind Your Eyes	[Vo(TTC 12)/Pe2/P/E]
VII	Through Deep and Dark, There is an Essence	[I/D]
VIII	While the Fields are Sterile	[E/V]
IX	And Yet People Prefer Crooked Paths	[I/Vo(TTC 53)/E/V/D]
X	She Lets Go So Nothing is Lost	[I/Vo(TTC 2)/E/V/D]
XI	Being Comes from Non-being	[Vo(TTC 40)/Pe2/P/E]
XII	Returning is the Movement of the Tao	[E/V/D]

TTC (*Tao Te Ching*), I (instruments), D (dance), E (electronics), V (video), P (piano), Pe (percussion), Vo (voices)

Ex. 1. Structural Overview of *The Eternal Tao*

Taoist and Ego worlds: chapter 1 speaks of the mystery that can be revealed by letting go of desire; chapter 12 speaks of sensory experiences (sight, sound, taste, touch) that can work against the previous idea of letting go of desire; chapter 53 speaks of “crooked paths” that deter people from the path of virtue; chapter 2 highlights the interdependence between opposite elements as the key to the discovery of Tao; and chapter 40 further emphasizes the complementarity of being and non-being.

Vital to Choi’s conception of the opera is Stephen Mitchell’s translation of *Tao Te Ching*, in which he refers to the Tao as the Great Mother.¹ This idea is reinforced by the presence of female dancers and the female voice in the electronic soundscape; not only does this haunting sound fill the transition between movements, it reverberates in the background as if it were the fundamental vibrations that embody the presence of the Great Mother.² Assigning literal meaning to the opera, however, works against the fluid, open-ended experience this opera offers to the listener. At the core of Choi’s sonic universe, this female voice occupies an important function, but its precise meaning can neither be defined nor be contained. Toward the end, the supreme force as a female entity becomes evident when the chorus sings the text from Section X: “She embraces all that arise. She creates but doesn’t possess. She acts but doesn’t expect. She lets go so nothing is lost.” It is important to keep in mind that in Taoist cosmology, the primordial masculine (*yang*) and feminine (*ying*) energies are considered to be complementary, not oppositional.

Example 1 shows the twelve sections of *The Eternal Tao* and the media combinations. As suggested by the titles, the

opening and closing sections provide a frame—points of exit and reentry into the Tao. Within the ethereal, spiritual realm of

Tao, established in Sections I, III, V, and VII, Choi intersperses movements that create a portal into the corrupt, material world dominated by Ego (II, IV, VIII, IX). The intensity in media reaches its point of culmination in Sections IX and X, before steering the movement back to the Tao in the end.

In lieu of a standard narrative that accompanies opera, Choi turns to metaphor to create visual, sonic, and gestural links that convey the idea of opposition between the Ego and Taoist worlds. For example, hands reaching outward or upward may symbolize desire or corruption, while intertwined hands symbolize the act of living in harmony with nature. The ensuing analysis provides specific commentary on Choi’s use of lighting, choreography, video projection, and music to illustrate her use of metaphor in this respect.

Dancers exit to the corner of the stage at the end of the 2nd section. Singers enter while dancer exit, and form a horizontal line. Lights change from dark red to dark blue when singers appear. Music starts when all the singers are on the stage.

A ♩ = 50 Mysteriously

Mezzo. *ppp* *f* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *p* *mf* *pp*
The TAO(o) that can be told (d) is (s) not (t) the e-ter-nal TAO(o)

Baritone

S. *ppp* *f* *ppp* *pp* *f* *p*
be not (t) oh

A. *ppp* *f* *ppp* *pp* *f* *p*
be not (t) oh

T. *ppp* *f* *ppp* *pp* *f* *p*
be not (t) oh

B. *ppp* *f* *ppp* *pp* *f* *p*
be not (t) oh

Per. *ppp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

Pno. *p* *f* *p* *f* *pp*
Inside the Piano strum the lowest strings

Second
0'' insect like sound 6'' human voice 12'' string plucking 18'' human voice 24'' rattling sound 30'' human voice
human voice [Vib] bell like *pp* *mp*

Ex. 2. Section III, “With No Desire”

First, Choi carefully tracks the coordination of lighting and staging in the score to *The Eternal Tao*. The opera begins and ends in darkness. Alternating between different gradations of red and blue, the color red is associated with desire for possessions that corrupt people (as well as violence and destruction), while blue symbolizes the act of returning and yielding to the essence of Taoism. Section IX, which deals with desire, greed, and corruption, is dominated by multiple colors in lighting and video projection. At the end, the return to darkness and blue in Section XI signals the journey back to the mysterious realm of the Tao.

Second, Choi's choreography of the three female dancers is synchronized with other media elements to express the fundamental opposition. The overture explodes with sounds that build in volume and intensity before the energy subsides. Dancers are on stage, but are barely visible, immersed in a dense fog (dry ice) and dark red lighting. They become more visible as the instruments converge on a single pitch. Toward the end of Section I, the dancers gather together in the center and raise their arms; as they enter the Ego world, their movements become more disconcerted and angular. In Section IV, the dancers respond viscerally to sounds of bottle rocket that signify violence and destruction; as Choi indicates, they act out the sense of fear, horror, and powerlessness of wounded bodies in war. In Section VI, they extend their hands outward in gestures that convey desperation. In Section X, the dancers move around the singers in a circular pattern around the stage, as the lighting changes from red to blue. Choi comments that the shift from the vertical (Section IX) to the horizontal position (Section X) signifies openness. Their use of long white cloth further symbolizes fluidity and the idea of letting go of human desire. The concluding section parallels that of the opening: the dancers are once again immersed in a dense fog and the blue lighting suggests their return to the Tao.

Third, the most enigmatic moments in the opera take place when Choi reduces the combination of media to electronics and video projection in Sections V and VIII. "The Supreme Good is like Water" (Section V) presents a series of still images that continually morph into something else. Choi's videography captures the ephemeral states of being and non-being, alluding to the impermanence of matter in the phenom-

enal world. The electronic soundscape begins with white noise, providing continuity, while percussive (plucked) string sounds accompany the overlaid image of burned leaves, human hands stretched out, and rippling waves of water. Toward the end, the image rests on a single leaf, overlaid on water, before it dissolves into sheer whiteness. In contrast, Section VIII is entitled "While the Fields are Sterile." This is Choi's commentary on global warming. The video projects a microscopic image of dried soil caused by severe drought, overlaid with its black and white replica; in the middle, this image transforms into an outstretched and burned hand, overlaid with its black and white replica. These images suggest lack of water and life caused by drought, but they also suggest victims of war. The electronic soundscape is hardly serene, as it brings back distilled echoes of music from Section IV, which comments on the atrocities of war. It concludes on an optimistic note, however. Choi closes with two (undamaged) hands enclosing one another and holding a dead fish as an expression of condolence for lost lives.

Lastly, music plays a multifaceted role in the opera, and the concluding part of this analysis will focus mainly on how voices, which enunciate the Taoist texts, interact with acoustic instruments and electronics. Here are some instances of

how Choi accomplishes the subtle blending of timbres to create seamless continuity in the musical unfolding.

"With No Desire" (Section III) demonstrates Choi's technique for blending timbres of solo voices with instrumental, electronics, and choral parts. In Example 2, the percussionist shadows the mezzo-soprano's vocal entry on pitches A, C#, and F#, which comprise the first phrase, by bowing on the side of the crotales. The chordal clusters in fourths overlap in pitch with the mezzo-soprano's notes. Blending with the strumming of the piano and bell-like sounds in the electronics, the chorus provides a resonant envelope. The mezzo-soprano and baritone exchange lyrical lines in the following phrase. Choi highlights the entry, "the nameable is the mother of all things," by having the chorus enter canonically on a descending chromatic line. The texture becomes more homophonic as it builds momentum toward the climactic arrival on the word "mystery." Toward the end of the movement, the vocal parts divide into rhythmically asynchronous descending and ascending chromatic lines to underscore the negation of "the nameable as the eternal name." A similar technique of blending the vocal and instrumental timbres can be found in "Being Comes From Non-being" (Section XI).

"Colors Blind Your Eyes" (Section VI) shows Choi's strategy for aligning vocal

Ex. 3. Section VI (mm. 11-12, vocal parts only)

and physical gestures to convey the Ego world in its full splendor. Here, the chorus sings accented airy sounds with no pitch, while the soloists exclaim “I” on scattered pitches. Forming a vertical line on stage, the singers gesture vigorously with their hands, while shouting, “I hate, I like, I want, I need, I take,” and so forth. As shown in Example 3, the rhythmically asynchronous entries are hardly random, but controlled through a shared four-note pitch motive that unfolds in different rhythmic configurations, while the baritone trails the mezzo-soprano voice in rhythmic canon at the distance of a quarter note. In the second half, the vocal entries are accompanied by rapid, pointillistic textures in the marimba and piano, which reinforce the sense of chaos in the Ego world. Following the last line, “desires wither your heart,” the stage darkens as the singers leave one by one, and the piano closes with parallel chords that spiral downward.

In “Yet People Prefer Crooked Paths” (Section IX), Choi further heightens the effects of vocal disintegration through rhythmically asynchronous entries and hocketing, while utilizing canon and homophonic textures to emphasize material corruption as the antithesis of Taoism. As all of the acoustic instruments join forces in building up to a rousing cacophony, the microscopic image of dried soil appears once again on the screen, this time in synchrony with the chorus’ final line: “this is not the Tao.”

“She Lets Go So Nothing is Lost” (Section X) is about the juxtaposition of opposites. Here, Choi introduces melodic lines to unify the vocal and instrumental textures. When the mezzo-soprano enters with the hexachordal motive, the trumpet

echoes the same motive in canon. The same process links the baritone’s entry with the alto saxophone. In the middle, instrumental and vocal parts settle on the dyadic ostinato (D-C#) on the text, “being and non-being create each other,” as if the repetition of two pitches embodies the complementarity of opposite entities. Instrumental lines interpenetrate each other as the composite texture builds to a point of culmination on the text, “the sage teaches without effort and teaches without words.” At the close, the chorus makes *stretto* entries on the final line, “She lets go, so nothing is lost,” in a descending chromatic line as the stage darkens. In “Being Comes From Non-Being” (Section XI), the stage is left dark except for the blue spotlights on the vocalists. The idea of “yielding to the Tao” is conveyed through lyrical and sustained vocal lines, which blend with the instrumental and electronic soundscape. Downward contour is associated with the return to the Tao; the vocal lines spiral chromatically downward as they sing, “everything in the world comes from being.”

Conclusion

Analysis of an artistic experience is not just about uncovering the inherent structure and aesthetic intention of the artist, but attempting to express the gap that exists between the ephemeral experience of performance and verbal communication about the work. And this gap is harder to fill in the case of *The Eternal Tao* because of the unbounded, multisensory experience it affords to the listener. Sounds and images continually morph from one state to another—being caught in a cyclical state of being and becoming. In the DVD of the production, the dancers’ movements on stage are

overlaid by duplicated shadows to create another visual layer. To this reviewer, this dynamic process, fundamental to Choi’s multimedia production, calls to mind what feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva calls the *chora*—the pre-symbolic realm in which sonic and visual gestures are articulated by “flows and marks” within the corporeal continuum of multimedia.³ By virtue of its fluid, signifying process, *chora* resists being anchored to established conventions and meanings. This process is also reflected in how Choi blurs the boundary between electronics and acoustical instruments in the spatialization of sounds.⁴ It is through such means that Choi invites the audience to meditate on the openness of experience and interpretation in contemplating the world of Tao.

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NOTES

1. See Laozi, *Tao Te Ching: an Illustrated Journey*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).

2. The source of this background sound is derived from Choi’s own voice, which was electronically altered into a harmonic cluster. Based on a phone interview with Kyong Mee Choi on February 19, 2013.

3. See Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 40.

4. Similar techniques involving spatialization of electronics, acoustic instruments, and voice occur in Kaija Saariaho’s *Lohn* (1996) and *L’Amour de loin* (2000).

Virtual Opera Production: The Making of *Libertaria*, Part 2

SABRINA PEÑA YOUNG

In “Virtual Opera Production: The Making of *Libertaria*, Part 1,” composer Sabrina Peña Young discussed ways that contemporary composers can use crowdsourcing, Music Xray, Bandcamp, and other online resources to create a low-cost, large-scale production such as an opera. To read Part 1, please see the *Journal of the IAWM* 18/2 (2012): 15-16.

Organizing a full-scale opera or large music project using the Internet in its entirety

presents a unique set of challenges for any composer. Producing an opera requires a large number of competencies, including good organizational skills, excellent communication ability, flexibility, and creativity; organizing a cast and crew virtually also involves a thorough understanding of digital technology. Net-



Sabrina Peña Young

iquette, all forms of online communication including Skype and Facebook, the “cloud,” and the ability to address cast concerns immediately despite time zone differences. In this article the author will discuss practical ways to apply current digital and online technologies to a large-scale project by using her current project, *Libertaria: The Virtual Opera*, as a primary example.

Libertaria: The Virtual Opera is an animated, feature-length opera involving a cast and crew that communicate through

e-mail, social networking, Dropbox, and Skype. The *Libertaria* cast has never met for rehearsal, the animators have never spoken to the composer in person, and the composer hears only the finished work as she mixes down hundreds of audio files to animation files received through Dropbox and Facebook. Because *Libertaria* is animated, there are additional challenges involved including lip-syncing audio to animated characters, working with an animation team, and editing down hundreds of files into a feature film.

Recording Insights from *Libertaria*

When producing a large-scale music project through the Internet communication, flexibility and organization are key components for success. Any composer wishing to collaborate with dozens of musicians and artists through the Internet needs to wear multiple hats, including director, manager, tech support, and coach. Needless to say, jumping between roles involves a keen sensitivity to each musician's needs, especially considering the cold nature of Internet communication.

The *Libertaria* cast worked on the recordings for the opera for over an eighteen-month period. After downloading the *Libertaria Cast Rehearsal Albums* from Bandcamp.com, the cast members recorded their vocals using the included scores and click tracks. Without set live rehearsals for this all-volunteer project, the composer, cast, and crew had to work with a very flexible schedule that allowed for work obligations, touring, family emergencies, and cast changes throughout the process. After trying several forms of communication including Skype, Facebook, and telephone, they found that the most effective means of communication was e-mail, with the exception of one animator who preferred live chat in Facebook. The composer used a master spreadsheet to keep track of cast and crew members and used Dropbox to organize and share files.

Perry Cook, founder of Princeton's PLORK and advisor to the top-selling Apps company SMUle, describes the recording process for *Libertaria*: "This style of production fits extremely well with a workflow I commonly use to produce my own musical pieces. I leave my studio fully set up, so when I get an idea I go in and record it. When things have solidified, I record a lot more takes, edit, iterate product. This is even easier, because Sabrina has already

written and scored it, and I just have to learn it, perform it well a few times, pick the four or five best, and ship it off to let her worry about the rest. I can also record a character/scene multiple ways (opera vs. Broadway, sad versus intense, etc.) and let her pick the one she likes."

Any one song for *Libertaria* has several takes per opera character. Complicated full-cast numbers like *Pilar of the Underground* have over forty vocal tracks that need to be spliced, edited, and cleaned up by the composer. The process is tedious and dependent on the recording quality of the original. In some cases, cast members had to rerecord their takes because of clipping, distortion, or submitting compressed mp3 files. Clean, raw vocal recordings work best when mixing hundreds of audio files. Some opera cast members submitted alternate takes with effects and full mixes. The composer usually saved these "wet" mixes for promotional purposes, test animations, and extra scenes not in the screenplay, and Alt Rock singer Matthew Meadows, who shares the role of Simeon, reached thousands of music fans with his alternate mix of the jazzy solo "Metal Ink."

While having hundreds of audio files to work with provides the composer with limitless ways to mix the audio down, some disadvantages include overlooking files, missing files, too much time choosing between nearly identical takes, and CPU overload when automation is applied. For example, in *Pilar of the Underground* the composer had to export the entire orchestral track to a single stereo track to mix the vocals because Logic could not run the original sixty-five track mix with full automation, dozens of automated vocal tracks, and complex software instruments. At the time of this article, the music production has wrapped up, and *Libertaria* is in the middle of animation production. Post-production will follow for the next five months, with a final cut of the animation and a mastered vocal score completed at the end of the summer.

Singer Jennifer Hermansky, currently on tour with *The Wizard of Oz*, shares her thoughts on singing for animation: "The challenge in voice-acting for animations is not knowing how the animated character will move during your songs or lines. You have to take the story, lines, and music as inspiration for how you will perform the character."

Benefits of Animation for the Low Budget Opera

With the global depression, art budget cuts, and innovations in technology, contemporary composers have embraced new ways of presenting opera using digital media in the last twenty years. Digital art projects like The Creator's Project (<http://www.thecreatorsproject.com/>) encourage and promote modern projects such as virtual operas, digital art, gaming-inspired art, and multimedia design projects. From the Chicago Opera Cabal ensemble to William Antoniou's *Turing Opera* and Alice Shield's *Apocalypse*, composers have combined the theatrical spectacle of opera with the unlimited innovation of technology.

Choosing to create an animated opera over a traditional live opera has several advantages, including working with a diverse range of artists worldwide, low production cost, unlimited stage possibilities, and easy distribution. An animated opera allows the composer to collaborate with numerous musicians and artists worldwide. Initially, artists offered their help from Australia, Argentina, and the United Kingdom, but in the end the primary cast and crew lived in the United States. Because this opera is not dependent on a single location, overall production costs are minimal when compared to hosting a large-scale opera, and crew members work on the opera from their homes.

Animation allows for as big or as small a production as possible with a few clicks of the mouse. Because *Libertaria* is a futuristic sci-fi opera, animation allows for unlimited imaginative characters and props, like reverse-aging geneticists, that would be hard to replicate in a low budget opera production. Talented animator Lucinda McNary created visual effects in *Libertaria* such as flying futuristic aircraft, the massive explosion of the Factory, the destruction of New York City, and hundreds of soldiers fighting in the Underground. For this project, the animators use the program Moviestorm in conjunction with Bryce, Photoshop, iClone, Final Cut, Flash, and Maya. The composer chose Moviestorm, a program that uses video-game style animation to direct virtual characters in a computer-generated environment, for its ease of use, low cost, and ability to quickly lip-sync. As the production evolved, Moviestorm's comic book effects helped develop a cohesive overall graphic novel cin-

ematic style of strong lines, comic script subtitles, and a dark color palette.

While this production has taken as long as any opera or film production, the end result will be available in a single file or DVD. Because future performances only involve screening a video, the opera can have hundreds of performances worldwide and online for a minimal cost. The interdisciplinary nature of the opera will help it travel to film, music, machinima, and animation festivals, as well as have select online screenings. *Libertaria: The Virtual Opera* moves beyond the concert hall and opens up opera to a wider audience.

Opera for the Digital Age

As prominent music organizations around the world feel a strong economic squeeze, closing doors as patrons struggle

to buy groceries instead of pricey concert tickets, a generational and demographic gap becomes apparent in the concert halls. The Digital Age brought in a new Musical Era where anyone with broadband and a synthesizer could upload original musical creations for all to hear. Yet generations of children have never seen a live opera or orchestra, millions of students do not have the means to take a single music lesson, and public education continues to morph into factories of creative stagnation. The composer's challenge is to reach out to these missing generations that prefer YouTube, iTunes, smartphones, and Tweeting while maintaining a high level of artistry.

"Before YouTube and Twitter, opera was the creative outlet for protest and social change. Opera is hip. Opera is

now." (Official Press Release: "Eccentric Composer Produces Animated Opera via Internet." <http://virtualopera.wordpress.com/2013/02/15/press-release-eccentric-composer-produces-animated-opera-via-internet/>)

Award-winning composer Sabrina Peña Young creates mind-numbing electroacoustic works heard worldwide. Her music has been performed at venues such as the Beijing Conservatory, the International Computer Music Conference, Miramax's Project Greenlight, the Athena Festival, the New York International Independent Film Festival, Art Basil Miami, Turkey's Cinema for Peace, 60x60, and Pulsefield International Exhibition of Sound Art. Her latest project is Libertaria: The Virtual Opera, an animated post-USA sci-fi opera about a young girl defeating an evil genetics factory. The work will have its premiere in Lake Worth, Florida in October 2013.

Laboratories for Opera: A Danish Experiment Called coOPERAtion

EVA HAVSHØJ OHRT

The Danish composer Line Tjørnhøj has initiated an experiment called coOPERAtion, consisting of four opera labs. Here young composers can try out conceptual ideas and new ways of cooperating with musicians and singers, giving them a space where they can develop as composers. The operatic genre is spun into hundreds of years of tradition but appears to have a hard time renewing itself. This article describes how different artists are attempting to modernize opera through intensive work in a laboratory setting.

Denmark—with its inhabitants still rated to be the happiest in the world. Denmark—where you can actually be a parent



Line Tjørnhøj

and have a career at the same time because our working day is shorter than in many other countries. In a number of ways, Denmark is in the forefront in promoting equal rights for both men and women. But when it comes to the business of music, this is still a male-dominated field—especially for composers. Female composers continue to be an exception. Line Tjørnhøj, in addition to composing beautiful and conceptual in-

strumental pieces and operas, is a driving force in the support of women, especially young women composers and performers.

Tjørnhøj's latest initiative, coOPERAtion, is supported and made possible by an association of young composers called AUT, for whom Tjørnhøj is the chairman. The four opera laboratories of coOPERAtion are located in Aarhus, Denmark, and each one presents the work of a young composer—three females and one male. The composers are Laura Bowler from England, Ruta Vitkauskaitė from Lithuania, Ylva Lund Bergner from Sweden, and Lasse Schwanenflügel Piasecki from Denmark.

Motivation behind coOPERAtion

Line Tjørnhøj explains what motivated the project: "We wanted to create a platform for artistic development for young composers. We are inspired by similar initiatives taken in the stage art and performance milieus. Opera as a genre is very well suited to be revitalized because so many different forms of art meet in this genre. Opera is flexible when it comes to incorporating the multimedia of our times, and the genre contains great possibilities for new ways of collaborating across art forms."

For this project Tjørnhøj invited very young composers to join because they have a difficult time obtaining work conditions that can leave room for experiments. The process from idea to realization has

many unknown factors, especially when it comes to opera. For these young composers she wanted to provide a place to gain concrete experiences, and to meet different creative partners to interchange ideas and views—coOPERAtion is a platform where the composers can try out their ideas in collaboration with professional producers. She says: "Traditional opera is one of the most popular forms of art in the world, but if it shall remain interesting, we believe that modernization is required, and that is why contemporary opera deserves a development platform."

coOPERAtion: Collaborative Opera Labs

As the title indicates, coOPERAtion is a collaboration between artists, associations, and cultural institutes. Performance artist Annika Lewis is facilitating two of the labs, and opera singer Christina Dahl was the facilitator in the first lab. The Danish National Opera has been a collaborative partner in the project, and the fourth lab will be held in cooperation with the international theatre festival ILT and Aarhus Sinfonietta. The Danish Composers' Society will also enter the project as a collaborator in a seminar to be held in connection with the fourth lab. The recurring instrumental ensemble for the project is Aarhus-based Lydenskab. For the classical music ensemble it is an exciting challenge to engage in creation, development processes and scenic techniques, and they are gaining great competency and insight

into the psychology of artistic, innovative work. We anticipate that the four young composers will leave coOPERation with new work tools and a greater understanding of the process and will thereby be included in the network of competency development that coOPERation is aiming to evolve. AUT is a central player in the work of assisting young artists in finding opportunities to create international cooperation.

Line Tjørnhøj says: “The making of laboratories is something performers and actors are very good at prioritizing. But in the classical music milieu and among composers it has never been a tradition. The young composers really want to experiment, but they seldom get the chance—not even during their studies. It is expected that a composer produce a finished work, and nobody questions the product during the process.”

The First Laboratory

Each of the four young composers gets the opportunity to try out ideas in a lab, a place where everything is possible and no limits are allowed. In cooperation with musicians and singers, the composers can experiment but with a minimum of props. Each lab lasts six days: five rehearsal days, with a presentation and artist talk on the sixth day, where the audience can ask questions.

The first lab was held in the fall of 2012 with the young English composer Laura Bowler. Before she arrived in Aarhus, she had sent her ideas and music scores to the singers and the musicians to give them something to prepare. Her idea was to explore the following theme: “A ritualistic presentation of the perception of the power of music through critics, political reaction/action, flashback premiere audience reactions, and the creator/composer.” At the beginning of lab one Laura Bowler wrote on coOPERation’s blog:

What do you get if you put 4 opera singers, 4 instrumentalists and a composer in a room without a director or conductor? Opera Lab. With a really successful first day of getting to know each other and everyone contributing with ideas for various ways to stage things and try things musically, I can honestly say that I’m excited and a little nervous about where we might end on Saturday. Without the hierarchy of having a director

in place, thus pushing all participants to explore outside of their comfort zones, I’m sure that the final outcome will be a truly collaborative performance with a lack of certainty of where all of the ideas actually stemmed from originally. This organic way of creating an opera is something entirely new to me as a composer, but I’m certainly enjoying being challenged and looking forward to tomorrow morning’s operatic antics!

After the second day of rehearsal, Bowler decided that she had to start all over. She sat up all night, and the next morning she arrived with new material and new ideas. Now she knew more about the forces and limitations of the group of people she was working with. This triggered confusion and uncertainty among the musicians and singers because they were not used to working without preparing “at home.” The day before the presentation Bowler wrote the following on coOPERation’s blog:

Today was a real turning point for everyone involved, which I believe couldn’t have been reached without all of the drama, discussions, tensions, frustrations, excitements, successes and failures of the previous 4 days. Everyone’s contribution today made everything we tried, tested, played, performed and improvised more successful than it had before. Though I truly believe that we couldn’t have reached the working dynamic we had today without the struggles that came previously, and most of all without knowing each other and spending time making mistakes as an ensemble together. It is impossible to place almost 10 strangers in a room together and expect miraculous things to occur immediately...but I do believe that we were on the cusp of something great today, which was definitely achieved through a process I have never encountered before. Looking forward to tomorrow’s presentation! I’ve had a fantastic week working with Ensemble Lydenskab, Christina and all of the singers! I feel privileged to have had a living, breathing com-

position workshop to play in with the input of fantastic musicians!

The challenge at the first lab seemed to be that the people involved found it very hard to begin from zero. So the first lab was less about finding new ways of working with opera, but more about letting go of control for the involved—about investigating the art instead of being afraid of exposing oneself on uncertain ground.

The Second Lab

The second lab took place in November 2012. Again the theme and set pieces were far from the traditional love triangle. This time the set-up was completely different from the first lab because of the many multimedia effects. For this lab a group of artists called “Kliudziau” moved to Aarhus



Ensemble Lydenskab

from Lithuania for two weeks. Kliudziau’s members include composer Ruta Vitkauskaitė, video artist Mykolas Budraitas, video mapping artist Simas Gineika, technical director Christian Francois, actress Irina Lavrinovic, and the cat Biliunas. They fostered the idea that the thematic starting point for the second lab should be the borderline between reality and fiction inspired by the “computer kids” of the twenty-first century. This lab used multimedia in many different ways to give a new angle to a “normal” operatic setting. At the presentation it was possible to experience the opera experiment in China, Lithuania, or anywhere, as it was streamed live on the Internet.

Other participants were The Danish National Opera, the Ensemble Lydenskab, the singer Sine Elbæk Rysgaard, and the performance consultant Annika B. Lewis. Pernille Madsen, opera singer from The Danish National Opera, comments on the second lab: “I have had two eye openers at this lab. The first is working with video projections, which I am not used to. The video is constantly recording and the pic-

tures and films are immediately used in the room as background and so forth, which inspires me. The next thing is electronica, which I have never worked with before. In a way I've always associated it with young people and DJs. It's been really interesting to work with." For several days the laboratory was like a boat sailing in different directions at the same time. The turning point came during an improvisation on Wednesday; the singer Stine Elbæk Rysgaard reported: "The different elements from the musical and scenic material,... which we had worked with for two days, were brought into the improvisation without it being planned beforehand. Out of this improvisation we made the opera."

Audience Reaction

The audience witnessed not a performance but an open rehearsal—a presentation of one week's work plus an artist talk, where both the audience and the artists discussed the work and the opera genre and asked questions. The audience has been open-minded and very eager to learn

more about the process and the thoughts of the composer. At the second lab the audience raised a question: "Do you perceive this as opera?" After one person had suggested that opera of today was an "empty genre" capable of containing anything, the animated audience continued to give opinions until Line Tjørnhøj interjected by saying that the presentation was a "life-time composition." Composer Ruta Vitkauskaitė's intention was precisely to work with a living structure, which is the reason that, at one point, she removed the scores; the musicians were expected to play from memory. She believed that with such an obstacle the opera genre would be given new life.

Envisions for the Future of Opera

One of the main purposes of this project has proved to be the need to make room for experimenting in order to find an answer to the question: "What is the future of opera?" The answer seems to be that everything is possible in the great and various potential of the opera genre. Perform-

mance consultant Annika B. Lewis, who has worked for quite some time with the creative process, commented: "It gives an openness and willingness to adjust to the fact that everything can be turned upside down in a split second. I think of an artistic laboratory as a kind of fundamental research that should be available at all major institutions. Large industrial companies most certainly make room for fundamental research, because they know that we must make space in order to discover the new—and they run it parallel to the usual business to produce what is needed."

About the experience from the first two laboratories, Tjørnhøj says: "We can already see different effects: competency development for all participants in the form of tangible work instruments, which can be employed in a creative and co-producing artistic process, and at the same time, we can also see a development of the artists' more or less established mindsets and views on art. The project generates an increase of artistic reflection and self-understanding within the participants, and knowledge is shared between and across musicians, singers, composer, performance facilitator and others involved."

This article presents only the first half of the coOPERation project. Surely we will learn more about the future potential of the opera genre and stab deeper into the artistic process of the laboratories with classical musicians and singers during the remaining labs. The third lab will take place on April 2-7, 2013, and the fourth lab, May 6-11 and 23-25. For additional information, please visit www.4cooperations.com.

Line Tjørnhøj was a composition student at The Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus, where she studied with Simon Steen-Andersen, among others. As a youth, she was apprenticed as a sailor and traveled around the world. Later she worked as a nurse. She wrote her first musical composition at the age of thirty-five, and since then critics and audiences have acclaimed her compositions. Her work, Anorexia Sacra, won the competition for the best chamber opera at the American Opera Vista Festival in 2009. In 2010 the music committee of the Danish Arts Foundation awarded her its three-year working scholarship for classical composers. Please see her website at www.linejorhøj.dk/.

Eva Havshøj Ohrt is a freelancer in the Danish milieu evolving around contemporary classical music, electronic music, and sound art. She is the writer and public relations manager for Line Tjørnhøj.

Denmark: Call for Composers and Artists

AUT (Aarhus Unge Tonekunstnere) in Denmark announces a call for composers and/or artists to interpret the theme of "body" in a work for three performers. The winning works will be realized by the acclaimed Danish choreographer/performer Lisbeth Sonne and the Norwegian vocal duo Bly in a week-long workshop, concluding with two presentation concerts in December 2013, in Aarhus and Copenhagen.

Composers and/or artists are invited to devise works that explore the human body through sound and movement. The three female performers (one performer/actor and two vocalists) specialize in extending the traditional capabilities of the body and voice; works that explore experimental and interdisciplinary approaches to performance are therefore warmly encouraged. Lisbeth Sonne will function as director and choreographer. She will be responsible for the physical and visual interpretation and staging of the winning works. The process has two distinct phases:

- 1) Conception and formalization of idea (artists/composers)
- 2) Realization and performance. Composers must be able to attend the dress rehearsal and public performances. The workshop process and final presentations will be professionally documented.

Deadline: September 15, 2013

AUT will accept only original works (i.e. works that have not been performed before). The competition is open to artists of all nationalities and ages. A jury consisting of AUT board members Kaj Duncan David, Allan Gravgaard Madsen and Jens Peter Møller, will, alongside Lisbeth Sonne and Bly, choose up to five works to be premiered in Aarhus (December 8, 2013) and Copenhagen (December 10). AUT will provide housing and cover transportation costs enabling the winning composers to participate in the dress rehearsal and concerts.

Send the score and/or materials for realization of the work (pdf) and your CV to aut@aut.dk

Web: www.aut.dk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AUT.dk

Bly: www.blyweb.com

Composer: Line Tjørnhøj. Tel: +45 23459596

Juliana Hall: A Remarkable Art Song Composer

KATHERINE EBERLE

When I recall the many art songs I have studied, performed, and taught in the past twenty years, only a few cycles stand out as ones I find worthy of recording or performing repeatedly. I believe high quality art songs require captivating melodies, interesting rhythms, excellent text setting, and harmonic choices that accompany the text so that the words really speak to me emotionally. With those criteria fulfilled, I believe I can reach my audiences most effectively. Juliana Hall's compositions meet those requirements for me.

I first encountered Juliana Hall's works in the 1990's when a colleague heard I was seeking repertoire for a compact disc recording and suggested I contact the graduate dean at my university, as his daughter-in-law was a composer. I did, and Hall generously sent me copies of some of her music, which I then went on to perform and record. A few years later she invited me to perform her cycle *Letters from Edna* at Yale. She is a fabulous collaborative pianist as well, so the experience was a very pleasant one for us both. Years went by and we lost track of one another. When it came time for me to record another compact disc, I remembered that my favorite work of the past twenty years was Hall's *Letters from Edna*. When I contacted her again and told her I wished to record the songs and use them as part of my concert tour, she agreed to also let me interview her so that I could write articles about her during my sabbatical.

If you are unfamiliar with Juliana Hall, let me introduce you. She is a prolific composer of classical art songs having written more than 250 individual songs. Born in 1958 and currently living in Connecticut with her husband and son, Hall composes full time and has been a visiting guest professor at the nearby Hartt School of Music. Hall's music has been performed in more than two dozen countries in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia by more than 100 performers.

She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition in 1989, at the tender age of 30. She applied for the fellowship so that she could dedicate herself to composing full-time. The award offered her living expenses for a year, and as a result she wrote six major works including *Lore-*

lei (a setting for mezzo, horn and piano on a poem by Sylvia Plath) recorded on the Vienna Modern Masters label (VMM2005); *Theme In Yellow* (seven songs for soprano or tenor and piano on poems by Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Carl Sandburg), excerpts of which I also recorded on the same label. That year Hall wrote *Peacock Pie* (twenty songs for tenor and piano on poems by Walter de la Mare); *Songs of Enchantment* (ten songs for soprano and piano on poems by Walter de la Mare); *Syllables of Velvet, Sentences of Plush* (seven songs for soprano and piano on letters of Emily Dickinson) published by Boosey and Hawkes (VAB313); and

Winter Windows (seven songs for baritone and piano on poems by Walter de la Mare, Robert Frost, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Percy Bysshe Shelley).

Hall has received a number of commissions. Two were from the Schubert Club of St. Paul, Minnesota for distinguished Metropolitan Opera singers David Malis and Dawn Upshaw, one from the Mirror Visions Ensemble was premiered at The American Church in Paris, France; one from the Turnpike Camerata of New Jersey was premiered in New York City; and one from soprano Elizabeth Dubberly was premiered in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Last fall, I began studying Hall's three

To Harriet Monroe

Dance-like ♩ = 160

Mezzo-soprano

Piano

6 *mf* *mp*

M.S. Spring is here, and I

Pno. *mp*

11

M.S. could be ve-ry hap-py, ex-cept that I

Pno. *mf* *mp*

18 *p* *mf* *rit.* *Tempo 1, ♩ = 160*

M.S. am broke. Would you mind pay-ing me now in-

Pno. *mf*

Juliana Hall, "To Harriet Monroe," from *Letters from Edna*

song cycles for mezzo-soprano so that I could make some comparisons for lectures at the Athena Festival and the University of Hartford Women Composers Festival, as well as potential publications. Hall's own words about her writing reveal her compositional style quite clearly. Below are excerpts from an email on September 13, and my telephone interview with her on September 14, 2012.

KE: What led you to pursue composing?

JH: Although I began my musical life as a pianist, first studying with my mother, I always had a feeling that I might be able to write music...I'm not even sure why. However, when I did compose pieces and my music was heard by composition teach-

ers at various junctures in my life, those teachers always encouraged me to abandon piano (or at least make it secondary) and concentrate on developing my compositional ability.

KE: Why specialize in art song?

JH: As some of my earliest pieces were songs, I very early discovered that I enjoyed working with text and felt that song composition was "right" for me...and it seemed, too, that I had something of a knack for it. Perhaps this was because I had always been drawn to literature and had enjoyed both English and drama in school.

KE: What past teachers or critics shaped your compositional style?

JH: As far as teachers, I have been blessed by the opportunity to study with

quite a few wonderful teachers. One of the most influential comments that continues to guide me came from Frederic Rzewski, who insisted that I not seek to follow any particular fad or trend, but that I find my own inner voice and trust my own compositional intuition. Martin Bresnick and Leon Kirchner were very helpful with myriad technical details, which was especially important in my case, since I really began my formal composition studies relatively late in life while in graduate school at Yale. Later, when I was studying in Minneapolis, Dominick Argento helped me quite a bit with his vast knowledge of literature and by sharing his deep experience of writing for the special qualities of the different voice types. He also helped me to "find my own voice" by convincing me of the importance of setting English-language texts as a native English speaker.

KE: How would you characterize your songs?

JH: I would characterize my songs as lyrical works written in an extended tonality that sounds modern without giving the impression of belonging to a school of composition (atonal, romantic, etc.). One other characteristic that audiences frequently comment upon is that they are able to understand virtually every single word in my works—without reading printed texts—which I believe is due to the manner in which I set the rhythms according to the text, down to the level of individual syllables.

KE: Do you write for one specific singer or voice type?

JH: I have written mostly song cycles for soprano and baritone voices, because the majority of performers I've known have been either sopranos or baritones. However, I've also written three mezzo cycles, three tenor cycles, and a cycle for bass.

KE: What do you believe sets your songs apart from other composers?

JH: Although I am perhaps better acquainted with song composers of past generations than those closer to my own age, I think what makes my songs unique is that when I am composing I am not attempting to "comment upon" or "express my view of" the chosen text; rather, I am trying to set each poem or letter in a manner designed to illuminate the poet's or writer's point of view as I feel it to be. One concrete example of how I might do this is to very closely set my melodies to the rhythm of

26 $\text{♩} = 92$, Expressive 17

M-S. *p* *stead of on pub-li-ca-tion of those so stun-ning ver-ses of mine which you have?*

Pno. *p*

32 Tempo I , $\text{♩} = 160$ *rit.* *p* Tempo I , $\text{♩} = 160$ *mf*

M-S. *mp* *I am be - come ve - ry, ve - ry thin, and have ta-ken to smok-ing Vir -*

Pno. *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

39 $\text{♩} = 104$ *f* *ff* *3*

M-S. *mf* *P. S. I am aw - ful - ly*

Pno. *p* *f* *ff* *3*

46 *mp*

M-S. *broke. Would you mind pay - ing me a - lot?*

Pno. *mp*

each individual word in the text, in a sense letting the text dictate how the music will go; this is very different from a composer like Schubert, who might “fit” a text into a repetitive rhythmic structure of his own devising.

KE: Who are some of your favorite poets?

JH: In my early days as a composer I very much liked setting poems by Paul Verlaine (in French), Rainer Maria Rilke (in German), and Federico Garcia Lorca (in Spanish). For

some time now I have concentrated on setting English-language poems. I do seem to be drawn to a certain type of lyrical poetry that lends itself very well to musical setting. Elizabeth

Bishop, Amy Lowell, and Edna St. Vincent Millay are three poets from my “collection” of poets, that is, poets I tend to enjoy working with repeatedly. These three are women, and I do feel that women poets have a certain feeling that male poets do not have; however, I also have a number of male poets whose works I enjoy. Also, I find it stimulating to work with both the more masculine tone of male poets as well as the female sensibility with which certain women poets express themselves. I believe it is more of a coincidence that my three cycles for mezzo-soprano use women’s texts; many of my works set texts by poets such as



Juliana Hall,
photo by Paul Cryan

W.H. Auden, William Blake, Lewis Carroll, e.e. cummings, Walter de la Mare, Thomas Hardy, Edward Lear, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, and William Shakespeare (among others). Of course, other women whose poetry I enjoy setting include Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, and Sylvia Plath, but my choice is always governed more by how an individual text fits into my plan for exploring a subject, color, or mood than by whether the author of that text is a man or woman.

KE: How do you choose poetry to set to song?

JH: When I begin a new song cycle, I usually have in mind a “subject” or a “color” or a “mood” I wish to explore. Most of the time, though, I don’t know right off what poetry will provide the right subject, color, or mood I’m looking for. I just start reading and rereading poets, both male and female, and usually the “right” text by the “right” poet presents itself.

The musical example, “To Harriet Monroe,” from *Letters from Edna*, shows Hall’s ability to set humorous texts as well as her ability to bring out Edna St. Vincent Millay’s serious financial need at the time. This particular letter is written to Millay’s literary agent and friend requesting a monetary advance. The comedic text is heightened by the broken phrase lengths, when Millay says, “spring is here, and I could be happy, except that I am broke.” Note how Hall sets the text. Her syllabification and phrase shapes mirror the emotional despair Millay must have felt. Hall’s traits include multi-metric phrases, no key signature so

that the music can modulate freely, and accompaniment figures that underscore and support the singer, sometimes doubling the voice and other times, providing harmonic coloration.

For access to additional repertoire, recordings, and information, please see www.JulianaHall.com. I believe Hall’s art song cycles are especially persuasive for their strong rhythmic drive, lyrical melodies, and superb text settings. Hall’s fascinating creativity in her compositions brings life to texts in a way that delights audiences, and thus she is worthy of more public appreciation for her extraordinary thread in the women composer’s musical narrative. Surely she will now join the ranks of other respected living American women art song composers such as Libby Larsen, Lori Laitman, and Judith Cloud.

Katherine Eberle, mezzo-soprano, is an art song specialist who has given over one hundred solo recitals as a guest artist in Brazil, Canada, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Russia, the Virgin Islands, and around the U.S. Her solo engagements include performances with the symphony orchestras of Detroit, Lansing, and Saginaw (Michigan), and Atlanta, Macon, Rome, and Valdosta (Georgia). She made her New York debut at Weill Recital Hall in 1994. She was a 1997 Artistic Ambassador for the United States Information Agency doing solo concert tours in South America and Korea. A Van Lawrence Fellowship Winner from the Voice Foundation, Eberle was a 2012 Obermann Fellow in Residence for her research in women composers. She has been a professor of voice at the University of Iowa since 1991. Eberle’s DVD recording, Pauline Viardot: Composer, Singer, Forgotten Muse, is available on Amazon.com. The IAWM is delighted to welcome Juliana Hall as a new IAWM member.

Wang Qiang: A Composer In Tune With Her Times

Wang Qiang is the co-founder and President of the Chinese Women Composers’ Association and a long-time member of the IAWM. This article originally appeared in the South China Morning Post, Hong Kong, on December 27, 2012. We thank the Post for granting permission to reprint the article. The IAWM is pleased to honor Wang Qiang for her contributions to women in music and to the profession.

The first time Wang Qiang felt completely free to write her music, she was already 56 years old. Fed up with the political inter-

ference that dominated most of her artistic life, the composer moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong in 1991. Hong Kong is not particularly known for the kind of artistic atmosphere that inspires creativity. But for Wang, one of a handful of contemporary women composers on the mainland, it was heaven. “I came here for an environment that allows me to compose freely,” said Wang, now 77. “I have written so much rubbish in my life, things I now have no wish to see any more.”

Wang’s early career in music composition was marred by political interference. But her eventful and dramatic life gave her plenty of inspiration. Born in Shan-dong in 1935, Wang joined the People’s

Liberation Army’s art troupe as a teenager and went to the border with North Korea as a volunteer during the Korean War. It was there the 16-year-old learned to compose war propaganda songs. “I like composing. It’s a way of expressing myself,” she said, her eyes twinkling with enthusiasm. “When the US planes were bombing overhead, we were dancing in the air raid shelters.”

After the war, she entered the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to study composition in 1955. She studied under Ding Shande, a French-trained musician who encouraged students to be liberal and creative in their compositions. But Wang soon found herself—along with other

musicians—forced to write music for the Communist Party’s campaigns. When she was in her third year at the conservatory, she was among students sent to the countryside to observe the Great Leap Forward—a radical socialist mass-movement of Mao Zedong intended to accelerate China’s industrial production to match that of Western nations.

Full of youthful fervour and optimism for Mao’s utopian dream, Wang was genuinely moved to write—at first. “I saw people pushing carts, digging man-made rivers...and I wanted to praise the ordinary people for their hard work, so I wrote *River of Fortune*, even though it also praised Mao’s policy,” Wang said. The choral work won her first prize in composition at the 1959 World Youth Festival in Vienna. But Wang soon found it increasingly difficult to follow orders to compose only music praising the government. During the Great Leap Forward, she and other composers were often summoned during the night by the authorities to write propaganda songs in locked rooms, on themes such as: “Surpass Britain and catch up with the US.” “But composing is not like working in a factory. You need inspiration,” she said. “So we ended up writing lots of rubbish.”

In 1960, the year she graduated, she and other musicians were sent to the countryside in Yunnan and Guizhou to see how agricultural collectivisation and the creation of people’s communes under the Great Leap Forward led peasants to happiness. They were ordered by the authorities to write a quartet depicting the people’s communes as “steps to heaven.” “These political slogans, I just couldn’t write anything out of them,” she said. “We wrote a quartet anyway, but they said it was nothing like ‘steps to heaven’ so we were criticised for lacking feeling for the People’s Commune. These were political tasks we grudgingly carried out.... It was a distortion of our creativity so we couldn’t produce anything good.”

Things went from bad to worse during the Cultural Revolution, the decade between 1966 and 1976 that saw musi-

cians attacked as imperialist bourgeoisie, violins smashed and pianos chained up in conservatories that were forcibly shut down. A former student of He Luding, the head of the Shanghai music conservatory who was jailed for seven years for his anti-Mao stance, Wang was denounced as his “black offshoot” and a “monster and demon,” which were insults for class enemies. Her name was crossed out with black ink in giant posters hung around the conservatory. She was also attacked for employing techniques used in French composer Claude Debussy’s compositions, such as the whole-tone scale, because a book on Debussy had been criticised by Yao Wenyuan, one of the powerful Gang of Four. “Therefore, you too are an enemy,” she sighed. “Even music technique had become [an issue in] class struggle.”

During that tumultuous decade, Wang wasn’t allowed to write music and was barred from teaching at the conservatory, where she had been working since graduation. She attended “political struggle” meetings and was often locked in a room writing self-criticism to “uncover my subversive thinking.” But Wang proudly says these horrendous experiences only enriched her life and her music.

Wang is known for the vast range of compositions she has written, from contemporary classical music to scores for film and television, operettas and dance. Her name has been listed in the *Dictionary of the World’s Greatest Female Composers*. Professor Chan Wing-wah, a Hong Kong composer, says Wang’s works are full of bold passion and are free from the revolutionary style of her early career when composition was a political task. “You need life experience and the ability to observe the world in order to compose,” said Wang, citing the example of well-known contemporary musician Tan Dun, one of tens of millions of youngsters sent to the countryside to toil in Mao’s “up to the mountains and down to the villages” campaign.

Even after her move to Hong Kong, life wasn’t easy. A mainlander who spoke little Cantonese, she had to scrape for a living like all new immigrants. “I needed to fill my stomach, so I taught piano, theory, composition in music shops,” she said. Wang’s professional skills in composition and music arrangement eventually earned

her a professorship at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts.

But Wang realised how tough it was for fellow women composers in the competitive commercial world. So in 2000, she founded the Chinese Women Composers’ Association to promote other female composers. “Women have written lots of compositions but most are kept inside locked drawers,” Wang said. “I want their works performed and published, otherwise there are few opportunities to hear and perform their works.” The association held a concert at Hong Kong City Hall in October, with the City Chamber Orchestra performing the works of a dozen female composers from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Five of them were musicians aged about 30. But Wang said women composers continued to be neglected in the world of music. “In terms of talent and hard work, women are not inferior to men, but there are few opportunities for women in this male-dominated society,” she said.

Most women composers teach music at schools or universities to bring in a wage and many also compose film and television scores. But few can afford to compose full-time and to focus on the works they want to write. Liu Qing, a lecturer at the China Conservatory in Beijing, said even though the majority of students who study composition at college are now female, many drop out of the trade sooner or later as they find it hard to balance the demands of family life with composing. The best-known composers tend to be male, she noted. “When you have a family and children, it’s difficult to spend several months...on creating just one piece of work,” she said.

Liu, a composer and member of the association, said Wang was an inspiration to the younger generation. “Madame Wang is a uniting force and she has given a foothold for us female composers,” she said. Liu said Wang had worked relentlessly to raise funds for the 13 concerts hosted by the association during the past decade and had helped raise society’s awareness of female musicians and given prominence to their work. And Wang said she was never deterred by hardship. “We know the road of music composition is full of hard work and bitterness...but we will march on courageously,” she said. “We still have many, many dreams.”



Wang Qiang

Oldenburger Komponisten-Colloquium

ROBERTO REALE

Before 1996, when Violeta Dinescu was appointed Professor of Composition at the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg, Germany, she had been teaching in Germany for fourteen years. Previously, she studied composition, piano, and pedagogy in her hometown of Bucharest in Romania. She recalls that in Bucharest she and her



Violeta Dinescu

fellow students regularly held debates about stylistic matters and various aspects of music composition. She was also accustomed to being in an environment that did not express any discrimination against women composers. In Romania there was no doubt about the fact that women's artistic capabilities were equivalent to those of men.

After moving to Germany, Dinescu learned that in the western-European world the situation was not the same—that women composers had a totally different status compared to that of men. She also discovered that the debates she knew so well from her time as a student in Bucharest—and that were so fruitful—seemed to follow completely different rules. In fact, she realized that very rarely was time allotted for members of the audience (students, professionals, and laymen) to discuss their own experiences with different kinds of contemporary music or hear a variety of musical styles. Discussions focused entirely on western-European music traditions as well as specific styles and schools of composition. Certain composers dominated the contemporary music scene, as if there were no composers in the other parts of Europe or the world.

Dinescu felt a strong urge to change the situation, and that led to the birth of the Oldenburger Komponisten-Colloquium. It began with five composers who presented their music in one of the lecture rooms of the University of Oldenburg. Since that time the number of composers has been increasing, and musicologists and performing musicians have been added to the list of those

invited so that the Colloquium could present a complete, overall picture of the music of our times and could be updated regularly.

Soon after its beginning, the Colloquium was held weekly during the fourteen-week semester. It has grown to such an extent that in the last semester the Komponisten-Colloquium held twenty-six Colloquia, including presentations by composers (Ursula Görsch, Siegrid Ernst), musicologists (Eva-Maria Houben, Ute Büchter-Römer, Diana Grguric), and interpreters (e.g., Kateryna Stadnichenko, Ulrike Brand, Christine Cornier-Langlois, Duo Violoncellissimo/Olga Veselina and Vadim Larchikov, Dora Etcheva). The Colloquium has sponsored concerts (Luiza Borac, Jenny Abel), book presentations (e.g., Ute Büchter-Römer: *Erzählte Biographie*, a book about the experiences of women musicians), CD presentations (Myriam Marbe), and an exhibition (Bartók–Enescu), plus the Twelfth Carl von Ossietzky International Composition Competition.

Concerning the selection of artists or topics, the Colloquium sets no stylistic

boundaries or preferences of any kind. In most cases, the artists themselves contact Violeta Dinescu asking for the opportunity to hold a colloquium about their work or project. There have been some exceptions to this thematic freedom; for example, in 2005 the theme of the Colloquium was “String Quartets of Our Time,” and in 2008 only women composers were invited.

The next series of Colloquia will focus on contemporary composers from Turkey (April 19–May 25, 2013). For information, please visit www.komponisten-colloquium.de. The Komponisten-Colloquium is a unique phenomenon in the cultural scene in Germany—probably even in Europe. It covers all aspects of contemporary music, and it offers the audience the opportunity to get in touch with composers, musicians, and musicologists on a weekly basis. It fulfills Violeta Dinescu's deep wish to present music in an unfiltered, neutral way that has no preferences for East or West, or for men or women, but simply puts the enduring beauty and inexhaustible variety of music into focus.

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror by Violeta Dinescu

On Friday, March 8, 2013, the silent film *Nosferatu* by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, with music by the Romanian composer Violeta Dinescu, was premiered in the Konzerthaus in Berlin. The premiere marked the celebration of both International Womensday, hosted by the Camerata Europaea, and the awarding of the Johann-Wenzel-Stamitz-Prize 2012, granted by the Künstlergilde e.V. Esslingen, to Violeta Dinescu for her lifetime achievement. The extraordinary musicians of Trio Contraste from Romania (Sorin Petrescu, piano and percussion; Ion-Bogdan Ștefănescu, flute(s) and percussion; Doru Roman, percussion) performed Dinescu's music to the film in a stirring way.

According to experts from around the world, Murnau's film, although dating back to 1922, has not lost any of its fascination and is still the best interpretation of the Dracula story to this day. Nevertheless, Dinescu disliked the film when she first saw it in the 1980s. Years later, her appreciation of Murnau's art was awakened when she wrote new music for Murnau's last film, *Tabu* (1929–31). It premiered in the Alte Oper Frankfurt in 1988. She was commissioned to write new music for *Nosferatu* by the Camerata Europaea, and she created amazing as well as insightful music. The success of the premiere also belongs to the outstanding musicians. It was a special event for them, too, because with this premiere they celebrated their thirtieth jubilee: thirty years during which they premiered hundreds of pieces written especially for them or adapted for them by their pianist, Sorin Petrescu.

At the premiere, the concert hall was filled with tension, and the entire audience was captivated by the movie and the music that so perfectly portrayed the story. Dinescu succeeded in writing music that not only captures the atmosphere of the movie but also enriches and intensifies it. To some extent, the music, with its large variety of sounds and melodies, takes the audience by the hand, like a wise companion walking along, embracing optical and acoustic impressions. ...Reviewed by Roberto Reale

In addition to teaching and directing the Colloquium, Dinescu is a renowned composer, and her compositions have been awarded numerous national and international prizes: Grand Prize for Composition (Utah, USA, 1983), Carl Maria von Weber Preis (Dresden, 1986), Baldreit Preis (Baden-Baden, 1987), NYU Prize for Composition (New York, 1995), Johann-Vaillant-Kompositionspreis 2012, Johann-Wenzel-Stamitz-Preis 2012.

She has composed operas and ballets and has received commissions to write pieces for chamber ensemble, symphony orchestras, and films by different institutes, including the Kulturamt-Mannheim, Staatstheater Mannheim, Stadttheater Freiburg, Stadttheater Ulm, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Staatstheater Magdeburg, Donaueschinger Musiktage, and the U.K. National Culture Collection, among others. Her music has been performed in

concerts in Europe, America, and Canada, and her works have been recorded on numerous CDs, many of which have been reviewed in the *Journal of the IAWM*.

Roberto Reale studied musicology at the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg, Germany and is currently an assistant. He is writing his doctoral thesis on "Aspects of Lament in George Enescu's Opera Œdipe."

Meet Three New IAWM Members

I Wanted to Be a Cheerleader but I Couldn't Jump

RITA SOUTHWORTH MOERSCHER

Music and the arts hold a central place in my life. I teach piano, perform, and plan concerts for a Boston music club and am also a senior lecturer in the Fine and Applied Arts Department at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts. My road to music began in Kasson, Minnesota, a small farming town. My family was unique because we did not appreciate sports in a sports-minded town, but instead we loved music and art. In addition to my love of music, I especially wanted to be a cheerleader or homecoming queen, but that wish did not come true. My early exposure to music was from the daily practice of my father, an amateur violinist. A lettering artist by trade, he was passionate about music and art and we all soaked it up. Piano lessons with local teachers began when I was seven, and my salaried musical career began at the age of thirteen, when I was asked to be the church organist. For five years, I earned \$3 per week to play fifty-two weeks of services plus all the weddings and funerals at our Methodist church.

I first experienced live symphonic music when I was eleven and heard the Rochester Symphony. After all these years, I remember the piano soloist, Irma Schenuit Hall, playing Chopin's Concerto in E minor, and I left thinking that I wanted to be a concert pianist. After graduating from the University of Minnesota, I went to New York to study with Nadia Reisenberg. Along with my piano lessons and a part-time job at Columbia University, I found time to take in the amazing art scene: concerts, ballet, and art museums. I was fortunate to hear some great musicians: Vladimir Horowitz, Sviatoslav Richter, Emil

Gilels, Arturo Benedetto Michelangeli, Andres Segovia, and Arthur Rubinstein: hmm—no women. The one female-only show I remember was a big retrospective of the artwork of Lee Krasner, wife of Jackson Pollock. Throughout the feast of arts in New York, it never occurred to me that most of these events did not include many (or any) women artists or musicians.

Boston became my next and last home. A professor I worked for at MIT introduced me to my first husband, Joel Moerschel, a cellist in the Boston Symphony, with whom I began to play chamber music. This led to many opportunities to learn and perform standard cello/piano and piano trio repertoire and to years of attending BSO concerts at which I heard some amazing women musicians. My first recitals featuring music by a woman composer were family-oriented: Joel and I performed the two cello sonatas written by his mother, Blanche Moerschel, a very active composer and a founding member of the Wisconsin Alliance for Composers. Later, we played works for cello and piano by Minuetta Kessler. Learning solo music by Amy Beach led me to research and program other women composers. Since then I have presented many lecture/recitals of women composers, some in conjunction with the Women and Gender Studies Department at Curry and often during Women's History Month. Recently, my colleague, clarinetist and IAWM member Michelle Shoemaker, asked me to learn *Lullaby* by IAWM member Jennifer Higdon for a performance with Michelle's duo, Revelia.



Rita Southworth Moerschel

I have had a private studio in Newton, MA since 1975 as well as a faculty position at the All Newton Music School, a community music school founded by a woman and now in its 100th year. All levels of talent and ages are in my studio—five year olds to a brief spell with a 100-year-old student. My first students were my own children, two of whom have found careers in music; one son is assistant stage manager for the Boston Symphony, and the other is violist in the Calder Quartet. Teaching continues to delight me as I try to enlighten my students and bring the joy of music to their lives. As music chairman of The Crescendo Club of Boston, one of many music clubs started and run by women, I plan six programs a year, getting talented students from local conservatories and music prep schools to perform, and encouraging them to include at least one piece by a woman. Our meetings are held a few doors down the street from the home of Amy Beach.

When I was hired to teach a course called "Introduction to Fine Arts" at Curry College, I was able to talk not only about the integrating principles of visual arts, dance, and music but also to discuss the complex lives and careers of women in those arts. Reading the fascinating histories of women in the creative arts inspired me to propose and initiate, with an art historian colleague, a course about female composers and visual artists. "From Gaga to the Greeks: Notable Women in Visual Arts and Music" attempts to bring to life and light the paths of the women who engaged in music and visual art, including the social attitudes, assumptions, and expectations regarding a woman's place, talents, and path throughout history. Included in the course are performances, both live and recorded, of music by some of the women about whom we read. We also take a trip to see firsthand the magnificent collection gathered by Isabella Stewart

Gardner. The Gardner Museum is the only museum in the world where the art was collected by the woman who also designed the building and gave it her name. Fittingly, the current director of The Gardner is a woman. “The Musical” and “ConcertGoin in Boston,” the other courses I created, incorporate discussions and readings about the important female contributors to musical theater and classical music.

My years at Curry have included not only teaching and performing but also earning a Master of Education degree. In much of my coursework, I incorporated the arts related to the subjects that I teach. My 2010 sabbatical focused on researching the musical life of Boston and its important place in the development of American classical music and music education. Very specifically, I was interested in the work of the “Boston Classicists,” Amy Beach being the only female among them. After spending many hours in libraries reading a large number of biographies and history materials and sorting through scores, I created a lecture/recital of works by this group that I performed in several different venues.

An interesting new project getting under way is an interdisciplinary collaboration with a dancer/choreographer and visual media designer (both of whom are women on the Curry Fine Arts faculty) that will involve at least some music by women composers. Having learned a tremendous amount about the accomplishments of so many women in the arts and music, I have a great sense of commitment to our work, including helping to change conventional perceptions of women’s contributions in the arts. I have been inspired by talented women who have written wonderful biographies about female musicians and music lovers who helped to found music clubs and symphony orchestras across America. Although my performances focus mainly on women composers who lived and worked before the 1940s, I am excited to hear works by those who came after. I am looking forward to reading about the activities of IAWM members and to perhaps meeting and collaborating with some.

Hearing, playing, and teaching music thrills me, and striving to bring the work of women musicians to the forefront gives me great satisfaction. I didn’t make the cheerleading squad but now I am a cheerleader for music, the arts, and the accomplishments of women in music.

Accidental Music

EMMA O’HALLORAN

At seven years of age I stood on a podium, baton in hand, and began conducting my first ensemble. I was a lucky audience member during the local army band’s annual visit to my school and that year I was plucked from the crowd to stand up, wave my arms about, and “create” sound. From that moment on, everything revolved around music. I was quickly drawn to performing on instruments such as flute and guitar, then piano and voice, and recently I’ve delved into the world of traditional Irish sean-nós singing. It wasn’t until my teens that I discovered I could explore



Emma O’Halloran

my love of sound through composition, and after penning some pastiche Steely Dan progressions I was hooked and have been writing ever since.

Studying music at university was an exciting and challenging experience. I began organizing concerts, listening forums, and musical happenings—anything that would enable me to engage in the creative process. It was there that I really started to contemplate my relationship with music and after completing a Masters in Composition at National University of Ireland Maynooth, I pursued a Diploma in Orchestral Conducting, convinced that this avenue would allow me more freedom to connect, collaborate, and express myself in a meaningful way through music. This return to the podium was one of my most formative experiences, and it helped me to clarify what I wanted to say with my music.

As a composer and musician, I have always been fascinated by how we perceive sound. Studying music formally allowed me to immerse myself in classical music, which, though being a new and thrilling experience, highlighted the limitation of strict Western delineations between “music” and other sound. Working as a conductor with musicians of all ages and capabilities opened my ears to a wider sonic spectrum that includes everyday environments, sounds, and imperfections. It allowed me to discover that the process I value most is

highly collaborative and blurs these boundaries between music and other sound.

Upon obtaining my Diploma from the Royal Irish Academy of Music, I started to focus on my compositional approach and began incorporating environmental and unconventional instrumental sounds in my music. Initial attempts in this area led me to employ electronic recordings as I found they could act as a forum for experimentation and offer a kind of freedom for musicians to discover the true sonic potential of their instruments. As I continued to examine this concept, it felt like a natural progression for the electronic parts to be viewed as instruments, and it became essential that they should be performed in real-time rather than being confined to the immutable realm of pre-recorded material. The employment of live electronics also satisfies a need I have as a conductor—it opens up a whole new world in terms of collaboration as it requires musicians to join forces and actively engage in the creative process.

My current work focuses on the combination of live electronics and acoustic instruments, with an emphasis on the incorporation of everyday sound-objects. For this reason, in 2011, I became a member of the Dublin Laptop Orchestra (DubLork), a group that aims to bring physical presence into electronic music by performing with gestural controllers and manipulating sound in real-time. An ensemble of laptops essentially acts as a blank canvas on which the composer can experiment with new approaches and unexplored concepts, and I found it to be the perfect medium to further investigate my area of interest. Working with DubLork has allowed me to grow as a composer and musician by providing collaborative opportunities with world-class ensembles such as Yurodny and the Crash Ensemble. In 2012, I was commissioned by Ireland’s RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra to compose a work for laptop orchestra and symphony orchestra, and the world premiere of this piece, *Whisper City*, marked the first time a laptop orchestra has ever taken to the stage with a symphony orchestra.

At present, my life is in a huge period of transition: I have just moved to New Jersey, where later this year I will begin Doctoral Studies in Composition at Princeton University. Prior to this, I lived in Dublin and worked at the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland, where I came to know almost every composer and contemporary

performer in the country. Now, more than ever, I see the huge value of being a member of an international network like the IAWM. I view composition as a musical journey; I take something from every piece I write and in turn, it takes me somewhere new, exciting, and unknown. I look forward to meeting and collaborating with IAWM members on this side of the Atlantic.

My Path as a Flutist

PATRICIA SURMAN

My life path as a flutist has brought me to Tahlequah, Oklahoma to serve as Artist Teacher of Flute at Northeastern Oklahoma State University and Instructor of Music at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. I grew up in the charming town of Redlands, California, and my first musical experiences included seeing the local symphony perform and attending summer concerts at the Redlands Bowl. My parents tell me that I was a very musical child, always singing, and I remember being fascinated by the piano in my second grade classroom. I began my flute studies through the elementary band program in fifth grade. I loved making music and I continued through the outstanding band program that the Redlands school district offered and in other local ensembles. After graduation from the University of Redlands, I was hired as the second flutist in the Redlands Symphony. Playing second flute to my own teacher, Sara Andon, was an education in itself.



Patricia Surman

I moved to Denton, Texas and pursued a dual master's in flute performance and musicology at the University of North Texas (UNT). I worked closely with some very influential pedagogues, most notably my flute professor, Mary Karen Clardy, and John Michael Cooper in musicology. My musicological research culminated in a translation of Jean Kastner's *Traite général d'instrumentation*, a monograph written in 1837 that was influential upon Berlioz's own work on orchestration. While completing my education, I established a large and successful studio of flute students, and I was also a teaching fellow, with responsibilities that included teach-

ing flute, music history, and conducting the UNT flute choir.

In 2010, I earned both a DMA in flute performance and a diploma from the Académie Internationale d'Eté de Nice as a student of Philippe Bernold. My dissertation, "Ida Gotkovsky's *Eolienne pour flute et harpe* in Theory and Practice: A Critical Analysis," contains the most current and extensive biography of Gotkovsky and the only theoretical writing on Gotkovsky's flute compositions. While residing in Texas, I continued to freelance as an orchestral flutist, and I began teaching flute and chamber music at Southwestern Adventist University. I also appeared as a soloist on flute and piccolo with the Keene Camarata.

In August 2008, I began teaching at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. Since joining the faculty, the flute studio has grown substantially, both in quality and quantity. This April, I will be appearing as a soloist with the NSU Wind Ensemble, and I am also directing the first annual NSU Flute Workshop this summer, a three-day intensive masterclass open to high school, collegiate, and professional flutists. In my teaching at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, I have a large studio of undergraduate and graduate flute performance and music education majors. I have worked to expand the chamber music program and have developed online courses in the music department.

While a student at UNT, I became interested in the intersection of music and technology. Along with Reiner Kramer, I have founded an ensemble dedicated to performing interactive works for flute and computer. Our ensemble, DuoInteraktiv, has been awarded a CMS/Yamaha In-Residence Fellowship to tour around the country, performing outreach concerts at high schools, colleges, and for a variety of community organizations. DuoInteraktiv has worked directly with composers, seeking out commissions and giving voice to a body of works that traditionally is performed for a very limited audience.

I have appeared in recital extensively across the United States and in Europe. Recent performances include engagements at Symphony Space in New York, at recital halls and universities in Florida, California, Nevada, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, and North Carolina; and internationally in Mexico, Canada, Spain, France, and Korea. My concert at Palacio

Laredo in Alcala de Henares appeared on Spanish Solidaria TV. I was an invited performer in the International Festival of New Music and the Lewisville Lake International Chamber Music Series. I have performed guest and faculty artist recitals at Methodist University, Southwestern Adventist University, and Northeastern State University, Tulsa Performing Arts Center's Brown Bag It Concerts, Oklahoma City Public Library's Noontime Series, Mu Phi Epsilon Series at the Dallas Public Library, and Flower Mound Lamb of God Saturday Concert Series. I have been a featured performer for many flute clubs and flute festivals, including the National Flute Association, Florida Flute Fair, Rochester Flute Fair, Oklahoma Flute Society Flute Fair, and the Flute Society of Mid-South.

My research has led me to publish articles in the *Journal of the National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors*, the *Texas Flute Society Newsletter*, and *Oklahoma Flute Society Newsletter*. Additionally, I have commissioned and premiered flute works in various genres, spanning from electroacoustic works with interactive electronics to strictly acoustic compositions including works by David Fulmer, Chapman Welch, and Paul David Thomas. I am currently a finalist for a 2013-14 Fulbright Scholar Award to research and teach in Greece. Upcoming engagements include an artist residency in Taipei, Taiwan, where I will be giving lectures and masterclasses and performing a recital of American music. I will be appearing as a concerto soloist with the Landon Towne Symphony in Annapolis, MD in October 2013, and performing as a principal flutist of the FAVA Opera Orchestra this summer in France. I look forward to collaborating with members of the IAWM—as a champion of new music, I am deeply committed to performing works by living composers.

Composer's Voice

Works by Anne Goldberg, Faye-Ellen Silverman, Chen Yi, Nailah Nombeko, Beth Anderson, Rain Worthington, Judith Zaimont, Judi Silvano, Julie Mandel, Kala Peirson, Inna Buganina, Evgenia Marchuk, and Anna Imaykina were performed on March 24, 2013 at the Composer's Voice/NYWC Collaborative Concert. The music is now available online at <http://www.voxnovus.com/composersvoice/program/13-03-24.htm>.

The Muse's Voice: A Survey of Women Organists in North America

GAIL ARCHER

During the summer of 2012, I surveyed women organists in leadership positions in cathedrals, conservatories, and colleges in North America. The purpose of the study was to track the success rate to date and open opportunities for women in the future. In the case of cathedral musicians, the term broadly defines a faith community of any denomination with 1,500 or more members in a major city by population. In the United States, the cities surveyed were Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Phoenix. For the colleges, the point of departure was the list of organ programs posted on the American Guild of Organists' website, and for the conservatories, the website of each individual school in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. I would like to express my thanks to the many colleagues who responded so graciously to my queries, especially Dr. Marnie Giesbrecht, who provided data from the directory of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and Laura A. Carrasco C., who provided information about women organists in Mexico.

The majority of women working in liturgical music find employment in the suburbs, building successful programs in towns and villages. Only nine large-faith communities employ women as the principal musician in major cities in the U.S.; two are designated cathedrals: St. Patrick's R. C. Cathedral, New York City, and the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston, Texas. The other seven are large Protestant churches: two in Dallas, and one each in Fort Worth, Houston, Minneapolis, New York, and Phoenix. In Canada, three women serve as principal musicians in large churches in Edmonton and one woman in Toronto, while in Mexico there is one women director at the cathedral in Yucatan.

Colleges provide an opportunity for women to teach organ along with a wide range of courses and ensembles. The American Guild of Organists lists nearly 200 organ programs on its site. For this survey, every college employing a woman was contacted individually. Colleges were added as the telephone contacts helped me to network with additional institutions that had made recent appointments of female organ faculty. There are eighty-two active

organ programs that are headed by women, or about 40% of the total organ programs with students enrolled for the fall of 2012 in the U.S. Forty-four of these female faculty hold a DMA in organ performance.

In Canada, organ is taught through the music departments of universities, which may be incorporated as music conservatories, such as the McGill Conservatory of Music in Montreal. Five universities: University of Alberta, Canadian University College, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, and York University, employ women as director of the organ program.

Organ as a major instrument is primarily taught in a conservatory setting in Mexico: the National Conservatory, the National School of Music, and the Conservatory in Queretaro. No

woman is teaching organ in any of these schools at this time. Organ is also taught in some institutes under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church such as the Instituto de Música Sacra de Morelia. The Academia Mexicana de Musica Antigua para órgano, founded by Ofelia Gómez and her husband, includes occasional organ lessons but is primarily involved in coordinating festivals and organ restorations.

Conservatories in the U.S. are either independent schools of music, or exist as specialized schools under the auspices of larger institutions with which they may have a corporate affiliation. Independent music schools that have organ programs are the Cleveland Institute of Music, Curtis Institute of Music, the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, and San Francisco Conservatory. Active organ programs in the affiliated conservatories include the University of Rochester–Eastman School of Music, Oberlin College–Oberlin Conservatory, Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, Rider College–Westminster Choir College, Yale School of Music, and University of Cincinnati–College-Conservatory of Music, with the only program headed by a woman, Dr. Roberta Gary. She has the distinction of being the only director in a U.S.

conservatory to hold an earned doctorate. Two women serve as assistant teachers of organ at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

A closer look at the data across the categories reveals some interesting facts. Women have more success in achieving a leadership role in institutions in the Midwest than in other parts of the U.S. While women organists are not experts in cultural anthropology, one colleague suggested a plausible reason: women held shared responsibility for the homestead or family business as pioneers moved West. Educational or religious communities may have had female leadership in the early nineteenth century and were comfortable sharing power with women. The single conservatory organ program that has a woman director is in Cincinnati. Houston and Dallas, Texas have the highest number of women serving in significant faith communities of all the principal cities in the country. In Houston, the Roman Catholic cathedral and seven other communities with fewer members than the 1,500-member benchmark have musical programs led by women. In the Dallas/Fort Worth area, University Christian Church, St. Patrick R.C. Church, and Lake Highlands United Methodist Church are cathedral-size congregations led by women musicians. There are fifteen other women serving in active musical roles, in some cases as organist in a cathedral-size church, such as St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Dallas, or music director in a smaller parish. Of the nine cathedral-size faith communities in major cities led by women in the United States, seven are west of the Mississippi.

The situation in the colleges is identical. Two women teach organ at a research university in a major city in the U.S.: Arizona State University in Tempe, and the University of Washington in Seattle. Seven more female faculty lead organ programs in research universities in towns: University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; University of Arizona, Tucson; Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; Indiana University, Bloomington; Iowa State University, Ames; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and the University of Oregon, Eugene. Eight of these nine universities are in the Midwest or Far West. The majority of the women teaching organ at colleges in the U.S. direct success-



Gail Archer

ful programs in suburban towns throughout the country.

Just as general political and financial power in the U.S. is centered in the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C. and Boston, influence and power in the organ world rests in the institutions along the Eastern seaboard; virtually all these positions are held by men. Naturally enough, schools with generous resources for organ scholarships attract gifted students, and large-faith communities with ample endowments can fund choirs and concert series with professional musicians. Here lies the very core of the concerns about career progress for women organists. Few searches are genuine for the most prestigious posts, with appointments often made internally by a recommendation from an influential institution. The most highly qualified women are frequently passed over. Potential employers may recognize their comprehensive education, skills, and accomplishments, but they have reservations about gifted women taking on a leadership role. A heightened awareness and societal change are needed in order for institutions to open equal opportunity to women organists.

Technique is not enough in the modern world. My women colleagues hold de-

grees in organ performance, conducting, and composition. They play concerts of the literature from the Renaissance to the present, commission new works, and release CDs while building liturgical and educational programs. Women organists must become the most sought-after candidates for positions of leadership in all parts of the world. To that end, I founded a new on-line magazine, *Musforum*, www.musforum.org, where the work of women organists is recognized, honored, and supported. There is also a free listserv to which all women musicians are invited to subscribe: musforum-list@barnard.edu. Interested women may contact me via e-mail: garcher@barnard.edu, and I will be happy to add your address to the network. The data in this article is posted on the *Musforum* site, and I plan to expand the survey internationally. In addition, I will play five concerts of organ literature by international women composers in New York City in the spring of 2013, "The Muse's Voice: A Celebration of International Women Composers," and will release a CD with works by Nadia Boulanger, Jeanne Demessieux, Sofia Gubaidulina, Jennifer Higdon, and Judith Bingham. I commissioned a work for the series from Alla Borzova: *And the greatest of these is*

love, inspired by the Chagall and Matisse windows at the Union Church of Pocantico Hills, NY, which was premiered in February 2013. The muse's voice deserves to be heard in modern society, lifting hearts and minds and inspiring all who hear our music.

Gail Archer is an international concert organist, recording artist, choral conductor and lecturer who draws attention to composer anniversaries or musical themes with her annual recital series in New York City: "An American Idyll, Liszt, Bach, Mendelssohn and Messiaen." The spring 2013 five-concert series is "The Muses Voice: A Celebration of International Women Composers." Ms. Archer was the first American woman to play the complete works of Olivier Messiaen for the centennial of the composer's birth in 2008; Time-Out New York recognized the Messiaen cycle as "Best of 2008" in Classical Music and Opera. Her recordings include Franz Liszt: A Hungarian Rhapsody, Bach, the Transcendent Genius, An American Idyll, A Mystic In the Making on Meyer-Media LLC and The Orpheus of Amsterdam: Sweelinck and his Pupils on CALA Records, London. Ms. Archer is college organist at Vassar College and director of the music program at Barnard College, Columbia University, where she conducts the Barnard-Columbia Chorus. She serves as director of the artist and young organ artist recitals at historic Central Synagogue, New York City.

Organ Survey Results: Women Organists in Leadership Positions in North America

Canada: Cathedrals

St. Joseph's Basilica, Edmonton (Monica Rist)

Robertson Wesley United Church, Edmonton (Tammy-Jo Mortensen)

First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton (Dr. Marnie Giesbrecht)

Metropolitan United, Toronto (Patricia Philips Wright)

Canada: Colleges

Univ. of Alberta (Prof. Marnie Giesbrecht)

Canadian Univ. College (Prof. Wendy Markosky)

Univ. of Ottawa (Karen Holmes)

York Univ. (Asst. Prof. Stephanie Martin)

Univ. of Toronto (Patricia Philips Wright)

Mexico

Instituto de Música Sacra de Morelia (Laura A. Carrasco C.)

Roman Catholic Cathedral in Yucatán (María de J. Pech C.)

United States: Cathedrals

St. Patrick's R. C. Cathedral, NYC (Dr. Jennifer Pascual)

Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston, TX (Dr. Christa Miller)

Church of the Heavenly Rest (Episcopal), NYC (Mollie Nichols)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN (Maria Bucka)

Memorial Drive Presbyterian, Houston, TX (Kathryn White)

Univ. Christian Church, Ft. Worth, TX (Kyla Rosenberger)

St. Patrick RCC, Dallas, TX (Cynthia Fruth)

Lake Highlands UMC, Dallas, TX (Nicki Lyford)

Casa de Christo Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ (Jennaya Robinson)

United States: Conservatory

Univ. of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music (Dr. Roberta Gary)

Women Teaching Organ

Research University in a Major City

Arizona State Univ., Tempe, AZ (Dr. Kimberly Marshall)

Univ. of Washington, Seattle, WA (Dr. Carole Terry)

Research University in a Town

Univ. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL (Dr. Faythe Freese)

Univ of Arizona, Tuscon, AZ (Dr. Pamela Decker)

Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY (Annette Richards)

Indiana Univ., Bloomington, IN (Dr. Jeanette Fishell)

Iowa State Univ., Ames, IA (Dr. Tin-Shi Tam)

Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (Dr. Marilyn Mason)

Univ. of Oregon, Eugene, OR (Dr. Barbara Baird)

Active College Organ Programs Directed by Women in the United States

Univ. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL (Dr. Faythe Freese)

Univ. of Akron, Akron, OH (Valerie Thorson)

The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH (Valerie Thorson)

Ancilla College, Donaldson, IN (Clara Woolley)

Arizona State Univ., Tempe, AZ (Dr. Kimberly Marshall)

Univ of Arizona, Tuscon, AZ (Dr. Pamela Decker)

Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD (Marilyn Schempp)

Baylor Univ., Waco, TX (Isabelle Demers)

Belhaven Univ., Jackson, MS (Carol Durham)

Benedictine College, Atchison, KS (Dr. Ruth Krusemark)

Bethany College, Lindsborg, KS (Melody Steed)

Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN (Judith Kresnicka)

Bethel College, North Newton, KS (Dr. Roseann Penner Kaufman)

California State Univ.-Fullerton, Tustin, CA (Esther S. Jones)

Clemson Univ., Clemson, SC (Dr. Linda Dzuris)
 College of Saint Mary, Omaha, NE (Marty Wheeler)
 Cornell College, Mount Vernon, IA (Dr. Lynda Hakken)
 Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY (Annette Richards)
 DePauw Univ., Greencastle, IN (Dr. Carla Edwards)
 Drury Univ., Springfield, MO (Dr. Earline Moulder)
 Duquesne Univ., Pittsburgh, PA (Dr. Ann Labounsky)
 Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, FL (Dr. Laura Ellis)
 Florida Intl. Univ., Miami, FL (Joanne Norman Schulte)
 Fresno Pacific Univ., Fresno, CA (Laurell Huber)
 Garrett-Evangelical Theological SEM, Evanston, IL (Margaret M. Kemper)
 Georgia College & State Univ., Milledgeville, GA (Dr. Ann B. Caldwell)
 Gonzaga Univ., Spokane, WA (Dr. Janet Ahrend)
 Hardin-Simmons Univ., Abilene, TX (Hye-Jean Choi)
 Univ. of Hartford, Hartt School, W. Hartford, CT (Dr. Patricia Snyder)
 Hastings College, Hastings, NE (Diane Aiken)
 Heidelberg Univ., Tiffin, OH (Joan Holder McConnell)
 Henderson State, Arkadelphia, AR (Dr. Hee-Kyung Juhn)
 Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY (Dr. MaryAnn Hamilton)
 Houston Baptist Univ., Houston, TX (Dr. Rhonda S. Furr)
 Houghton College, Houghton, NY (Dr. Judy Congdon)
 Univ. of Idaho, Pullman, ID (Susan Billin)
 Indiana Univ., Bloomington, IN (Dr. Jeanette Fishell)
 Indiana Univ. of Penn., Indiana, PA (Dr. Christine M. Clewell)
 Indiana Univ.-Southeast, New Albany, IN (Dr. Janet Hamilton)
 Iowa State Univ., Ames, IA (Dr. Tin-Shi Tam)
 Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY (Jean Radice)
 Jones County Jr. College., Ellisville, MS (Kay Guiles)
 Kutztown Univ., Kutztown, PA (Dr. Ina Slater Grapenthin)
 Lebanon Valley College, Annville, PA (Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman)
 Lenoir-Rhyne Univ., Hickory, NC (Florence Jowers)
 Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (Dr. Marilyn Mason)
 Middle Tennessee State Univ., Murfreesboro, TN (Angela Tipps)
 Mills College, Oakland, CA (Dr. Sandra Soderlund)

Millsaps College, Jackson, MS (Carol Durham)
 Minot State Univ., West Minot, ND (Kari Files)
 Univ. of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO (Elisa Bickers)
 Moody Bible Inst., Chicago, IL (Dr. Elizabeth M. Naegele)
 Univ. of Montana, Missoula, MT (Dr. Nancy J. Cooper)
 Montclair State Univ., Upper Montclair, NJ (Renée Anne Louprette)
 Nazareth College, Rochester, NY (Dr. Dianne Maynard-Christensen)
 Nebraska-Wesleyan Univ., Lincoln, NE (Masako Bacon)
 Univ. of Nebraska-Kearney, Kearney, NE (Dr. Marilyn Musick)
 Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM (Arlene DeYoung-Ward)
 Ohio Northern Univ., Lima, OH (Mary Jane Eichelberger)
 Oklahoma City Univ., Oklahoma City, OK (Dr. Melissa Plamann)
 Univ. of Oregon, Eugene, OR (Dr. Barbara Baird)
 Palm Beach Atlantic Univ., W. Palm Beach, FL (Patricia Holland)
 Pittsburg State Univ., Pittsburg, KS (Dr. Susan Marchant)
 Ripon College, Ripon, Wisconsin (Dr. Sarah Mahler Kraaz)
 San Jacinto College, Central Pasadena, TX (Dr. Martha Braswell)

St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN (Dr. Catherine Rodland)
 Southwestern Baptist Theological SEM, Fort Worth, TX (Yoon-Mi Lim)
 Valparaiso Univ., Valparaiso, IN (Dr. Lorraine S. Brugh)
 Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY (Dr. Gail Archer)
 Wartburg College, Waverly, IA (Dr. Karen Black)
 Washington Univ., St. Louis, MO (Barbara Raedeke)
 Univ. of Washington, Seattle, WA (Dr. Carole Terry)
 Univ. of W. Florida, Pensacola, FL (Dr. Lynne A. Lauderdale)
 Univ. of Wisconsin-River Falls, River Falls, WI (Laura J. Edma)
 West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV (Dr. Melody Meadows)
 Wichita State Univ., Wichita, KS (Lynne Davis)
 William Carey Univ., Hattiesburg, MS (Kathy Vail)
 Willamette Univ., Salem, OR (Dr. Marcia Hauff)
 William Jewell College, Liberty, MO (Dr. Ann Marie Rigler)
 Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, WI (Valerie Floeter)
 Univ. of Wisconsin-Superior, Superior, WI (Dr. Norma Stevlingson)
 Wittenberg Univ., Springfield, OH (Trudy Faber)

Women's Work Concert Series: Tenth Anniversary Season

Founded by composer Beth Anderson in 2004, Women's Work produces a series of three concerts a year to educate the public about the achievements of women composers and performers of all periods and nationalities. They document the performances with biographies, program notes, photographs, recordings of the composer's works and other information. You can hear audio recordings and watch videos of past performances on the Women's Work MySpace page or you can follow their Facebook page. They have interviewed many women composers and created podcasts, which are available at: <http://www.jamesarts.com/womens-work/index.htm>. Women's Work is focusing on chamber music for its tenth anniversary season. The concerts are presented at the Players Theatre in Manhattan, New York.

The first concert on April 2 featured Parthenia, New York's premiere viol consort, with guest artists Dashon Burton, baritone, and Kristin Norderval, soprano. They performed Frances White's *a flower on the farther side* for viol consort and pre-recorded electronics, Kristin Norderval's *Nothing Proved* for viols, soprano and manipulated electronics, Eleonor Sandresky's selections from her String Quartet, Tawnie Olson's world premiere of a new work for viols and baritone, and Beth Anderson's *Magnificat*.

The second concert on April 16 included Julia Wolfe's *On Seven-Star Shoes*, Laura Kaminsky's *Cadenza Variations for Woodwind Quintet*, Barbara Harbach's *Freeing the Caged Bird*, Magda Santos's *Chorando em São Paulo*, Beata Moon's *Wind Quintet*, and Kate Neal's *Paper Scissors Dog* with video by Sal Cooper.

The final concert on May 21 will feature Canta Libre Chamber Ensemble performing new chamber music by women for flute, harp and strings. The selections will be Nancy Gufstavson's *Nocturne*, Barbara Harbach's *Carondelet Caprice*, Beth Anderson's *February Swale* (commissioned by Canta Libre), Adrienne Albert's *Lullaby*, and music of Victoria Bond.

BOOK REVIEWS

Deborah Hayes: *Ruth Shaw Wylie: The Composer and Her Music*

Minneapolis: Mill City Press (2012), 268 pp. ISBN 978-1-037600-96-9. Hardcover

BETH CHRISTENSEN

Ruth Shaw Wylie is one of many women composers who have been underrepresented in the body of literature about music. Born in Cincinnati in 1916, Wylie studied at Wayne State University and then at the Eastman School of Music with Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson. She continued her education at the Berkshire (now Tanglewood) Music Center where she became acquainted with, among others, Arthur Honegger and Samuel Barber. Wylie taught at the University of Missouri and Wayne State University before devoting herself to composing full time in 1969.

Wylie, who described herself as “a fairly typical midwestern composer” was anything but typical. Her music, initially rooted in tonality and neoclassicism, evolved to a style that embraced atonality, dissonance, and improvisation. She continued to compose until her death in 1989, and her last works express her frustration with failing health.

In this well-written and documented study, Deborah Hayes (professor emerita and former associate dean for graduate studies in the College of Music at the University of Colorado at Boulder) provides the first full-length study of Wylie and her music. The volume presents a balanced combination of engaging prose and important reference material, and effectively weaves Wylie’s personal life with her musical development. Because the author knew Ruth Shaw Wylie in her final years, the writing reflects the immediacy their friendship provided. She relies on not only her personal knowledge of the composer but also integrates primary information (interviews and letters) from Carolyn Armstrong, a doctoral student at the University of Colorado at Boulder who had interviewed and corresponded with Wylie in preparation for performances of her work. Wylie’s nephew and heir also provided important information.

Hayes’s writing style is accessible and easy to read. She describes concepts such as serialism and unconventional methods of notation in a manner that is clear and acces-

sible and does not compromise substance in the process. Here is an example of her explanation of twelve-tone composition:

In twelve-tone composition, the composer constructs a “row” or series from the twelve chromatic pitches of the tempered scale. No pitch is central as in tonal music, and tonal implications are to be avoided. The composition is built from statement of the row or parts of the row, its transpositions, and its permutations (re-orderings), including retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion. Harmonies are built from the tone row as well. Total serialists construct rows or series not only of pitches but also of rhythmic durations, meters, timbres, and all musical elements, which they term *parameters*.

Judicious use of photographs and musical examples, especially when combined with Hayes’s clear descriptions, help to illuminate Wylie’s use of improvisation and unorthodox notation. *Textures for Four* (January 1968), for example, is notated by four overlapping circles, each of which contains some dynamic markings, notes with general rhythms and pitch directions, but no bar lines. Hayes does an excellent job of combining Wylie’s instructions with background information to help the reader understand just how the work is to be performed.

Hayes’s volume traces Wylie’s personal life and musical evolution in chronological order. The author presents her subject as a total person—one with interests in chess and the outdoors, with a love for dogs, and with experience in the challenges of being a woman in the role of teacher, composer, and administrator during the middle of the twentieth century. In addition to her insightful biography, Hayes includes a carefully researched catalog of Wylie’s works and performances, a list of Wylie’s honors and awards, and an extensive list of sources, offering an important foundation for future research on this important composer.

Wylie was a visual artist as well as a composer, and Hayes describes her artistic activity throughout the book. Reproductions of some of Wylie’s paintings—in addition to the plentiful musical examples—would have been helpful. And one very

picky point: in her detailed description of Wylie’s inclusion in emerging music reference sources after 1980, Hayes fails to include the article on Wylie in *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, despite the fact that the work is cited in her bibliography. These are, however, small quibbles.

Hayes eloquently relays the over-arching musical form of Wylie’s late music as < >. It begins quietly, builds in intensity toward a mid-composition crescendo, and then slowly diminishes until it fades away. The author encourages the reader to equate this musical form with the contours of Wylie’s life—a life that began somewhat quietly, was especially productive and rewarding in the middle, and slowly succumbed to the ravages of poor health (and emphysema) at the end. This volume has the potential to ignite a new crescendo of interest in Wylie’s music, opening the possibility for more research about, and, most importantly, performance of this important twentieth-century composer. It has made this reader, someone fairly unfamiliar with Wylie’s work, eager to listen to more of her remarkable music. [For additional information on the composer, please see “In Search of the White Raven: Ruth Shaw Wylie and Her Music” by Deborah Hayes in the *Journal of the IAWM* 18/1 (2012): 20-24.]

Beth Christensen is Music Librarian at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. She is an active member of the Music Library Association and has a special interest in information literacy in music. Her research in music is focused on American music in the early and mid twentieth century, particularly Carl Ruggles and his circle.

Sharon Mabry: *The Performing Life: A Singer’s Guide to Survival*

Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press (2012). 167 pages. ISBN 978-0-8108-8408-3 paperback; ISBN 978-0-8108-8409-0 ebook

JULIE CROSS

Talented singer Sharon Mabry has created a unique volume that combines good advice with personal experience in the creation and maintenance of a performing career. She addresses the trials, travails, and joys of a singing career with carefully-chosen personal anecdotes and advice that transcends common sense. This book is a compilation akin to the guidance the best pro-

fessors would give their best students. In fact, it is a perfect work for those students ready to begin graduate school or embark on a career.

Each chapter is well-organized, with subheadings that allow for easy access to topics and a reminders list at the end of every chapter. Though this book does not have an index, its concision, combined with a detailed table of contents, makes this unnecessary.

Mabry titles the first half of the book "Preparing for Success," providing a focus on practical advice and brief anecdotes. Readers are reminded to seek out quality mentors, to prepare fully as performers, and to find one's "voice," both musically and personally. I was especially appreciative of her chapter on finding one's niche and knowing one's maintenance level (she focuses on respect for individual differences in temperament and personality), knowing one's limits, and on being as high- or low-maintenance as one needs in order to attain success. Repertoire choice is important, she reminds us, and singers should consider whether they wish to perform a smaller repertoire long-term or if frequent additions of music may be necessary to keep actively engaged in the art. Her eighteen tips for practicing are practical and helpful. Additionally, she addresses positive thinking, apparel selection, collaboration, support systems and mentors, public speaking for concerts, and workable lifestyle choices. Affirmations are discussed, with a list to use, plus guidelines for creating one's own.

The second section of the book, "Coping with Success," features many of Mabry's personal and performance diary entries. Throughout this section I developed an appreciation of her vulnerability and her willingness to share personal information in a tactful and often humorous manner. She shares details of health concerns, including her own women's health challenges, which many singers will not publicly address. This is helpful for the menopausal or pre-menopausal singer who has felt alone with similar issues. She also addresses those who have chronic illnesses that may preclude a full-time performing career. Both long- and short-term acceptance of one's level of health is often a difficult emotional and professional journey for singers, whose instruments lay inside our bodies. She addresses potential problems with travel, the importance of reading

maps vs. relying on flawed GPS systems, getting adequate sleep, and creating quality recordings. She discusses her own dietary concerns and how best to navigate such difficulties while staying with host families, a common situation for those who sing in regional opera companies and chamber music festivals.

After the series of delightful anecdotes, the book concludes with two essential resources. "Fifty Practical Pointers for Performers" is a kind-hearted list of personal and professional advice. Mabry's suggested reading list is comprehensive and considers the emotional, spiritual, personal, technical, and musical aspects of a performing career. This is a must-have for university music libraries, singers, students, and teachers; kudos to Sharon Mabry for her generosity of spirit in sharing her life's journey with her readers.

Julie Cross is Associate Professor of Voice at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and a former treasurer of the IAWM. She performs in recitals throughout the United States and has recordings with Albany Records and Audio for the Arts.

Monique Buzzarté and Tom Bickley, eds.: *Anthology of Essays on Deep Listening*

Kingston, NY: Deep Listening Publications (2012). ISBN 1889471186

JEAN WALD

The *Anthology* is a collection of twenty-three essays in honor of the eightieth birthday of Pauline Oliveros, originator of Deep Listening. The foreword, by Oliveros herself, describes the initial event in which a 1988 visit to a cistern in Washington State to examine the space and its 45-second reverberation time quickly became a recording session lasting five hours. The three in attendance—Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, and Panaiotis (aka Peter Ward)—became founders of the Deep Listening Band, exploring how performance can work within a space, becoming both part of the space and revealing the space as a participant. The essays are written by a variety of practitioners including those trained in the fields of music composition, traditional performance, dance, architecture, musicology, and philosophy and practiced in the arts of improvisation, teaching, and design, among others. Some quote Oliveros, Cage, Proust, and McLuhan. Each has a connection to

Oliveros, varying from close associate to correspondent to workshop participant.

Deep Listening is a technique, a practice, a lifestyle. It is experienced through the natural world and other humans rather than as a solo art. One listens not just with the ears, but with the body, mind, and spirit, an ever-changing and expanding experience of existence. Deep Listening has been variously described as "all there is," "unlocking layers of imagination," "engaging with the sounds of the environment," "witnessing the beauty of the world," "sonic engagement," and so on. The sounds can be acoustic, live, recorded, manipulated electronically, heard in one's own thoughts, heard in dreams, and even remembered while dreaming; the possibilities are innumerable. Paraphrasing Oliveros, the practice entails listening in every possible way to everything all the time, and processing what is heard.

The writers present evidence of Deep Listening as simultaneously visceral, mystical, emotional, intellectual, and endlessly perceptive. The book is deliciously full of natural sounds such as hummingbirds as motors, "the dull continuo of traffic," "a breeze on the water's surface," engines and whistles of trains, a clarinet and whale duo; even a foreign language one doesn't understand can be heard as music with cadences and inflections. So much of Deep Listening involves improvisation that one can envision some of these chapters becoming assignments for a class in improvisation, each student asked to focus on some aspect of how to think about music and one's space while improvising.

Participants in Deep Listening are often a mixture of professionals and novices, blurring the line between performer and audience. Open-ended sets of instructional scores and group participation create a dynamic of inclusion, experimentation, and peaceful community in dynamic spaces. Deep Listening invites one to listen fully and differently.

In "From the Ordinary to the Extraordinary: Plans and Deep Listening," Miya Masaoka, "a classically trained musician, composer and new media artist," describes her training in Japan with koto and gagaku masters, in which she was urged to "become the instrument"; not to have a separate identity but to transmit music from an energy source outside herself through the instrument, that instruments have souls and

are sacred. Deep Listening encourages the exploration of acoustical spaces designed for purposes other than performance or recording. Even physical spaces that have become inaccessible to the public can become accessible because as musicians get permission to record in them (see Paula Matthusen's essay "Deep Listening Deep: on the Pursuit of Acoustically Unique Spaces"), they reverberate with creativity. Composers feel an obligation to preserve spaces before they are lost, giving them a kind of sonic life.

In "In Too Deep, Listening," Renée T. Coulombe, "composer, improviser, media artist, DJ, producer, and scholar," describes remote desert events where the environment is key to the experience. These are not public events, but are for serious practitioners of Deep Listening. Sometimes these events focus on contemporary electronic dance music genres, two of which she describes as inherently adhering to the philosophy of Deep Listening: Dubstep and Minimal Techno. Experiencing this in the desert, where the acoustics of the landscape have an effect on the music, is different from experiencing them in a club setting. *Outro*, her name for the deep sharing between people who, for example, wander away from the event and connect with each other about what is important to them as kindred spirits in a shared and loved setting, is another kind of Deep Listening.

In "Listening with the Feet," Viv Corringham, "vocalist and sound artist," describes soundwalking, a practice used by soundwalk artists and acoustic ecology groups, in which the physical act of walking, feeling the feet connect with the earth, transferring weight, experiencing balance, perceiving the texture of the earth, feeling the touch of one's socks, and hearing the

sound of one's steps all enhance sensory awareness. In "Deep Listening through Movement: a Personal History," "dancer [and] performance artist" Heloise Gold tells us that Deep Listening gives one the tools and permission to slow down and act from a place of full wakefulness. As a result of her twenty-year teaching partnership with Oliveros and her collaborator, the writer and Dream Festival creator IONE, she experiences *whole body listening*, as if every cell is participating. This has led her to deeper work including the use of one's own voice for self-healing. Lara Davis, "architect, shell-builder and research assistant at the Department of Architecture ETH Zürich," uses an old Mediterranean construction technique to teach a crew to build thin-shell masonry vaults, using listening and tapping to demonstrate how the sense of touch allows one to develop a sensitivity to the behavior of materials, described in her essay "Corporeal Listening: The Hands of a Builder."

In "Cognitive Consonance: Deep Listening in Today's Schools," Susan Key, musicologist, teacher, and developer of education programs, describes her "Keeping Score Education" listening workshops designed for classroom teachers, noting that teachers seem to have less exposure to the arts in teacher preparation and professional development than in the past. She characterizes listening practices as multi-dimensional and emphasizes that participation in the arts correlates with affective development and cognitive skills for students. She also suggests concrete ways in which Deep Listening practitioners can reach out to educators in formal and informal ways to support arts education.

The final essay, "Deep Listening in Dreams: Opening to Another Dimension of

Being," is by IONE, "author, playwright/director and improvising word-sound artist," who is also the Artistic Director of the Deep Listening Institute. She has taken up the cause of dream listening "with many ear-minded folk and musicians" who have attended events sponsored by the Institute. Included in the discussion are ancient societies' listening and dream teachings, examples of current dream listening phenomena, an experiment to try, and right brain/left brain research. Two things stood out for this reviewer, and I leave the reader with the following to explore: the statement (from brain research) "We dream backwards in response to our external sounds" and a question: "Could there somehow be measurable sound in the dreams of the deaf?"

The index includes names of people, events, scores, recordings, ensembles, and books. It would have been helpful to index concepts and terms in the alphabetical listing with "see also" references. Informative footnotes throughout the book reference articles, books, interviews, websites, explanations to clarify the text, and notes about private email correspondence, most of which invite further investigation into the subject. The Anthology is both an enchanting introduction to Deep Listening for the uninitiated and a convincing survey of the subject for the informed. To this reader, Deep Listening describes a way of absorbing the world, both natural and human-made, and gives new meaning to the expression "I'm all ears."

Jean Wald is Music Specialist/Research Librarian at Stetson University in DeLand, FL. In addition to her library duties, which include cataloging, reference, collection development, and archival work, she is also a church musician, an early music performer, and a folk dancer.

Judith Lang Zaimont: *Eternal Evolution*

Awadagin Pratt, piano; Harlem Quartet; Ilmar Gavilá and Melissa White, violin; Juan-Miguel Hernandez, viola; Paul Wi-ancko, cello. Navona Records LLC. 5846 (2011)

KIMBERLY GREENE

Critically acclaimed American composer Judith Lang Zaimont continues to captivate international audiences and to engage distinguished performers with her distinctive and impassioned musical style. Zaimont's

release of *Eternal Evolution* (2011) journeys from the dramatic to the contemplative through the intrinsic, intimate artistic connections reflected in the impressive performances of the Harlem Quartet and the renowned pianist Awadagin Pratt. The CD's seven compositions exhibit a musical style that integrates modernist counterpoint with a striking combination of tonal and chromatic language.

Having attained the position of Professor Emerita at the University of Minnesota's School of Music, Zaimont continues to educate by participating in composition-

al master classes and seminars throughout the United States and abroad. With more than one hundred compositions to date, her music is performed at some of the most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center's "Great Performers" series. Her life and musical contributions are subjects of twelve doctoral dissertations to date, and her composition awards are too numerous to list. Zaimont also conceived and served as editor in chief of the book series *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective* (3 volumes, 1986-1990).

Zaimont's String Quartet "The Figure" was commissioned for the University of Rochester, Syracuse University, and Cornell University with support from The Andrew Mellon Foundation (2007). Conceived by the composer as a musical gesture resembling the human breath, "The Figure" opens with a descending and unresolved *agitato* chromatic sigh followed by the signature gesture—or the distinctive three-part figure—that engenders, formulates, and defines the composition's two movements. In the somber first movement, "In Shadow," the violin dances desperately, while the other strings stand in stark contemplative stasis, and then joins in a frenetic and troubled response in rapid compound meters. The second movement, "In Bright Light," is an aggressive excursion that plunges into a cutting, yet dramatic, presentation of disrupted clusters that unexpectedly transform the chromatic sigh into a *cantabile* melody, accompanied delicately, but purposefully, by the remaining strings. Although the tripartite organization of the stunning second movement remains barely discernible, Zaimont's figure, which occurs intact and in permutation, and her concerted musical language engage the imagination and skillfully unify the two movements.

"The Figure" exhibits the artistry of the Harlem Quartet, which debuted at Carnegie Hall in the fall of 2006 and premiered at the White House for the guests of President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama in December of 2009. Here, the Harlem Quartet offers a refined and perfectly balanced yet passionate musical execution of Zaimont's complementary movements.

The volatile and varied natural characteristics of the forces of weather are manifested in the three-movement composition *ZONES*, Piano Trio No. 2. In order to express the aspects of "Cold," the composer exploits the tension of the half-step in constant combat. Adroitly, Zaimont uses the interval to create melodic units that distort and delay harmonic resolutions through Neapolitan motion, assisting in the establishment of the chilling atmosphere and complementing the recurring tempestuous melodic material. Furthermore, she adds an independent and bitter consequent that enters as a codetta to the exposition and serves as the conclusion of the movement. In stark contrast to the first movement, "Warm" commences with the violin, with the half-step transforming to a minor

ninth, while the piano and cello augment the mysterious musical ambiance with knocks and the *sul ponticello* bowing technique, respectively. Masterfully, the composer enkindles the movement through the entrance of a sustained melody and the use of Latin rhythms embedded within the rich harmonic language. The concluding movement, "Temperate," transfigures the composition by harnessing the forces of nature in a jubilant finish. Rather than presenting the complete melodic theme throughout the entire movement, the composer engages in the deconstruction of a rondo by gradually introducing fragments of the thematic material, thereby delaying the appearance of the full statement until the joyous conclusion. The performance of the piano trio remains exceptional, especially due to the contribution of the pianist, Awadagin Pratt.

The CD also includes the very popular piano trio, *Serenade* (awarded First Prize in the 2012 Third Millennium Ensemble's composers competition), and *Astral... a mirror life on the astral plane*, a challenging work for solo viola.

Eternal Evolution offers a diverse musical experience, which resonates with the listener due to its consistent musical language and the presence of the varied atmospheric vignettes. For the music professional, the inclusion of the interactive multimedia content on the CD provides an exclusive glimpse into Zaimont's compositional perspective and approach. It also includes select excerpts from the scores for study, which only enhances the listener's appreciation of Zaimont's remarkable and distinctive musical craftsmanship.

Kimberly Greene is a PhD candidate in musicology at Claremont Graduate University, CA. Currently, she serves as Adjunct Professor of Music History at California State University, Fullerton. Greene's notable upcoming commissioned publications include several named articles for Oxford Music Online (August 2013)

and a series of articles for the Peter F. Drucker Graduate School of Management (March 2013). She holds a master's degree in Music History & Literature from CSUF, with additional degrees in German Studies, French Language and Literature, and Business Administration.

Cynthia Green Libby: *The Lotus Pond: Exotic Oboe Sounds*

Cynthia Green Libby, oboe; Scott Cameron, percussion; Jeremy Chesman, harp; Peter Collins, Wei-Han Su, piano; Susanna Reichling, percussion. MSR Classics. MS1421 (2013)

SUSAN H. BORWICK

From meditative yoga centers to the habitat of an aquatic plant sacred to Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism to a small, environmentally sheltered body of water in India, the lotus pond suggests reflective beauty and oneness with self and nature. Oboist Cynthia Green Libby presents six works that merge the timbre the performer identifies as "meditative"—the light, plaintive Josef oboe—with the similarly introspective timbres of harp, tam-tam, tom-tom, and piano to present works that lead us forward and away from the Germanic canon of two centuries ago. Thank you, Cynthia Libby and colleagues from Missouri State University, for the challenge and richness of this recording. The credentials of all the performers are exemplary, yet Libby's do stand out: a doctorate in performance with a performer's certificate from the Eastman School as well as a background in teaching performance, women and music, world music, and the healing arts. The six composers represent a polyglot of musical languages, drawn together here by the oboe's tone color: Egyptian Gamal Abdel-Rahim, Welsh Hilary Tann, Vietnamese Do Hong Quan, Peruvian-French Marcelle Soulage, and Americans Elizabeth Vercoe and Derek Limback.

Hilary Tann's *Shakkei Diptych* for oboe and piano is a transcription (also for solo flute or soprano saxophone) of

Deon Nielsen Price: Violin Concerto Premiere

Deon Nielsen Price's new Violin Concerto, "Concerto for Oneness," received its world premiere on April 27, 2013 at St. Ann and the Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn, New York. The Metro Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Philip Nuzzo, performed the work with Amanda Lo as soloist. Several IAWM members attended a pre-concert dinner. Kathleen Shimeta thanked Deon for organizing the dinner. She remarked that it was a wonderful opportunity for New York City IAWM members "to meet one another, share our career stories and enjoy our common goal of women in music." She also commented that the concerto was "a beautiful piece of music performed by the orchestra and soloist."

an oboe concerto commissioned by oboist Shannon Spicciati for the 2010 International Double Reed Society Conference in Oklahoma. The two movements reflect Tann's visits to Japan, Korea, and China, her private study of the shakuhachi (a Japanese end-blown flute), and her appreciation of traditional East Asian musics. The composer explains that Shakkei is a term used in Japanese landscape design; it means "borrowed scenery." The first movement is "inspired by Mount Hiei as viewed from Shoden-ji, a temple with a dry landscape garden," and the second, "by the hills of Arashiyama as viewed from Tenryu-ji, a temple with a lush stroll garden." Tann translates the former inspiration into a "sparse" musical landscape, the latter an "overgrown" one, each borrowing a smidgen of Debussy's *Nuages*, according to the composer's notes. Although the more sumptuous orchestral accompaniment in the concerto version is compellingly "overgrown" at times, this arrangement has its charm and, on the practical side, is more widely performable.

Head of the composition department at the Hanoi Conservatory, Do Hong Quan contributes *Bon buc tranh* (Four Pictures). The contrasting moods are unified by Vietnamese folksong and contemporary European harmonies. The percussionists are asked to add cowbell and bass drum to the exotic setting in addition to the tam-tam and tom-tom, sounds more idiomatic to the lotus-like theme. As a product of the American 1960s, I admit that hearing alluring music from Hanoi performed by Missourians on a CD available throughout the world gives me a bracing sense of hope and affiliation through music with the global community.

Egyptian educator, pianist, and composer Gamal Abdel-Rahim, who in 1971 founded and then headed the first composition program in the Arab world at the Cairo Conservatory of Music, composed a flute concerto two years later, and arranged the second movement, *Bohayrat Al-Lotus* (The Lotus Pond), for flute (also oboe or violin) and piano. The *Lotus Pond* movement performed here is constructed on four-note scalar patterns invented by the composer, rather than modal scales of Egyptian derivation typical of his style. The result melds ancient Egyptian with contemporary Western-European musical styles to create an evocative Eastern-centered sound. It

demands considerable control from oboe, percussion, and piano, who ably comply—particularly Libby.

Marcelle Soulage, a student of Nadia Boulanger at a time when female composers were literally unheard, composed *Pastorale*, op.15, for oboe and harp as a two-mood shepherd's pipe piece, first tense and then lushly beautiful. The more traditional musical context of Soulage's *Pastorale* never intrudes on the lotus-pond theme of the recording; rather, the work underscores that the theme has made its way intuitively into even European music, often French rather than German, often chamber music rather than symphonic, at times natural and ephemeral rather than structured and *höher-gestellt* (superior).

Derek Limback, currently a band director-teacher in Missouri, contributes *Ripple Effect: Three Pieces for Neon* for oboe and harp, a tribute to a deceased student. The movements—*Resilience*, *Beauty*, *Joy*—contrast in style and mood from a rather dissonant energy through a slower and more melodic middle movement to an almost whimsical ending. The programmatic association with the loss of a student brings a poignancy to the work and the performance.

Elizabeth Vercoe's *Butterfly Effects*, premiered in Bangkok in 2009 as two movements and then in Illinois in 2010 as a full seven-movement work for flute and harp, is recorded here in a five-movement version for oboe and harp arranged especially for these performers. The movements—*Mourning Cloak*, *Common Jezebel*, *Question Mark*, *Monkey Puzzle*, and *Psyche*—carry the American names of butterflies. The composer was first inspired by a Taoist dream: "Am I a human who dreamt of being a butterfly or am I now a butterfly who dreams of being human?" (Zhuangzi). Each of the five movements is as miniature as a butterfly, less than a minute long, carrying its distinctive character in sound evoking color, shape, and temperament. Together they act much like a suite of contrastingly nuanced sound and space. *Butterfly Effects* fittingly ends a recording that is breathtaking, fresh, and an emotional point of arrival, simply home. I breathe it in and reflect, as if embraced by lotus blossoms floating in a meditative pond.

Susan Borwick, musicologist, theorist, composer, is Professor of Music at Wake Forest University, where she teaches topics in Music,

Women's Studies, and the Divinity School. Her compositions have recently been featured by the Riverside Church (NYC), Vox Femina, Women's Voices Chorus, and collegiate and all-state honors choirs in California, New York, Florida, Minnesota, and Utah.

Oasis: Music of Tsippi Fleischer
Campanella Children's Choir; Players of the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra; Yael Medini, librettist; Yael Barolsky, violin; Rona Israel-Kolatt, soprano. Vienna Modern Masters VMM 4007 (2011)

MEIRA WARSHAUER

Tsippi Fleischer is one of the major composers of her generation in Israel and the first internationally established woman composer in the Middle East. She has developed a distinctive compositional voice influenced by the rhythms and inflections of Semitic languages. The three works presented on Oasis span a wide range of both style and expression.

Erasure (2009) is a virtuoso composition for solo violin, brilliantly performed live by Yael Barolsky, for whom it was written. A compelling work, it takes the listener on a journey from the most vigorous life force to what the composer describes as "a gradually vanishing world" evoked by a "development-through-fading" form. Fleischer uses an imaginative range of violin techniques as motives spin out in reverse, towards a reductionist kernel or essence. The effect is both moving and intriguing. The great variety of glissandi is especially striking, and Barolsky has total control of the many-hued shadings called for in the composition. This work warrants repeated listening, each time revealing new nuances and relationships.

Moderna (2010) sets a minimalist text by the Egyptian poet Iman Mersal, who now lives in Canada. Combining Arabic and Hebrew, the three poems, *Soul*, *City*, and *Sex*, offer dark commentary on modern life. Fleischer's setting mirrors the intensity of the texts in sparse settings—each less than two minutes long—for soprano, oud, cello, and piano. Soprano Rona Israel-Kolatt effectively conveys the dramatic intent as she moves from sung-speech (*Sprechstimme*) to full-voiced singing. The CD booklet provides a hint of the intertwining of the two languages in the poems; a fuller text and translation would be even more helpful. These settings suggest Mersal and Fleischer share a commitment to crossing boundaries and meeting a lived truth

in spite of cultural pressures against such collaboration.

The CD's title composition, *Oasis*, is a thirty-minute children's opera, which takes Fleischer further into her boundary-crossing journey. Commissioned and premiered by Cantus-Juvenum Karlsruhe (the German youth choir) at the initiation of stage director Sebastian Stiebert, the opera is set in an imagined biblical Sinai desert. Yael Medini's libretto, translated into German for this commission, portrays Israelite and Bedouin children who forge a bond of friendship when the Bedouin youths offer water to the desperately thirsty Israelite children and their parents. The opera is an allegory for peaceful cooperation, with the backdrop of contemporary Arab-Israeli relations hovering close by. Fleischer's writing is most effective in the half-sung, half-spoken *Mantra of Wandering* sections. The overlay of solo flute arabesques, tube whistling, percussion, and instrumental punctuation, all of which accompany the chorus, creates a sense of wandering in vast desert spaces. Here one feels the effect of Fleischer's immersion in the Sinai desert while composing the opera, as described in her notes.

When the opera shifts to solo voices and the narrative of the story plays out, the music becomes more straightforward, with simpler rhythms and less nuanced inflections. Writing for children's voices presents performance limitations, which may explain the contrast in styles. Intervals of fourths and fifths create a feeling of exotic starkness. The mostly German libretto includes a few phrases in Hebrew and Arabic in a nod to cross-cultural inclusion, and Fleischer herself penned an optional scene in Arabic. Dance scenes meld the Israeli *hora* with the Arabian *debka*, further emphasizing a meeting of two cultures. The performance here by the Campanella Children's Choir is convincing and clear-voiced. Players of the Moravian Philharmonic, with Petr Vronsky conducting, bring virtuosity and sensitivity to the score.

Meira Warshauer is a composer based in Columbia, South Carolina, whose music is inspired by Jewish themes and their universal message plus her love and concern for the earth. Her 2011 CD, Living Breathing Earth, exhibits both interests, with Tekeeyah (a call), the first concerto written for shofar, trombone, and orchestra, and Symphony No. 1: "Living Breathing Earth."

In The Library of Dreams: The Electroacoustic Dream Theatre of Frances White

Pogos Productions (2011) 21064-2

SUSAN FRYKBERG

I am a great fan of the shakuhachi, so the opening traditional work *Chōsi*, described as "a prelude for settling the mind that focuses on the breath," caught my ear immediately. This enticing sonic invitation begins a CD of coloristic instrumental and electroacoustic compositions described in the liner notes as "dream theatre."

The Ocean Inside begins most delicately with piano and electroacoustic sonorities. A vast, spiritual space seems to be presented, into which the alto flute, violin, clarinet, cello, piano, and percussion dip, dive, and skim the surface for over fourteen minutes in an expressionistic counterpoint to a slow moving, electroacoustic cantus firmus taken from a shakuhachi melody. At times we experience a dramatic flurry of instrumental activity, and at other times we are either caught in a frozen moment of time via long held-chords and drones or are swept up into a melody that has an almost transcendent feel to it. The instrumental and electroacoustic timbres are, on the whole, well integrated.

Walk Through Resonant Landscape No. 5.1 and 5.2, both electroacoustic, were realized at Winham Lab, Princeton Univer-

sity. Attractive natural sounds of birds, water, and frogs are delicately combined with cleverly re-created electronic ambiences whose characteristics, envelope, spectrum, frequency material, etc., seem to be derived from the original materials. Both works occupy the same spiritual space as *The Ocean Inside*, but this time we encounter "nature as dream." The works have a delightful sense of space and openness so characteristic of nature's expansiveness, yet there is also an inner space, derived from the computer transformation of the natural sonic materials, intimating the sense of nature herself dreaming.

In the Library of Dreams we hear the viola d'amore, performed beautifully by David Cerutti to a supportive electroacoustic accompaniment comprised of synthesized, bell-like tones, slowly changing spectral drones, breath-like sonorities, and subtle tonal colorations. The work is based on one of the composer's dreams, and the viola d'amore serves as the dreamer walking through a library of music searching for what legend has described as the most beautiful song of all, as yet unheard. As the dreamer searches, the books disintegrate, the library disappears, and the dreamer never finds the song. The viola writing is beautiful, lush, and romantic, while the electroacoustic part—subtle, painterly, and always in the background—provides a most appropriate "library."

Recently Released CDs

(Other recent releases are in the Members' News column.)

Jennifer Higdon: *An Exaltation of Larks*

The Lark Quartet, with Gary Graffman, Blair McMillen, Todd Palmer. Bridge Records 9379 (2013). The CD includes *An Exaltation of Larks* (string quartet), *Light Refracted* (quintet for strings, clarinet, and piano), *Scenes from a Poet's Dream* (piano quintet).

Kristin Norderval: *Aural Histories*

Post-ambient arias for voice and electronics, Deep Listening Institute (2012). The CD was included in *New Yorker* critic Alex Ross's November 2012 list of recommended new recordings. None of the works have lyrics but all have stories. Norderval says that "some are improvisations recorded in one take with live sampling; others are electronic compositions with varying degrees of vocal improvisations...others are through-composed electronic works." Some works are for voice alone and some contain pre-recorded and processed sounds of machines and electronic equipment.

Andrée, Schumann, Beach, Canal

Susan Pickett, violin; Manabu Takasawa, piano (private label). The CD of music by women composers for violin and piano contains Elfrida Andrée's *Tonbilder* for piano, Amy Beach's "Dreaming" from *Four Sketches* for piano, Clara Schumann's *Three Romances* for violin and piano, and Marguerite Canal's Sonata for violin and piano. The CD was first released in 2009, and it is now available on Amazon.

In the final work, *The Book of Roses and Memory*, the viola, electroacoustic drones related to the formants of spoken voice, and a pre-recorded violin interact with a mysterious spoken text, part horticultural, part story-telling. The text is at times clear in meaning and presentation but at other moments, deliberately opaque. The drones themselves contribute to the sense of mystery—part dream, part spiritual realm. Some of the viola melodies are lovely, especially as played by Lih-Wen Ting.

White has created a body of work in which, per the CD liner, “she takes the real, brings it into her being, transforms it there, then brings it out again in her composition....She mixes her timbres by hand as a painter would mix colors, and she applies them lovingly and painstakingly to her canvas of silence.” I would recommend this well-engineered CD. It is a treat to hear Grammy award-winning eighth blackbird and the other outstanding musicians. The overarching narrative—aptly named in the liner notes as “electroacoustic dream theatre”—gives a coherent listening experience from start to finish.

Susan Frykberg is a composer and sound artist living in Melbourne, Australia. She is a founding member of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community, CEC and the World Forum of Acoustic Ecology, WFAE. Her compositions have been performed in North America, Asia, and Australasia, and her music is available from earsay.com and on iTunes.

Elizabeth Vercoe: *Kleemation and Other Works*

Peter H. Bloom, flute; Mary Jane Rupert and Rosemary Platt, piano; Sharon Mabry, mezzo-soprano; Boston Musica Viva, and others. Navona Records NV5884 (2012). ASIN B00925TAAU.

LAURA KAFKA

Kleemation and Other Works, a compilation recording of the highest quality from both an artistic and an engineering standpoint contains six of Elizabeth Vercoe’s vocal and instrumental compositions composed from 1975 to 2003. Although four of the compositions were previously released on other recordings, it is a pleasure to find these six works assembled together here. Clear, extensive liner notes by the composer include song texts, facsimiles of the five drawings by Paul Klee that inspired *Kleemation*, and photographs of the composer and performing artists.

Kleemation for Flute and Piano, a five-movement, fifteen-minute work, is performed by “2” (Peter H. Bloom, flutes, piccolo; Mary Jane Rupert, piano, harp), a distinguished musical duo of more than twenty years’ international standing. Vercoe musically renders Klee’s drawings with all the humor, fear, and reality that make each one leap from its canvas and dance. The second movement, *Please!*, draws on swing music with its lounge-lizard-like appeal that Vercoe cleverly manipulates before returning to an echo of the easy-going opening of the movement. Vercoe composed *More Will be Marching Soon* as U.S. troops entered Iraq in March 2003. It incorporates the hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers” into both the flute and the piano parts in the anxiety-infused fourth movement. The composer indicates that the final movement of the work, “Woman Sowing Weeds,” has “subversive intentions.” Decidedly hopeless in character, it features a flickering flute symbolic of the woman’s hand gesture as she scatters the seeds; a staccato piano represents “raining down tiny seeds.” This eloquently reminds us that the seeds sown by war’s atrocities have repercussions lasting for generations to come.

Fantasy, a ten-minute solo piano composition in six contrasting sections, is bold, free-flowing, and dramatic. It affords the pianist an opportunity to utilize the instrument as an orchestra with a wide variety of color and timbre. The work explores rhythm and tempo and features effects such as strumming the piano strings, glissandi, arpeggios, and trills. Vercoe’s musical directions on the score are minimal, leaving the pianist maximum latitude for personal interpretation. Rosemary Platt plays with bravura and broad sweeping strokes.

Irreveries from Sappho is a witty, seven-minute song cycle in English for mezzo-soprano or soprano and piano, one of eight cycles on texts by women. Although Sappho, the Greek female poet, lived approximately 2,600 years ago, the poetry selections are appropriate and enduring themes for women today. From start to finish the writing is imaginative: traditional counterpoint and recitative are interspersed with musical “sleight of hand” (as Vercoe calls it in her liner notes). The composer’s website states that *Irreveries* is “wickedly satiric and full of musical jokes and parodies” (including snippets of “Tur-

key in the Straw” and “Auld Lang Syne”). It asks the singer to use glissandi and Sprechstimme, and to take on the personality of each of the three women depicted in the three songs. The cycle requires expert technique on the parts of both singer and pianist, coupled with a good sense of humor and the ability to “sell the song” without apologizing for it. Mezzo-soprano Sharon Mabry has a full, well-placed and well-controlled middle voice, which fits the vocal requirements of these songs like a glove, and she is skillfully accompanied by Rosemary Platt.

Herstory II: 13 Japanese Lyrics is a nineteen-minute English song cycle consisting of thirteen songs for soprano, piano, and percussion. The texts, in a haiku-like form, are by medieval Japanese women poets. In *Lady Suo* or in *Lady Horkikawa*, *Lady Ukon*, the singer is asked to speak the text, and in *The Poetess Ono No Komachi* and *Lady Izumi Shikibu*, to whisper it. The vocal line is always dramatic and at times requires the singer to execute wide leaps, as in *Interlude 2, Lady Akazome Emon*. *Herstory II* does not require a singer with a large voice, but welcomes a flexible and an exceedingly expressive one that can tackle the demands of the highly dramatic text. Both the piano accompaniment and the percussion part lend an exotic character to the cycle and imbue it with mystery and interest that is almost frightening at times, primal and raw. The over-all mood of the cycle is tense, and the women depicted border on the hysterical, reminiscent of Richard Strauss’ settings of Shakespeare’s *Ophelia Lieder*. Members of the internationally acclaimed Boston Musica Viva interpret this cycle in a fashion that leaves the listener convinced that their interpretation is the only possible one.

To Music is a five-minute work for solo flute in four separately-titled contrasting sections inspired by the poetry of Russian writer Anna Akhmatova. The interpretation of *To Music* by flutist Nancy Stagnitta is imaginative, playful, clear, and virtuosic—a true listening pleasure. *Despite Our Differences I* is a thirteen-minute movement for piano trio composed in Paris in collaboration with Greek-American pianist Christine Paraschos, to whom the work was dedicated after the pianist’s tragic death in 1997. The recording is a live and unedited performance that was premiered at the “Women’s Music Festival/85” at

Boston University. Alea III's performance with guest pianist Paraschos is a musical collaboration of the highest order, executing Vercoe's dramatic music with great skill and stylistic integrity.

Elizabeth Vercoe's *Kleemation and Other Works* is outstanding in every respect, an artistic masterwork that merits high praise. I cannot recommend it too highly. It seduces the listener down a path leading to a musical landscape that is abstract yet accessible. Both the audio CD and the MP3 download are available from Amazon, iTunes, and Spotify. I further recommend that the reader make time to visit the composer's comprehensive website (www.elizabethvercoe.com).

Dr. Laura G. Kafka is an educator, musicologist and singer from California, residing in Maryland. She has taught music at every level from elementary through university undergraduates and she has worked in arts administration. Additionally, she sings recitals and adjudicates solo vocal competitions and choral festivals. Her interests include Karol Szymanowski and translating Polish and French poetry into English performance editions for art songs and children's choral literature (laurakafka@mac.com).

Lori Laitman and Steve

Heitzeg: *Wild Songs*

Polly Butler Cornelius, soprano; Victoria Fischer Faw, piano; Heather Barringer and Patti Cudd, percussion. Innova Recordings 825 (2011)

CHERYL COKER

Wild Songs is an intriguing compilation of songs by Lori Laitman and Steve Heitzeg. In the liner notes, vocalist Polly Cornelius writes of the "beautiful and intellectual songs" and the "thoughtful preparation (that) went into selecting" them. The poetry of Emily Dickinson is dominant, but other text sources include Rachel Carson, Jane Goodall, Terry Tempest Williams, the Greek poet Aeschylus, Robert Kennedy, and the Bible. The focus of this review is on the work of Lori Laitman, who has composed over 200 songs as well as opera and oratorio. *Four Dickinson Songs* (1996) is Laitman's only work on this CD. Steve Heitzeg's compositions (*Wild Songs*, *Three Graces for Hildur*, *Loveblessing*, and *Is Everybody Else Alright?*) provide a glimpse of the breadth of his expressive compositional style.

Will There Really Be a Morning has a sparse chordal accompaniment that en-

hances the questioning lyrical vocal line. For the playful *I'm Nobody* the composer suggests at one point to "have fun." The thin accompaniment is sometimes reduced to just one note on each staff, but the dynamics and articulation are carefully marked. To portray the text (rising toward the Angels) in *She Died*, the composer uses upward octave leaps throughout. Because of its constantly shifting meters and tempo markings (*ritardando* and *accelerando*), the song has the feeling of being improvised. *If I...*, written as a gift in honor of Laitman's father's eightieth birthday, this song is the only one of the cycle that has a key signature; the other three are filled with accidentals as the composer enhances the texts through harmonic movement.

The varied moods of the poems show Laitman's keen sensitivity to communication of words and feelings through dynamics, meter shifts that allow the rhythm of the text to flow, and harmonies that change quickly. Her treatment of the poetry is unfailingly perceptive as she develops vocal lines that sing well and that can surprise yet feel inevitable. Soprano Polly Cornelius is consistently effective throughout her vocal range; her diction and attention to dynamic details are excellent.

Cheryl Coker is currently Chair of the Music Department of Millsaps College, where she teaches voice, vocal literature, vocal pedagogy, and women and music. She holds a degree in music education, a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Southern Mississippi, and a DMA in vocal performance from the University of Minnesota. Much of her doctoral work focused on works by women composers.

Airi Yoshioka: *Stolen Gold*

Albany Records, Troy 1305 (2011). ASIN: B005W0AA18

ELIZABETH VERCOE

The disc delivers what the title of the third piece on this new disc promises, but in addition to a dazzling violin technique and spirit of adventure, the recording, called *Stolen Gold*, also reveals the performer's serious commitment to new music, to women's music, and to experimentation. All seven of the pieces on the album are by living women composers. Five of the works were commissioned by the performer, and all include electronics in different ways, whether the sounds are pre-recorded, computer-generated, or involve live

interactive computer. As if all this were not daring enough, there is one piece for electric violin.

Without a score, it is not always easy to tell which of the sounds are played live and which are electronically produced, especially in Tania León's *Abanico* for violin and interactive computer. *Abanico* opens with a bravura violin part accompanied by delicate percussive sounds but also contains pre-recorded string sounds playing in duet with the live instrument. Although León describes the piece as "a bouncing scherzo of images," there are quiet sections, a deft use of silence, and increasingly insistent and recurring percussive sounds reminiscent of her Cuban origins. While the violin is given a thorough workout with harmonics, left hand pizzicato, spiccato, glissandi, trills and double-stops, the effects are integral to the music and the sense of lyricism that pervades the piece.

Wave Mechanics II by Tokyo-born composer Karen Tanaka begins with long, sustained pitches and harshly bowed violin sounds that recur intermittently; these are followed by fast repeated notes and quiet scurrying passages interspersed with loud double-stop interjections. The music is all of a piece: what you hear at first is the character of the music throughout, exploiting what the composer has described as extremes of texture, speed, and dynamics, all without breaks or silences. The piece contains interesting stereo effects as the sound moves from one speaker to another and concludes by tapering off into nothingness.

Al Airi Lepo Sviri, by Serbian composer and performance artist Milica Paranosic, translates as "Airi plays so beautifully." This haunting and deeply emotional piece is certainly a tribute to the musicianship of the violinist and evokes the folk traditions and modal scales of the composer's native Serbia. The violin part is dramatic, improvisational, and accompanied by pre-recorded violin sounds (sometimes sounding in the cello range) as well as the composer's own singing voice.

The title piece, Anna Rubin's *Stolen Gold* for amplified violin and fixed electronics, is an arrangement of another piece by the same name. Unlike the electronic parts of the León or Paranosic pieces, these sounds are neither pre-recorded violin or vocal sounds nor interactive but rather fixed, computer-generated sounds that partner with the distinctly different live vi-

olin. Clocking in at just over five minutes, *Stolen Gold* is one of the shortest pieces in the collection. It nonetheless creates a long arc of sound, with each phrase sustained by an underlay of electronic sounds, creating a quiet and meditative tone poem.

Linda Dusman's *Magnificat 3: lament* for violin and fixed media has been performed at least once with a real-time video animation responding to the sounds of violin and tape. Inspired by the Marian text of the *Magnificat*, Dusman's piece is elegiac, with sweeping gestures in the violin along with sections of bouncing repeated notes. There are environmental components in the electronic part, such as the sound of cicadas, but it also contains string sounds that merge with the live instrumental part.

A singer herself, Alice Shields has created a soaring, tonally or modally-centered, heart-on-your-sleeve elegy with computer-generated electronics in her *Kyrielle* for violin and fixed audio media. The electronic

sounds often resemble an organ accompaniment, producing music that is generally more akin to the aesthetic of the Paranotic piece than to either the Dusman or Schack. The composer describes her compositional process as quoting and ornamenting three Marian chants from the *Liber usualis*, sources that are so integral to the music that the words of the chants are printed in the score.

Becca Schack's *Pulse* for electric violin and tape straddles the worlds of pop and classical music much as this Juilliard-trained composer does, writing for classical groups as well as performing in the New York club scene. The title of this piece gives an indication of the pre-recorded accompanying electronics that are sometimes as insistent as those of any rock music, but the electronics also include the composer's recorded voice and analog keyboards, and the violin part is sensitive and often lyrical. Although the work has also been performed

with a visual component (a live dancer in a MIDI body-suit that triggers pre-recorded reactions), it stands on its own without the visuals.

With program notes by the performer and each of the composers as well as biographical information and score sources, the disc booklet is full of useful information. The sound quality of the disc is impeccable, and the performance of violinist Airi Yoshioaka is admirable—full of flair and sensitive to the wide range of styles. This is a varied and intriguing recording that readers of the *Journal* should hear and one that should find an audience beyond new music buffs.

Composer Elizabeth Vercoe lives in the Boston area and teaches at Regis College. In October Navona Records released a recording of her chamber music titled Kleemation & other works containing the title piece that was performed on tour in Australia and New Zealand last year as well as the second of the composer's Herstory song cycles, a piano trio, two solo works, and her crossover piece called Irreveries from Sappho.

REPORTS

Melodia Women's Choir of NYC: A Reflection on a Decade of Change in Women's Choral Music

TERI DUERR

Rewind to a decade ago and Jenny Clarke, the founder of Melodia Women's Choir, was seeking to join a women's choral group in New York City. In the midst of one of the richest cultural and musical centers in the world, the lifelong lover of choral music was surprised to find that none existed. And so, Melodia, New York City's premiere women's choir, began, founded by Clarke and led since its inception by Artistic Director Cynthia Powell (who is also the artistic director of the nation's first LGBT chorus, Stonewall Chorale).

The lack of women's voices in NYC a mere ten years ago mirrored the women's choral scene at large. In a 2005 *Journal of the IAWM* essay entitled "A Plea for Women's Choral Music," composer Naomi Stephan wrote: "Evidence of neglect [of women's choral music] is strong and compelling. Just consider: Despite women's fuller participation in composing, conducting and teaching, the status of women's choral music, at least in the United States, is still underrepresented or undervalued in virtually every category imaginable: compositions, choral and composition departments, methodology books, competitions, programming, touring,

recordings, radio broadcasts and scholarly journals." Stephan goes on to cite results of an IAWM survey revealing that even among members of IAWM, an organization dedicated to fostering the work of women in music, there existed a "hierarchical mindset" that placed orchestral composition at the top and women's choral compositions



Melodia Women's Choir

at the very bottom, beneath all other instrumental works and mixed, men's, and even children's choral compositions.

Clarke, Powell, and Melodia were looking for a way to change this and to "bring the music [for women's voices] out of obscurity and into the concert arena in

New York," says Clarke. To this end, Melodia's performances have thrillingly ranged across musical traditions, eras, styles, and genres. Over eighteen concerts, Melodia has performed everything from Meredith Monk to medieval medleys to Johannes Brahms to Gustav Holst and has collaborated with women composers, instrumentalists, and vocalists from backgrounds as diverse as minimal techno and Japanese taiko drumming. The ensemble makes a special effort to sing rarely heard music and premiere works for women's voices by women composers. "We want audiences and musicians to know what a wealth of sophisticated and gorgeous repertoire has been and still is being composed for women's choir and bring it to the world as broadly as we can," says Clarke.

Melodia's spring 2013 concert marks the final program of its tenth-anniversary season, which began in celebratory spirit last fall with the concert "Questions About Angels" and the world premiere title commission for the choir by composer Sally Lamb McCune. The April concert, "A Breath of Spring," featured the all-women French horn quartet Genghis Barbie and

pianist Taisiya Pushkar, plus the specially-commissioned world premiere of *From the Four Winds* by Nina Siniakova. The concert brought Melodia full circle with performances of Eleanor Daley's *Rose Trilogy* and Claude Debussy's *Salut Printemps*, both selections from Melodia's very first concert a decade past.

The oft-overlooked composer Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel once said, "It must be a sign of talent that I do not give up, though I can get nobody to take an interest in my efforts." Hensel would be gratified to know that Melodia has performed several of her works this past decade, and that growing audiences are indeed finally

hearing her and many other women's voices, thanks to the increasingly vibrant women's choral scene around the world. Melodia Women's Choir is proud to have spent the last ten years contributing to that growth. For more information, please visit www.MelodiaWomensChoir.org.

The Kapralova Society Annual Report 2012

KARLA HARTL

The most important project initiated and financially assisted by the Kapralova Society in 2012 was the new recording of Kaprálová's String Quartet, op. 8, released in October in partnership with the Czech Radio. While there have been prior releases of this remarkable composition (by Studio Matouš in 1998 and by ArcoDiva in 2006), the new recording features a performance that is informed by the most recent Kaprálová scholarship and is as close to an authentic interpretation of the work as is possible. It follows the entire original autograph, which was subjected to cuts on the older recordings. The performers are the members of the excellent Skampa Quartet, one of the top Czech string quartet ensembles. The CD also features the world premiere of Václav Kaprál's String Quartet No. 1 and Martinů's String Quartet No. 5. The CD liner notes have been written by Kaprálová (and Martinů) scholars Erik Entwistle, Judith Mabary, and Marta Blalock.

Kaprálová's music was again heard at concert stages around the world last year, with her art songs, string quartet, piano preludes, and piano concerto being among the most frequently performed. The composer's string quartet was programmed at the Festival international de quatuors a cordes du Luberon (France); the live performance by the Kapralova Quartet was recorded for Radio France. The Canadian Music Competition (Toronto) presented the composer's art songs, performed by Vancouver's soprano Teyia Kasahara, who won the provincial finals. Kaprálová's music was featured in record-breaking twenty-two radio broadcasts, including four national broadcasters, in Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, and the United States.

The Czech Radio's CD recording of Kaprálová's Piano Concerto in D Minor, released in 2011 with the assistance of the

Society, received excellent reviews in *Harmonie* (Veroslav Nemeš), *Opus Musicum* (Jindra Bartova), *Nuova e Nostre* (Marco del Vaglio), *The Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music Newsletter* (Greg Terian), *Kaprálová Society Journal* (Michelle Latour), and *Criticaclassica.com* (Marco del Vaglio). *The Kaprálová Companion*, the first English biography of the composer, published in 2011 by Lexington Books, received favorable reviews last year in *Opus Musicum* (Monika Hola), *The Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music Newsletter* (Peter Herbert), the *Journal of the IAWM* (Michelle Latour), and the *ForumOpera.com* (Nicholas Dery). The most important critical acclaim came with the nomination of the book for the 2011 Award of the F.X. Šalda Foundation. It made the shortlist for this distinguished prize that recognizes important contributions to art history and criticism.

The spring 2012 issue of the *Kapralova Society Journal* featured Martin Kostaš's article "An Analysis of Compositional Methods Applied in Kaprálová's Cantata *Ilena*, op. 15," which provided a unique insight by the author, who in 2007 finished *Ilena*'s orchestration, into the most important choral work composed by Kaprálová. Michelle Latour's "Kaprálová's Vteřiny, op. 18," provided a useful analysis of the diverse collection of art songs. Arturo Desimone's interview of Maria Segura-Thijssen highlighted some of the challeng-

es facing today's women conductors. The fall issue featured an essay by Diane Paige, "Kaprálová and the Muses: Understanding the Qualified Composer," and Karla Hartl's "Kaprálová's Piano Concerto in D Minor, op. 7," which focused on the reception of the work when it was first performed in 1935 in Brno. Texts published in other periodicals and e-zines included "Vítězslava Kaprálová. Portrait amoureux et musical," for *ForumOpera.com* by Nicholas Dery; "Vítězslava Kaprálová: Největší česká skladatelka," for *FemmeFatale* by Valerie Kuchařová; and Karla Hartl's interview about the composer for the Canadian bi-weekly *New Homeland*. Kaprálová's life and music was the subject of a 2012 thesis entitled "Étude sur le cycle Navždy, opus 12," by Anaïs Maillard de la Morandais (Kunstuniversität Graz, Austria). The most significant contribution to Kaprálová's bibliography last year was a chapter on Kaprálová in *Česká hudební avantgarda* (Czech Musical Avant-Garde), a new book by Kaprálová's first biographer, Jiří Macek, published by Czech publisher Littera Proxima.

The Society's databases of women composers and conductors and other online resources on women in music continue to be a main attraction for visitors to our website and are frequently bookmarked by online discussion groups and blogs, and linked to by college and public libraries worldwide.

Trombone Players

Although women have gained acceptance in other sections of the orchestra, discrimination still exists in the trombone section. Monica Buckland Hofstetter, director of the two orchestras of the TU Dresden (Dresden University, Germany), offers some positive news, at least on the university level. She reports that the two orchestras have a total of six trombonists, three males and three females; the female bass trombonist also plays the tuba. The orchestras frequently exchange players and on occasion one of the orchestras might consist of three female trombonists, which she finds to be a thrilling experience. She suspects that it will be a while before a professional orchestra can make the same announcement.

The 2013 Women Composers Festival of Hartford

JESSICA RUDMAN and SUSAN MARDINLY

Each year, the Women Composers Festival of Hartford presents music by dozens of female composers, including one featured Composer-in-Residence. The discussion about whom to invite for the coming year is always difficult, and many fascinating artists are suggested. The story behind this year's residency is no different: the serendipitous road leading to Hilary Tann's participation began about eighteen months before she arrived in Connecticut. The Festival issues several score calls every summer, including a request for submissions from composers local to Connecticut and surrounding areas. Tann sent some of her music for possible inclusion on the 2012 Local Composers Concert, but the staff knew immediately that programming one piece by such a unique voice would not be enough: we needed to bring this composer for a residency. Over a year later, Tann began her tenure as the Festival's 2013 Composer-in-Residence.

During the Festival, Tann's music was featured on six concerts. In addition to speaking at each program, she also gave two extended lectures and worked closely with the Festival performers, fitting coaching sessions into her busy schedule of talks and concerts. The week before her residency began, Tann drove from the Schenectady, NY area, where she teaches at Union College, to meet with students in The Hartt School Saxophone Studio. Graduate student Colette Hall describes her interaction: "Dr. Tann was an absolute pleasure to work with; she had very clear ideas of what she wanted to hear and really helped to direct my playing so that I could achieve those ideas. I hope I am able to work with her again in the future." This personal contact was greatly appreciated by the musicians, who gave stellar performances on the various events in which they participated.

The opening concert of the Festival, "American Women in Song," filled the recital hall to overflowing. Co-sponsored by The Hartt School Community Division and directed by IAWM member Dr. Susan Mardinly, the program began with the scintillating *Three Sandburg Songs* by IAWM composer Elizabeth Austin. Austin's atmospheric chords in "Lost," rocking vocal rhythms in "Haze," and sweeping phrases in "Child Moon" added depth and

meaning to texts by American poet Carl Sandburg. Voice faculty and advanced students contributed wonderful performances of nine songs by Amy Beach, including a number of out-of-print obbligato songs donated during research at the University of New Hampshire's Milne Special Collections. Singers ranging in age from thirteen to nineteen next gave outstanding performances of the music of Lucy Simon and Jeanine Tesori. The program ended with a fine rendition of jazz greats by another advanced student.

Tann's residency began with an engaging talk given to the Hartt Composers' Seminar. Presented as part of the Institute of Contemporary American Music, her lecture entitled "Composing Under the Influence" focused on her use of Japanese inspirations. Tann made a clear distinction between "composing under the influence," where elements extrinsic to the composer's background are incorporated into one's music, and "composing while intoxicated," where those elements become the primary focus of the music.

After discussing the possible dangers of the latter, she played excerpts from several works to demonstrate some ways she has negotiated the fine line between the two stances. Tann challenged the students to think about ways they could approach such issues; for example, asking them how one might use an orchestra to depict the sound of the shakuhachi. She also described an interview she conducted with the composer Toru Takemitsu and played a brief recording of their exchange. Overall, the event provided a thought-provoking introduction to Tann and her music, revealing several themes that would recur in her presentations throughout the week.

The Local Composers Concert held later that same evening featured two of Tann's works alongside music by composers from Connecticut and New York: Elizabeth Lim, Sarah Meneely-Kyder, Emiko Hayashi, and Shuying Li. Meneely-Kyder's expres-

sive song for soprano, trumpet, and piano highlighted the artist's many talents: not only did she compose the music, she also wrote the text and performed the piano part. The remainder of the concert featured the 016 New Music Ensemble, which skillfully moved between the various styles included on the program.

The Festival's fourth event was co-sponsored by The Musical Club of Hartford. Chair Susan Mardinly and Festival Director Daniel Morel curated a program showcasing pieces from throughout the Festival. The concert opened with a reprisal of Austin's beautiful Sandburg songs performed by a young singer who had won both the high school and college scholarships funded by the Club. The remainder of the event featured Tann's music, and each piece was preceded by a brief discussion offering profound insight into the music. The audience felt the "deep gorge" effects in the saxophone quartet *Some of the Silence* and heard the thrush's song in *Like Lightnings*. They envisioned a cathedral and graveyard through Tann's use of chant in *The Cresset Stone* and imagined a shakuhachi performing *Llef's* expressive bent pitches and breathy phrases. The members of the Club responded enthusiastically to the program, and we look forward to future collaborations with this dedicated organization.

That afternoon, Central Connecticut State University faculty members Jill Maurer-Davis, Julie Ribchinski, and Patricia Grimm performed works for flute, cello, and piano at the Music Department's Forum. The program included music by Louise Farrenc, Elisanda Fábregas, and Hilary Tann. While the two latter pieces were both originally composed for the Meininger Trio of Germany, they represent two divergent compositional approaches: Fábregas's work is based on music from her native Spain, while Tann's composition explores Anna Maria Luisa de Medici's love of flowers and gardens. This emphasis on nature can be found in much of Tann's oeuvre and was a theme to which she referred throughout the week.

On Thursday evening, The Hartt School Saxophone Studio co-sponsored a program devoted entirely to Tann's music, and the composer again gave illuminating



Hilary Tann

introductions to her works. Senior Artist Teacher Carrie Koffman, accompanied by Hartt piano faculty member Maggie Francis, opened the program with a virtuoso performance of *Shakkei*. Originally written for oboe and small orchestra, the piece was premiered here in a version for soprano saxophone and piano. Tann's dynamic writing made this chamber arrangement feel as full and evocative as the orchestral scoring. The subsequent compositions spanned a range of forces from soprano saxophone solo to voice and saxophone, sax duet, and sax quartet. In *Shoji*, one could hear the movement of the Japanese screens for which the piece was named. The final work, *Of Erthe and Air*, combined saxophone with flute and frame drums in a compelling fusion of styles exploring the juxtaposition of meditative "dream" time and driving rhythmic time.

The 2013 Festival marked the inaugural meeting of the WCForum, which provided a diverse overview of current scholarship on female composers. Topics included Maddalena Casulana's madrigals, influences in the songs of Elsa Olivieri-Sangiaco Respighi (the wife of Ottorino and an excellent composer in her own right), a biography of Olga Harris, and Juliana Hall's vocal writing. Associate Director Jessica Rudman presented research on the music of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, while flutists Mary Matthews and IAWM member Melissa Wertheimer of the Dahlia Duo partnered with composer Nicole Chamberlain to give an engaging talk about the performer-composer relationship. Tann then spoke about her background and the connection between nature and her music. As part of the discussion, Nicole Stacy and Elisabeth Tomczyk performed *On Ear and*

Ear, written in memory of Tann's mentor Milton Babbitt. A presentation of the 60x60 Athena Mix concluded the event. Based on the high quality of the proceedings, the WCForum promises to be a growing component of the Festival in the future.

The Festival's emphasis on music present and past was also well-represented by Concert Pro Femina, which included compositions by Tann as well as other living and historical composers. Organized by Mattie Banzhaf and Patrice Fitzgerald, the evening featured a mix of instrumental and vocal works. A set by the charismatic St. Patrick-St. Anthony Men's Choir with compositions by Nancy Hill Cobb, Hildegard von Bingen, Alice Parker, Kathryn Rose, and Cristine Temple-Evans was a highlight of the evening, as was Monika Krajewska and Natasha Ulyanovsky's performance of art songs by Pauline Viardot and Marguerite Monnot/Edith Piaf.

Matthews described the Festival's final concert, performed by The Dahlia Duo. "The Flute Works Concert provided us with the unique opportunity to coach with three of the six composers we were performing in one week! Sitting down with each individual artist and working together to achieve an artistic vision is such an exhilarating experience. Anna Rubin worked with choreography and setting a visual landscape, while Hilary Tann and Nicole Chamberlain described the timbres, extended techniques, and their unique influences. These collaborations culminated in a program that we as an ensemble truly love."

Two pieces Matthews mentioned were premieres: Chamberlain's *Trajectory* and Rubin's *Consulting the Oracle*, which won the Festival's Composition Competition. A

theatrical tour-de-force, the work featured elegant choreography gracefully executed by the duo as they played poignant lines on a stage artfully lit by a circle of artificial candles. Joined by pianist Marko Stuparevic and cellist Pablo Issa Skaric, the duo also presented compositions by Linda Dusman, Libby Larsen, and Jennifer Higdon. The musicians' energetic performance and diverse selection of music provided an exciting conclusion to the 2013 Festival.

Plans are already underway for 2014, and we hope you'll join us as a composer, performer, or audience member next year. Check our website during the summer and fall for score calls, concert announcements, and more! The Festival is held each March as part of Women's History Month and is generously supported by New Music USA's MetLife Creative Connections, The University of Hartford Women's Education and Leadership Fund, The Hartt School, Central Connecticut State University, and Charter Oak Cultural Center. Information about recent and upcoming events can be accessed online at womencomposersfestivalhartford.com. For more details about ways you can participate in or contribute to the festival, please contact the Festival Director, Daniel Morel at info@womencomposersfestivalhartford.com.

Jessica Rudman (www.jessicarudman.com) has been involved with the Women Composers Festival of Hartford since 2005. An active composer and theorist, she is currently a doctoral candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center. Susan Mardinly, a contributor to WCF since its inception, began singing and lecturing on women's music in 1979. She received grants to research Amy Beach, Barbara Strozzi and Fanny Mendelssohn and has produced 30 scores, numerous articles and a book.

Women in Music UK

SARAH COLE

In June 2012 we held our 25th Annual General Meeting and open committee meeting. Discussion was focussed on our website, www.womeninmusic.org.uk, and on the WIMUST (Women in Music Uniting Strategies for Talent) project in which Women in Music UK is a partner. WIMUST, funded by the European Commission, involves 49 organisations across Europe and is being co-ordinated by the Italian organisation Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica. WiM UK was honoured to be represented by three mem-

bers during 2012. WiM Chair Debbie Golt attended a planning meeting in Fiuggi in July, Rosemary Evans completed a three-month residency as a researcher during the autumn, and she was joined by composer/saxophonist Rachael Forsythe for a two-week residency in November. Evans returned to the UK in October to attend the Gender, Music, Creativity and Age Conference at the newly opened Centre for the Study of Music, Gender and Identity (MuGI) at the University of Huddersfield. Dr. Margaret Lucy Wilkins was the Hon-

orary Guest at the conference. Her review of the conference is included at the end of this report. On our website, the "Comps and Ops" page, compiled by Jennifer Fowler, contains her annual Proms Survey, which also appears in the *Journal of the IAWM* 18/2, 2012.

Debbie Golt, Hon. Sec. Sarah Cole, and other committee members attended a series of open planning meetings for the Southbank's Women of the World (WOW) Festival. The meetings were hosted by the Artistic Director of the Southbank, Jude

Kelly. We suggested that work by contemporary women composers be included in this and other festivals held at the Southbank during 2013, such as the year long examination of music in the 20th century based on the book *The Rest is Noise* by Alex Ross.

WiM (UK) has 80 active members. While cut backs in public funding have made it increasingly difficult for small organisations to stage events, the national and international celebrations of 2012 (Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic Games) did lead to some important commissions and opportunities for composers in the UK. Catherine Pluygers, oboe, and the London New Wind Festival

gave three concerts between September and November 2012. Works by women composers included those by Judith Bailey, Hilary Tann, Colleen Muriel, Dorone Paris, Sadie Harrison, Veronika Krausas, Amanda Feery, and Jennifer Fowler. Fowler's *Uncoiling* for solo oboe and piano was commissioned by the Walthamstow Festival and was first performed in London on 23 February 2012. Also from Fowler during 2012: a commission from the University of Western Australia for their centenary resulted in *Three Cellos*, recorded for release on CD in Perth, Western Australia. *Hymn for St Brigid* was recorded for release on CD by the Winthrop Singers of Western Australia, and *Lament for Dunblane*, per-

formed by the BBC Singers, was broadcast by the BBC Radio 3 on 28 February 2012.

Julia Usher's *Transit of Venus*, for clarinet and soprano saxophone, was first performed at the beginning and end of the actual astronomical event, Transit of Venus, June 5-6, at Much Hoole Church, near Preston, Lancashire, UK. The performance accompanied a live projection in real time of the Transit, received by satellite from NASA. The live performance was then transmitted back to NASA, where it was one of ten featured feeds that went on the World Wide Web. The same piece, in a recording by Ian Mitchell and Christian Forshaw, was also used in performance for two dancers during the Future Sounds weekend at the University of Central Lancashire. Also during Future Sounds at UCLAN, the piece was used in a low frequency format to accompany a visual art installation called *Pipedream*. This was created by Justine Flynn, Sound Artist and Researcher in low frequency vibrations.

The first performance of *Song of the Earth* by Reverend Professor June Boyce-Tillman, MBE: was presented at the cultural Olympiad in March 2012, and the first performance of a commission, *Jubilee Wisdom*, was given in November at Winchester Cathedral. Clare Connors presented a programme inspired by the works of band leader Carla Bley at the Royal Academy of Music, London, as part of the London Jazz Festival in the autumn of 2012. Catherine Pestano has a chapter on her music work with marginalised people, written with Sheila Woodward, in the academic book *Community Music Today* (2012) edited by Kari K. Veblen, David Elliott, Stephen J. Messenger, and Marissa Silverman, published by Rowman and Littlefield. This book is likely to be a useful resource for people working with creative participatory music in its many diverse forms, and has a number of international perspectives on the growing field of community music making.

WiM Chair Debbie Golt featured several UK-based African women musicians with interview/live sessions and gave many others CD airplay on her long running radio show "African Essence" on London-based Resonance FM. In turn she was interviewed about her life in culturally diverse music on the World City Live, a series produced by Cultural Co-operation also on Resonance FM.

Carl von Ossietzky Composition Award: 13th International Contest

The following provides information on the annual composition competition for Wind Ensemble. Considering the fact that the number of wind instrument classes (Bläserklassen) in German schools has been growing rapidly, the Institute of Music of the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg intends to contribute to the broadening of the repertoire for wind instrument classes. The level of difficulty of the repertoire ranges from easy to fairly difficult. The compositions should constitute a challenge for beginners and advanced pupils as well as student teachers without demanding unsolvable technical difficulties. The degree of difficulty is not regarded as a criterion of quality!

Instruments of choice:

1 piccolo, 2 flutes, up to 3 clarinets in B-flat, 2 alto saxophones in E-flat, 2 tenor saxophones in B-flat, 1 baritone saxophone in E-flat, up to 3 trumpets in B-flat, 2 horns in F (French horn), 1 tenor horn in B-flat, up to 3 trombones (one of these is a tenor bass trombone), 1 tuba, 1 double-bass or elect.-bass, 1 drum-set. Reducible instrumentations are welcome!

Duration: 10 minutes maximum

The compositions should not have already been published or performed. There is no limitation of age of the participants. The content of the piece can be chosen freely.

Submissions: until October 30, 2013 to:

Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg
Fk III, Institut für Musik
Postfach 2503
Kompositionswettbewerb
z.Hd. Prof. Violeta Dinescu
D-26111 Oldenburg
Deutschland

Please submit two copies of the composition anonymously, as well as an anonymous commentary on your composition. Please also send a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the composer, as well as a short CV (biography). Submissions are accepted only by mail (post) – no E-Mail!

Participants not older than 25 years can apply for the youth prize of the contest. These composers should mark their score with a letter F (=Förderpreis).

The awarded compositions will be performed by the wind ensemble of the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg in 2014. Members of the jury: Violeta Dinescu, composer; Siegrid Ernst, composer; Christoph Keller, composer; Michael Searby, composer; Peter Vollhardt, artistic assistant for ensemble conducting; Roberto Reale, research assistant.

Gender, Musical Creativity and Age Conference

MuGI: Centre for the Study of Music, Gender and Identity. University of Huddersfield, UK, 6-7 October 2012. The report is by Margaret Lucy Wilkins.

It was with immense pleasure that I accepted Dr. Lisa Colton's invitation to be the Honorary Guest at the first conference promoted by MuGI. During my career (now retired) in the Music Department of the University of Huddersfield, I had been Composition Leader, guiding the education of some 200+ p.a. undergraduate composers, under the tutelage of a dozen staff composers. In addition, I initiated and taught the first Women in Music module, in which Lisa Colton was a brilliant student. Now herself a member of staff, she has developed the study of gender and music into a research centre.

The Conference was held in the new, iconic Creative Arts Building which houses the Music Department. The venue was enjoyed by delegates from the USA, Canada, Europe and the UK. The state-of-the-art technology supported Skype, which enabled two of the papers to be read by researchers in America, who were not able

to attend the Conference in person. Miraculously, they could be seen on a large screen by the delegates, who also posed live questions that were discussed from conference room to a USA home. Dr. Sophie Fuller (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, UK) gave the Keynote address, entitled '*Something Revolting*': *Women, creativity and music over 50*. Wit, good humour and sound scholarship marked out her paper. Ten paper sessions ranged across the centuries, *Historicising popular music*, *Victorian ideologies and their evolution*; across the generations, *Ageing within musical traditions*, *Late style*, *Music and youth*; and between genders, *Female composers and institutions*, *Women and reception*, *British masculinities*.

In the atrium, refreshments were served. Displays showed an exhibition of 2000 years of women composers, *To name*



IAWM members enjoyed a luncheon following the Chinese Woman Composers' Association Tenth Anniversary Two-Piano Concert at Hong Kong City Hall on the evening of October 18, 2012. L to R: Deon Nielsen Price (USA), Shi Fuhong (Beijing), Wang Qiang (Hong Kong, President CWCA), Su Fan-ling (Taiwan), Hongying Li (USA).

but a few!!!, curated in Budapest by Maria Viz and Roger Scaife. In addition was a display table containing examples of scores by women composers held in the British Music Collection (formerly the British Music Information Centre), now permanently housed in the Library of the University of Huddersfield. Also, a table set up by Rosemary Evans contained materials for Women in Music UK, and the European-funded WIMUST project initiated by Donne in Musica, Italy.

Japan: Women Composers of Latvia, South Korea, and Japan

TAEKO NISHIZAKA

The Japanese premiere of a piano concerto by Lūcija Garūta (1902-1977) was given on February 9, 2013 at a concert presented by the Orchestra Nadezhda at the Nerima Cultural Center Hall in Tokyo. Orchestra Nadezhda specializes in performing lesser-known but outstanding music of Russian and Northern European composers. Garūta, a pianist and poet from Latvia, based her concerto (1952) on a Latvian folksong, and one of the most effective features of the work was the dialogue between piano and orchestra. Incidentally, Zemene Music Plan, one of the sponsors of the concert, has promoted Latvian music for many years, and previously, in 2003, Zemene sponsored the Japanese premiere of Garūta's cantata *God, your land burns* (1944).

Ensemble KOCHI Japan held a concert titled "As a Composer, As a Woman" on February 22 at Sogakudo Concert Hall in Tokyo. Works of women composers from both the past and today were

presented. As for the past, several songs by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Clara Schumann, and Alma Mahler were performed by a soprano soloist with a chamber orchestra replacing the piano; the orchestral accompaniment was arranged by some women members of KOCHI. The rest of the program consisted of contemporary works for chamber orchestra: *Perpetual song of life* (2012) by Jiesun Lim, *Le tombeau de Gerard Grisey* (2000) by Hitomi Kaneko, and *Non mesuré mit Louis Couperin* (2008) by Isabel Mundry. An interview with Jiesun Lim (South Korea) and Hitomi Kaneko (Japan) on the topic "As a Composer, As a Woman" preceded the concert. They seemed to be more conscious of their nationalities than their gender, but they both discussed an issue common to women of all ages and countries: how to reconcile being both a composer and a mother. Each of the composers presented a positive outlook, which added to the enjoyment of the concert.

Visit the IAWM Website

We encourage you to visit the IAWM Website often at www.iawm.org. You will find information about the organization, how to join or renew your membership, the listserv, concerts, congresses, competitions, opportunities, publications, awards, radio requests, and advocacy work. Under Resources, you can search the archives for more than 220 articles from the IAWM, ICWM, AWC, and ILWC Journals. The site provides links to members' pages and to the IAWM Facebook and blog. A Calendar of Events (<http://www.iawm.org/calendar.htm>), to which members can add their own events, is now available. If you need assistance, please contact our Webmaster, Stefanie Acevedo, at webmaster@iawm.org.

IAWM Annual Concert: Review

PAMELA J. MARSHALL

The IAWM Annual Concert (October 28, 2012) was the last event of LiveWire 3, Third Annual Festival of New Music at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. It was an exciting and varied weekend festival, but by Sunday, attendees had become distracted by the approach of infamous Hurricane Sandy. Before the concert, many people were remaking plans for how they were going to get home. For some, flights were already canceled. Those who needed to drive along the East Coast questioned whether they should attend this last festival concert featuring music by IAWM members. Once the concert started, however, the intensity of the five performers of Ensemble Pi brought us back to focus on the music. The performers were Idith Meshulam, piano and artistic director; Kristin Norderval, soprano; Katie Schlaikjer, cello; Airi Yoshioka, violin; and Monique Buzzarté, trombone. Meshulam, Norderval, and LiveWire Festival Director Linda Dusman selected the program from over sixty pieces submitted by IAWM members. The overall feeling of the program was meditative and spacious, with ethereal sound worlds woven by electronics around the instruments.

Inner Space for cello and electronics by Kyong Mee Choi was filled with ethereal sounds. The cello music blended effectively and often seamlessly with the pre-recorded accompaniment, which included altered cello sounds and acoustically derived rustling and rattles. The music was consistently gentle with no big climaxes. A whirlwind of sound near the end was not quite a climax but was beautiful as it faded away. *Oh Death, Rock Me Asleep* for soprano and violin by Jerry Casey took as its text a mournful and dramatic poem reputed to have been written by Anne Boleyn on the eve of her death. Casey's program note stated: "The soprano is Anne Boleyn; the violin, Death. The melodies and harmonies are modal. . . . Death as portrayed by the violin is at times sensuous; other times, menacing." The seemingly simple modal phrases grew in intensity every time the refrain returned. Each verse explored a different part of Anne's memories with various musical treatments and often dissonant violin commentary. The intensity

that Kristin Norderval and Airi Yoshioka brought to this stark and dramatic music was moving.

Illuminated Shadows of Louise Nevelson for clarinet, violin, and piano was by Molly Joyce, a student at Juilliard. This rhapsodic piece in three short movements was full of impressionistic colors and Romantic sensibility, at times evolving into noise and ostinato, and ending in a jazzy scherzo. Interwoven melodies of violin and clarinet seemed independent but were always complementary. *Generation* for piano and electronics was by Cuban composer Maureen Reyes Lavastida, who came from Cuba to attend. Dedicated to Cuban composer Carlos Fariñas, the music used his initials as harmonic generators. The electronic accompaniment included processed, inside-the-piano sounds. Much of the piano's musical material was single-note events, echoing the electronic accompaniment. Arpeggiated harmonic series led to a more active piano, including some jazzy phrases. In this beautiful piece, the straightforward piano part complemented the more virtuosic recorded sounds.

Tracing for trombone and electronics by Frances White brought a trombone onto the stage, a somewhat rare occurrence in mixed-ensemble chamber music concerts. Monique Buzzarté presented a mesmerizing performance of this intense work. Slow moving and stately, with a chant-like quality, a recurring two-note motive was like an invocation. There were many complementary moments between electronics and trombone: air sounds, long notes that faded in and out of a pulsing background, glissandi, and muted sounds. *Tracing* took the immersive, meditative quality of the whole concert to another level of intensity. Carrie Leigh Page described the mood as "time out of time, like the Easter vigil." *Inori-Prayer* for piano and cello by Kanako Okamoto commemorated the great earthquake and tsunami of 2011. In her program notes she wrote that the opening cello solo was her prayer, in reaction to the devastation. This opening melody was chromatic but seemed like an exotic mode, accompanied by tremolos and arpeggios in the piano. The chant-like quality developed further as both instruments played walking lines of

eighth notes. It was written at the request of Eve Duncan for a Melbourne Composers League concert to show friendship between Japan and Australia.

Butterfly Mirrors for voice, piano, and cello by Mara Helmuth was, according to the program notes, "an improvisatory and interactive piece with live computer processing, involving spectral delays of the performers' sound." Kristin Norderval sang wordless music and sound effects into the piano, and the resulting resonance

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was amplified to make the effect more audible. The result of the spectral processing was drone-like, similar to a raga—atmospheric, subtle, and slowly evolving. Unfortunately, the processing application crashed (noiselessly) and the performers improvised a more sudden end to the piece than planned, but we did get to hear several minutes of this interesting sound world. The concert ended with *Three Stones* for clarinet and electronics by Heather Stebbins. The music began with soft clarinet notes accompanied by a low-pitched warm and resonant cloud of sound. The clarinet became gradually more active and louder,

reaching a high repeated motive accompanied by rattling resonance that transformed in more liquid movement. The whole piece ended rather abruptly. Since the composer was actively working at the sound board during the performance, it was unclear whether the processing was interactive, but afterward I learned that the accompaniment was pre-recorded, with each section cued in according to the clarinet's music, giving the performer more flexibility in the timing of phrases.

The performers of Ensemble Pi gave moving renditions of these works; so even with the hurricane looming, I am glad we

stayed to hear them perform.

Pamela J. Marshall is an independent composer and horn player in Lexington, MA and a Board member of IAWM. She has written for chamber ensembles, orchestra, solo voice, chorus, synthesizers, and mandolin, including commissions from the International Horn Society, South Beach Chamber Ensemble of Miami, The Master Singers of Lexington, Green Mountain Youth Symphony, Assabet Valley Mastersingers. She leads composing and improvisation workshops and records concerts and nature soundscapes and does web site design and email marketing for fellow artists. Her music is available on the web at Spindrift Music Company (www.spindrift.com).

IAWM Annual Concert: Pre-Concert Panel Discussion

CARRIE LEIGH PAGE

As part of the Livewire Festival, the IAWM presented a panel discussion on October 28, 2012 with a few of the featured composers from the IAWM Annual Concert. Several audience members posed excellent comments and questions to the panel. The discussion focused on regional differences in the practice of new music around the world, but much of the dialogue centered on the ties between music and academia, the economic factors in new music, and opportunities for women in music.

IAWM past president Hsiao-Lan Wang began by explaining some regional differences she found in her experiences as a female composer, both in Taiwan and the United States. As one of six children, she noted that population growth fueled a high degree of competition for student places when she entered college. Now the number of spots exceeds the number of students, and professorial jobs are in decline in Taiwan. Heather Stebbins, a doctoral fellow at Boston University, commented that a shortage of music positions exists in the U.S. but there is still a demand for student spots in composition programs. She mentioned that Boston, reputed to be a relatively conservative area for new music, is more open to international influence because of the large number of international students in this academic town. Mara Helmuth of Cincinnati, Ohio, explained that university teaching may be supportive, but it is also demanding and may curb output of new works. An audience member commented that in some college positions, new music may be written for tenure purposes rather than for other

reasons. Almost every panelist teaches (or has taught), mostly at the college level, to supplement her composition income.

There is good news for new music, according to Jerry Casey of Columbus, Ohio. She and others noted that smaller regional orchestras, especially those with newly-appointed music directors, are pushing premieres and new works, though they still rely on standard repertoire to fill seats and drive subscriptions. Mara Helmuth concurred that the majority of new music performances still seem to take place in collegiate settings. One audience member asked if this created a "class structure" due to the economics of the music business, but the panel demurred making any definitive judgment on that issue. Molly Joyce mentioned a new source of independent funding through Internet project sites such as Kickstarter. When the discussion turned to the potential for government funding, Tanako Okamoto explained that she had had a better response in funding from other countries, particularly Australia, than from her native Japan. In addition to securing performances and recordings, the importance of being able to travel and discover new opportunities and forms of expression was raised as a motivating factor in finding funding.

A brief discussion was held on the impact of recordings.

Are we creating and/or catering to an audience of one? Molly Joyce said that recordings actually *drive* the demand for live music, even in a saturated market such as New York, but Heather Stebbins countered that the ubiquitous listening to music has lowered the attention span for live music performances. Mara Helmuth reminded everyone of the importance of music as a social function. Hsiao-Lan Wang noted that the post-concert celebration was a new phenomenon for her when she came to the United States. She had also seen it in Japan, and it seemed to be an important time for bonding of composers and performers.

Maureen Reyes Lavastida gave a fascinating description of new music activities in Cuba, where only one institution offers higher-level degrees in composition, so the field is very competitive. There is a large audience for contemporary music, and Cuba has several important festivals of new music, with funding from both the Cuban government and non-government organizations. Ticket prices are very af-



Panel (L to R): Hsiao-Lan Wang, Maureen Reyes Lavastida, Jerry Casey, Mara Helmuth, Molly Joyce, Heather Stebbins, and Kanaka Okamoto

fordable, which helps create large audiences, but performers are typically unpaid, and their performance at the festival is considered a “social service.” Because of the complicated political situation and limited access to the Internet, music-making in Cuba is largely isolated from

the outside world. Memberships in international organizations are important for fostering exchange of ideas and bringing Cuban composers to a wider world stage.

In one of the most striking notes on regional differences, Hsiao-Lan Wang and Kanako Okamoto explained that, in many

Asian cultures, composition is considered to be a woman’s career, and that composition departments are overwhelmingly (perhaps 80%) female. This contrasts sharply with composition departments in the US, which are, in most cases, male-dominated.

IAWM Announcements and Reports

Message from the President

Congratulations to the winners of the Annual Concert competition and the Search for New Music. The Board urges any institution or agency seeking to host

the International Congress in 2014 to make its written proposal immediately. Our tradition is to alternate U.S. with international locations, and 2014 is the year for a Congress to be held outside the U.S.

The sluggish global economy the past few years has sent a cautionary shiver throughout the music world. Now that we are at a better place economically, however, we look forward to a wonderful Congress, and we must receive formal proposals from IAWM members and their institutions/agencies during the next few days or weeks. Time is of the essence. The Congress is a major undertaking that is organized by local arrangers in tandem with the IAWM Congress Committee. See details about making a proposal on the IAWM website. Let’s continue to make good music and build supportive communities for women’s music! *Susan Borwick*

IAWM 2013 Annual Concert

Carrie Page thanks everyone who submitted to the recent call for scores for the 2013 Annual Concert: 127 works were submitted for review by 65 composers from 14 countries. With so many works of such high caliber, the decisions were difficult, and the IAWM wishes to extend special thanks to Moon Young Ha, Reiko Fueting, and Yoon-Ji Lee for serving as judges. The committee is pleased to announce that the following works have been selected:

Ming-Hsiu Yen (Taiwan): *Lego City*

Lina Järnagard (Sweden): *The Waves: Identity*

Jane O’Leary (Ireland): *in a flurry of whispering*

Santa Buss (Latvia) was selected to compose a new work that will be premiered at the concert by ensemble mise-en. The concert will take place on Friday, October 11, 2013, at 8 p.m. at University Settlement (184 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002). This concert is being co-presented by IAWM and The Performance Project @ University Settlement.

IAWM Calendar

The IAWM’s calendar is now online. If you have an event, a competition, a conference, or a call for scores that aligns with IAWM’s mission, you can post it on the calendar. Our web moderators will do their best to approve your post in a timely

Congratulations to Award Winners

Katy Abbott was awarded the Gold Medal for Art-Song from the Boston Metropolitan Opera 2013 Composition Competition for her new song cycle *The Domestic Sublime* (text by Chris Wallace-Crabbe).

Sang Mi Ahn won the 31st Republic of Korea Composition Prize in the chamber music category for *Loki’s Castle* (2010); it was performed at the award ceremony in the Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center (Goyang, Korea) on November 22, 2012. This is one of the most prestigious awards given to Korean composers of traditional and western music (this year’s competition featured western music).

Andrea Clearfield was awarded 2013 fellowships at Civitella Ranieri, Italy; Le Moulin à Nef in Auvillar, France; the Wurlitzer Foundation, Taos; and Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Violeta Dinescu won the Johann-Wenzel-Stamitz-Prize 2012, granted by the Künstlergilde e.V. Esslingen for her lifetime achievement.

On December 2, 2012, The Women International in Film and TV Showcase presented composer **Sharon Farber** with the Visionary Award in Music, an award given to women who inspire others. The Foundation recognizes innovative, creative, and inspiring women in the film and television industries, honoring outstanding women who continue to “raise the bar” in their respective fields. This is the first time a Music Award was presented.

Asako Hirabayashi won a \$10,000 award as a recipient of the 2012-13 Artist Initiative Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board to cover the cost of local performances of her chamber work, *Al que ingrato me deja, busco amante* for soprano, violin and harpsichord, which won first prize at the 2012 Alienor International Harpsichord Composition Competition last spring. She also won a prize of \$8,250 to write an opera as a recipient of the 2012 Jerome Fund for New Music from the American Composers Forum. The Nautilus Theater in St. Paul, MN commissioned the opera, scheduled for a world premiere in January 2014.

Tania León received the 2013 Grammy Award for *Inura* for voices, strings, and percussion, a track from *In Motion* (Albany Records). The award was in the Best Contemporary Classical Composition category.

Sky Macklay won the 2013 Leo Kaplan Award, the highest prize in the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, for her orchestral piece *Dissolving Bands*. It was commissioned and premiered by the Lexington (MA) Symphony to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the town of Lexington.

Jessica Rudman’s piano trio *Certain Octobers* received the Student Composition Award at the 2012 College Music Society National Conference, and *To Think on You* (tenor and piano) was given the Boston Metro Opera’s Advocacy Award.

Brahmanda by **Jing Wang** was awarded Best Animated Short Film at the MagicalCharm Film and Video Festival.

Judith Lang Zaimont was awarded a major commissioning grant by The Elizabeth & Michel Sorel Charitable Organization, Inc. in support of her “Pure, Cool (Water)” Symphony No. 4 project.

manner. Here is the link: <http://iawm.org/calendar/>. Just click the "Post Your Event" button and type in the information. Remember to give your event a clear and descriptive title. If you have any questions or problems, please contact Hsiao-Lan Wang at hlwang2000@gmail.com.

IAWM Membership Report

Greetings from the new IAWM Membership Chair! Deborah Hayes, chair extraordinaire, has passed the reigns to me to continue her great communication with our members. In addition to the transfer of chair, there were several technological changes for IAWM during the time

of our renewal for 2013. Positive results of these changes include a user-friendly and contemporary revamped website and new webmail host for easier communication. Many thanks to everyone who joined or renewed membership during these technological changes. In addition to our renewals, we welcome over 50 new members.

Our membership is diverse in so many ways. We are multigenerational and represent 39 states within the U.S. and 30 countries around the world. Our members work in varied genres, styles, languages, and mediums. We are composers, performers, conductors, educators, students,

musicologists, ethnomusicologists, music festival coordinators, new music ensemble members, bloggers, editors, authors, and artistic directors. As our mission statement begins, we are "a global network of women and men working to increase and enhance musical activities and opportunities and to promote all aspects of the music of women." Communication is flowing well again, and I encourage you to write to membership@iawm.org with your comments and suggestions for all things membership. In the meantime, welcome new and returning members to IAWM!*Jennifer Kelly, Membership Chair*

Members' News news of individual members' activities

Compiled by Anita Hanawalt

News items are listed alphabetically by member's name and include recent and forthcoming activities. Submissions are always welcome concerning honors and awards, appointments, commissions, premieres, performances, publications, recordings, and other items. We recommend that you begin with the most significant news first—an award, a major commission or publication, a new position—and follow that with an organized presentation of the other information. Please note: due to space limitations, information such as lengthy descriptions, lists of performers, long websites, and reviews may sometimes be edited.

Please send information about your activities to members' news editor Anita Hanawalt at anita@hanawalthaus.net or by mail to 514 Americas Way PMB 3734; Box Elder, SD 57719-7600. The deadline for the next issue is September 30, 2013. Anita does not monitor announcements sent to the IAWM listserv; be sure to send the information directly to her.

Katy Abbott has taken a fixed term, part-time position as Lecturer in Composition at the University of Melbourne, Conservatorium of Music. She will release two discs in 2013, one of vocal and the other of choral music. Abbott is completing a new work for Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's education arm for performance in 2014.

Deborah J. Anderson's recently published pieces include *Four Sketches* (harp, alto flute, and English horn; www.fatrock-ink.com); *Wild Life*, for student pianists (albertipublishing.com); *Duet for Keys and*

Valves (soprano saxophone and trumpet) and *Persian Silk* (3 flutes and contrabass flute or string bass) (for both: www.alry-publications.com). On February 16, 2013, Anderson gave an informal talk on "The Journey of a Woman Composer." A dedicated group of 17 musicians performed nine pieces on an All-Anderson program in Tacoma, WA on March 24. www.deborah-janderson.com

Elizabeth Austin's *B-A-C-Homage* (viola and piano) was performed by Laura Krentzman and Erberk Eryilmaz on February 16, 2013 at The Society of Composers National Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Soprano Erica Maas, a senior at The Hartt School of Music, has sung *Three Sandburg Songs* (soprano and piano) on several concerts in the Hartford area.

Lynn Book announces *Escapes*, a new video project online (<https://vimeo.com/54898728>), part one of a three-volume video book, *UnReading for Future Bodies*, funded by the Research and Publication Fund, Office of the Dean, Wake Forest University and supported by a Visiting Artist Residency at Sarah Lawrence College. It received its first public screening at Wake Forest University, sponsored by IPLACe Interdisciplinary Performance and the Liberal Arts Center on March 26, 2013. This "book of poems" is based on the "Phaedra" figure across centuries of time and narrative. *Escapes* will be published in the forthcoming issue of *Anglistica* (University of Naples, Italy), the interdisciplinary online journal, under the title "Writing Exile: Women, the Arts and Technologies,"

co-edited by Wanda Balzano and Silvana Carotenuto, spring 2013 (<http://www.anglistica.unior.it/>). The work will also be shown at York St. John University in the UK, along with a concept paper as part of "Becoming Nomad: Hybrid Spaces, Liquid Architectures and Online Domains," hosted by the TaPRA Performance and New Technologies Inter-conference Event April 10, 2013.

Book will deliver a paper, "Outrageous Acts and Performance Art: Inter-Play in the (s)Lip of Power," and screen excerpts of *Escapes* as part of "Outrage!: Discourse, Practices and Politics of Protest and Social Transformation" at the Southeastern Women's Studies Association Conference, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, April 18-20. Forthcoming performances of *Derangements: a denatured song cycle* will be given in the U.S. at Mildred's Lane, June 15-20, with additional workshops and performances at Supermarkt in Berlin, August 9, with more dates to follow. A summer release is planned for *Creativity and Entrepreneurship: Changing Currents in Education and Public Life*, edited by Lynn Book/David P. Phillips (Elgar, 2013).

Canary Burton composed five pieces during the past year including *Chopin Slept*, played by Quiet Strength on August 7, 2012 at the Wellfleet (MA) Library, followed by a performance of *Sri Rama and Soaring* (viola and cello) at the 820 Gallery in Harwich, the next day. Carson Cooman began rehearsals on the organ work *In the Beginning...* in March 2013 at Memorial Chapel of Harvard University. She composed *Treasures*, for women's chorus, for

The New Day Voices, Florence, Italy. Boston pianist Roxana Bajdechi is recording *Daniella's Hope* (two performers at one piano), a classical work, along with *Permanent Record*. She is also recording *Ragtime 3 Step*, *Ya Gotta Be Kiddin'* and *Sigrid's Song*, all non-improvised, written-out jazz music. With the completion of these pieces, Burton will be producing a jazz album called "Mixed Messages."

Skopec Internet Magazine is starting a six-month campaign to promote Burton's jazz compositions on a corresponding Internet radio station. Also on Internet radio, she has 465 "fans" to date on Airplay.com, formerly Jango Radio, for music from her first two albums, along with three classical pieces on Women of Substance Radio. Her page on ReverbNation has been generating much interest, even among rap artists. Several IAWM composers, including Burton, have been featured on Radio Arts Indonesia. Burton is distributing her classical and jazz sheet music at www.musicaneo.com, all for less than \$2 per copy. She is currently working with members of the Cape Cod Symphony and Boston area musicians to record about ten of her classical pieces. A new musicians' website is also in the planning stages.

Andrea Clearfield was recently visiting composer at the University of Texas at Austin, The University of Chicago, and the College of William and Mary. The Philadelphia premiere of her cantata *Tse Go La*, inspired by her fieldwork documenting Tibetan music in the Nepalese Himalayas, was given by the Mendelssohn Club and the Pennsylvania Girlchoir with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia in April 2012, with additional performances in New York City with Schola on the Hudson Chorus in May 2012 and the University of Texas at Austin on March 25, 2013. *The Drift of Things*; *Winter Songs* (nine-movement song cycle) was commissioned and premiered by Lyric Fest at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia on January 27, 2013. She is currently working on an opera to a libretto by Jean Claude van Itallie and Lois Walden, commissioned by Gene Kaufman and Terry Eder, and commissions for the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus, Arc Duo, Susquehanna University, Aids Quilt Songbook, and Philadelphia Orchestra hornist Denise Tryon. A strong advocate for creating vital, alternative spaces for arts, her Philadelphia

Salon is celebrating its 26th year, and she is curating and hosting Salons around the country.

PARMA Recordings has released the album *Pacific Ridge* with three of **Emma Lou Diemer's** orchestral works: *Santa Barbara Overture*, *Concerto in One Movement for Marimba* and *Concerto in One Movement for Piano*. An earlier CD titled *Emma Lou Diemer*, issued by Albany Records, contains *Piano Trio No. 1*, *Quartet for Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, and Piano*, and *Seven Pieces for Marilyn* for piano. In October 2012 Philip Ficsor and the Westmont College Orchestra directed by Michael Shasberger premiered *Concerto for Violin*, written for Ficsor. The Santa Barbara Symphony opened the 2012-13 season with *Santa Barbara Overture*, written several years ago for the symphony. Also in October, *The Creation of God*, with narration/story by Sara McDaris, music by Diemer, was premiered at the Huntsville, Alabama Museum of Art. An additional performance followed in February at First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville. Please see: emmaloudiemermusic.com.

The world premiere of *Nosferatu* (silent film of Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, 1922) with **Violeta Dinescu's** new music (2012-13) took place on August 3, 2013. It is reviewed on page 25 in this issue.

Sharon Farber's *Only a Book* (string orchestra, flute, and percussion), commissioned by iPalpiti Artists International orchestra, received its world premiere performance at the SABAN Theatre in Beverly Hills on July 20, 2012. The twenty-five minute piece, in the form of theme and (six) variations, portrays the journey and history of the Jewish people. Farber's acclaimed piece for choir, chamber orchestra, and ethnic instruments, *Ashlina*, received its Israeli premiere on December 22, 2012, having been performed many times since its New York premiere in 2004. Two outstanding sopranos have recently released CDs with Farber's music: soprano Sharon Rostorf-Zamir's CD, *Forever To Remember*, opens with the song cycle *To Always Remember*, and Grammy winner, soprano Hila Plitmann's *The Ancient Question*, closes with Farber's song cycle *Bridges Of Love*. String Quartet no. 1 will be performed by the International String Quartet of Yucatan on May 30, 2013. Farber has recently completed the score for the fea-

ture film *Farewell, Baghdad* and will also score producer Aaron Millar's upcoming feature *Buddha Eyes*. Please see: www.sharonfarber.com.

La Folia, the Texas based Baroque ensemble, invited **Asako Hirabayashi** to appear as a solo guest artist to perform Bach's *E Major Harpsichord Concerto*, and her own composition, *Concerto for Four Harpsichords and Strings* in January 2013. She received outstanding reviews as both a performer and a composer: "a modern master of the instrument, Asako Hirabayashi's concerto proved there's life in the old instrument yet – and room for more than Bach...but we think that Johann Sebastian would approve..." During the rest of this season, she will give seven chamber concerts in the Twin Cities, including solo recitals of her own compositions as well as early music repertoire at Finchcocks Musical Museum and Handel House in London, England and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland, in May.

Elaine Keillor announces the recent launch of her four-CD set, *Sounds of North: Two Centuries of Canadian Piano Music* (Gala Records 108). The set includes piano compositions by Susie Frances Harrison, Frances Hatton Moore, Jeanne Delmar, Violet Archer, Jean Coulthard, Rhené Jaque, Rachel Laurin, and Jocelyn Morlock. In March, Greenwood Press published *An Encyclopedia of Native American Music in North America*, researched and written by Keillor and assisted by Timothy Archambault and John Medicine Horse Kelly. The encyclopedia includes coverage of the composers Dawn Avery, Sadie Buck, and Barbara Croall.

Jennifer Kelly was awarded tenure as Associate Professor of Music at Lafayette (PA) College. She was also hired as the new Artistic Director of the Concord Chamber Singers of Lehigh Valley (PA). Following five years spent researching and interviewing 25 women composers, she announces the upcoming June 2013 release of her book, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States* (University of Illinois Press). Kelly is conducting a concert in Bethlehem, PA on May 24 featuring several composers from the book: **Emma Lou Diemer**, **Jennifer Higdon**, Joan Tower, and Shulamit Ran.

Dayton Kinney is graduating in May from Smith College with a Bachelor of Arts

degree in Music. Prior to attending the Carnegie Mellon School of Music this fall, working toward a master of music degree in composition, Dayton will be participating in two music festivals for composers: New Music on the Point in Leicester, VT, and Composit in Rieti, Italy.

This summer, **Sky Macklay** will be on the faculty of The Walden School Young Musicians Program in New Hampshire, a summer music school for 10-18-year-old composers. After that, she will be a Composition Fellow at the Bennington Chamber Music Conference and in the fall she will begin her doctoral studies in composition at Columbia University.

Adriana Isabel Figueroa Mañas was awarded an Honorable Mention for *Transparencias* in the international contest *Eulalio Ferrer* in Guanajuato, México. The work was premiered on October 11, 2012, when all of the prize-winning works were performed.

Orpheus Winds, the faculty wind quintet at Brigham Young University, recently performed **Esther Megargel's** *Waterscape for Wind Quintet* in The Madsen Hall at the university. A second performance was given in the Orem, Utah public library. *Waterscape* is a 15-minute work in three movements based on experiences at the McKenzie River in Oregon. (http://esthermegargel.com/0359a52.netsolhost.com/About_me.htm)

On March 19 and 20, 2013, **Margaret Mills** gave two concerts at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina. The first was a program of works by 20th- and 21st-century composers, including Ruth Schonthal, **Betty Wishart**, Charles Ives, Joel Feigin, **Joelle Wallach** and Gloria Coates. The March 20 program was a lecture/recital on women composers with works by Amy Beach, Ruth Crawford, Miriam Gideon, Betty Wishart and Joelle Wallach. On April 14, Mills gave a recital on the concert series of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. A celebration of Claude Debussy's 150th birthday, the program included his *Pour le Piano* and selected *Preludes* along with works by Amy Beach, Robert Schumann and Charles Ives. In addition, Mills gave the world premiere performance of *Off Seasons* by Geoffrey Kidde. Mills is happy to report the wisdom of keeping scrapbooks for many years, as

her papers and memorabilia have recently been accepted in the New York Public Library Lincoln Center, American Music Collection.

Janice Misurell-Mitchell had three performances in September at The Red Poppy Art House in San Francisco: *The Art of Noise*, for flute and percussion, performed by Meerenai Shim, flute, and Brandi Brandes, percussion; *Amendment Blues No. 1*, for alto flute/voice, and *Scat/Rap Counterpoint*, for solo voice, both performed by the composer. In October she and clarinetist Richard Nunemaker performed *Profaning the Sacred*, for flute/voice and clarinet/bass clarinet on a concert at the University of Chicago sponsored by CUBE and the Renaissance Society. She gave a lecture-recital at the Rice School of Music in Houston. In November, she performed on flute and voice with dancers led by Cristal Sabbagh at Createfest in Chicago. Flutist Meerenai Shim and percussionist Christopher Jones performed *The Art of Noise*, at a New Music DePaul concert. *Alone Together*, for bass clarinet and double bass, was performed at a Six Degrees concert in Chicago with Dileep Gangolli, bass clarinet, and Collins Trier, bass. In December she performed *Amendment Blues No. 1* at the Empty Bottle in Chicago, in a benefit for New Amsterdam Records, which had received major damage from Hurricane Sandy.

Frances (Frankie) Nobert presented an organ concert for residents and guests at her home, Mt. San Antonio Gardens, in Claremont, CA on February 5, 2013. In attendance was **Margaret Meier** whose piece, *Romantic Passacaglia on a Twelve-Tone Theme*, was included on the program. Nobert performed one of the Lenten Noonday Concerts on March 13 at Claremont United Church of Christ, Congregational. Built by Glatter Götz/Rosales, the organ is one of the most outstanding in Southern California.

Kristin Norderval recently participated in an opera works-in-progress festival in Montreal, "Oper'Actuel 2013," organized by the wonderful opera company Chants Libres, which focuses exclusively on developing new opera. It was founded and is run by Pauline Vaillancourt, a visionary singer and director. Norderval was honored to have her latest CD, *Aural Histories*, listed on Alex Ross' year-end, top-ten

list: "Notable Classical Music Recordings for 2012" (in *The New Yorker*). Ross, in his article about women composers of classical music, "Even the Score," wrote: "At a recent 'Women's Work' concert [April 2], at the Players Theatre [New York], Kristin Norderval sang her song cycle 'Nothing Proved,' based on poems by Queen Elizabeth I, with the accompaniment of the viol consort Parthenia. Although it was a concert piece, it felt like an opera in the making, conjuring in tensely shimmering, computer-enhanced textures the lofty isolation of the subject. A setting of the poem 'O Fortune,' which Elizabeth wrote under house arrest during the reign of Queen Mary, rose to a ghostly fury that eclipsed past operatic portrayals of the monarch, from Donizetti to Britten." (*The New Yorker*, April 13, 2013)

Dafina Zeqiri Nushi's *Disappear* for viola was selected to be performed by Conway Kuo on February 24, 2013 for the Composer's Voice concert series at the Jan Hus Church in New York City. *Atmospheres for two flutes* was a finalist in the 2013 International Women Composers Competition, organized by the Women Composers Festival of Hartford, CT. *Telegoni* was played by the Slovenian Feguš String Quartet at a "Masterprüfung – Konzert" organized by Kunstuniversität Graz (Music University Graz), in Austria.

Leanna Primiani reports a very busy season. *The Black Swan* (solo flute) premiered August 9, 2012 at the National Flute Association Convention (NFA) in Las Vegas. Commissioned by NFA for its annual high school soloist competition for outstanding young performers, Aaron Goldman and pianist Dianne Frazer performed the eight-minute, single movement work, inspired by the composer's fascination with bird-calls. *Holy Order–Shaker Dances* (oboe, violin, cello, and piano) premiered in San Francisco in the fall of 2012 and will be performed by the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble and the Atlanta Chamber Players as part of the National Rapido! Composition Competition. It won the Western Regional Division and the National Audience Favorite awards. Most recently, *Paraklesis* was featured at the 2013 Harvard Women's Choral Festival.

Marga Richter, a full length biography by **Sharon Mirchandani** was recently published by the University of Illinois Press. To

complement the release, Richter is highlighting three of her CDs. *Marga Richter – Poetic Images Beyond Poetry* (Ravello 7867) includes *Out of Shadows and Solitude*, *Quantum Quirks of a Quick Quaint Quark*, and *Spectral Chimes/Enshrouded Hills*. “Richter’s music is notable for its orchestration and for the variety of moods that follow from that orchestration” (James Manheim; February 26, 2013). *Persichetti and Pupils* (Albany Troy 1310) was released in 2012 and includes *Sonata for Piano* (1954) with pianist Richard Zimdars. “I have no doubt that Richter’s *Sonata* is one of the most important works written for the piano after 1950” (Radu A. Lelutiu, 2013). The CD also includes *Remembrances* and *Eight Pieces for Piano*. *Snow Mountain: A Spiritual Trilogy* (Leonarda LE 337) includes three works: *Qhanri* (snow mountain) *Tibetan Variations for Cello and Piano* with David Wells, cello, and Marga Richter, piano; *Requiem* for piano, Richter; and *Landscapes of the Mind II*, Daniel Heifetz, violin, and Michael Skelly, piano (Richter’s son).

Jessica Rudman’s music was chosen for performances on the Firebrand Concert Series Local Composer Spotlight (Malden, MA, January 26), the Manchester University New Music Mini-Festival (Manchester, Indiana, February 22-23), and the National Student Electronic Music Event (Philadelphia, PA, March 22-23). In spring 2013, two works were premiered: *Twisted Blue* for clarinet and chamber orchestra (The Hartford Independent Chamber Orchestra, West Hartford, CT, April 20; and New Britain, CT, April 22) and *Beyond the Fields We Know* for flute, cello, and marimba (Vigil Ensemble, New York City, April 10).

Marjorie M. Rusche performed a Composer Residency with Musica Reginae Productions, New York City, February 26-March 3, 2013. During the residency, two piano solos received their NYC premieres. Rusche participated in rehearsals (one of them an open rehearsal) and a pre-performance discussion of each composition (with audience interaction), and she attended a post-concert reception. *Eclipse* and *Piano Portraits* were performed by pianist Barbara Podgurski for the New Music Composers’ Forum on March 2, 2013 at The Church-in-the-Gardens in Forest Hills, NY.

Alice Shield’s feminist mini-opera *Komachi at Sekidera* for voice, alto flute, and cello was performed in concert on April 24 at Saint Peter’s Church in Manhattan. The fifteen-minute work is in a Monteverdian dramatic style.

Clare Shore’s *...your friends?* (flute and soprano saxophone) was premiered by the Tower Duo in Columbus, Ohio, February 16, 2013, at the Society of Composers, Inc. National Conference. On February 23, *Game Piece No. 1* for sopranino saxophone and woodwind quartet was premiered during the Manchester New Music Mini-Festival at Manchester University, Indiana.

Faye-Ellen Silverman was named “Artist of the Week” on Radio Arts Indonesia in mid-October 2012, resulting in three one-hour programs of her music. Several additional performances followed on the station throughout the fall of 2012. Violinist Avner Finberg gave the world premiere performance of *A Brief Conversation* on December 9, 2012 at “My Dad’s Violin Concert” on the Composers Voice Series at Jan Hus Church in New York City. Stuart Brezczinski, English horn, performed *Layered Lament* for the Composers Voice Series on March 24. On February 15, 2013, a reading of *For Showing Truth* (women’s choir) was given at the Harvard Women’s Choir Festival in Cambridge, MA. Clarinetist Ashlee Miller gave the world premiere performance of *Tides*, with the composer at the piano, February 27, at the City University of New York.

“Shared Waters,” a concert/lecture with music by Silverman, funded by The New School Green Fund, was given on March 19 at The New School in NYC. This two-part event included a lecture on water challenges and opportunities given by Helen Neuhaus and the world premiere of Silverman’s clarinet concerto, *Orchestral Tides*, featuring clarinetist Ashlee Miller, conducted by Solene Romieu. Miller performed *Repeat of Tides*, with the composer at the piano, for “Music Under Construction at Mannes” at Mannes College, NYC, March 24. The Cygnus Ensemble gave the New York premiere of *Pregnant Pauses* at the Cutting Edge Concerts New Music Festival 2013 at Symphony Space in NYC on April 29.

Southern Crescent and *Midnight Mockingbird* (both for piano and saxophone) by **Ja-**

mie K. Sims were aired March 13, 2013, on Richmond, VA’s NPR station, WCVE-FM. Both works are from the recently released album *Gentle Woman of a Dangerous Kind: Documentary Film Score*, on Mooscular Phonic Tunes Records. The film *Marii Hasegawa: Gentle Woman of a Dangerous Kind*, featuring several classical works by Sims, was screened on April 11 and April 23, hosted by the Chrysalis Group at the Chrysalis Gathering Place in Richmond. The film score featuring music by Sims is available on CD at online stores and at JamieKSims.com.

Composer/cellist **Elizabeth Start** has released her third CD, *Elizabeth Start: Alone and with Viol Thoughts*. She premiered her violin/cello duo *Rising* with Phillip Chen at a memorial service for W.C. Chen, September 23, 2012, at Kalamazoo College. Mandolinist Carlo Aonzo and guitarist Rene Izquierdo performed *Pale Cliffs* in Milwaukee and Madison, WI on September 28-29. On October 13, Start performed *Rising* with Phillip Chen for an annual fund-raising dinner for the Michigan Festival of Sacred Music. She also performed with the CUBE Ensemble of Chicago on November 8. On December 24, Start premiered *Midwinter Carol* for solo cello at Holy Family Chapel in Nazareth, MI. On February 13, 2013, Start performed her *Three Etudes for Electric Cello and Processing* at the national conference of the Society of Composers, Inc. Due East is scheduled to premiere *Moving Toward Evening* at a Chicago Composers’ Consortium concert on June 26. A November 2013 release concert is scheduled for the ten x ten project, including Start as one of 10 composers paired with 10 print-makers who will create a book with a companion vinyl recording. The project is presented by homeroomchicago.org, Spudnik Press, and Accessible Contemporary Music.

Evelyn Stroobach’s *Etude for Percussion* (ensemble) was performed by the New Music Ensemble at Lakehead University on December 6, 2012. *Into the Wind* was performed in Sofia, Bulgaria on November 28 by concert violinist Ralitsa Tcholakova, who wrote: “Philippe Beauline, the Canadian Ambassador was there. The audience liked it very much. Lots of people came to tell me that they find it really interesting.” This concert was widely publicized

in the Bulgarian press. Tcholakova gave an additional performance on December 22 at Saint Patrick's Basilica in Ottawa at a concert commemorating the victims of Newtown, CT. CTV filmed the concert. On March 18, 2013, Tom Quick, producer and host of "Monday Evening Concert" at CKWR radio, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, aired all three movements of *Aria for Strings* (string orchestra), performed by the Thirteen Strings of Ottawa and conducted by Winston Webber. On December 17, he aired *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (SATB chorus and cello). It was also aired on December 18, on Canary Burton's "The Latest Score," and on December 19, on "Classical Discoveries," WPRB radio, Princeton, NJ.

The recent CD, *Of Erthe and Air: Susan Fancher and friends perform the music of Hilary Tann* (Arizona University Recordings AUR CD 5014), includes works for from one to four saxophones and concludes with a Live Concert Recording from the XVth World Saxophone Congress (2009) of Tann's *Shakkei* for solo soprano saxophone (Susan Fancher) and small orchestra (Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Allan McMurray). Mezzo-soprano Clara O'Brien, flute and percussion duo, Due East, and the Red Clay Saxophone Quartet complete the roster of performers.

Hsiao-Lan Wang received her second commission from the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra to create *Currents of Inevitable Convergence* for 13 musicians and digital music. The premiere took place on March 29, 2013 in Taiwan, conducted by Kusao Kajima. Her percussion duet *Before Sunrise*, for marimba and vibraphone, premiered in Taiwan in December. The work was written for Ling Sun and Kunihiro Komori.

Brahmanda, a collaborative project conceived and produced by multidisciplinary artists Harvey Goldman (animation) and **Jing Wang** (music), has been selected for presentation at the California International Animation Festival (CalAniFest), Toronto Electroacoustic Symposium, Great Lakes International Film Festival, International Art Expo Istanbul, Magikalcharm Film Festival, Athens Slingshot, World Electroacoustic Music Listening Room, and New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival. It was also awarded

Best Animated Short Film at the Magikal-Charm Film and Video Festival.

The Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, Neal Gittleman, Music Director, gave the Midwest premiere of **Meira Warshauer's** *Tekeeyah* (a call) *Concerto for Shofar, Trombone and Orchestra* at the Schuster Center in Dayton, Ohio, January 2013, with soloist Haim Avistur. *Tekeeyah* was commissioned by a consortium of orchestras throughout the Midwest and southeastern U.S. and has now been performed six times, including a performance at the 2012 Conductors Guild Conference in Chicago. The national broadcast on American Public Media's Performance Today, plus broadcasts in New York (WQXR), Chicago (WFMT), and elsewhere, brought positive feedback from listeners and stations. More radio projects are possible during 2013. The concerto was recorded in 2011 for Navona Records (NV5842) along with *Symphony No. 1: Living, Breathing Earth*. A lecture about Warshauer's music was presented in March 2013 by **Christina Reitz**, at Murray State University's Athena Festival. Her talk, "Sacred and Ecological Works of Meira Warshauer," examines three of Warshauer's most popular orchestral works that combine her spirituality and environmental activism: *Like Streams in the Desert* (1998), *Symphony No. 1: Living, Breathing Earth* and *Tekeeyah* (a call).

EurOrchestra, with Francesco Lentini, conductor, and Anila Rosh, cellist, gave the Italian premiere of *In Memoriam September 11* (solo cello and strings) at the Church of San Carlo Borromeo in Bari, March 2013. The performance was presented in cooperation with Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica and was recorded for local radio and for international streaming through CEMAT in Rome. *Ocean Calling* (suite for two pianos) was performed several times in the fall of 2012. *Ocean Calling I: Waves and Currents*, was premiered at University of South Carolina by the Lomazov/Rackers Duo in September with the Midwest premiere given by Laura Melton and Robert Satterlee in October at Bowling Green State University of Ohio's New Music Festival. It was commissioned by Gail Anastasion, Janna Baker, and Laurie Walden, in memory of their mother, Patricia M. Baker. *Ocean Calling II: From the Depths* was premiered by Lomazov and

Rackers in November at the University of South Carolina as part of the South Carolina Music Teachers Association (SCMTA) Annual Conference. It was commissioned by the SCMTA and the Music Teacher National Association. Warshauer was SCMTA's 2012 Composer of the Year. She is composing *Ocean Calling III: The Giant Blue* for performances in 2013-2014. It is commissioned by Matt and Debbie Long in memory of Mary Eunice Troy, Matt's grandmother and Warshauer's first piano teacher.

Eva Wiener's *Etude* for piano was premiered by pianist David Holzman at the concert called "Las Américas en Concierto" at the Mannes College of Music on February 10, 2013.

Betty Wishart's *Sonata II* (2012) was performed by Michael Young at Morehead State University's Contemporary Piano Festival in Morehead, KY on March 1. Pianist **Margaret Mills** performed *Sonata* (1973) on a March 19 concert, "American Men and Women Composers of the 20th-21st Centuries," and again on March 20 for "A Tune of Her Own," a lecture-recital of women composers at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina. The first movement of *Sonata II* was choreographed by Avis Hatcher-Puzzo and performed at Fayetteville State University on March 28. Connors Publications published *Serenade* for piano solo in March.

Rain Worthington's piano/violin duet, *Jilted Tango*, was performed on the Composer's Voice/New York Women Composers Collaborative Concert held March 24 in NYC. *Conversation Before the Rain* (solo piano) was performed by Max Lifchitz on April 21 in the North/South Concert Series in NYC. During the summer of 2013, Worthington will be recording her new orchestral piece, *Within a Dance*, with the Moravian Philharmonic and PARMA Recordings in the Czech Republic.

Judith Lang Zaimont's *Art Fire Soul*, a two-disc boxed set surveying her solo piano music, received superb reviews and was on *Fanfare* magazine's 2012 "Want List." It also received an outstanding review in *Gramophone* magazine (November 2012). The videos of two of its tracks—*Jazz Waltz* and *Nocturne: La Fin de Siecle*—have been very popular on YouTube.



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