



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN IN MUSIC

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Alissa Duryee with the harpsichord she built

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN IN MUSIC

IAWM is a global network of people working to increase and enhance musical activities and opportunities and to promote all aspects of the music of women. The IAWM builds awareness of women's contributions to musical life through publications, website, free listserv, international competitions for researchers and composers, conferences, and congresses, concerts, the entrepreneurial efforts of its members, and advocacy work. IAWM activities ensure that the progress women have made in every aspect of musical life will continue to flourish and multiply.

Inquiries

IAWM
2712 NE 13th Ave.
Portland, OR 97212

Payments

IAWM
2400 Alycia Ave
Henrico, VA 23228

PAYPAL to treasurer@iawm.org

www.iawm.org/civicrm/iawm-payments-page/

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Journal of the IAWM Staff

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Eve R. Meyer
evemeyer45@gmail.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Christina Reitz

MEMBERS' NEWS EDITOR
Anita Hanawalt
anita@hanawalthaus.net

REVIEW EDITOR
Laura Pita
laurapita830@gmail.com

EDITORIAL BOARD
Samantha Ege
Deborah Hayes
Eve R. Meyer
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IAWM Membership Information

IAWM membership includes a subscription to the *Journal of the IAWM* (issued four times a year) plus access to past issues on the IAWM website. Membership offers opportunities for awards in ten categories of composition, as well as music scholarship and programming, an education grant, opportunities to participate in annual concerts and IAWM conferences, and opportunities to present webinars. Membership offers increased visibility through IAWM's social media platforms, website, and optional IAWM Listserv; eligibility to run for and hold board and officer positions within IAWM; and connections with a vibrant community made up of members from 30 countries on five continents, sharing, celebrating, and supporting women in music globally. For information on joining or renewing your membership, visit the IAWM website: www.iawm.org/contact-us/.

We would like to hear from more of you, so don't be shy—send us your reports, reviews, articles, proposals, and news for submissions to the journal.

—CHRISTINA RUSNAK

2022 IAWM CONFERENCE



Dana Reason | Photo Credit: Norman Korpi

Call & (HER) Response, Music in the Time of Change

This Conference is our Call for (YOUR) Response. Join us. Registration is Open! To view the full program: <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/IAWM2022>

It is great to welcome you to another spring as the IAWM Vice President and Chair of the forthcoming IAWM conference. It has been a few years since we gathered for the wonderful conference “Women, Feminists, and Music: Transforming Tomorrow Today,” sponsored by IAWM and Feminist Theory and Music 15 (FT&M15) and held June 6–9, 2019 at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. The conference was successfully chaired by Professor of Composition Beth Denisch and her team of volunteers, students, and faculty.

We now invite you to make new friends, hear new ideas and music, and create inspiring memories by registering and attending our forthcoming conference **Call & (HER) Response, Music in the Time of Change, June 2-4, 2022**. This conference is the first hybrid IAWM conference ever, and it will take place both in person at the Oregon State University campus, in Corvallis, Oregon, as well as a fully online.

Over the past few years, many of us have had to pivot to online teaching and research and attending concerts

and programs virtually. We hope that by offering our members the ability to attend the IAWM conference online, we will be able to make attending the conference financially possible given the current rising travel prices and unexpected changes in music due to the effects of Covid.

What to Expect from the Conference Program this Year?

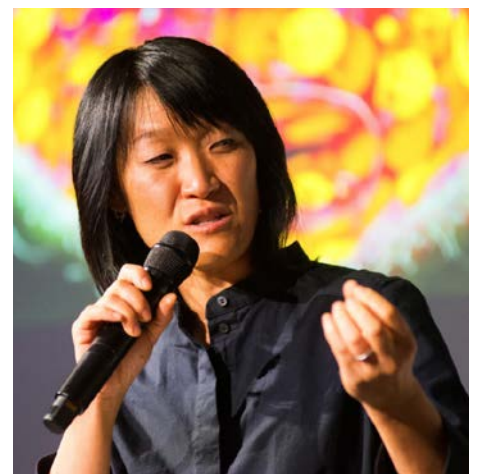
Keynote and Writing Workshop by Dr. Nina Eidsheim (UCLA)

Our featured keynote talk, as well as an additional writing workshop, is by Dr. Nina Eidsheim and takes place on Friday, June 3rd at 2pm (PST) and Saturday, June 4th at 9AM (PST). Dr. Eidsheim’s keynote talk will center on examining institutionalized practices and the reception of normalizing how we listen to music through the lens of white music access, production, vocalization, and history. She will be sharing findings from her research in her groundbreaking work: *The Race of Sound* (Duke University Press, 2019), and she will guide the attendees on how to disrupt, question, and examine whose voice speaks and whose voice gets heard and listened to.

We hope that by offering our members the ability to attend the IAWM conference online, we will be able to make attending the conference financially possible given the current rising travel prices and unexpected changes in music due to the effects of Covid.

—DANA REASON

On Saturday, June 4th at 9AM (PST), Dr. Eidsheim will guide us in a Saturday morning writing workshop called 1000 Ways Home, which will help us see, examine, and understand ways in which we appreciate, accept, and understand cultures. Dr. Eidsheim is a leading musicologist and professor from the University of California, Los Angeles. She has written books about voice, race, and materiality including: *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice*, and she served as co-editor of *Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies* and *Refiguring American Music*, book series for Duke University Press.



Dr. Nina Eidsheim



What else is happening? 10 Concurrent Sessions and More

Our program begins at **Noon Pacific Standard Time on Thursday, June 2nd**, and we will be offering a fully-packed conference. You can expect to choose between two concurrent papers sessions on all three days and one to two concurrent workshops on all three days. You will also be able to attend the various virtual listening curated programs with live chat, which will fit the time you are joining us from around the planet. Our hope is that many of the composers and performers will be on LIVE chat for the virtual listening room.

Special Feature Streaming LIVE from Antwerp, Belgium: The Virago Symphonic Orchestra Presents Women in Music

The concert will be held on Saturday, June 4th at 10:15 (PST). Sixty women, with conductor Pascale Van Os, will perform beautiful music through the ages. The Antwerp-born composer Lara Denies' new work for ten musicians, *Beside the Frozen Lake I Stand*, will be premiered. Other works include the following for symphony orchestra: Augusta Holmés: *La Nuit et L'amour*; Fanny Mendelssohn: Overture in C-major; Florence Price: *The Oak*; Joaquin Rodrigo: *Concierto de Aranjuez* (Adagio), with guitar soloist Emma Wills; and Caroline Shaw: *Entr'acte*, for string orchestra.

Second Special Feature Streaming Live from Australia: The University of New South Wales

The ensemble concert by contemporary Australian composers will be hosted by Monica Buckland, conductor and lecturer at UNSW. Planned features include: *Concord concertino*, new work for clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano by Elizabeth Younan (Australia Ensemble UNSW); *Mettle*, new work for brass and percussion by Younan (UNSW Wind Symphony, Conductor Paul Vickers); *Still*, for clarinet and piano by Katy Abbott (Australia Ensemble UNSW); *Precious Colours* (Pallah-Pallah) by Alice Chance (Burgundian Consort, Conductor Sonia Maddock); *Aurora Eora*, by Alice Chance (Burgundian Consort); and *Exchange* by Nicole Murphy (Australia Ensemble UNSW). There will also be a panel discussion: "What's the state of play for women in music today?" moderated by Monica Buckland.

Additionally, the conference will offer 50 papers; 30 mini-workshops; 40 virtual listening works; live-film scoring session featuring Cinema's First Nasty Women (KINO Lorber, July 2022); a Deep Listening Workshop; a live-streamed noontime concert featuring IAWM composers and performers; the OSU Jazz Band with guest Migiwa Miyajima; Dr. Sandra Babb's Bella Voce (OSU); and music faculty and students and more!

This is a truly global conference featuring composers, performers, technologists, sound artists, performance

artists, musicologists, deep listeners, educators, freelancers, students, faculty, independents, and more coming to us from Korea, Italy, Spain, Poland, UK, Russia, Hong Kong, Canada, Belgium, United States, and Australia, and more!

Who are the members of the **Dedicated, Dynamic, and Dazzling Team** behind this amazing conference? Please meet: Teil Buck (MM); Dr. Gabriela Alvarado (DMA); Monica Buckland (conductor, University of New South Wales, Sydney); Eline Cote (Virago Symphonic Orchestra, founder, Antwerp); Morgan Davis (MS, William & Mary); Dr. Christina Reitz (Western Carolina University); Christina Rusnak (MA/MM, independent composer, President of IAWM); Dr. Jane Rigler (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs); Dr. Deborah Nemko (Bridgewater State University); and Dr. Deborah Saidel (independent).

We are looking forward to seeing you in June!

Dana

DANA REASON, PhD

*Chair of the 2022 IAWM Conference:
Call & (HER) Response: Music in the Time
of Change*

Vice-President of IAWM

*Special thanks to Oregon State University
College of Liberal Arts and the Benton
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KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

Historical Keyboard Instruments: Building, Teaching, and Composing

ALISSA DURYEE

Introduction

As a performer, educator, and composer living in France, I have built most of my musical activities around historical keyboard instruments. My approach is to treat these instruments as a family of related and complementary members—from the expressive clavichord, to the brilliant and resonant harpsichord, to the different types of fortepianos and organs. It fascinates me that these instruments, despite their mechanical, acoustic, and cultural specificities, are all accessible via the same interface.

As a performer, I sometimes tailor my performances around one or more given instruments (often traveling with my own), and I respect historical playing techniques. My original compositions are almost exclusively for keyboard. *Night Pieces* for piano was the winner of the Judith Lang Zaimont Prize of the 2021 IAWM Search for New Music competition, and *Forager's Journey* for clavichord was awarded Second Prize at the International Clavichord Composition Competition of the Nordic Historical Keyboard Festival. In creating new music, my goal is to create works that are idiomatic to a particular keyboard and that engage with the instrument's legacy, but also explore new sounds and playing techniques.

My performance repertoire ranges from early music to contemporary works, with special emphasis on little-known compositions. I have been an artist in residence at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, and at several festivals in France and North America such as Les Journées Lyriques, the Amherst Early Music Festival, and

the Boston Clavichord Society, where I have performed as a soloist, continuo player, and chamber musician. In 2020, I completed a recording juxtaposing music of the Pennsylvania Moravian community with that of contemporary European composers on a historic 1799 Meerbach clavichord; the instrument has been in Bethlehem, PA since the 19th century. With cellist Jérôme Huille, I formed the Duo Dialogues. As a result of winning the Concours Musique au Centre competition, we completed a recording tracing the history of music for cello and keyboard on period instruments.

In addition to performing, I am active as an educator in several capacities. As a conservatory and workshop teacher, I have developed a particular approach to pedagogy, influenced by my experience with multiple instruments and the practices related to them. I also collaborate with primary and middle school children, sometimes in ways related to my areas of keyboard expertise, and sometimes in a broader, more creative way: performing original music for them about sustainable development as in *Snail Mail*; co-composing large-scale performances intended to involve children in a collective artistic experience as in *Bienvenu au Tribunal*, a mock courtroom drama about petty crimes; and preparing a chronicle about a group of extraterrestrials seeking exile on planet Earth after creating an ecological disaster on their home planet as in *Les Petits Hommes Verts*.

Building Historical Keyboard Instruments

This article focuses mainly on my experience building historical keyboard instruments, as well as the impact of this experience on my performing and teaching. While studying performance during my conservatory years, I pursued building and teaching largely for practical reasons—I needed instruments, and I needed money. In retrospect, it was enriching to work on these projects alongside my studies, although it was burdensome in terms of workload.

As an undergraduate piano major, I became interested in the harpsichord and clavichord because a collection of historical keyboard instruments (many in playable condition) was available in the music department at Vassar College. In addition, the collection included high-quality, recently-made copies of an organetto and a harpsichord. Given the museum-piece quality of some of these instruments and the niche repertoire of others, they were woefully under-played, and awareness of their existence among the student body was shockingly low.

In the years just after my graduation, though I was busy pursuing modern piano study, I came to miss playing historical instruments. I wanted to develop expertise so that I could play whichever instrument best expresses a particular piece, whether performing an older work or composing a new one.

In creating new music, my goal is to create works that are idiomatic to a particular keyboard and that engage with the instrument's legacy, but also explore new sounds and playing techniques.

—ALISSA DURYEE

I craved this breadth as a musician more than I aspired to focus entirely on the modern piano.

I moved to France in 1997 to continue my studies, but, at the time, the educational climate was not very open to this kind of project. Most conservatories in France were offering degrees in only one instrument, with little encouragement for students interested in being multi-instrumentalists. Age limits were very common, making it difficult to integrate a new field of study after age 25. (Thankfully, the rules have been changing in recent years: keyboard departments have emerged in some conservatories, age limits have been raised in certain programs, and graduate-level courses of study are becoming more widespread in partnership between universities.)

Building a Clavichord

I realized I had no time to waste getting instruments of my own, as well as the knowledge needed to care for them. Building seemed like the most affordable and comprehensive way to do this: I decided to start with a clavichord. This is a less time-consuming endeavor than a harpsichord, and it presents inherent advantages: relative portability (depending on the type of clavichord) and great benefits to touch and technique. I set about looking for kits and eventually bought one from the Early Music Shop in England. It is a copy of an anonymous instrument conserved at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, Netherlands. Large enough to have a good sound and a useful range, it is also portable enough for travel by car, train, and airplane (though this mode of transportation can be challenging).

I assembled the kit during one hot New Jersey summer on my grandmother's dining room table. Working a few hours each day, it took about three months to complete the instrument, including decoration. Although I was able to finish using just a basic set of tools (chisels, hammers, files, sandpaper, paintbrushes, and a power drill), the project could have progressed



Alissa Duryee tuning the clavichord she constructed

much faster, with a slightly more precise result (better looking corners), had I had access to a woodworking shop.

The clavichord is a sturdy and useable instrument, which is still with me today. Clavichords are notoriously quiet instruments, but this model strikes a nice balance: soft enough for late-night practicing and also loud enough for performance in small- and medium-sized spaces. It has enabled me to develop my playing skills in ways not possible otherwise: tone production, weight transfer, and mastery of articulation are all improved by clavichord playing. For composer-keyboardists like Bach, Handel, and Mozart, the clavichord

was a discreet and portable instrument, enabling practice in many circumstances, enriching the abilities of a keyboard player, and useful as a companion to composing.

With a clavichord of my own, I have been able to practice in many a hotel room, on porches, in spare rooms while others sleep. I have been able to teach workshops in France and in North America, and the instrument has proven robust in hot climates as well as cooler ones. A special treat for me was the opportunity to see and play the original instrument that served as a model for mine while traveling in the Netherlands.



Soundboard of the harpsichord that Alissa Duryee built

Building a Harpsichord

I decided that I also needed a harpsichord, but this would be a more ambitious project. To undertake it, I needed a grant opportunity and access to a dedicated workspace. Through the Fondation des États-Unis, the international home for students with a cultural program where I lived at the time, I was able to obtain a grant from the Harriet Hale Woolley Foundation.¹ The Foundation also provided me with a workspace independent from the room where I was living. This small, no frills, poorly-lit basement room, previously used for the storage of broken chairs, was cleared and repurposed into a make-shift workshop. Empty except for a large central table and situated between a boiler room and a communal practice room with thin walls and an ailing upright piano, this became a second living space for me for just over a year.

I spent many a late evening and many an all-nighter sanding to the sounds of bubbling pipes and the practicing of singers who didn't realize anybody could overhear them. My "shop" became a regular stop for party-goers at the end of their night out; they would come to share a round of beer

and check on my progress. The process became part of the product, as I worked toward an inaugural concert, which also featured an exhibit about the "making of...."

Wanting an instrument that would allow me to study all repertoires, I opted for a French Double Kit from The Paris Workshop.² For a first harpsichord, it felt important to have an instrument with multiple keyboards and a broad range—meaning that any historical harpsichord repertoire could be played on it. Additionally, this model transposes to three pitches: A= 440 (used for playing contemporary music with modern instruments and sometimes Renaissance music), A=415 (most often used for playing historical repertoire and in chamber music on period instruments), and A= 392 (a particularly mellow pitch used for some French Baroque works). In picking an instrument that can "do it all," I had to sacrifice the interesting specificities of other types of instruments. The debate about whether any instrument is ideal for "playing it all" is a topic far beyond the scope of this article—and it was also beyond the scope of my reasoning at the time.

I began working with my very rudimentary tools, adding an electric sander to what I had used for the clavichord, as well as a great many objects to assist with all different types of clamping: C clamps, of course, but also heavy books, techniques using twine, tooth-picks, masking tape, etc. Despite my low-tech approach, with perseverance it was possible to produce an instrument that looks attractive and sounds good. I still use it for concerts. As with the clavichord, there are things that could be better, but thankfully most of them are either not easily visible, not audible, or improvable through further tweaking and regulation.

When the instrument was completed, I asked the shop that had delivered the kit to help me move it into my new apartment on the other side of Paris. The movers did not hide their surprise when they saw that I had accomplished

the job, confiding to me that the setup I was working with seemed "sub-optimal," though they had not wanted to discourage me by saying so at the time.

Now that I had two instruments, I temporarily closed the chapter on instrument building. It was time for me to turn my focus back towards other projects. I did return to the workshop experience in several brief phases later on, once I had become a more accomplished player and wanted better regulation. After about fifteen years of being used and moved around, my harpsichord needed some refreshing. I used my first maternity leave to redo the case painting, this time taking care that any two surfaces that touch during a move were the same color (this avoids friction marks in contrasting colors). I also added quite a few more elements to the soundboard painting, loosely inspired by the plant and animal life found on a coral reef. It is my hope to undertake new building projects in a more intense and innovative capacity in the future, maybe involving electronics.

Lessons from the Building Process

First, it is important to draw distinctions between different types of instrument building projects. It's helpful to visualize a spectrum: at one end, there is a kit, prepared by someone else, that one can use to assemble the instrument. It is usually copied from a historical source, and the goal is to use it to play historical repertoire. My work falls into this end of the spectrum. The building process was labor-intensive but not especially risky. The kit is accessible to anyone with basic manual skills and a lot of determination.

The other end of the spectrum involves designing and making a totally new instrument. Although this sounds like a contemporary concept, it is also a fair description of the evolution of keyboard instruments throughout history. Such a project requires skill, experience, and vision, with no guarantee that the creator's efforts will be adopted by performers and accepted by listeners. I hope to undertake this kind of bold project in the future.

1 For additional information, see <https://www.paris.edu/harriet-hale-woolley-scholarship-for-visual-artists-and-musicians/>

2 <http://www.theparisworkshop.com/en/index-en.html> and <http://www.theparisworkshop.com/en/k/hemsch.html>

There are many areas of the spectrum between these two extremes: making your own plans based on measurements taken in a museum, working on new instruments collaboratively in a workshop environment, studying do-it-yourself books, adding new electronic dimensions to acoustic instruments, and so forth. There are also many differences between my two kit experiences, mostly in the types of prime materials that are supplied. The clavichord required me to perform many basic tasks: keycaps had to be individually cut and filed, shellacs had to be mixed from flakes, and the pins were not drilled—making stringing a painstaking task. The harpsichord came with certain analogous steps already completed, as it made sense for these to be finished in the shop before delivery.

Whatever the prime material and design of the project, creativity in problem solving is needed to finish the process. In my case, to achieve a balanced keyboard, I needed weights that I did not have and could not afford. This led me to my local pharmacist, who agreed to weigh pennies for me to create small and precise weights.

Later, having no idea how to go about gilding with gold leaf, I wandered into a building in a district with many picture-framing businesses and knocked on doors until I found a woman willing to let me watch her guild a frame (this was before YouTube). I had many interactions in hardware stores with people who knew as little about harpsichords as I knew about how to implement my next clamping scheme, and I was once informed by the entire staff of a paint store that one “simply doesn’t paint keyboard instruments.”

These problem-solving and interpersonal episodes went hand in hand with other opportunities for growth. For example, learning to string and tune in various temperaments was an eye-and-mind-opening experience. My experiences with building gave me insights into composing for keyboards and exploring extended techniques with them. The most important

takeaway from the project, however, was my decision to view the diversity of keyboard instruments as a value in itself, rather than a historical progression from primitive to advanced. I have found that exploring the wealth of different types of keyboard instruments to be far richer than concentrating on one; it has opened the exciting possibility of developing relationships between players, composers, and instrument builders. For this reason, I would recommend the instrument-building experience to anyone considering it.

Passing On My Experiences Through Teaching

At about the same time I was building these instruments, I began teaching piano to support my studies. The seemingly unrelated activities shared a common need: to produce means and tools to further my own learning path ahead as a musician. Like many other musicians, I believe that transmitting knowledge as you are learning it yourself is an excellent way to crystallize your thoughts and methodology.

The more I delved into early music and performance practice, the more I began to question standard contemporary instrumental teaching methods: learning an instrument’s technique and repertoire is often dissociated from other aspects of musicianship. I became interested in the profiles of prolific composers/improvisers/keyboardists who were trained before the existence of modern conservatories. I completed a research project about the Bach, Couperin, and Scarlatti families in an attempt to understand how musical transmission took place in these families, and I learned that the pedagogical focus seems to have been on musicianship with no limit as to how

many types of musical expressions an artist might have. Focusing on a particular instrument was of secondary importance. Over the years, as I shifted from teaching privately to holding positions in music schools and public conservatories, I honed a teaching style in keeping with this philosophy.

I am currently a professor at the Conservatoire de l’Agglo du Pays de Dreux, where I teach keyboards as a family, enabling students to explore the various instruments. I am fortunate to have a classroom with a piano, an organ, and a harpsichord, which all of my students play interchangeably in their first years, choosing to specialize (or not) as they come of age musically. Outside of my own classroom, I offer workshops on early keyboards in other conservatories and in festivals for students interested in branching out. I am now in a position to offer solutions to the problems that I encountered when I wished to study early keyboard instruments and was told that I was too old. For example, I am currently teaching harpsichord to a thirty-year-old pianist.

I encourage my students to sing and compose, and I provide an opportunity for them to participate in an annual Pianoforte Meeting, a multi-keyboard festival of concerts, workshops, and masterclasses that I organize in collaboration with Bart van Oort. Despite my unconventional approach to teaching, I was able to successfully defend my philosophy before a jury for my tenure examination, and I am currently assistant director of my conservatory. My experience as a teacher of historical instruments and as a builder of two opened up many creative possibilities for me, and as an educator, I hope in turn to open up creative possibilities for others.

My experiences with building gave me insights into composing for keyboards and exploring extended techniques with them. The most important takeaway from the project, however, was my decision to view the diversity of keyboard instruments as a value in itself, rather than a historical progression from primitive to advanced.

—ALISSA DURYEE



Gyuli Kambarova at the computer teaching her interactive piano group class.

***PianissiMore* Sounds Fortissimo!**

GYULI KAMBAROVA

My dream as a child was to play the majestic black upright piano that sat hidden in my parents' bedroom. It was a Tereck brand that had been named after a Russian river. The keys and bench seemed to call to me every time I passed them. One day, to my delight, I had my first piano lesson with a well-known teacher in my hometown of Makhachkala, located in the south of Russia on the Caspian Sea. Over the years, I had several teachers, but the last one, Natalia Nikolaevna Simonova, a professor at the Rachmaninov State Conservatoire, was the one who had the greatest influence on me and shaped who I am today.

The words of Simonova still ring in my ears: "Gyuli, don't play like a bunny-toy on the drum" or "Play the pedal with your ears" or "Live every note." Her words made such a strong impression on me that I use them with my students in my private studio, which I established in Louisville, Kentucky, more than ten years ago. My vision of being a piano and composition teacher

began in my small studio in humble surroundings in a little carriage house above the garage my husband, Samir, and I rented when we arrived in the United States in 2011. I found that my greatest joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment came when I had the chance to pass my knowledge and expertise on to my students. It was clear to them, and to their parents, that sharing my love for the piano was (and still is) a valuable part of my life.

This was an exciting time for me as I explored the popular local piano method books, piano brands, approaches, applications, programs, and music traditions while I tried to develop and build a successful career. Slowly, my studio grew to the point that my tiny carriage house could no longer hold all of my students. As a family, we decided to move to a bigger apartment and officially register my music studio as GSK Music, LLC.

My students began to win national and international piano and composition competitions, and the number of students signing up for lessons expanded to such an extent that it wasn't possible to fit all of them into my schedule. The success of the studio enabled us

to purchase a beautiful multilevel house with the studio on one floor and our living space on the other. It took a great deal of courage and conviction to believe that my studio would become prosperous, professional, and an essential part of the community.

Four years ago, I decided that it was time to expand the studio's offerings and provide lessons not only in piano and composition but also in cello, violin, and jazz improvisation as well as group piano lessons, chamber music, piano duets, and classes in music history and music theory online, jazz history, and innovative and interactive group piano classes online for those who wished to improve their performance level. In my interactive piano class, we have three goals: improve sight-reading, improve technique, and eliminate stage fright. At the end of our class, all the students perform a short piece, and we analyze each other's performances. During my search for talented teachers, I decided to change the name of the studio to *PianissiMore* to reflect that we offer much more than just piano lessons.

My current students are at the intermediate and advanced levels, with one exception, and most of them have been with me for more than eight years. Six of them—Madalyn Bowers, George Chen, Peter Zhang, Lara and Leila Thomas, and Calvin Brey—have received recognition at several national and international piano and composition competitions. Graduates from my program have been accepted and received scholarships at prestigious universities such as Loyola University, Vanderbilt University, University of Louisville, Purdue University, Saint Louis University, and Bellarmine University. On March 19, 2022, four of my students received first degree diplomas at the International Piano Competition "I am a Musician." In the same competition, I received a diploma as a teacher for outstanding work in preparing the students for the competition. It was a pleasure to receive the award, but even more inspiring was the beautiful letter I received from one of the students, Leila Thomas.



PianissiMore students after their recital on March 19, 2022.

My personal experience with PianissiMore has been tremendously influential on my development as a musician. Gyuli has taught me fundamental skills that have greatly improved my tone, musicality, technique, and my overall playing. My lessons with PianissiMore have changed my practice routine and overall outlook on music for the better—I have developed greater levels of concentration and determination while learning more challenging repertoire and preparing for competitions. It is an experience that has benefited my musical development incredibly.

—LEILA THOMAS

I was asked to explain the reasons my studio has become so successful and how my experience might be helpful for others at the beginning of their teaching careers. It is a difficult question to answer, but I believe that one important reason is that I am also a composer, which gives me a deep understanding of music and therefore allows me to discuss a work with my student from a composer's viewpoint. Another reason is that I try to be a meticulous teacher who pays attention to details and asks the same from students at all levels.

I always prepare an individual plan for each student, but I require all students to have in their repertoires works in five styles: baroque, classical, romantic, jazz, and contemporary, and I spend quite a bit of time helping them learn how to sightread effectively. I learn so much from my students when they ask questions, and I try to find different ways to help them by having them learn new pieces and making recordings and videos of their performances as well as by using the educational videos I have prepared for them. They are aware that I care not only about their progress but about them personally and that they can contact me anytime about anything.

As the COVID-19 crisis has changed our lives, we have learned to adapt and adjust and to use innovative technologies such as professional microphones like Warm Audio, Sound Interface Behringer, Logic Pro X, and Final Cut Pro and approaches as well as applications and programs such as Zoom, Google Duo, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, Skype, and Facebook to help our teachers provide lessons through distance learning. To preserve our traditions, we have had online concerts three or four times a year featuring performances by our students and teachers.¹ The innovations that we developed during the COVID-19 shutdown has broadened our perspective and introduced our programs to students from different states and countries. Performers at various levels and ages are able to participate in our private and group lessons making the sound of *PianissiMore* more and more fortissimo! The studio currently has more than 70 students, and in the near future, we are planning to open a school of music in Louisville, where we will offer opportunities to learn classical music as well as jazz.

¹ Our staff of teachers at *PianissiMore* include Arthur Tang (piano), Murphy Lamb (piano), Roman Wood (cello), Emily Fischer (violin), Samir Kambarov (saxophone, jazz history/theory), and Gyuli Kambarova (piano, composition).

Guidelines for Contributors

Articles

Before submitting an article, please send an abstract (two or three paragraphs), the approximate number of words in the article, and a brief biography to the editor in chief, Dr. Eve R. Meyer, by e-mail at evemeyer45@gmail.com. Most articles range between 1,500 and 4,000 words. The subject matter should relate to women in all fields of music, either contemporary or historical. If the proposal is approved by the Journal Board, the editor will send more detailed information.

Reports and Announcements

Reports on women-in-music activities from our sister organizations and IAWM committees as well as reports on music festivals and other special events should be sent to the editor in chief. Announcements of future events and recently released recordings should also be sent to the editor in chief.

Deadlines

Deadlines for articles: December 15 for the February issue; March 15 for the May issue; June 15 for the August issue; September 15 for the November issue. Reports and short articles are due the 30th of the month.



Leanna Kirchoff

Arias from Friday After Friday: Women Caught in the Syrian Civil War

LEANNA KIRCHOFF

I was honored to receive IAWM's 2021 Miriam Gideon Prize for *Arias from Friday After Friday*, five songs for soprano, flute, violin, and cello on the topic of the Syrian Civil War. Featuring a poignant libretto by Rachel J. Peters, these songs are excerpted from an opera-in-development called *Friday After Friday*, which explores the particular heart-breaking tragedies experienced by Syrian women who are enduring violence, poverty, dislocation, and separation from family members.

Syrian President Assad's violent suppression of the 2011 grassroots pro-democracy protests plunged the country into a Civil War that continues to impact families today. Since the beginning of the war, 6.6 million Syrians have fled to surrounding countries, to Europe, and to other parts of the world, and 6.7 million are still internally displaced.¹ The current news from

1 "Syria Refugee Crisis," <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/syria/>.

Ukraine, of citizens fleeing the country and of the increasing number of casualties and evidence of war crimes, is reminiscent of the humanitarian crisis in Syria and gives a present-day example of what Syrians have been facing for over a decade.

Choosing a cross-cultural topic is unique for me, but I felt compelled by the women's stories and the human side of the topic. These Syrian women are much like me, as a woman with latitude to pursue a wide variety of educational, career, and personal goals. But now, they face unimaginable circumstances and disruption of normal life as a result of the Civil War. In retrospect, I leaped into the project in 2016 before really considering whether Rachel and I—two white, Western women—could authentically portray an ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Research for the Libretto

We diligently researched and sought connections in our respective regions of the country, Rachel in the New York City area and I in Denver. In seeking firsthand accounts, we read memoirs of Syrian and Western-born female journalists who reported on the revolution. We viewed documentaries and video blogs from the conflict and interviewed several women who have emigrated from the region. Since this occurred before the pandemic, we were able to sit with them personally. Their descriptions of physical and sexual violence, poverty, and, in particular, the war's impact on women, dramatically moved me to feelings of outrage. I perceived a lack of response from the American public. I began to see how opera, with its intimate use of personal stories, could be a powerful platform to cast a spotlight on the atrocities happening in Syria.

The core of my understanding about the war revolved around the writings of three authors: Samar Yazbek, Janine di Giovanni, and Francesca Borri. Yazbek's, *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution*, chronicles early days of the revolution from March to

July 2011.² As a Syrian writer well known in her homeland, Yazbek recorded personal interviews with people involved in weekly protests near Dar'a, where the revolution began, and across the country in an effort to preserve the truth of the tragedies. Giovanni's *The Morning They Came for Us: Dispatches from Syria* was published in 2016, five years after Yazbek's diaries, and depicts later events in Syria after the conditions had been deteriorating for several years.³ As an experienced war journalist, American-born Giovanni's accounts come from a Western point of view, but her descriptions are very consistent with Yazbek's. Italian-born Borri's *Syrian Dust: Reporting from the Heart of the Battle for Aleppo* focuses on circumstances in Aleppo, Syria's largest city prior to the war.⁴

All three authors describe the humanitarian injustices that seem surreal compared with life in the West. Yazbek recounts numerous stories from demonstrators who were arrested and imprisoned, whose experiences of physical and sexual torture are difficult to read about. Giovanni describes the devastation felt by many women who have been raped. Although no fault of their own, women in this circumstance have little future hope for marriage and children, as sexual purity is of high value for Syrian men. I keenly remember Borri's vivid descriptions of families living in underground graveyard tombs because their homes were destroyed, and they had no place to go.⁵

As common stories and themes emerged from the research, Rachel developed these threads into synoptic characters and scenes for the opera. The opera derives its title, *Friday After*

2 Samar Yazbek and Max Weis, *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution* (London, England: Haus Publishing, 2012).

3 Janine Di Giovanni, *The Morning They Came for Us: Dispatches from Syria*. First American edition (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).

4 Francesca Borri and Anne Milano Appel, *Syrian Dust: Reporting from the Heart of the Battle for Aleppo* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2016).

5 Ibid, 79-85.

Friday, after weekly protests that occurred on Fridays throughout Syria beginning in March 2011. Friday, normally a holy day in the Islamic faith, is traditionally set aside for congregational gathering, worship, and prayer. But after the government crackdown, sectarian and non-sectarian people across Syria began filling the streets to claim Friday as a day of demonstration. The name for each Friday's protest was chosen from a short list of slogans posted on Facebook and up for vote by activists.⁶ Yazbek mentions Friday of Dignity," "Friday of Defiance," "The Fall of Regime Legitimacy Friday," "Get Out Friday," and "Say No to Dialogue Friday."

Subject Matter of the Songs

The five songs of *Arias from Friday after Friday* were among the earliest material I composed for the opera. Each song focuses on a specific issue commonly facing contemporary Syrian women. The five songs are briefly summarized below:

"I have no medical training"

The frantic protagonist in this aria, Jiyan, gives a visceral description of the makeshift field tents and medical care rising from the ashes of bombed out hospitals. The real doctors have been arrested or shot. There are few medical supplies, so volunteers learn quickly how to adapt. Jiyan sings about "pools of blood soaking through her shoes" and "lifeless bodies" arriving on the hour.

"Look at you, Layla"

This aria conveys the common story of desperate families selling their daughters in marriage as a way of supporting the remaining family members. In this bittersweet moment, Miriam prepares her fifteen-year-old daughter for marriage to a Saudi Arabian man. She admits that she had hoped Layla could go to college, but that this marriage will net the family \$300 and the chance to survive.

⁶ Basma Atassi and Cajsa Wikstrom, "The battle to name Syria's Friday protests," <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2012/4/14/the-battle-to-name-syrias-friday-protests>.

"I have no medical training"

libretto by Rachel J. Peters music by Leanna Kirchoff

emphatically, nervously $\text{♩} = 72$

Ex. 1. "I have no medical training," mm. 1-10.

"Five different men asked for my hand in marriage"

This aria examines Ahed's defiant attitude as a survivor of physical and sexual abuse while imprisoned. She has rejected numerous men who have offered to preserve her honor through marriage and raising a family. Ahed claims that her country is a "cemetery for the living" and no place to raise children. Her hard heart will only melt once all Syrian captives are free.

"At 6:30 every morning"

The loss or separation of family members is an obvious outcome of war. At a table set for two, Hala describes the morning coffee routine she would normally share with her husband, Ali. The Syrian war has separated them, and his return is uncertain. Hala tries to assure her young daughter that perhaps Ali will return in the next week, although she tells herself they may never be rejoined.

"When the women poured out into the streets"

In an ironic twist, the protagonist of this aria has joined Assad's army—A Lioness for National Defense. Sima reasons that she can earn a steady paycheck and have vacation time, medical care, and education while working for the government. She concludes that this is a better life than when she was a prostitute. Evil men will always be in power, so Sima joins ranks with them, exchanging her military service as a way of preserving her own dignity.

I began to see how opera, with its intimate use of personal stories, could be a powerful platform to cast a spotlight on the atrocities happening in Syria.

—LEANNA KIRCHOFF

Music

The music of these *Arias* draws loosely upon the Arabic maqam system of melodic modes and upon Arabic rhythmic cycles.⁷ Arabic music features a twenty-four-note tuning system, as compared to the twelve-note, equal-tempered tuning system of Western music. Discovering ways to integrate these characteristics of Arabic music factored extensively into the compositional process and prompted many new ideas that expanded my thinking beyond my normal approach as a composer of vocal music. I liked this chance to delve into Middle Eastern music and see how some of these idiomatic techniques, sounds, and even expressive goals could blend with my own musical inclinations.

Typically, when writing a vocal piece or an opera, I work at the piano and create a vocal-piano version first before orchestrating the piece for different instruments. For *Friday After Friday*, both the *Arias* and the opera, I composed the music for a trio of violin, cello, and flute (doubling alto flute and piccolo) from the beginning of the process. Keeping in mind Arabic music's monophonic features, my germinal ideas were more melodic and improvisatory in character rather than imbedded in harmonic progressions, which may have been the case if I had composed specifically for piano.

The first song of the cycle, "I have no medical training," serves as a good example of the melodically-driven compositional approach I adopted. (See Example 1.) Inspired by ideas from Lois Ibsen al Faruqī's article, *Ornamentation in Arabian Improvisational Music*,

⁷ For a comprehensive online introduction to the Arabic maqam system, see www.maqamworld.com. *Grove Music Online* has helpful articles covering both art music and folk music traditions of Arabic music. See Owen Wright, Christian Poché, and Amnon Shiloah, "Arab music," *Grove Music Online*, 2001. For further study of Arabic music, I recommend Habib Touma's *The Music of the Arabs* (New expanded ed., Portland, Or: Amadeus Press, 1996) and also, Jonathan Holt Shannon's *Among the Jasmine Trees: Music and Modernity in Contemporary Syria* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006).

"Look at you, Layla"

libretto by
Rachel J. Peters

music by
Leanna Kirchoff

(A bedroom in Atmeh, MIRIAM, a young mother, pins the hem of her daughter LAYLA's wedding dress. LAYLA is 15, terrified, shaking, silent.)

gracefully, tender ♩ = 144

Ex. 2. "Look at you, Layla," mm. 1-7.

Primary tetrachord from "At six-thirty every morning" Secondary tetrachord

Complete scale used in "At six-thirty every morning"

Opening vocal line

Refrain from "At six-thirty every morning"

Ex. 3. Tetrachords from "At six-thirty every morning."

I incorporated several types of ornamentation into both the vocal and cello lines.⁸ For example, the throbbing repeated notes in the solo cello line evoke a nervous energy and counter-melody to Jijan's frantic declamations. The frequent alternations between one pitch and its upper neighbor tone appear quite frequently in both

⁸ Lois Ibsen al Faruqī, "Ornamentation in Arabian Improvisational Music: A Study of Interrelatedness in the Arts," *The World of Music* 20/1 (1978): 17-32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43562537>.

the voice and the cello lines for dramatic purposes to suggest Jijan's anxious feelings and to give a sense of unrelenting intensity. The trill markings that appear in standard Western notation require a faster fluctuation and thus an increased number of alterations between pitches than those that are written out. Experimenting with the variety of ways trills can be performed was new compositional territory for me.

The pitches of the vocal and cello lines are both drawn from the same scale (D-Eb-F#-G-A-Bb/B-C), but the vocal line ascends from the resting note of D, whereas the cello begins its trajectory upward from the A, a perfect fourth lower. The tonic-dominant relationship between D and A is subverted with the dominant on the bottom at the beginning of this song, and only confirmed later in measure nine when the cello sweeps down to the double-stop with D on the bottom. The decorated flute line in the second aria, "Look at you, Layla," also has a quasi-improvisational feel against Miriam's vocals. The harmonics and slides built into the violin part weave in a microtonal flavor to the beginning of this piece. All three treble lines, in combination with the dance-like spirit of the 6/8 meter, create what I consider an innocent and festive quality, as if Miriam is trying to convince herself and her daughter that this marriage should be a celebratory occasion. (See Example 2.)

Melodic Building Blocks: Jins

The Arabic maqamat families (plural of maqam) feature three-note, four-note, and five-note melodic fragments, called jins, which serve as building blocks of their modal system. As microtonal intervals are integral to Arabic music, these jins characteristically include quarter flat or quarter sharp distances between pitches. For the five *Arias*, I explored some of the most common jins as building blocks in my vocal lines, modifying the quarter-tone flat pitches to the closest pitches available in a twelve-tone chromatic scale. The following illustrate the pitches: Bayati (D-Eb modified-F-G), Hijaz (D-Eb-F#-G), Rast (C-D-Eb modified-F-G), and Saba (D-Eb modified-F-Gb).

The Phrygian tetrachord modified from Jins Bayati, the minor tetrachord modified from Jins Rast, and the octatonic tetrachord modified from Jins Saba appear extensively throughout the vocal lines. Their specific use is associated with the text and predicated upon the idea that each jin possesses

an individual expressive characteristic. Specific families of maqamat are performed to elicit particular emotional responses from listeners. For example, Ali Jihad Racy identifies Jins Bayati as a mode expressing joy and femininity, Jins Rast as evoking a feeling of pride and power, and Jins Saba as an emotionally-moving mode often associated with feelings of sadness and pain.⁹

In the aria "At six-thirty every morning," I chose Jins Saba for portraying Hala's feelings of melancholy that permeate the entire piece. As shown in the opening vocal phrase, the melodic line travels between two octatonic tetrachords, A-Bb-C-Db as the primary tetrachord, and C#-D-E-F as the secondary one, with A and E serving as the two primary notes of these tetrachords. In the refrain, which appears twice in the aria, the descending presentation of Db-C-Bb-A possesses a weeping quality as Hala pleads for Ali to return. (See Example 3.)

⁹ Ali Jihad Racy, *Making Music in the Arab World: the Culture and Artistry of Tarab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Iqa' Maqsum
(as shown at maqamworld.com)

DUM TAK TAK DUM TAK

Ex. 4. Iqa' Maqsum

Racy comments that Jins Hijaz is one of the most ecstatic of the Eastern maqamat, with its characteristic augmented second between Eb and F#. I saved this special tetrachord for the emphatic vocal lines of Jiyana in "I have no medical training," using the augmented second in setting words and phrases such as "massacre," "lifeless bodies arriving on the hour," and the particularly despairing moment after she repeats "war, war, war." (See Example 1, mm. 1-10.)

Rhythmic Cycles: Iqa'at

Besides the influence of the maqam modal system on the pitch structure of the *Arias*, I based some of the accompaniment patterns on Arabic rhythmic cycles, called iqa'at. With the DUM and TAK sounds of the tabla in mind,

"When the women poured out into the streets"

libretto by Rachel J. Peters music by Leanna Kirchoff

6 *strongly, with conviction*
Voice: When the wo-men poured out in-to the streets screech-ing

Flute: *pp*

Violin: *strum mp*

Cello: *mp*

9
Voice: "Re-vol-u-tion, Free-dom!"

Flute: *mf* (solo) *f*

Violin: *mp*

Cello: *mp*

Ex. 5. "When the women poured out into the streets," mm. 6-9.

"At six-thirty every morning"

libretto by
Rachel J. Peters

music by
Leanna Kirchoff

(At HALA's home in Istanbul. She sits at a kitchen counter with two cups of coffee in front of her.)

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system features a Cello part in 11/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 58. The notation includes a plucked (pizz.) instruction and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second system shows the vocal line starting with the instruction 'wistfully'. The lyrics are: 'At six - thir - ty ev' - ry morn - ing for twen - ty one years'. The third system continues the vocal line with the lyrics: 'I made cof - fee for us, with su - gar for you,'. The accompaniment for the second and third systems includes a Violin (Vc.) part.

Ex. 6. The beginning of "At six-thirty every morning."

the rhythmic pattern of the strummed accompaniment in "When the women poured out into the streets" is modeled after the common Iqa' Maqsum. (See Example 4.)

In measures 6 to 9 of this last aria, the cello strums substitute for the DUM, and the violin strums substitute for the TAK. The rhythmic cycle has been completed within beats 1 and 2 of each measure, with some irregularities inserted in response to changes in the length of the vocal phrases, as in the 3/4 meter in measure 9. (See Example 5.)

Having listened to many examples of Arabic rhythmic cycles in meters of 10/4, 12/4, or even 19/4, I modeled the cello's plucked rhythmic phrases (11/4, 14/4, 12/4, etc.) of "At six-thirty every morning" after some of these long Arabic rhythmic cycles. Of course, these cello phrases could be broken down into smaller metrical units, but composing the elongated phrases helped me to capture a sense of the slow passing of time while Hala and Ali are separated. Example 6 is from the opening of the aria showing the cello's plucked accompaniment.

Next Steps for the Project

To date, the *Friday After Friday* opera project has received an OPERA America Discovery Grant funded by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, which supported two public workshop performances: in January 2019 at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, and in October 2019 at the 124 Bank Street Theater in NYC. Emily Martin, director of the opera program at Bucknell, directed both of the workshop performances, which also featured costuming by Paula Davis, assisted by Yasameen Mohammadi, and lighting design by William Kenyon. In June 2019, several scenes were workshoped at the Duffy Institute in Norfolk, Virginia, led by music director Alan Johnson (music director of Frost Opera Theater, University of Miami).

I was honored that nine women, all from families with roots in Syria or neighboring countries, participated in the NYC workshop. We amended the text and music based on their suggestions that have helped with the authenticity of the piece. Their enthusiasm while working on such a culturally relevant piece encourages me to seek a more widespread audience for this opera.

While Rachel and I believe that depicting violence in an artistic work certainly does not equal endorsement of this violence, we are very cognizant of the ongoing conversation among opera creators about the repercussions of presenting sensitive material onstage. We do not wish to force trauma onto audiences or add to an operatic repertoire already fetishized for centuries with such violence. We want to make things better and are still working on a way forward with *Friday After Friday* that does not ignore or deny the very real suffering caused by the Syrian war. Our ultimate aim here is to strip away damaging Western projections of Syrian women as a monolith; their perspectives on this untenable situation are informed by experiences of economic class, religion, education, and many more factors with as many variations as there would be anywhere else in the world.

In reflecting on our multi-year journey with this project, I have become increasingly aware that we likely cannot retell these stories without more extensive guidance from someone with a Syrian background. Many modifications in the opera have already resulted from conversations with consultants and performers, but we feel that a Syrian-born dramaturg or cultural consultant would propel the next phase of *Friday After Friday's* development. (Any recommendations from readers would be welcome.) I also note the lack of Middle Eastern characters and subject matter in modern opera. At a time when diversity, equity, and inclusivity initiatives are prevalent in American arts organizations and academic institutions, cross-cultural storytelling may be a critically important pathway toward understanding and learning to value one another's experiences, human to human. I know I have been changed forever by this project.

American composer Leanna Kirchoff writes vocal and instrumental chamber music, choral music, and opera. She holds a doctorate degree in composition from the University of Colorado and teaches at the University of Denver. For further information about *Arias from Friday After Friday* or the opera please see: www.leannakirchoff.com and www.fridayafterfridayopera.com.



Figure 1. Two of the many instruments that have been donated to students by Sidewalk Opera.

Sidewalk Opera: Connecting Community and Music

CATHERINE KELLY

The possibility of creating Sidewalk Opera popped into my mind one evening in 2018 as a means of providing free classical music performances for the broader public, following a turning point in my career. The years leading up to Sidewalk Opera's creation were filled with invigorating music-making. In 2014, I completed my graduate studies with a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at James Madison University and moved to Germany to audition for opera productions. After spending a year auditioning and performing in concerts, I secured a ten-month contract to sing the role of Susanna in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Vienna, for a 180-performance tenure. During this time, I also performed at music festivals and founded and toured internationally with the chamber trio *Ensemble Poetico*. I was grateful for the experiences I had, but I decided to return to my home state of North Carolina at the end of the season. I missed my family and close friends.

Though I was happy with my decision to move back home, my initial acclimation had its challenges. When I returned, I was reminded of the distinctions

in cultural norms and, sometimes, in musical tastes that differentiated Europe from America. For example, I had worked full-time in Europe as an operatic soprano, but in the United States, I learned that a freelance music career typically included some additional sources of income. In my case, I worked as a private voice teacher and sang in crossover-genre events in which I was asked to perform popular music and selections from musicals in addition to opera. I also performed in many oratorios and gave several art song recitals.

Quite unexpectedly, I developed an illness that, among a variety of symptoms, included hoarseness that would not go away. I feared that my singing voice was gone. Following advice from my doctor, I canceled performances for six months and began treatment. Fortunately, my teaching job provided a steady stream of income. Although I started to feel better after a few months, I realized that I was faced with the uncomfortable reality that my music career needed to pivot, and it was time to change my focus to something bigger than myself and my performer's ego. I learned that I could not take my voice for granted, and that I needed to establish a reinvigorating purpose for my dedication to music-making.

That evening, in early 2018, I began my work on Sidewalk Opera. My initial idea was to recruit some musician friends to perform operatic arias out in the open, on a sidewalk or a town square. Not only would it provide opportunities for musicians to share the music that we loved, but it also had the potential to spark local interest in classical singing and playing in our community. I envisioned that these performances would be accessible to listeners and casual for performers, and they would embody the tagline: "Classical music performances: no 'black ties' necessary."

The early weeks of planning included many hours of writing aria arrangements to suit various ensemble groupings. The first performance in Dunn, NC, in March 2018 featured just voice and viola. I contacted The Cellar, a local coffee shop that was positioned in a perfect location, and I asked if we could perform on their storefront stoop. The shop owner, coincidentally, was an opera lover and proved to be an enthusiastic and gracious host. We drew a small crowd of pedestrians that first day, and I noticed car passengers leaning out of their windows to record videos on their phones. Customers in the coffee shop stepped outside to hear us. At the time, our setlist was still very limited, so our performance only lasted about twenty minutes, followed by a quick coffee break inside before we did the same set again. This was enough performance time for a video, which was recorded that day to garner attention from a social media page managed by the city government. As the video continued to be shared repeatedly online, community members reached out to learn more about Sidewalk Opera. The warm welcome was joyous.

In the coming months, Sidewalk Opera's repertoire and network of musicians expanded. Local small business owners contacted Sidewalk Opera to schedule pop-up events, and we were asked to provide music for charity fundraisers, which introduced us to community groups that focused on issues such as autism awareness as well as cancer research. We are based

in Durham, but traveled to primary schools throughout the state to share and talk about musical instruments and classical singing.

We found our most enthusiastic audiences in the more rural areas: elementary school children who had never before heard opera, but who became entranced by the powerful music. One of my fondest memories was of a young girl who hesitantly tapped my arm after a performance and asked in a soft voice, "How do I learn how to do *that*?" She gesticulated with her hands to indicate the music she had just heard. She said: "The violin was amazing!" Though I chuckled at the girl's sweet comment and advised her to ask her classroom music teacher about violin teachers nearby, I took her feedback seriously. Thus, another mission for Sidewalk Opera emerged. We were reminded that music lessons could be a considerable expense for families, and the cost of musical instruments was yet another hurdle in the way of many children benefiting from a musical education. We updated our mission statement and pledged to contribute a percentage of donations toward helping local families purchase instruments and finance music lessons.

During the early months of COVID-19, when people were sheltering at home and in need of creative outlets to process the frustrations of lockdown, our ability to supply musical instruments became the focal point of our mission. Our musicians often donated their time and talents to raise money for this ongoing project. We were fortunate that Sidewalk Opera began with outdoor performances, taking place quite literally on sidewalks and street corners; this provided a sturdy platform for our shift into the "new normal."

With the guidance of a compassionate and motivated Board of Directors, new methods for fundraising were formed. We planned concerts with local restaurant owners who were transitioning to outdoor business, and we worked with care-providing communities in search of opportunities to provide entertainment for residents. We discussed plans for the future, envisioning performances of full operas presented in an accessible way, in addition to continuing our beloved aria concerts and pop-up events. We have remained focused on drawing audiences of both opera lovers and listeners who may be experiencing opera for the first time, as we provide high-quality, professional-grade music for all, without the steep ticket price.



Figure 3: Catherine Kelly, soprano, discusses classical music with the students at a local primary school.

As I reflect on Sidewalk Opera, I often wonder about the correlation between this project and my return to good health. Most of my recovery, of course, should be attributed to dedicated care from my doctor and to following the recommended lifestyle changes. I believe deeply, however, that the passion and positivity surrounding Sidewalk Opera has immensely bolstered my wellbeing. To feel connected to others in the community, especially through such a meaningful vessel as music, must surely do much good for the body, mind, and spirit.

Sidewalk Opera owes a large debt of gratitude to small business owners and community members in our area of North Carolina. We are particularly appreciative of the ongoing support from The Violin Exchange of Dunn, V Pizza of Cary, Brain Mugs & Brew of Durham, and The Artisan Market of Durham. What started as a small idea has grown considerably larger than I could have imagined. It is undeniably some of the most gratifying work I have ever done, and it is our constant hope and goal to return the kindness Sidewalk Opera has received back to our community. For more information, please visit us at www.sidewalkopera.com.



Figure 2: Pamela Kelly, violin; Catherine Kelly, soprano; Craig Brown, tenor; and Melodie Bobbitt, piano, at a Sidewalk Opera performance.

Catherine Kelly's operatic credits include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Anne Frank in *Der Tagebuch der Anne Frank*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Serpina in *La Serva Padrona*, Giannetta in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Lucy in *The Telephone*. Memorable musical theatre roles include Louisa in *The Fantasticks*, Catherine in *Pippin*, Sandy in *Grease*, and Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof*. She teaches privately at Ravenscroft School and is staff vocalist at Duke University Chapel.



Ania Vu

Time and Text in Relation to Music

ANIA VU

As a composer, I find it difficult to turn off my “composer” brain, even when writing words to be set to my own music. I choose words not only because of their meanings, but also because of their sounds. In that sense, crafting text is no different than crafting music: from planting a small-scale idea to carrying out the larger picture, developing the material and building it to a climax, and playing with the listener/reader’s expectations. However, on top of the sonic properties of the words, words also have meaning. I could, of course, just create an absurd text solely based on “interesting” sounds devoid of any sense. Yet, I find that as a composer, I like to work with constraints and create something meaningful using limited material.

A key process in my work with languages—I am fluent in Polish, French, Vietnamese, and English, and I have studied German, Latin, and Greek—is first choosing “musical” and similar-sounding words and then building a meaningful narrative out of them. Once the text is composed and carefully crafted, I use it as a sonic, formal, and expressive guiding reference in

my vocal and instrumental writing process. Some like to say that music is a language, but I believe the opposite—that language *is* music.

I applied this approach to several poems of my songs, from *a może...* to *Plakała zapalka*, and *Tik-Tak*, all written in Polish, my native language. I chose to write in Polish for several reasons. Having lived in the US for almost a decade now, I began perceiving my native language *almost* as a foreigner, listening to it from a purely sonic perspective. I find this language’s sound properties—the straightforward vowels and richly dense consonants—to be wonderfully sharp, percussive, and therefore, musical. I like to think of myself as a “text composer” rather than a poet. My sentences are concise to match the straightforwardness of the sound of the language and often engage in wordplays of the text.

Any meaningful moment that we would like to hold on to—vanishes irrevocably, “as if nothing had happened.” This phrase is the opening and closing line of the poem of my song *Tik-Tak* for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, and percussion. The text is about the relentless flow of time with the incessant sounds of ticking clocks, constantly rushing us. But *why* is it rushing us, “tak nietaktownie?” (so untactfully?). One of the reasons I decided to write in Polish was because of the percussive word “tak” and its many definitions depending on the context: yes, as if, as much, as such. My text played with the “tak” sound and all of its aforementioned meanings. It is also, of course, the sound of a ticking clock.

The piece has an overall ABA’ form, with the A section being clock-like and rhythmic, contrasting with B, which is timeless, slow, and arrhythmic. The B section, for a brief moment, offers a small glimpse into someone’s strong wish to hold onto a beautiful moment a little longer. However, it vanishes again, “tak o tak” (just like that), as do any other moments. Irrevocably, indifferently, and mercilessly. At a deeper

level, this song is about loss and how powerless we all are in the face of it. Finally, the word “tak” is also a bow to the dynamic and virtuosic group of extraordinary musicians for whom it was written: the TAK ensemble.

My fascination with time perception in music can be traced back to 2018 with the piece *Against Time* for solo piano. It was prompted by a series of somewhat difficult life events that led me to experience time in a new way: time without motion. I realized that music could manipulate time perception so that the listener would experience time that could move faster or slower than the time *outside* of music. *Against Time* features a prominent note repetition, which symbolizes two paradoxical ideas of time: time suspension because repetition suggests stability, but also its flow, because of the sound brevity on a percussive instrument like the piano. Most of the piece is very slow and contemplative, almost motionless. Towards the end of the piece, with only finite energy that can go into stretching time, this energy eventually becomes depleted, leading to an eruption. Time suddenly runs faster than usual to make up for its lost time from the past.

Both *Against Time* and *Tik-Tak* were selected by the Vietnam Contemporary Music Centre among its six pieces to be submitted for consideration to the ISCM Virtual Collaboration Series. Eventually, ISCM selected *Tik-Tak*. This piece also won the Boston New Music Initiative’s 9th Annual Commissioning Competition in April 2021, selected by an outside panel of three industry professionals from an anonymous pool of almost 100 compositions.

I realized that music could manipulate time perception so that the listener would experience time that could move faster or slower than the time outside of music.

—ANIA VU

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"We have made great effort in recent years to have a diverse judging panel including non-white and non-male judges," said Beth Ratay, Artistic Director of BNMI, "and the result was our first non-white, non-male winning composer this year."

Now, almost a year later, I submitted a new commissioned piece for the BNMI to premiere in June: *Strange Birds* for the Pierrot ensemble plus percussion and soprano. The instrumentation that BNMI proposed was identical to that of my doctoral dissertation piece minus soprano. I made a request to add a soprano, and Ratay graciously agreed.

Strange Birds is a scene from my chamber opera for multimedia and electronics, *Through the Doors*. The opera, which is still a work in progress, marks a significant place in my portfolio: not only does it continue my interest in text and time awareness in music, but it is also deeply interdisciplinary and collaborative. The piece lies at the intersection of music, text, visuals, and philosophy. Broadly, it invites the audience to engage with philosophical questions on personal freedom and determinism, the extent of personal choice, and the role of time. It is a work that emerged from a long-term collaboration with visual artist and friend Modesta Gorol, who will design the background visuals and animations for the work. We created an original story based on our collective musical and visual interests, and then I wrote the libretto in English. It was my first time writing my own text in English and my first time writing a libretto. The challenge came not only from the language standpoint, as a non-native speaker, but also from the dramatic standpoint. Nonetheless, I found myself thoroughly enjoying the process of writing and rewriting the libretto. As a current composer fellow at the American Opera Project's Composers & the Voice program, I have learned so much about writing for the voice as well as dramaturgy, building a story, and developing my characters. Consultations with the instructors and cohort fellows have enabled me to revise and improve my libretto.

In short, the story is about a dutiful and sheltered young daughter, Odessa, who obeys a promise to wait for her father, a metronome-maker, until his return from the war. When years go by and he has not returned, she breaks her promise to find him, embarking on a journey of self-discovery within a surreal world that changes her into a wiser, braver, and more autonomous young woman. *Strange Birds* is the third scene of the opera after the dramatic moment when Odessa decides to leave the house to search for her father herself. It is the first time she encounters the outside world after being confined for so long. The world she finds herself in is very colorful and full of strange, big, human-like birds, each played by a different instrumentalist. For example, the violinist is a magpie, the pianist an ostrich, the flutist a lark, the percussionist a parrot, etc. Most of the musicians interact with Odessa at some point. She asks them if anybody has seen a soldier with a metronome, but the silly birds answer her only through their narrow-minded and self-centered perspective, confusing and frustrating her even more. The musicians play and speak during the piece, fitting the BNMI's current annual theme of "The Music of Speech."

After I finish writing my opera, I would like to continue exploring the relationship between text and music and expand to less-common languages, such as Vietnamese. I would also be interested in writing multi-lingual texts, mapping the words onto instrumental writing, and examining the sonic relationship between different languages and culturally complex narratives. Until then, I hope you will join me at the premiere of *Strange Birds*, which will have two performances by soprano Mary Mackenzie and the musicians of the BNMI in Massachusetts on June 4 and 5, 2022. For more information, visit www.bostonnewmusic.org/S_13. The premiere of the entire opera will take place sometime in the fall of 2022 in the Old City section of Philadelphia. I hope to see you at either of these events!

Julia Perry's Masterpiece: *Stabat Mater*

EVGENIYA KOZHEVNIKOVA

Introduction

In the year 2024, the 100th anniversary of the birth of the distinguished African-American composer, singer, and conductor Julia Amanda Perry (1924-1979) will be celebrated. Although Perry had a very successful career, her music was neglected after her death; it is now, however, being revived and is the subject of my current research. She was a prolific composer who wrote twelve symphonies, concertos, and operas plus vocal, chamber, and solo works. Her music was widely performed in America and Europe during her lifetime, and she was the first female composer to receive two Guggenheim Fellowships (in 1953 and 1956).

There are few resources about Perry's life. The most detailed is a chapter from Helen Walker-Hill's *From Spirituals to Symphonies*.¹ Perry was born in Lexington, Kentucky; her mother, Lois Heath Perry, was a schoolteacher, and her father, Dr. Abe Perry, was a physician and an amateur pianist. After the family moved to Akron, Ohio in 1934, she began studying voice, piano, and violin, and in college, she became interested in composition, especially choral music. She composed several choral works while attending Westminster Choir College, including the cantata *Chicago* (text by Carl Sundberg) as her master's thesis. Carl Fischer published her choral work *Carillon Heigh-Ho* in 1947.

In the summer of 1951, she attended the Berkshire Music Center Festival to study composition with Luigi Dallapiccola, who would become her long-term mentor. While there, she composed a setting of the *Stabat Mater* for contralto solo and string orchestra. It received its premiere at Tanglewood in a performance by the student orchestra under the direction of a prominent Italian conductor,

Piero Bellugi. Encouraged by Bellugi, Perry raised enough funds to allow her to travel to Florence, Italy, where *Stabat Mater* was performed. It was a success and was performed elsewhere in Italy, receiving high praise. When she returned to the U.S. in 1953, one of the highlights of her early career was the performance of the work at Carnegie Hall.

Stabat Mater

*Stabat Mater*² is a Christian hymn to Mary, which portrays her suffering at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. The Latin text is attributed to Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1230-1306), and it has been set to music by numerous composers. My aim in this short article about Perry's version of the work (which is dedicated to her mother)³ is to present the main characteristics of *Stabat Mater* and explain what makes it unique.

What is distinct about Perry's setting is that she created her own poetic translation of the text, and that may be one reason her version bonds so closely with the text and does not sound like just another abstract setting of a sacred Latin text. The translation was probably for her own use and was not intended for performance, but there are contemporary performances of the work that use Perry's English translation, instead of the Latin text.⁴

Walker-Hill provides a concise introduction to the work:

In 1951 Perry became less conservative with the appearance of Stabat Mater, the work which brought her national

2 There are several recordings of the work; I particularly like the performance by the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, William Strickland, conductor, and Makiko Asakura, mezzo soprano. <https://youtu.be/UpcnC--lrsW>

3 The reason for the dedication to Perry's mother is unknown.

4 For instance, the performance by APEX: <https://youtu.be/mUh0nNucd9K>

*and international attention. The source of the composer's new skill and confidence poses a mystery because Stabat Mater was well under way before her lessons with Dallapiccola began....This composition strikes out into new territory in its length, instrumentation, dissonant harmonic language, and contrapuntal complexities. Although she was the first to sing the work, Perry wrote Stabat Mater not for her own voice, as is widely supposed, but with contralto Marian Anderson in mind. (Anderson never sang it.) Critical acclaim began with the first performances abroad.*⁵

She also summarizes the importance of *Stabat Mater*:

*This seminal work served as a laboratory for working out a wealth of ideas. Many of them never appeared again in her later compositions, but others became hallmarks of her later style: dissonant seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords; sustained homophonic quartal chords in parallel motion; the dichotomy between sections of driving rhythmic regularity and others of free mixed meters and durations; the importance of spacing and octave displacements; fondness for ostinato patterns; and a declamatory vocal style with sparing use of melismata.*⁶

African-American Influence

Perry's early compositions and arrangements of spirituals such as "Free at Last"⁷ and "I'm a Poor Li'l Orphan"⁸ were more informed by African-American traditions than her later works, such as *Stabat Mater*, when her music adopts more Western classical traditions. Some African-American influence, however, is still present.

5 Walker-Hill, 111.

6 Ibid., 112.

7 "Free at Last" arranged by Julia Perry. www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kUAlyjXefg

8 "I'm a Poor Li'l Orphan in This World." www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rUUE469hW8

What is distinct about Perry's setting is that she created her own poetic translation of the text, and that may be one reason her version bonds so closely with the text and does not sound like just another abstract setting of a sacred Latin text.

—EVGENIYA KOZHEVNIKOVA

1 Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and Their Music* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007): 93-139.

One significant feature of the culture is the use of call-and-response, which had its roots in Africa, where it was used in public gatherings, religious rituals, and vocal and instrumental music. We can see this influence in Movement I between the contralto line in mm. 30-31 and the repeated pattern in Violin 1, mm. 32-35 (Example 1). Another example is in Movement II, mm. 44-45, where Violin 1 has two tetrachords from two different whole-tone subsets (WT0 and WT1). The contralto answers in mm. 46-47 (Example 2). There are many other instances, and Movement V is built entirely on call-and-response technique.

Other Characteristics

Throughout the work, Perry uses pandiatonicism—a technique common in neoclassical music in which the notes of the diatonic scale are used freely without conventional resolutions. The piece does not have a clear tonal center; rather, it makes use of several key areas, which are oftentimes different in the soloist's and the string players' parts. The last phrase of the piece is based on E-minor pentatonic, with the addition of the lowered 5th in the cello and double bass parts. The final chord creates the illusion of the resolution in E, although the last note that the singer has is D (the 7th scale degree from E).

In addition to pandiatonicism, Perry uses the Dorian mode, which is common in jazz as well as in early music. An example is in the first movement's opening vocal line (Example 3). Perry uses the pitch collection of the Dorian mode on G (G-A-Bb-C-D-E-F).

A significant feature of the work is Perry's prominent use of several motives throughout the *Stabat Mater*, which creates a sense of unity between the movements. She develops the opening theme by sequencing, imitation, and changing the rhythm (Example 4). The opening theme from movement I appears later in movements III, VII, and IX (Examples 5-7). In Movement III, the opening motive in m. 70 is followed by the whole-tone

Movement I, mm. 30-31, contralto

Movement I, mm. 32-35, response in violin 1, 4/4 phrase over 3/4

Example 1. Call-and-response between the contralto and the first violin, Movement I, *Stabat Mater*

Movement II, mm. 44-45, violin 1 **Movement II, mm. 46-47, contralto**

Example 2. Whole-tone scale and call-and-response between the contralto and the first violin, Movement II, *Stabat Mater*

Movement I, mm. 17-22, contralto

Example 3. G Dorian mode in the opening vocal line, Movement I, *Stabat Mater*

Movement I

The main theme in cello and double bass: mm. 1-2, then comes back in m. 70 tutti **Continuation of the main theme in mm. 2-4, viola**

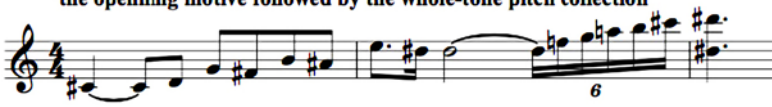
Transposition of the main theme, mm. 6-7, violin 2 **Rhythmic diminution of the main theme in mm. 10-11, violin 2**

Example 4. Motivic development of the main theme in Movement I, *Stabat Mater*

pitch collection in m. 71 (Example 5). Movement VII opens with the main theme performed tutti in m. 180, in dotted-eighth-note rhythm. It is followed by the rhythmic variation of the theme in mm. 190-191 (Example 6). The main theme is transposed and performed in dotted-eighth-note rhythm again in Movement IX, starting from m. 258 (Example 7). Perry develops that section into a fugato, adding layers from a solo cello to all the strings.

Another interesting aspect of the opening motive is that it has four tendency tones that resolve up a half-step to D-F#-A#-D# sonority (the second chord of Example 8). All of the pitches of the main theme, stacked upon each other, would form a chord of 15th (the first chord of Example 8). The harmony that these pitches would project is a bit different from what Perry used many years later in *Homunculus*, C.F. (C.F. stands for chord of the 15th). See the last chord in Example 8.

Movement III, mm. 70-72, violin 1
the opening motive followed by the whole-tone pitch collection

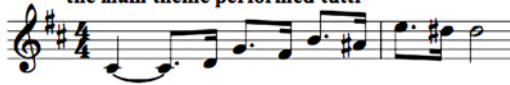


Movement III, a variation of the opening motive in mm. 73-74, cello



Example 5. Motivic development of the main theme in Movement III, *Stabat Mater*

Movement VII, mm. 180-181,
the main theme performed tutti



Movement VII, mm. 190-191, variation of the main theme in cello



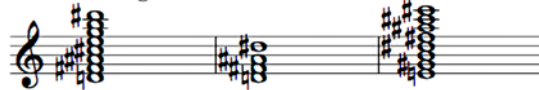
Example 6. Motivic development of the main theme in Movement VII, *Stabat Mater*

Movement IX, m. 258,
a variation of the main theme in cello



Example 7. Motivic development of the main theme in Movement IX, *Stabat Mater*

The diagram of chords



Example 8. 15th-chord diagram of the main theme in Movement I of *Stabat Mater*, the notes of its “resolution,” 15th-chord from *Homunculus*, C.F.

Movement IV, mm. 99-100, violin 1



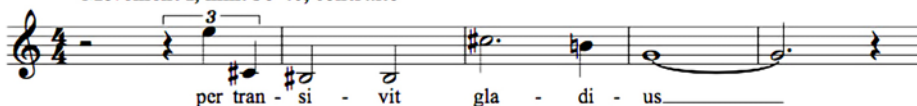
Example 9. The opening line of violin 1 in Movement IV, *Stabat Mater*

Movement IV, mm. 122-127, harmonic reduction



Example 10. Harmonic reduction of strings in mm. 122-127, Movement IV, *Stabat Mater*

Movement I, mm. 36-40, contralto



Example 11. Some examples of dramatic leaps in mm. 36-40, Movement I, *Stabat Mater*

One more characteristic that appears in *Stabat Mater* and in Perry's later works is her usage of quartal harmony. Movement IV starts with a quartal passage in the first violin in m. 100 (Example 9). The pattern continues in the second violin in m. 101, and then the viola is added to it in m. 105. The quartal harmonies sound transcendental in the strings in mm. 122-127 (Example 10).

Perry is able to attain highly dramatic passages in the work by various methods. One is the use of extremely large and dissonant leaps in the vocal line. These leaps create tension, especially when they are used repeatedly. Example 3 shows a leap down of a major ninth in Movement I, m. 21, on the word “lacrymosa” (tearful). A leap down a minor tenth appears in the same movement in m. 36 with the phrase “per transivit gladius” (“the sword pierced through”).⁹ (See Example 11.) A leap of a major ninth occurs in m. 83 to emphasize the lyrics “Quis est homo qui non fleret Matri Christi matrem si videret in tanto supplicio?” (“Who would not weep if saw the Mother of Christ in such a great punishment?”). In Movement IV, the leaps of a minor ninth, which occur in mm. 104 and 106, emphasize the painful meaning of the text: “Pro peccatis sua gentis vidit Jesum in tormentis” (“For the sinning of His people, saw her Jesus in great torment”).

Multiple musical elements contributed to building tension and drama in *Stabat Mater*, but it is Perry's sensitivity in expressing the meaning of the text that especially helps to distinguish her setting from that of many others and to place this piece as one of the outstanding sacred vocal works of the 20th century.

⁹ The translations are by Julia Perry.

Jane K (Evgeniya Kozhevnikova) is a composer, pianist, and educator. She composes in various styles and genres, from classical to jazz and tango, and tastefully blends them together. In 2020, she released a jazz-tango album titled *Tango Avenue*, and in 2022, an album of her art songs, *Lift Up Your Hearts*, was released. She holds two master of music degrees, Music Composition and Music Performance, from Western Michigan University and is working on her doctoral degree in Music Composition at the University of Florida.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Twenty-Five Seasons of Cutting Edge Concerts New Music Festival

VICTORIA BOND

Cutting Edge Concerts New Music Festival began in 1998 at Greenwich House with a program that featured opera scenes from Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*, Tania Leon's *A Scourge of Hyacinths*, William Bolcom's *McTeague*, and my own *Travels*. Over the twenty-five-year period, the festival has celebrated the works of women composers. The list is lengthy and impressive, and it includes Lisa Bielawa, Margaret Brouwer, Chen Yi, Valerie Coleman, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jennifer Higdon, Katherine Hoover, Laura Kaminsky, Libby Larsen, Hannah Lash, Thea Musgrave, Laura Schwendinger, Alex Shapiro, Judith Shatin, Augusta Read Thomas, Joan Tower, Melina Wagner, Anna Weesner, and many more. But it all started with a man, Pierre Boulez.

I was assistant conductor to Boulez with the Juilliard Contemporary Music Ensemble, when I was a student there. During rehearsals, I absorbed the engaging way he imparted his insights into the inner workings of the music. I was very impressed with his manner of speaking to audiences, which varied from first-time listeners to cognoscenti at his Perspective Encounters and "Rug" Concerts. When Boulez presented music by his colleagues, he interviewed them on stage, asking about their creative process. He had the unique ability to draw some vital nuggets of musical significance from even the most recalcitrant composers. His relationship with the composers, performers, and audience members sparked the idea for the beginnings of Cutting Edge Concerts (CEC). I wanted to create and present my own series and model it on his.



Cuban composers Orlando Garcia, Keyla Orozco, Aurelia de la Vega, and Tania Leon with Victoria Bond on a Cutting Edge Concert called Cuba Today! April 4, 2016.



Director Peter Sellars, singer Joan Morris, and composer William Bolcom with Victoria Bond on a Cutting Edge Concert, April 20, 2009, featuring Bolcom's songs.



Victoria Bond's setting of James Joyce's *Cyclops* from his *Ulysses*, performed on Cutting Edge Concerts New Music Festival at Symphony Space in Manhattan on April 1, 2013. Performers: The Manhattan Choral Ensemble, Pulse Chamber Ensemble: Scott Flavin, violin; Margaret Donaghue Flavin, clarinet; Marina Radiushina, piano; Actors Sean McNall, Rich Dreher, Sean Gormley, and Cornelius Horgan.



Victoria Bond with composer Joan Tower



Victoria Bond interviews composer/flutist Valerie Coleman as part of Cutting Edge Concerts New Music Festival in a Composer Portrait Concert devoted to her music, April 7, 2014.



Jessica Fishenfeld and Scott Joiner in Eric Salzman's *Big Jim and the Small-Time Investors*

Boulez was generous to his colleagues, promoting their music as well as his own, and that spirit of generosity was something else I was bent on emulating. I wanted to interview composers and make them feel at ease discussing their music with the audience. Above all, I wanted to avoid the off-putting formality of a prepared statement. My ability as an interviewer has been tested on a number of occasions. I have had the challenge of speaking with composers whose responses were monosyllabic; I had to work hard to draw them out of their shell. I have also had the opposite problem; for instance, when a well-known architect monopolized the pre-performance discussion and stretched what should have been a five-minute introduction into a half-hour lecture on his architectural accomplishments.

Through my work as a conductor, I have gotten to know many composers and performers. Some are personal friends with whom I share my leisure

activities such as taking long country walks with fellow enthusiast and composer Laurie Anderson. We share a passion for nature and for animals, and during one of these walks, we worked out ideas for presenting her film *Hidden within Mountains* on a future CEC concert. Some are people whose music I have long admired and conducted, like Tania Leon, Libby Larsen, Daron Hagen, and John Harbison. Some I knew when they were students such as Andrew Norman, Kenji Bunch, and Cornelius Dufallo. And some are performers who have advocated my own music: The Cassatt String Quartet, Da Capo, Cygnus, and The American Modern Ensemble among them.

I wanted to interview composers and make them feel at ease discussing their music with the audience. Above all, I wanted to avoid the off-putting formality of a prepared statement.

— VICTORIA BOND

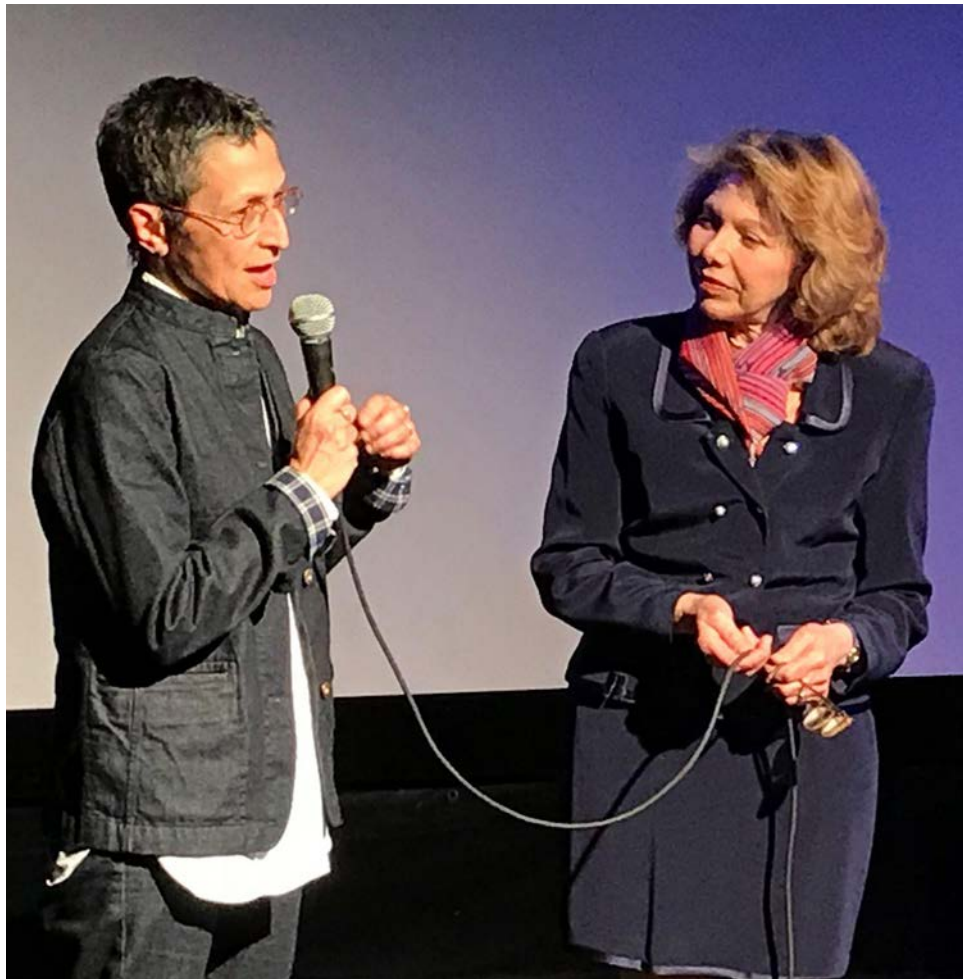
Opera and music theater have always been important components of CEC. I am fortunate to be good friends with renowned director Rhoda Levine, who has directed productions as varied as *Porgy and Bess* in Cape Town, South Africa, to *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the New York City Opera. Knowing that she would bring her theatrical flair to CEC, I asked her to direct two unusual works. For Derek Bermel's witty *Language Instruction*, she placed the action in a classroom full of eccentrics, taught by an instructor who could not communicate. The resulting chaos was hilarious. She also directed *The Four Seasons of Futurist Cuisine* by Aaron Jay Kernis as a TV cooking show, complete with Dadaist recipes.



Rochelle Small-Clifford singing *The Dawes Roll* by Valerie Coleman.



Jonathan Spitz, cello; Jessica Fishenfeld, soprano; and Oren Fader, guitar, in *Sirens* by Victoria Bond.



Victoria Bond with composer Laura Kaminsky

The festival has produced fully-staged chamber operas including *My Last Duchess* by Theodore Wiprud and *The Clever Mistress* by Robert Sirota. Valeria Vasilevski directed Eric Salzman's opera *The True Last Words of Dutch Schultz* as a film noir. The costumes were entirely black and white, and in one scene, the action moved in reverse, with the singers executing their original gestures backwards and in fast-motion, like a film rewinding. The eclectic vocalist Theo Bleckman was the soloist, and his portrayal of the legendary gangster was malevolently spine-tingling. CEC produced a production of Salzman's *Big Jim and the Small-time Investors*, directed by J. Griffith Brown. *ConcertoNet* (April 2018) said of the performance: "Salzman's concept, and his libretto with Ned Jackson, placed their opera today, taking on all those venal curiosities of American life in his last work....Greed

and avarice, hucksterism and holograms, manic televangelists and moral turpitude, all became transformed into a sardonic, wicked, yet strangely appealing 'musical theater' piece last night." This season the festival will present scenes from my puppet operetta, *How Gulliver Returned Home in a Manner that was Very Not Direct*, with puppets and direction by Doug Fitch. I will be conducting the Mostly Modern Ensemble.

From time to time, I have paired composers with creative artists of other disciplines, such as architects (*The Shape of Sound*) and weavers (*Woven Sound*). In 2010, I created a season with the theme *Can Music Heal?* and partnered with Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital as well as other cancer care facilities. CEC donated half of the box office proceeds to these organizations. We invited doctors and music

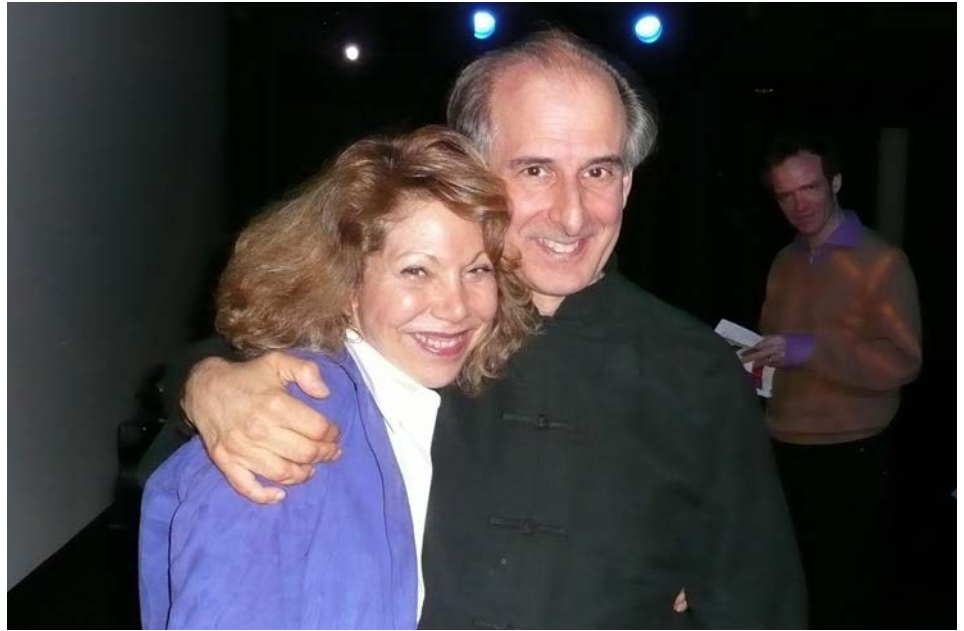
therapists to participate in pre-concert panel discussions. I was curious to know more about how music therapists work with patients and spent the day observing one at MSK.

Over the years, we have presented a number of programs that incorporate visual art and artists. For example, I have long been fascinated with the way weavers' art relates to music because it uses form, color, and texture—elements that apply to composition. I wrote a work that I called *Woven*, inspired by the intricate and colorful weaving and textiles of Jack Lenor Larsen. He invited me to perform it on an outdoor concert at his magnificent sculpture garden in East Hampton. In turn, I invited Larsen to speak about his work on a Cutting Edge Concert. Dressed in his signature white suit and hat, he made a stunning presence at the concert and astounded

the audience with images of his incredibly detailed artwork. At CEC, we have worked with the prominent painter Eric Fischl, whose watercolors were projected during the Eroica Trio's performance of Bruce Wolosoff's composition *The Loom*. Fischl was at the concert to discuss the collaboration with Wolosoff and the synergy between visual and musical creativity.

In 2006, CEC featured the music of Harry Partch, a composer with whom I had a fruitful history. When I lived in Los Angeles, he cast me as the soprano soloist in the premiere of his opera *Delusion of the Fury*, which made an indelible impression on me. After Partch's death, Dean Drummond, a percussionist who had also participated in that premiere, continued the Partch tradition by preserving the iconic instruments at Montclair State University and commissioning new compositions for them. CEC performed an entire concert using the Partch instruments and featured his music as well as works by Drummond and other composers. At that time, the series was held in a very small theater at Greenwich House, and one of the instruments, the Marimba Eroica, could barely fit on the stage. The player stood on a tall ladder in order to play and wore huge orange gloves with which he tapped the keys. At the concert, I asked the player where he got those gloves and if they were specifically made for that purpose. The audience laughed when he replied "Home Depot."

Although CEC had to suspend performances in 2020 due to Covid, the festival did present two live performances in 2021 at Symphony Space that were live-streamed and offered to the public for free. Stellar musicians from the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra performed on one, and on the other, composer Philip Glass appeared live on stage to discuss his music with me and pianist Paul Barnes. More than 1,000 people watched the live stream of these two concerts, and probably many more enjoyed the videos of them on our website.



Victoria Bond with composer Bruce Adolphs



Victoria Bond with composer Philip Glass



Victoria Bond with composer Paul Chiharra



Tenor Scott Joiner and cast in goggles in Eric Salzman's *Big Jim and the Small-Time Investors*

I launched Cutting Edge Concerts with the purpose of presenting the music of living composers, including, but not limited to, my own work. I was eager to know what my composition colleagues were writing and to have a way of bringing their music to the public. I also knew many performers who were interested in new music, and the thought of putting these together was intoxicating. I resolved that the series would not endorse one style but rather revel in the multiplicity of diverse styles being composed today, from the most conservative to the most experimental. From then to now, the series celebrates the coexistence of this diversity and presents works without making stylistic judgments. Over the years, I have made a point of engaging ensembles that rehearse and perform together on a regular basis. I have found that this results in committed and polished performances.

The challenges of producing, organizing, maintaining, and funding Cutting Edge Concerts are great. Because so much of the music is literally hot off the press, getting composers to finish works on time is critical. More than once, the series has had to change programs because a scheduled work was not completed. However, the rewards of the series are equally great: bringing new music to new audiences; providing a platform for composers to hear their music performed by outstanding musicians; and providing musicians interested in new music the opportunity to work with composers.

Cutting Edge Concerts has given me a tangible way to express my appreciation for those who create, those who perform, and those who enjoy both. Celebrating our twenty-fifth season, CEC is going strong, and, as we did in the beginning, we continue to celebrate the music of our time.



Michael Kelly, Ariadne Greif, Jonathan Hare, Sean Christensen, Yoojin Lee in Victoria Bond and Stephen Greco's *The Adventures of Gulliver*



Ariadne Greif, Charles Tay and Yoojin Lee in Victoria Bond and Stephen Greco's *The Adventures of Gulliver*

I launched Cutting Edge Concerts with the purpose of presenting the music of living composers, including, but not limited to, my own work. I was eager to know what my composition colleagues were writing and to have a way of bringing their music to the public.

— VICTORIA BOND



Odaline de la Martínez

LORELT at 30: An Interview with Odaline de la Martínez

CHRISTOPHER WILEY

Independent record label LORELT (Lontano Records) was formed in 1992 with the aim of releasing neglected classical music by women composers, Latin American composers, and 20th- and 21st-century composers. A total of 45 CDs have been issued on the label to date. I spoke to its founder, Odaline de la Martínez (known as Chachi) [Figure 1], about its fascinating 30-year history.

Christopher Wiley: Chachi, congratulations on 30 successful years of LORELT!

Odaline de la Martínez: Yes, it'll be 30 in May, and I'm really glad that the anniversary is being recognized because we've been covering the repertoire that people are only just beginning to turn to now. I had a feeling that something wasn't really fair, that something needed correcting. I know that it's only a small gesture, but in my own small way, I knew that I could make a difference. And that's how we started. And we've been doing it for 30 years! It's about celebrating diversity: women composers, Latin American music, contemporary composers, African-American music—we've released music by several Black British composers; some have appeared on more than one disc. And we have plans for others.

CW: You're being incredibly modest! What you've done with LORELT, and what you're continuing to do, has made a huge difference in the world of music. But how did it start—what was involved in setting it up?

OM: Back in the beginning, music was released on LPs. To produce anything on an LP or to press 30,000 LPs [was costly, and] we didn't have that kind of money. All of a sudden, CDs appeared on the horizon. In those days, you could make 1,000, but you couldn't do less than that—now you can make 30 or even just 15 if you need to. I thought, here's an opportunity: it doesn't cost as much to make a CD as an LP.

Even during my years of studying at the Royal Academy [of Music, London], I kept an eye on the releases of music by contemporary and living composers. Time and time again, those companies would get a grant and release a record, and one or two years later it would be deleted from their catalogue. We always made a point that we will never delete anything we record because if we don't feel strongly enough to keep it in the label's catalogue, then we shouldn't do it in the first place. So, nothing is deleted; everything is kept in perpetuity.

CW: Did you literally just start recording and releasing? Is it as simple as that?

OM: Yes, we figured we could do it. And do you know who we had a lot of support from? Dame Elizabeth Maconchy. She came to our very first recording, *British Women Composers Volume 1* [LNT 101]....Since then, of course, we've recorded not only her chamber music [LNT101], but also her choral music [LNT127] and her orchestral music, too [LNT133]. We're now looking at the possibility of buying from the BBC, if we can, recordings of her choral music with instruments because I think she wrote a lot of choral music. But the disc that we released [LNT127] was basically unaccompanied or with piano.

CW: You mentioned that LORELT has a focus on women composers, 20th- and 21st-century composers, and Latin American composers. Why did you choose those areas?

OM: Because they were neglected. That's why we founded Lontano itself,¹ because there were so many really good composers that were neglected. We actually recorded a lot of American composers who were very well-known in America but were completely unknown elsewhere. People only knew Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, and a couple of other composers, and that was it. There was such a wealth of composers who needed to be heard, including British and Latin American composers. There were people who had never heard of [Heitor] Villa-Lobos—it's unbelievable. I remember being asked to do a concert of "repertoire music," and I did a concert of Villa-Lobos, and they said, he's not "repertoire." I said, yes, he is! In France, in Germany, in the [United] States, he's repertoire, but obviously not here [in England]. So, let's make him repertoire here. Since then, I've done a lot of Villa-Lobos, including a whole Prom concert in 1992.²

CW: Why do you think the major labels have neglected that repertoire?

OM: Because you have to survive—and that's the problem. When you're pressing large quantities of LPs, you've got to guarantee some kind of a sale. And if you've got an unknown composer, you're not going to do it. But now you can start with 30 copies, and then add more as you sell. With the Florence Price CD [*Fantasia Nègre: The Piano Music of Florence Price* (2021), Samantha Ege (piano). LNT144], we had no idea that it was going to be such a hit, so we started with about 500 copies. And then all of a sudden in the States they wanted more. It's beginning to pay the bills because it costs a lot of money to release—not as much as an LP, but it costs.

¹ LORELT is co-owned by Lontano, the contemporary music ensemble that Odaline de la Martínez and Christopher Wiley founded in 1976.

² For full details of this concert, see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/events/eqpq9r>.

CW: *What made your record label different?*

OM: In the beginning, we were really lucky because we released three CDs: *British Women Composers Volume 1* [LNT101], Villa-Lobos' *Chamber and Choral Music* [LNT102], and *British Women Composers Volume 2* [LNT103]. We applied for a grant in the early days of the Arts Council, and we got it. It covered the first three releases. After that, we slowly gathered bits and pieces of funding. Often, if we work in collaboration with a university, the university might contribute financially. Now there are other foundations that contribute, such as the RVW Trust, which supports projects on British composers. The Ambache Charitable Trust contributes to a lot of projects on women composers. We've never been awarded particularly large amounts, but every little bit helps.

CW: *Of the three categories you mentioned, which do you think is the most important area of focus for LORELT? Is there much overlap between categories?*

OM: I think women composers because a lot of the Latin American composers are women, and many of the contemporary composers are women. Women composers overlap into everything else—even though we still record lots of Latin American music. Look at Silvina Milstein: she's a living composer, a woman composer, and she's Latin American. That wasn't why we chose her; we chose her because we liked her music. She's a first-class composer and fits in with LORELT's ethos but is not well known.

CW: *How did those categories develop? Because I know that you've more recently branched out into piano music, choral music, and instrumental music.*

OM: That was because some of the composers specialize in piano—some of the Latin American composers, for example [Carlos] Guastavino, who's a very well-known composer, but little known here [in the UK]...and Latin American performers, like Alma

Petchersky, who's done a couple of CDs [LNT106, LNT120]. We're planning to do a CD of Fanny Mendelssohn, and she [Petchersky] actually went to the State Museum in Berlin and found scores that have never been recorded before. The recording is going to be coming out, hopefully this year.

We need to get enough money to release CDs. Now, we can start with small quantities. We're very lucky because our distributors have a special machine in their own production factory, so if somebody orders 100 CDs, they can make just 100, which is very useful. It's all about the advance of technology. They've also just bought a huge machine that makes LPs. If you look at most of the stores in this country that sell CDs, the biggest ones are those that also sell LPs. There are almost more sales of LPs than CDs!

We pursue projects that we believe in, not because we're trying to ride on the back of Florence Price—we planned that CD long before the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum, and we recorded it in the middle of a national lockdown. Things we believe in are becoming things that other people believe in, too, or that people want to support, so, for the first time, we're breaking even. Let's hope it lasts!

CW: *Chachi, you're a high-profile conductor and a composer, and this is how you were probably best known 30 years ago. How easily did you take to the LORELT recording and production role?*

OM: It's a divided role. We've recorded a lot for the BBC and quite a few other countries; as a result, we know how to record. Once you have the recording, it's just a matter of project management. Originally, we had an administrator, but we really couldn't afford one, so now I oversee production. I'm the middle person. The performer sends me the program notes; I send them to the designer. The recording engineer sends the master; we send it to the production company. We have a very good publicist, Nicky Thomas Media Consultancy. We send her the information about our releases, and she



Figure 2. Album cover of *Black Renaissance Woman*, SamanthaEge, piano

publicizes it. The publicity we've had for the Florence Price recording has been amazing. And it looks like we're also getting a lot of publicity for our latest release, *Black Renaissance Woman* [LNT145; Figure 2]. We were pressing a small number of CDs very quickly, because we had to get it out—can you imagine recording in December and releasing it at the end of February? That's an impressive turnaround for a record label—it usually takes a year and a half. So, at the moment, we've only pressed a few to send to the publicist, but now we're pressing more.

CW: *We were speaking about how LORELT championed certain types of neglected music years in advance of others. But you were ahead of the curve in other respects as well: you were the first independent classical label to offer .mp3 downloads. How did you come to recognize so early a trend that has become hugely important in the music industry?*

OM: As soon as I saw that you could get music in .mp3 format, I went for it. The trend started in America, and I said: Why don't we offer downloads on our site? That was before we joined Zebralution [a leading digital distributor for independent record labels]. (Zebralution uses .wav files, rather than .mp3.) Zebralution heard about us, and they are now our digital worldwide distributors—they sell our music all over the world....[T]hey send us spreadsheets identifying who bought

which titles and which digital files, including the big-name companies such as Amazon and Spotify.

CW: During LORELT's 30 years, what types of artists have you worked with?

OM: We've worked with pianists, the BBC singers, and orchestras, such as the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Originally, the purpose was to promote Lontano and the composers, but as we began to grow, we started finding people who I really wanted to be in the recordings, and we began to add new people....If you plan well in advance, and you raise the money, you can do it. We're very grateful for our supporters [as mentioned above].... Recording is expensive. Letting us use the wonderful recording studio at the University of Surrey, with two beautiful pianos, is real support. The Florence Price CD [LNT144³] and the latest release [LNT145] were recorded at the University of Surrey and were distributed all over the world.

CW: Are there any other discs within LORELT's catalogue that you would consider to be particularly notable, or which stand out for you in some way?

OM: I personally feel in touch with the first three [LNT101–3], the Maconchy CDs [LNT127, LNT133], and the Ginastera CD of piano music [LNT106], which is so beautifully done. At the same time as we did our Ginastera CD, somebody else also did it. The critics compared them, and they regarded our recording very highly because the pianist [Alma Petchersky] knew how to interpret the music. All of LORELT's recordings are important to me. Of course, the Florence Price CD is very important, and the next one [LNT145], which includes Margaret Bonds [amongst other composers]. I think Bonds is phenomenal. Her *Spiritual Suite* opens the new CD; the last movement is absolutely extraordinary—the bass sounds like African drums, and [pianist] Samantha [Ege] does it so well.

3 See Christopher Wiley and Samantha Ege, "Women in Music on the Record: The Liza Lehmann, Ethel Smyth, and Florence Price Sessions at the University of Surrey," *Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music* 27/1 (2021): 25–29.

CW: Which of LORELT's discs have sold particularly well, and why do you think that was?

OM: The Villa-Lobos CDs [LNT102] and works on LNT112 and LNT115 sell very well, and the Boulez CD [LNT108, which includes *Le Marteau sans maître*, the first commercial recording not conducted by the composer]. It also depends on the country: in America, the Latin American music has always sold well [such as] the music recorded by [pianist] Clélia Iruzun, which is mostly Brazilian.

CW: You've mentioned sales in America, and I know you have an American distributor and also an Antipodean one. Where else in the world are your recordings sold?

OM: Everywhere. We've got a British distributor, Trapeze Music, who also sells directly to Europe....People buy the music from our website, and digital downloads are worldwide.

CW: In addition to selling through physical formats and digital downloads, has LORELT's catalogue received much radio airplay?

OM: Yes, a lot. Tom Quick in Toronto, Canada [who broadcasts the radio show "Women in Music" on The Grand 101.1 FM] plays many of our recordings. Radio France recently wrote...that they would like to broadcast some Florence Price, and we sent them a CD. We sent .wav files to Sweden. In the UK, you hear our music played over and over again. In Latin America, there's a big movement in Uruguay and Argentina to promote the work of women composers. They don't have the facilities that we have, and they don't have the money to buy the CDs, so I often send them the .wav files, and they play them on the radio. Also in Israel, [conductor and radio music editor] Talia Ilan has a program on opera, and she's been broadcasting a lot of women composers; she even played the CD of my music [LNT130]. The BBC also plays bits and pieces of my music as well. We're getting a great deal of radio play.



Figure 3. Album cover of *Smyth, Beach and Spain-Dunk*

CW: Other than those you've already mentioned, has LORELT had any other notable supporters?

OM: Sadly, the Arts Council doesn't support CD recordings any more. The Amphion Foundation in America, for example, supports our concerts. We benefit from a lot of foundations, but very few American foundations support just CDs, but they often support concerts. Since the music has already been rehearsed, you can record it after the concert, which is a lot cheaper, since the rehearsal is paid for already.

CW: I know that the images used on LORELT's album covers are chosen very carefully. Could you tell us a little more about that? Are there any particularly notable album covers?

OM: LNT114, a recording of three string quartets, including one by [Ethel] Smyth featuring her on the front cover. (See Figure 3.) Often the composers offer images to us; for example, for the [forthcoming] Rhian Samuel recording, we have several possible photographs of her.

CW: In addition to selling CDs, LORELT has started to offer printed music for purchase as well. How did that come about?

OM: Yes, the website is beginning to release publications such as Ethel Smyth's *Serenade in D* and, in the near future, her *Overture to Anthony and Cleopatra*. We were awarded a grant from the Ambache Charitable Trust and engaged two people to edit the *Serenade*

with myself as the final editor. The two editors copied it, and I made changes because I have performed the *Serenade* so many times that I knew where the mistakes were. I also edited it shape-wise; for instance, moving a *crescendo* a little later in the music because I had tried it several times in performance, and it didn't quite work where it was. I also wrote a six-page preface, including some information on Smyth. The edition is now in its second version, so it is 99.9% mistake-proof. It is inexpensive to purchase; the main cost is postage, and we are the only one offering the music for sale. This is the beginning of a new area of activity for LORELT: selling printed music of works that need to be heard but aren't widely available.

CW: You mentioned earlier that you've released a CD of your own compositions on the LORELT label. Do you have any other plans to release your own music in the future?

OM: Yes, *ASONANCIAS* [LNT130]. It is an early chamber work. I'm now beginning to collect my early and late works, and I hope to release another CD.

CW: Are there any other future projects that are being planned for LORELT?

OM: We're planning a recording that we hope to release this year of music for voice and instruments by Rhian Samuel, with [baritone] Jeremy Huw Williams. It has been delayed because it takes 83 minutes, and the maximum a recording company can produce is 75 minutes. Williams will record additional material, and we plan to release two CDs. A string quartet from America will be in residence in Oxford in May, and they will be recording string quartet and piano quintet music of Black South African composers. And then there's the Fanny Mendelssohn recording that I already mentioned. So, there's a lot in the pipeline at the moment.

CW: It's really great to know that LORELT is still flourishing, even after 30 years. Chachi, thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today, and I wish you all the best for LORELT's continued success in the future.

OM: Thank you.

Christopher Wiley is Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Surrey. He is the author of many book chapters and journal articles published in *The Musical Quarterly*, *Music & Letters*, *Journal of Musicological Research*, and *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*. He has co-edited volumes including *Researching and Writing on Contemporary Art and Artists* (2020), *Transnational Perspectives on Artists' Lives* (2020), and *Women's Suffrage in Word, Image, Music, Stage and Screen* (2021). (www.surrey.ac.uk/people/christopher-wiley)

Cuban-American composer and conductor Odaline de la Martínez was the first woman in history to conduct a BBC Prom at the Royal Albert Hall, London. She has received numerous awards including a Marshall Scholarship from the British Government and a Guggenheim Fellowship; she was made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music and received the Villa-Lobos Medal from the Brazilian government. In 2017, Martínez received a Lifetime Achievement Award and in 2019, a Doctorate Honoris Causa from the University of Surrey, as well as a Gold Badge from the Ivors Academy of Composers and Song Writers, and a Lukas Lifetime Achievement Award for her achievement as a woman and a member of the Latin American Community. Martínez's opera trilogy *Imoinda—A Story of Love and Slavery* received its world premiere at the Seventh London Festival of American Music in 2019 to critical acclaim. In 2020 she was appointed co-director of Juilliard's Trailblazers Festival of Women Composers and was named Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of Surrey.

LORELT: CD Catalogue (as of March 2022)

For further information about these releases, see www.lorelt.co.uk/cd-catalogue

LNT101. Errolyn Wallen, Lindsay Cooper, Elizabeth Maconchy, Nicola LeFanu. *British Women Composers Volume 1* (1992). Jane Manning (soprano), Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).

LNT102. Heitor Villa-Lobos. *Chamber and Choral Music* (1992). BBC Singers, Lontano,

LNT103. Odaline de la Martínez, Judith Weir, Melinda Maxwell, Hilary Tann, Eleanor Alberga. *British Women Composers Volume 2* (1992). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).

LNT104. Martin Butler. *Tin-Pan Ballet* (1993). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).

LNT105. John Metcalf, Arvo Pärt, Robert ap Huw, Jeffrey Lewis, Grace Williams, Philip Glass. *Sea of Glass: Môr o Wydr* (1994). Elinor Bennett (harp).

LNT106. Alberto Ginastera. *The Piano Music of Alberto Ginastera* (1994). Alma Petchersky (piano).

LNT107. Edwin York Bowen, Roberto Gerhard, Elizabeth Maconchy, George Benjamin, William Alwyn. *Flight: British Flute Music* (1995). Ingrid Culliford (flute), Dominic Saunders (piano).

LNT108. Pierre Boulez. *Boulez sans Boulez* (1995). Marc Ponthus (piano), Linda Hirst (mezzo-soprano), Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).

LNT109. Augusta Holmès, Nadia Boulanger, Cécile Chaminade, Pauline Viardot-García. *Fleurs jetées: Songs by French Women Composers* (1996). Rebecca de Pont Davies (mezzo-contraalto), Clare Toomer (piano).

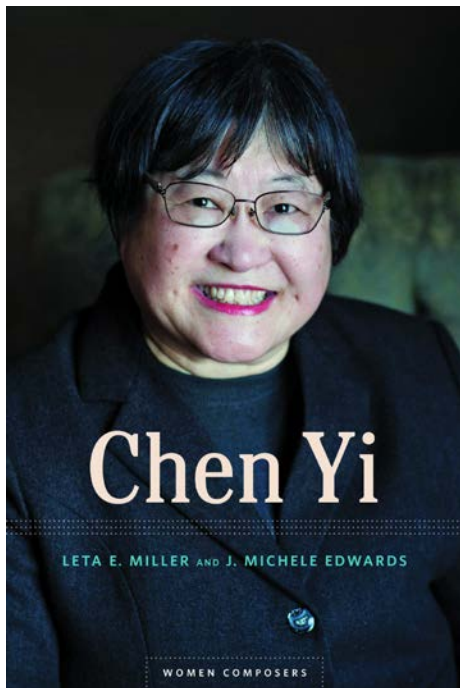
LNT110. Minna Keal. *A Life in Reverse: The Music of Minna Keal* (1996). Stephen Bryant (violin), BBC Symphony Orchestra, Nicholas Cleobury (conductor). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor). Archaeus String Quartet.

LNT111. John Metcalf. *Paradise Haunts...: Music by John Metcalf* (1997). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Angell Piano Trio, Caroline Balding (violin), Timothy Lissimore (piano), Frances Angell (piano), Richard McMahon (piano).

- LNT112.** Heitor Villa-Lobos, Carlos Guastavino, Modesta Bor, Andrés Sas, Ernesto Lecuona, Lucas Estrada, Antonio María Valencia, Alberto Ginastera. *Songs from Latin America* (1998). Marina Tafur (soprano), Nigel Foster (piano).
- LNT113.** M. Rosas Cobian, Agustín Fernández, Rajmil Fischman, Gabriela Ortíz, Mario Verandi. *Alma latina* (1999). (Electroacoustic music).
- LNT114.** Smyth, *Beach and Spain-Dunk* [String Quartets] (2000). Ethel Smyth, Amy Marcy Beach, Susan Spain-Dunk. Archaeus String Quartet.
- LNT115.** Francisco Mignone, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Barrozo Netto, Edino Krieger, Ronaldo Miranda, Marlos Nobre. *Brazilian Mosaic* (2002). Clélia Iruzun (piano), Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).
- LNT116.** Dorothy Ker, Jenny McLeod, Gillian Whitehead, Annea Lockwood. *New Zealand Women Composers* (2003). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).
- LNT117.** Stephen Gardner, Ed Bennett, Kevin O'Connell, Simon Mawhinney, Elaine Agnew, Michael Alcorn. *Music from Northern Ireland* (2004). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).
- LNT118.** Jeremy Dale Roberts. *The Music of Jeremy Dale Roberts* (2005). Hiroake Takenouchi (piano), Dimitri Murrath (viola), Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).
- LNT119.** Ernesto Lecuona, Ernestina Lecuona. *Lecuona: Ernesto and Ernestina* (2005). Clélia Iruzun (piano).
- LNT120.** Carlos Guastavino. *Piano Music of Carlos Guastavino* (2005). Alma Petchersky (piano).
- LNT121.** Luís Tinoco. *Chamber Works* (2005). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Eileen Hulse (soprano).
- LNT122.** Philip Hammond, Alan Mills, Eibhlís Farrell, Deirdre McKay, David Byers. *Piano Music from Northern Ireland* (2006). David Quigley (piano).
- LNT123.** Marietta Veulens. *de algunas zonas del alma: piano cubano* (2006). Marietta Veulens (piano).
- LNT124.** Francisco Mignone. *Piano Music* (2007). Clélia Iruzun (piano).
- LNT125.** Peter Child. *Tableaux: Chamber and Choral Music of Peter Child* (2007). Lontano, BBC Singers (Women's Voices), Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Maggie Cole (harpsichord).
- LNT126.** Dorothy Ker. *diffracted terrains: Chamber Music of Dorothy Ker* (2007). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Andrew Sparling (clarinet), Robin Michael (cello).
- LNT127.** Elizabeth Maconchy. *Music for Voices* (2007). BBC Singers, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Richard Pearce (piano).
- LNT128.** Joji Yuasa, Toru Takemitsu, Akira Miyoshi, Ichiro Nodaïra, Toshio Hosokawa, Keiko Harada, Sachiyo Tsurumi, Dai Fujikura. *COSMOS HAPTIC: Contemporary Piano Music from Japan* (2008). Hiroaki Takenouchi (piano).
- LNT129.** Silvina Milstein. *Fire Dressed in Black: chamber works* (2008). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Alison Wells (mezzo-soprano), Caroline Balding (violin).
- LNT130.** Odaline de la Martínez. *ASONANCIAS: Chamber Music* (2009). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Marina Tafur (soprano), Olivia Robinson (soprano), Sophie Langdon (violin), Caroline Balding (violin), Mark Knoop (piano).
- LNT131.** Peter Child. *Pantomime: Chamber Music of Peter Child* (2010). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Olivia Robinson (soprano), Rebecca Lodge (mezzo-soprano), Caroline Balding (viola), Dominic Saunders (piano).
- LNT132.** Mihailo Trandafilovski. *Chamber Music* (2010). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin), Mihailo Trandafilovski (violin), Caroline Balding (viola), Kreutzer Quartet.
- LNT133.** Elizabeth Maconchy. *Orchestral Music* (2011). BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Clélia Iruzun (piano).
- LNT134.** Philip Hammond. *Piano Music by Philip Hammond* (2011). David Quigley (piano), Cathal Breslin (piano), Michael McHale (piano).
- LNT135.** James Clarke, Dorothy Ker, Howard Skempton, Tim Parkinson, Ross Lorraine, Paul Rhys, Christopher Fox, Bryn Harrison. *A Place in the Sky* (2012). Andrew Sparling (clarinet).
- LNT136.** Marlos Nobre. *Piano Music* (2012). Clélia Iruzun (piano).
- LNT137.** Nicola Moro, Kim Ashton, Paul Evernden, Matías Hancke de la Fuente, Leonardo Margutti. *London: New Voices* (2012). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor).
- LNT138.** Rob Keeley. *Dances with Bears* (2013). Mary Dullea (piano), Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Caroline Balding (violin), Dominic Saunders (piano), Rowland Sutherland (flute), Andrew Sparling (clarinet).
- LNT139.** Ernesto Nazareth. *Portrait of Rio* (2015). Clélia Iruzun (piano).
- LNT140.** Grace Williams. *My Last Duchess: The Songs of Grace Williams* (2017). Jeremy Huw Williams (baritone), Paula Fan (piano, harpsichord), Rachel Kay Green (harp).
- LNT141.** Silvina Milstein. *of gold and shadows volume 1: chamber works* (2019). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Dominic Saunders (piano), Helen Tunstall (harp).
- LNT142.** Silvina Milstein. *of gold and shadows volume 2: chamber works* (2019). Lontano, Odaline de la Martínez (conductor), Angelica Cathariou (mezzo-soprano), Tarli-Varbanov Piano Duo.
- LNT143.** Elizabeth Maconchy, Nicola LeFanu, Hilary Tann, Eleanor Alberga, Barbara Jazwinski, Cecilia McDowall. *Women's Voices* (2020). Jeremy Huw Williams (baritone), Paula Fan (piano), Yunah Lee (soprano), Lauren Rustad Roth (violin), Timothy Kantor (violin), Molly Gebrian (viola), Theodore Buchholz (cello).
- LNT144.** Florence Price. *Fantasia Nègre: The Piano Music of Florence Price* (2021). Samantha Ege (piano).
- LNT145.** Margaret Bonds, Helen Eugenia Hagan, Nora Douglas Holt, Betty Jackson King, Florence Price. *Black Renaissance Woman* (2022). Samantha Ege (piano), John Paul Ekin (piano).

REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW



Chen Yi

Leta E. Miller and J. Michele Edwards: *Chen Yi*

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 252 pp.; appendices, bibliography, index, photographs, musical examples, cloth, paper, ebook. ISBN: 978-0-252-04354-3, 978-0-252-08544-4, 978-0-252-05242-2 (2020)

ELIZABETH L. KEATHLEY

Chen Yi is a deeply-researched, engaging, and highly-readable book, which is part of the University of Illinois Press's important Women Composers series. Chen (b. 1953) is a well-established composer with a voluminous oeuvre and an endowed professorship plus many commissions, residencies, awards, and honors, yet there are fewer scholarly articles and dissertations on Chen's life and compositions than one might expect (most are in Mandarin). This volume, therefore, fills a critical lacuna in the English-language literature on music history.

The book is considerably longer than others in the series, but its length is justified by the extent of Chen's

achievements and accolades. The book has seven chapters plus back matter and does not stint on explicatory graphics or the interpretation of biographical and professional facts. These features, in fact, are the volume's chief attractions: more than just a body of facts, the book's interpretations of the facts afford a satisfying understanding of Chen's oeuvre and its contexts.

The authors are well positioned to write such a book. Although they are both U.S. music scholars, Leta Miller, professor emerita at University of California Santa Cruz, has participated in the Pacific Rim consciousness of the West Coast, while J. Michele Edwards, professor emerita of Macalester College, has done considerable research on the music of modern women composers, including East Asian women.

The central chapters of the book describe Chen's compositional methods (Chapter 3) and provide analyses of selected compositions in three generic groups reflecting performing forces: solo and chamber music, large instrumental ensembles, and solo and choral vocal music (Chapters 4–6, respectively). The framing chapters, an introduction and biography (Chapters 1 and 2) and concluding chapter, "Issues" (Chapter 7), address Chen's musical background and training, her motivations for and philosophy of composing, and how her varied life and professional experiences have informed her music and, in turn, been informed by her gender, social class, and nationality. The framing chapters can be easily understood by most readers; the central chapters will be more meaningful to people with some understanding of Western music, its notation, and its vocabulary. The Chinese dimensions of Chen's musical aesthetics and practices are explained in detail, which is helpful for both professionals and amateurs of Western music.

Throughout the book the authors give Chinese terms in Pinyin romanization, and a glossary provides not only definitions but also the terms

in both simplified and traditional Chinese characters. Explanations of Chinese musical features are invariably quite clear. Both co-authors are knowledgeable about Chinese music, and they had several of their sources translated from Mandarin for them by Yunxiang Gao. This surely provides a richer knowledge base than relying exclusively on English-language sources. The large number of interviews the authors conducted with Chen Yi herself, among others, clearly added to the richness of detail in their account.

The authors take a particular stand regarding Chen's music, arguing that it is not a hybrid in any trivial sense, e.g., grafting some sort of decorative *chinoiserie* onto Western classical music, but rather that Chen's style is a distinctive amalgam of the many musics she has practiced, experienced, and been trained in throughout her multifarious musical life. How they reach this conclusion is clear in the biographical introduction to Chen's music: her early training in Western classical music, which she played on violin and piano in the home of her physician parents, her conservatory education in Beijing, her exposure to folk and revolutionary music during the Cultural Revolution, and her leadership of ensembles for both model Peking opera and traditional Peking opera all influenced and enriched Chen's mature style. Not only did her teachers provide training as a musician and composer, but they also influenced her attitude about how music fits into her thinking and life.

Exchange programs between the Beijing Central Conservatory, where Chen pursued undergraduate and master's studies (she was the first Chinese woman to receive a Master of Music in composition at that institution), and Columbia University, where she earned her doctorate, were crucial for her compositional development. She has studied with Alexander Goehr, Mario Davidovsky, Patricia Carpenter, and Chou Wen-chung, whose advocacy of "the spirit of the *wenren*—ancient philosopher artists" who studied

broadly and recognized relationships among the arts—Chen took to heart.¹ Chen credits these broad (and deep) studies not only in music and music history, but also in world history, art, and philosophy, for her insights into relationships among musical ideas and practices from diverse times, places, and situations; Chou credited Chen's exceptionally hard work and open mind.

Regardless of her intellectual and musical achievements, Chen Yi projects a disarming humility and a desire to do good in the world. She has routinely reached out to the Chinese diasporic community in whatever U.S. city she has lived in. Also, she has served musical groups she participated in—from the "Music From China" quintet (comprised of traditional instruments, but also playing recently composed music) to the Women's Philharmonic—by taking on additional tasks for the benefit of the group and their audiences. For example, she has written newsletters or done other kinds of uncompensated outreach. Although she remarks on the difficulty of living under the Cultural Revolution for both herself and her intellectual, Western-tending parents, Chen apparently bears no resentment, but rather acknowledges that the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath drew her attention to the value of Chinese folk music, which has since become an important feature of her compositional language. Salient along these lines is the authors' assessment that, "for Chen, cultural blending fulfills both artistic and ethical goals: she sees her role as a composer to reach out to audiences from divergent cultures through the nonverbal medium of sound and to forge international connections by highlighting the beauties in disparate traditions."²

There seems to be an ethics, a generosity, and a grace to so much that Chen does, thinks, and says in this book. Rather than make overt political statements, Chen celebrates the good and acknowledges the marginalized

in her compositions. For example, the *Variations on "Awariguli"* for piano solo (1979. Rev. 2011), based on a folksong of the (persecuted) Uighur minority, and *Eleanor's Gift* (1998), honoring Eleanor Roosevelt's crucial support of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, speak volumes about Chen's ethics without pronouncing a word.

Miller and Edwards give a general account of Chen's compositional materials and procedures before presenting analyses of selected compositions. They note that Chen's default medium is the symphony orchestra, and her orchestral compositions are, indeed, numerous and varied. They rarely include Chinese instruments, but often use Chinese articulations, timbres, scales, and concepts. Generally, Chen begins a composition with an idea or premise, creates the overall structure, then fleshes out the details, a procedure not uncommon among Western composers. Chen discusses the engagement of both her intellect and her emotions as she composes. Thus, although Chen has been working with different materials, and perhaps toward different goals, her compositional methodologies and attitudes have clear resonances with those of canonical Western composers.

Each of the compositions Miller and Edwards selected for analysis receives a detailed explanation of its context, relationship to texts, concepts, and other components. The musical examples are clearly explained, and for several examples a form chart is included. Not only will readers garner a detailed understanding of Chen's compositions, but these tools would also help any teacher of musicology, composition, or music theory to explain the musical processes in the compositions and to generalize from them. It is especially satisfying to couple the study of the examples and charts with actual listening to the compositions. Edwards has created a Chen Yi playlist on Spotify that facilitates this.

The contextualizing discussions are equally important for understanding the significance of this music. Just

to cite one delightful detail in the second movement of the *Chinese Myths Cantata*, the goddess Nü Wa recognizes herself reflected in the water as the woodblock plays a solo. The authors explain that the woodblock solo, a device from the Beijing opera, signifies that a character is thinking. And just what Nü Wa is thinking about the authors Miller and Edwards theorize with reference to Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Cornell University Press, 1974): she is contemplating her own, distinctly female subjectivity. Realizing she is alone, Nü Wa subsequently creates humans from mud to keep her company. I do not always find cross-cultural applications of Western feminist theory useful, but in this case, it makes for a compelling explanation.

Finally, the works list, divided into types of performing forces, is comprehensive to 2019 and contains useful information for anyone considering programming one of the compositions (duration, forces, compositional contexts, etc.); the bibliography contains many interesting titles; and the index is comprehensive and accurate, which always improves a book's usefulness.

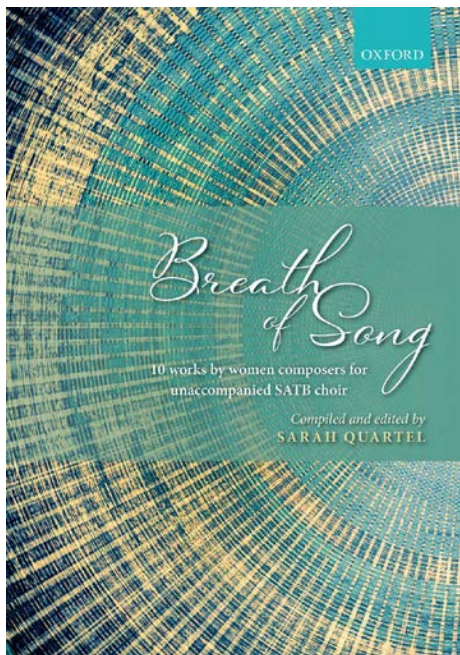
To say that *Chen Yi* is the definitive guide to the life and works of Chen Yi is to say something true but not nearly enough. Not only is it a fascinating and insightful account of the journey of one extraordinary woman composer and her music, but it is also a primer on the history of twentieth-century China, a resource on Chinese music, and a volume to which readers will return again and again for both its utility as a reference book and the pleasure of a good read.

Elizabeth L. Keathley is Professor of Historical Musicology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Her research concerns musical modernism/modernity and its intersections with gender, class, and ethnicity. Her distinctions include university-wide teaching excellence award and an NEH fellowship for her book on the women in Schoenberg's orbit. Oxford University Press published her edition (with Marilyn McCoy) of the complete correspondence between Arnold Schoenberg and Alma Mahler in 2019.

1 *Chen Yi*, 31.

2 *Chen Yi*, 47.

MUSIC REVIEW



Breath of Song

Sarah Quartel, ed.: *Breath of Song*

Ten concert works by women composers for SATB unaccompanied. New York: Oxford University Press, 96 pp., preface, vocal score, program notes, paperback. ISBN 978-019353-202-1 (2021)

CAROL ANN WEAVER

Breath of Song, a collection of ten *a cappella* choral pieces by contemporary women composers from the UK, Canada, and USA, was compiled and edited by Canadian composer Sarah Quarrel, in response to a growing demand for women's choral music. These well-crafted pieces, written in a variety of SATB choral styles, include both sacred and secular English texts from biblical to contemporary writers. As with any collection, the musical impact and effectiveness varies from piece to piece, revealing sparkling gems throughout. The collection is paired with excellent recordings by The Oxford Choir, directed by Bob Chilcott. The pieces are reviewed here in the order in which they appear on SoundCloud, not as they appear in the publication.

Reena Esmail's *TaReKiTa* is a lovely, tasteful piece with attractive textures, made more pungent by use of repeated

Hindustani text syllables on constantly pulsing eighth and quarter notes. Energy from the pulsing of eighth notes, shared among the upper three parts, is compounded by a modulation up a step from F to G halfway through the piece, adding a sense of harmonic movement. Rhythmic repetitions are needed for any Western choral group to enunciate the intriguing Hindustani onomatopoeic music syllables and to build momentum. The range throughout remains modest for all but the tenors. While rhythmic patterns are passed around among the upper voices, the bass centers on slow pulses and long notes throughout, grounding the piece. A short, simple melody, including idiomatic grace notes, is passed from the sopranos to all the parts, driving the piece to a climactic end, which would be further enhanced if the last three repeated chords were to expand outward.

Round me falls the night by Annabel Rooney (text by William Romanis) maintains a gentle flow throughout, presenting a calming, uncomplicated texture, with plenty of room for rests and pauses between phrases, and an evocative solo soprano finale. However, unless sung by a choir of virtually perfect-pitch singers, the harmonic ventures and distant modulations may sound less intuitive or musically rewarding than desired, potentially resulting in a troubled choral performance. Some harmonic transitions may work well instrumentally, but within choral music they might sound slippery and insecure, possibly interfering with Rooney's desired calmness.

These well-crafted pieces, written in a variety of SATB choral styles, include both sacred and secular English texts from biblical to contemporary writers. As with any collection, the musical impact and effectiveness varies from piece to piece, revealing sparkling gems throughout.

—CAROL ANN WEAVER

Snow is Silent by Jenny Mahler (text by John Pickles) creatively provides an exquisite adventure into contrasting sounds and gestures, effectively comparing noisy rain with silent snow. Mahler juxtaposes basic SATB homophonic and declamatory statements with rhythmic spoken and whispered sections, beautifully enhanced by well-scored conga drums. Choral pinnacles with wondrously full and high-ranged voicings are followed by quietly sung and spoken sections. Everything is derived from the natural flow of the harmonic activity, yet listeners are continuously captivated.

My Beloved Spake, a love song by Becky McGlade with a biblical text, attempts to gently beguile and entrance. All choral phrases are soft with a natural ebb and flow, incorporating a plethora of suspensions and moving inner parts at cadences. However, many of the resultant harmonies and voice leadings seem tangled and troubled, rather than alluring and enticing. More charm and mystery, rather than a dutiful problematizing of choral harmonies and inner voices, could possibly further enhance this (still mysteriously unknown) Song of Songs writer's sensuous text.

In *Love Letter*, Sarah Dacey could hardly have found a more fitting or timely text than that of Edna St. Vincent Millay. Nor could she have developed a more fascinating musical way to set this gender-inclusive text to intrigue and bring along her listeners. How? Partly by the 5/4 meter, which carries an inherent musical balance-cum-surprise, partly by the open fifths—homophonic to

canonic to solo—that allow for breath, flexibility, and room to move, and partly by uncomplicated, singable, short melodies. Dacey's harmonies make intuitive sense, as do certain musical repetitions, ending with a most effective focus on a single voice.

Laura Hawley's *The Arrow and the Song* features beautifully listenable, consonant, choral-friendly harmonies, effective solo versus tutti sections, homophonic versus polyphonic textures, the use of non-worded vocables to denote the sounds of shooting an arrow, and a lovely progression from fewer to many words sung, plus written directions for singers to imitate wind and bird sounds. What else is needed? Possibly more intriguing, compelling, "catchy" vocable rhythms to ensnare us with their charm, while guiding us through this somewhat mysterious poetry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

God be with us by Cecilia McDowall offers unadulterated beauty and a profound sense of choral reverence throughout. Two strophic verses incorporating tasteful variations are followed by an inspiring chorus, which serves as a final blessing, all deeply enhancing the invocational text by Alexander Carmichael. The use of C major, including Scotch snaps and Mixolydian touches, provides ample tonal space for this work to unfold. This piece alone could be worth the price of the entire anthology.

Within *Wake, Love, Wake!* Joan Szymko truly allows us to feel poet Rabindranath Tagore's dark night, pained love, heavy silence, and still wind. Homophonic, rhythmically parallel statements allow the choir to act as a single, pleading voice throughout. Harmonic transitions work well, such as where the music goes from Db to Bb. A more buoyant, expansive "wake" section invites "a breath of song." Yet, at the end, we are still waiting for the song to emerge.

Sarah Quartel's *The Birds' Lullaby* establishes a disarmingly simple but intriguing "doo-doo-doo" pattern in the lower voices, setting up the

sopranos, who carry imaginative bird-inspired words by E. Pauline Johnson. Finally, when all voices sing the text, a delightful contrast is created by the tenors who jump in with the sopranos' original tune, luring the choir into dreamland. Quartel stays a long time in the same tonal area and reuses many of the same ceiling notes in the soprano, but when she expands to a new tonal region, new breath is gained. Not only the birds but also the branches sing.

In *O ye who taste that Love is sweet*, Eleanor Daley's sonorous, generous music matches Christina Rossetti's alluring words, creating a deeply resonant anthem. The work is strophic, with the opening melody—almost Sacred Harp inflected—sung by women in unison, then harmonized by the choir in Daley's signature style of suspensions, parallel and contrary motion, and teasingly delightful

consonances. But if that weren't enough, the chorus takes us to yet a new level of soaring treble faux-bourdon over a bass/tenor pedal before settling into a full cadence. The second verse and chorus are basically repeated, with new text and tantalizing musical variations. The final refrain, again based on the original melody, becomes a fitting end to a piece that is secure in its footing.

This collection superbly helps fill a gap in contemporary women's choral music. We are looking forward to sequel publications representing an even wider range of ethnic, racial, gender-fluid, linguistic, choral, and stylistic diversities.

Carol Ann Weaver is an American-born Canadian composer who composes extensively for choir and other media. She is a recent Chair of Association of Canadian Women Composers (ACWC), a newly-minted Vice Chair of Canadian Association for Sound Ecology, and Professor Emerita at University of Waterloo/Conrad Grebel University College, Canada. www.carolannweaver.com

Women Throughout History

Musiciste e compositrici
Storia e storie

a cura di
Luca Aversano
Orietta Caianiello
Milena Gammaitoni



SEdM

**Luca Aversano, Orietta
Caianiello, and Milena
Gammaitoni, eds:**

Musiciste e compositrici.

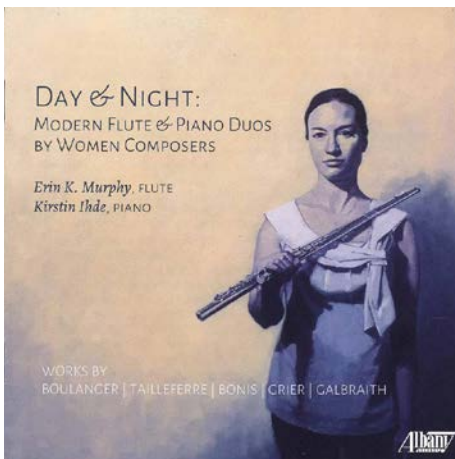
**Storia e storie (Musicians and
Composers. History and Stories)**

**Rome: Società Editrice di
Musicologia (2021)**

The 18 essays in this volume investigate the contributions of women musicians and composers in various historical periods and geographical areas. They range from ancient Rome to the present day, from Italy to Catherine II's

Russia and Victorian England. Vivid portraits of composers, conductors, dancers, and performers are presented. The essays include women's music education as well as their struggles for social rights. For additional information, see <http://www.liberdomus.it/cgi-bin/liberdomus/details.cgi>; <http://www.sedm.it/sedm/en/>.

COMPACT DISC AND DIGITAL RECORDINGS REVIEWS



Day & Night: Modern Flute & Piano Duos by Women Composers

Day & Night: Modern Flute & Piano Duos by Women Composers

Compositions by Lili Boulanger, Germaine Tailleferre, Mélanie Bonis, Lita Grier, and Nancy Galbraith. Erin K. Murphy, flute; Kirstin Ihde, piano. Albany Records, TROY1829, (2020)

NANETTE KAPLAN SOLOMON

On this beautifully performed and masterfully engineered disc of 20th- and 21st-century works, flutist Erin Murphy and pianist Kirstin Ihde achieve their stated mission: to expand the list of recordings for flute and piano duo by women composers and expose new audiences to their works. The program runs the gamut from familiar early twentieth-century French composers Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) and Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983); to its centerpiece, a lush sonata by Mélanie Bonis (1858-1937); and finally, sonatas by two living American composers: Lita Grier (b. 1937) and Nancy Galbraith (b. 1951). The works juxtapose reflective and introspective moods with jazzy syncopations and dazzling virtuosity, the genesis of the CD's title.

Lili Boulanger's 1911 *Nocturne* opens the disc. She composed the work in two days as a theory assignment at the age of 18! With her warm flute sound, Murphy captures the character of the piece in its supple lines

and surprising harmonic modulations. Originally written for flute, it was transcribed by the composer for violin and is often performed in that medium. A short descending whole-tone passage at the end of the piece alludes to *Prélude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, as an homage to Claude Debussy, who was revered by Boulanger and her sister, Nadia.

Germaine Tailleferre, the only female member of the French group *Les Six*, is represented here by two works for flute and piano composed thirty years apart. *Pastorale*, written in 1942, is in a lilting 6/8 barcarolle-like pattern. An unusual internal flute cadenza interrupts the peaceful flow of the lyrical main theme, with the piano then returning nonchalantly to the opening material. *Forlane*, composed in 1972, when Tailleferre was 80 years old, has a sicilienne-like rhythm evocative of Maurice Ravel's eponymous movement from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. The phrase structure, however, is less regular than that of Ravel, and there is an interesting atonal and dissonant transition that is more daring than the original model. In both of these works, the duo's performances exhibit exquisite balance and sensitivity to harmonic and melodic nuances.

Mélanie Bonis, one of the few women to attend the Paris Conservatory, used the name Mel to obscure her gender in the hope of being taken seriously. Many of her more than 300 compositions were published and regularly performed during her lifetime. She garnered praise from Camille Saint-Saëns, Célestin Joubert, and Gabriel Pierné. Her Sonata for Flute and Piano, composed in 1902, is one of the few Romantic era large-scale works written originally for flute. The piece is dedicated to the noted flutist Louis Fleury (also the dedicatee of Debussy's

Syrinx, and Darius Milhaud's *Sonatine* among others), with whom Bonis had a close relationship. While Fleury was known to have performed this work on numerous occasions, it ultimately fell into oblivion. Its resurrection in the 1980s is attributed to Michel Debost, former professor of flute at Oberlin and the Paris Conservatory.

The first movement, "Andantino con moto," in the uncommon key of C-sharp minor, has lush harmonies reminiscent of Gabriel Fauré. It is not surprising, considering that Bonis was a student of César Franck. The writing sounds improvisatory at times, and has climbing appoggiaturas, not unlike Richard Wagner's Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, with a nice interplay of figures between the two instruments. The second movement is a playful scherzo with light figures evocative of Mendelssohn, and an impressionistic trio section. The unresolved ending takes the listener by surprise. Again, the performance has great balance and impressively clear articulations. The slow movement, the emotional weight of the sonata, has Baroque-like contrapuntal lines, with a more animated middle section. The finale, more homophonic in texture, yet more daring in its harmonic ventures, has modal and whole-tone sonorities and interesting flute and piano interplay. Works by Bonis have been showing up on recital programs recently. I have been extremely impressed by the songs and piano works I have heard, and this magnificent sonata does not disappoint.

Lita Grier won first prize in the New York Philharmonic Young Composers Contest at age 16 for her very first work, written in her first year at Juilliard. As she prepared to write a major work for flute several years later, she enrolled in the studio of the legendary Julius Baker, but did not inform him that she was working on a flute sonata.

The works juxtapose reflective and introspective moods with jazzy syncopations and dazzling virtuosity, the genesis of the CD's title.

—NANETTE KAPLAN SOLOMON

Instead, she filed it away. After graduate work at UCLA with Lukas Foss and Roy Harris, she took a hiatus from composition and worked in public relations and broadcasting, most notably in classical radio with her husband Dean Grier. As the tides of musical taste changed in the post-serialist, post-modern 1990s, Grier resurrected her flute sonata, eventually contacting Baker, who had incidentally heard it performed by a student at a festival audition, and who became a staunch champion of the work. The piece was performed at the Ravinia Festival in 1992 and recorded in 1999 by Cedille Records. Grier's sonata is a wonderful find. It is a totally engaging work from the energetic and syncopated jazz-influenced first movement, with allusions to George Gershwin, to the haunting, sensuous middle movement, to the upbeat, driving finale, rife with ever-changing meters.

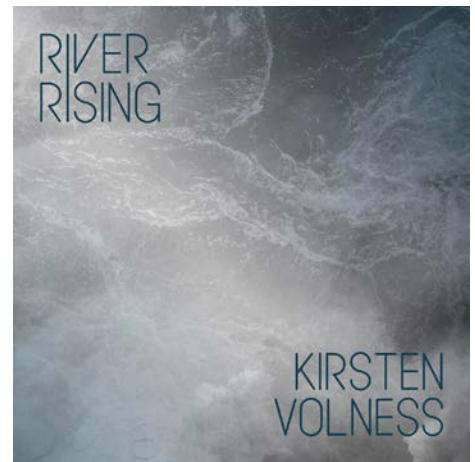
The music of Nancy Galbraith, professor of composition at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, has been praised for its "rich harmonic texture, rhythmic vitality, emotional and spiritual depth, and wide range of expression" (liner notes, 10). Her work is noted for her exquisite sense of instrumental color, particularly in her many wind ensemble works that have been widely performed. Her sonata for flute and piano *Atacama* had its premiere at Juilliard in June 2001 with flutist Alberto Almarza and pianist Luz Manriquez. The piece was named after Chile's Atacama desert, known to be the driest hot desert in the world. It evokes "intriguing visions of varicolored

desert moods," as the composer states (liner notes 10). The first movement, "Capricho" (whim in Spanish), is a fast romp with frequent syncopations, constantly changing meters, and energetic piano writing that utilizes horizontal and vertical fourths and fifths, a hallmark of Galbraith's style. Having heard my flute colleague perform it years ago, I can attest to the deftness with which Murphy and Ihde negotiate the challenging ensemble interplay. The second movement, "Notturmo," provides a marked contrast, with haunting, chant-like hollow harmonies of fourths and fifths, evocative of Debussy's piano prelude *La Cathedrale engloutie*. In this movement, the flutist is called upon to use extended techniques such as whistle tones, singing while playing (very effectively done here), pitch bends, and wind noise, all of which contribute to the eerie atmosphere of a desert (sound)scape. The last movement, "Volante" (wheel in Spanish), is a tour-de-force of perpetual motion with jazzy rhythms and an abundance of repeated notes and flutter tonguing, which add to the final momentum. It is a brilliant conclusion to an effective concert piece, and more generally to a stellar CD.

Nanette Kaplan Solomon is a pianist and advocate for women composers. She is Professor Emerita from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. She performs frequently as a soloist and chamber musician, and she has served on the boards of the IAWM, College Music Society, and Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association. Her four compact discs: *Piano Music of Nikolai Lopatnikoff* (Laurel), *Character Sketches: Solo Piano Works by Seven American Women* (Leonarda), *Sunbursts: Solo Piano Works by Seven American Women* (Leonarda), and *Badinage: Piano Music of Mana-Zucca* (Albany) have received critical acclaim.

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River Rising

Kirsten Volness: *River Rising*

Lilit Hartunian and Kate Outterbridge, violin; Sam Kelder, viola; Jonathan Butler, cello; Kirsten Volness, piano. Kirsten Volness (independent production), CD, digital audio (2021), www.kirstenvolness.bandcamp.com/album/river-rising

KRYSTAL J. FOLKESTAD, nee GRANT

Kirsten Volness has gathered one acoustic and five electroacoustic compositions in her album titled *River Rising*, self-released in 2021. The works showcase strings, piano, and electronics, creating emotive soundscapes with well-crafted motives and forms. The way in which the performers interact and blend with the electronics is laudable.

Gaia (2004), the only track with no live acoustic instruments, illustrates Volness' approach to electronic fixed media. Her organic soundscape breathes, hisses, chirps, and flittingly contrasts with synthesized sounds, which are reminiscent of cinematic soaring spaceships and chatting robots. The piece opens with the organic sounds coalescing into a pulse followed by the synthesized sounds entering, first, as sparse resonant clusters, then, as simple staccato inflections. After increased resonance and softer attacks, the organic sounds mellow. The track concludes with some of the organic sounds emerging with their original clarity, as the synthesized sounds become part of the rhythm of life.

Tree of Life (2008) for string quartet is the recording's longest track. The performers' precision creates a unified

sound whether they are dovetailing melody, swimming in polyphony, or suffusing the fixed media. The work has five sections, which describe three tree species separated by two interludes with strikingly seamless transitions between the sections.

The first section, “white birch,” features a sampled gallery of miscellaneous wind chimes. The strings appear sparsely as soloists with brief trills fluttering among the chimes. Warm, neoromantic counterpoint follows until a chord arrives abruptly. Melodic phrases become shorter and shorter, cut off by chords, and the section ends in a brief chorale. The ensuing interlude features running water and bell-like sounds accompanying a slow, poignant, extended viola solo that spans from the instrument’s lowest to highest pitches.

In “weeping willow,” sounds of moving air remain in the background while the strings, in simultaneous passage-work, resemble the trills and rhythms of “white birch.” Scalar flourishes in this central section progress from mostly descending motion to a balance of ascending and descending motions, concluding with all parts ascending into a strident, climactic chorale. The section closes like the first interlude, with a slowly ascending melancholy melody. This time it begins in the viola and continues to the violin’s stratosphere.

Volness’ performance of Nocturne reflects being at home with her piano, and the video for Alone Together features violinist Hartunian smiling while playing lakeside, where she often walks.

—KRISTAL J. FOLKESTAD, nee GRANT

The last interlude begins with whirs and flutters, similar to those in *Gaia*, before becoming playful with sparkling sweeps of pitched tones. *Col legno* and *leggiero* string iterations meld into these soundscapes. In the closing section, “coast redwood,” the fixed media punctuates, makes halos, or extends the string parts with shimmers and sweeps of bells, air, or rustling leaves. The strings begin the section with buoyant layers of *pizzicato*. The cello is the first to break into a vibrant *arco* melody, which becomes contrapuntal, reminiscent of the first interlude, as the other instruments leave one by one playing *pizzicato*. A brief arrival of all parts transition to a serene concluding chorale.

The next two works, *desangramiento* (2016) and *River Rising* (2014), respond vividly to the global shock of violence and disaster that Volness discusses in the program notes. The four primary sounds in *desangramiento* are a helicopter rumbling, a bird call, chords on the accordion, and metallic keyboard percussion. At the beginning and end of the piece, the viola sings mournfully. In the middle, one section has dissonant double-stops and another features brassy, percussive, sharp articulation. *River Rising* has ethereal synthesizer chords throughout, while the violin creates a cloud of sacred resonance. The violin part includes waves of high sustained notes, middle register *col legno*, rapid high and low articulated double-stops, and a dissonant low register melody.

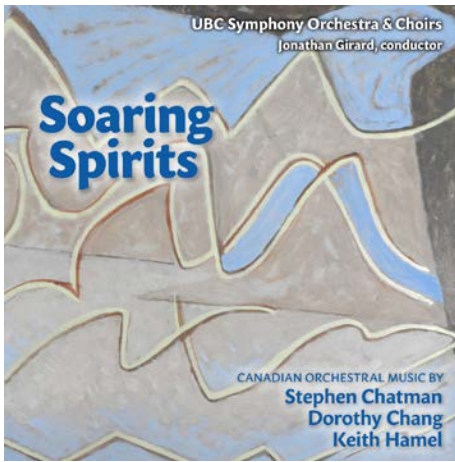
Nocturne (2012) for piano and *Alone Together* (2014) for violin evoke the loneliness that many have experienced during the pandemic. Volness’ performance of *Nocturne* reflects being at home with her piano, and the video for *Alone Together* features violinist Hartunian smiling while playing lakeside, where she often walks.¹ Beyond

1 Kirsten Volness, *Alone Together*, Kirsten Volness, YouTube, 2020, Lilit Hartunian, violin; Scott Quade, video. <https://youtu.be/DCJ4NnW72EI>

contorting the piano’s tuning and resonance, the electronics in *Nocturne* frequently serve as a drum kit and otherwise tinge each section with the non-silence of throbbing creatures and elements inside and outside at night. The piano’s styles span from lively, jazzy bass lines to an adagio in Scriabinesque counterpoint, and from flowing Gershwin-like treble chords and melodies to gentle, simple lines, like the accompaniments of singer-songwriter Norah Jones. The piece ends with articulated ascending clusters that are pedaled together, and then released one note at a time, creating an exquisite entrance for silence. Throughout *Alone Together*, a decades-old pop synthesizer sound bobs as an undercurrent to multiple looping violin layers. The peacefulness of the opening loop’s three long notes pervades the piece as dissonance and rhythmic intensity ebb and flow. Toward the end of the piece, the number of layers decreases and an additional synthesizer joins the mix as it plays the violin’s opening motive a couple of octaves lower. The synthesizer becomes the lone final sound.

Listening to this album’s emotional breadth alone at home can feel cathartic, but the mettle of the players and the complexity of Volness’ acoustic and modified sounds make one wish for the opportunity to hear this music again in the way much of it was originally presented: live, in person, in a larger space with speakers several feet apart.

Krystal J. Folkestad, nee Grant, is a pianist, composer, and writer. She holds a Ph.D. in composition from Stony Brook University. She has taught composition and music theory in Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia. From lecture-recitals in elementary schools of her hometown, Birmingham, Alabama, to a musical theater club at a senior center in Brooklyn, New York, she creates an oasis of inclusivity within classical music. She collaborates with performers and teachers to curate repertoire by underrepresented composers. <https://arsarvole.com>



Soaring Spirits

Dorothy Chang: *Flight*, in *Soaring Spirits*

University of British Columbia Orchestra, Jonathan Girard, conductor; Paolo Bortolussi, flute. Redshift Records, TK492 (2021)

ELLEN K. GROLMAN

Soaring Spirits offers orchestral works by three Canadian composers: Stephen Chatman, Dorothy Chang, and Keith Hamel, performed by the University of British Columbia Orchestra and Choirs under the baton of Jonathan Girard. Chang's *Flight* is the focus of this review.

Born in Winfield, Illinois, Chang's piano studies began early, and by age 16 she was composing. She holds degrees in composition from the University of Michigan and the Indiana University School of Music and has taught at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver since 2003. Frequently finding inspiration for her compositions in personal history and her Chinese heritage, Chang was also influenced as a youth by popular and folk music. Her catalog numbers over seventy works for soloists, chamber and large ensembles, theatre, dance, and video. Her music has been performed at concerts and festivals in North America and abroad. Several bring together Chinese and Western instruments and musical elements.

Flight, a concerto for flute and orchestra, depicts the efforts of Chang's grandfather, a lieutenant in the Chinese Nationalist air force, to protect his wife and children in 1949 during the Chinese Civil War. Desperate to escape to safety, and with the advancing army close behind, the family awaited rescue with thousands of other refugees at a remote airport, finally stowing away on a small cargo plane, with an unknown destination. *Flight* encompasses the stories and memories the composer heard from her mother and grandparents, which come alive in the three-movement, evocative, and thrilling work. According to Chang, *Flight* chronicles the young family's range of emotions, "from sorrow and despair to bittersweet nostalgia, uncertainty and triumph" (liner notes, 8-9). Appropriately, the work is dedicated to the composer's grandfather.

The first movement, "In Shadows," opens with high unison violins and the timorous flute, which sets an eerie, uncertain atmosphere. The movement appears to develop organically from here, spinning out from the early shadowy anxiety as the flute is joined by the oboe. Their narrative slowly builds in intensity as the full ensemble depicts the enormity of the family's situation. The whirling, agitated middle section propels us through cymbals, harsh orchestral interjections, and the flute, at its shrillest sound, to the climax. The increased dissonance serves to underscore the family's confusion and desperation, which continues in the cadenza—a frantic recitative. Chimes signal the movement's conclusion.

Chang indicates that the middle movement, "Remembrance," incorporates "cultural identity and folk song."¹ Although the entire folk song makes an appearance only in the closing bars of the movement, the liner notes

¹ "Flight: Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (2005-06)," *Dorothy Chang, composer* (website), accessed March 8, 2022. <https://www.dorothychang.com/large-ensemble>

declare, "Fragments and variants of a traditional Chinese song are woven throughout." An ascending minor third is featured in the winds and brass early in the movement and recurs frequently—placid and contemplative. The horn issues a solemn call, echoed by the winds, then accompanied by soft layers of strings. The flute is now less agitated, less restless, than in the previous movement, questioning but not distraught. Nostalgia ushers in more lyrical and gently articulated melodies while impressionistic gestures underlay much of the flute's soliloquy until we hear, finally, the folksong. A gentle glissando signals the movement's end.

The final movement, "Sea and Sky," opens with a blaring, brassy fanfare. Turbulence is depicted partially by the flute's flutter-tonguing and increasingly frenzied intervallic gymnastics; the ensemble responds with dramatic leaps and soaring lines. A timpani strikes, then silence. From nowhere, the flute and snare drum share a brief moment. The movement is powerful, dramatic, changeable, and non-metric. A frenzied flute figuration provides the climax, powerfully underscored by percussion. The free-wheeling cadenza closes as the flute meets the trumpet on a high unison pitch. Strings accompany the soloist for its final dramatic, triumphant statement.

Jonathan Girard leads the University of British Columbia Symphony Orchestra in a performance marked by highly effective dynamic contrasts, precise cut-offs, and fine balance. The audio engineering is clean and clear of extraneous noises. The recording also includes Stephen Chatman's *A Song of Joys* and his arrangement of Calixa Lavalee's *O Canada!* as well as *Overdrive* by Keith Hamel.

Ellen Grolman is Professor Emerita at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, MD, where she taught for 30 years in the Department of Music. She has authored bio-bibliographies of Emma Lou Diemer (Greenwood Press) and Joan Tower (Scarecrow Press) and edited a two-volume set of Maddalena Lombardini Sirmen's string trios (Hildegard Press). Upon retirement in 2013, she relocated to St. Augustine, FL, producing and hosting for WFCF FM (Flagler College Radio) the two-hour weekly live radio program *Music of our Mothers* (www.musicofourmothers.com), which airs exclusively classical music by women composers.

Flight encompasses the stories and memories the composer heard from her mother and grandparents, which come alive in the three-movement, evocative, and thrilling work.

—ELLEN K. GROLMAN



Great Women

Grainne Mulvey: *Great Women*

Four works for voice and electronics by Grainne Mulvey, featuring Elizabeth Hilliard, soprano. Metier Records mds 29007 (2021)

CATHERINE LEE

Commissioned by the Dublin International Chamber Music Festival (with support from the Arts Council) to mark its 50th anniversary in 2020, *Great Women* is a powerful new work for voice and electronics by Grainne Mulvey, featuring Irish soprano Elizabeth Hilliard. The text is based on the words of four women who shaped the history of Ireland in the past and continue to shape it today.

Constance Georgine Markievicz (1868–1927) was an Irish politician, suffragette, and revolutionary who worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor and underprivileged. Markievicz helped plan the Easter Rebellion in 1916 and was the first woman to be elected to the Westminster Parliament. She also worked directly with people running soup kitchens and delivering fuel and turf to the poorest families in Dublin. Born an aristocrat, Markievicz used her power, privilege, and position to help others as she fought for women's rights and Irish nationalism.

Rosie Hackett (1893–1976) was an activist for the trade unions in Ireland. Unlike Markievicz, Hackett was born into a working-class family and was raised by a single mother after the early death of her father. She was a founding member of the Irish Women Workers Union, was present at the printing

of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, participated in the Easter Rebellion, and served as an active member of the Irish Citizen Army. Hackett worked tirelessly for better and safer working conditions and for pay raises by organizing walkouts and other activities in support of strikers.

Professor Mary Robinson (b. 1944) was the first woman president of Ireland (1990–1997). She also served as the United Nations Commissioner of Human Rights (1997–2002) and Chancellor of the University of Dublin (2002–2019); in addition, she worked with her own foundations. Robinson transformed Ireland by decriminalizing homosexuality, legalizing contraception and divorce, enabling women to sit on juries, and securing the right to legal aid in civil legal cases.

Mary McAleese (b. 1951) succeeded Robinson as president (1997–2011), and she was the first person from Northern Ireland to hold that position. McAleese is currently Professor of Children, Law and Religion at the University of Glasgow and Chancellor of Trinity College in Dublin. Throughout her fourteen years in office, she has focused on building bridges both within differing groups in Ireland and between Ireland and Britain.

The tape for *Great Women*, created by Mulvey, draws on poems, letters, and speeches of the four above-mentioned remarkable women. Some of the texts are read by Elizabeth Hilliard and are treated in a manner similar to musique concrete, where they are modified and manipulated to form a sound collage, and others are direct recordings of the women themselves speaking. Mulvey also makes use of electronic sounds to fill out the tape, but the focus remains on the words of the women. The live voice part, realized by Elizabeth Hilliard, includes many extended vocal techniques such as overtone singing, speech, text fragmentation, and so forth, as well as beautifully-sung melodic lines. The tape part and the live vocal part are so closely interwoven that it is, at times, difficult to tell which is which.

Together, they create a shared vision of the women who have helped build and continue to shape modern Ireland.

Great Women begins with a sense of urgency, as layered vocalizations gradually unfurl to reveal the opening statement by Markievicz: "We have got to get rid of the last vestige of the Harem before woman is free as her dream of the future would have her" (liner notes, 4). This call to action is followed by a new dimension with a delicate texture. There is a sense of timelessness as drones provide the accompaniment to the virtuosic vocal part, which leaps from one register to another. As we move through the piece, we are met with moments of urgency, repose, timelessness, and elegance. We are reminded of the fragility of human nature and the strength of flexibility. We hear Mary Robinson evoke the fifth province, a place within each of us that allows reconciliation and healing. Mary McAleese speaks of a nation that has been transformed. As the piece closed, I felt as though I had been on a journey and that I had met, in one way or another, these great women and had been transformed by their actions and work.

The performances on *Great Women* are outstanding, with a stunning, virtuosic performance by Dublin-based soprano Elizabeth Hilliard. She brings the words of the four women to life with clear conviction, and she switches between different vocal techniques with ease, ranging from a guttural speaking voice to the most delicate filigree. Her high singing range is superb, as her voice blends into the electronics to create new textures. Hilliard and Mulvey have collaborated on numerous projects, and their close relationship is apparent in this recording.

Dr. Catherine Lee actively commissions evocative new music and has extensive experience in classical, contemporary, interdisciplinary collaborations, and free improvisation setting on the oboe, oboe d'amore, and English horn. Lee's most recent solo CD, *Remote Together* (Redshift Records, 2021), is nominated for the 2022 JUNO Award Classical Album of the Year (Solo Artist). Lee holds a Doctor of Music in oboe performance from McGill University (Montreal, Quebec) and a certification from the Deep Listening Institute (New York).

RECENT RELEASES: COMPACT DISC AND DIGITAL RECORDINGS

Beyond 12: Reinventing the Piano, Vol. 2

MICROFEST RECORDS (JANUARY 2021)

Grammy-nominated pianist Aron Kallay premieres new works by eight visionary composers: Jeffrey Harrington, Monroe Golden, Robert Carl, Nick Norton, Alexander Elliott Miller, Bill Alves, Eric Moe, and **Veronika Krausas** for his microtonal piano. Krausas' *Une Petite Bagatelle*, a short work from 2013, is a reimagining in 2/7 comma meantone tuning that reflects the whimsy of the work. Her *Terços* (Catalan for thirds) uses Pythagorean tuning.

Brass Tacks: Music for Brass

NAVONA RECORDS NV6428 (MAY 2022)

The album includes **Janice Macaulay's** *Tuba Contra Mundum* for solo tuba, performed by Jobey Wilson, plus works by Brian Belet, Nathan Wilson Ball, L. Peter Deutsch, and Andrew Lewinter.

Rhona Clarke: Sempiternam

MÉTIER MSV 28614 (2021)

Choral music has always been a constant thread throughout the compositional development of Rhona Clarke. The choral works on this album, both sacred and secular, written over a thirty-year period, demonstrate the increasing individuality of her work, though rooted in the choral tradition of Ireland and Britain. They range from the darkness of *Ave Atque Vale* to the sheer breathtaking beauty of *Pie Jesu* or *Lullay, my Liking*. The music is performed by the Latvian State Choir, under the direction of Māris Sirmāis. The works on the disc are all first recordings, apart from *The Old Woman* and *Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep*. (<https://divineartrecords.com/announcing-sempiternam-a-new-album-celebrating-the-choral-music-of-rhona-clark/>) (<https://youtu.be/eP6O-gxXwmk>)

Samantha Ege: Black Renaissance Woman

LORELT LNT 145 (MARCH 2022)

Samantha Ege, with pianist Thomas Graff, has recorded an album of forgotten piano music by five trailblazing yet overshadowed women composer-pianists of the 20th-century Black Chicago Renaissance. The project was the recipient of the American Musicological Society's prestigious Noah Greenberg Award. *Spiritual Suite* (first recording) by Margaret Bonds draws on the spirituals she heard performed by legendary singers such as Marian Anderson. Bonds was one of the first Black composers to gain recognition in the United States. Helen Eugenia Hagan (1891-1964) is the first-known Black woman to earn a degree at Yale. Her Piano Concerto in C minor is presented in a two-piano arrangement (first recording). Nora Douglas Holt (1884-1974) composed more than 200 works, but only two have survived, including *Negro Dance*, op. 25, no. 1. *Four Seasonal Sketches* by Betty Jackson King (1928-1994) begins with the joys of spring and ends forcefully with the darkness of winter. Piano Concerto in One Movement (first recording) by Florence Price is performed in a two-piano arrangement. The work combines virtuosic harmony with a traditional African-American juba dance.

Filtering

ALBANY RECORDS TROY1891 (2022)

The album includes **Janice Macaulay's** *Kaleidoscope* for wind symphony, which won IAWM's Alex Shapiro prize in 2018, and **Anna Rubin's** *Chiaroscuro*, along with pieces by Brad Ellis, Samuel Winnie, and Daniel Bernard Roumain. The works are performed by the University of Maryland Baltimore County Wind Ensemble, Brian Kaufman, conductor.

Stefania de Kenessey: In Her Words

NEUMA RECORDS (APRIL 2022)

The album is electronic, and all the works are composed, performed, and recorded by de Kenessey. The music is dancelike and is inspired by the Bulgarian and Hungarian folk songs that she enjoyed in her youth as well as the Western classical and popular music of her adulthood. *In Her Words* is the result of a fruitful four-year collaboration with choreographer Ariel Grossman, the founder and director of the all-female Ariel Rivka Dance company. The four movements are diverse in sound, outlook, and orientation, but they are unified in theme: they all confront the difficulties faced by women everywhere, of all backgrounds, of all stations in life—themes that live close to the composer's heart.

Sarah Masterson: Seven Pillars of Wisdom

CENTAUR RECORDS (APRIL 2022)

The album presents the first recording of Philippa Schuyler's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and gives new life to one of the last works of Schuyler, concert pianist, composer, and journalist. Her music has been largely unheard since her untimely death 55 years ago, while on a helicopter rescue mission in war-torn Vietnam as a correspondent. Written in 1964-65, the technically-complex, hour-long *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was inspired by the book of the same title by T.E. Lawrence—more famously known as Lawrence of Arabia—about the British army officer's participation in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. For details about Schuyler's life and works, see the article in the *Journal of the IAWM* 28/1 (2021): 2-5.

Jane O'Leary

Four recordings that include music by Jane O'Leary have been released since October 2021.

Incantations [Silenzio della Terra]

DAD RECORDS (OCTOBER 2021)

With Anna Lisa Pisanu, flute, and Filippo Lattanzi, percussion. It includes *Silenzio della Terra* by O'Leary. <https://bfan.link/incantations>

a terrible beauty

DIATRIBE RECORDS (OCTOBER 2021)

With Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, Sinead Hayes, conductor. It includes *beneath the dark blue waves* by O'Leary plus works by **Rhona Clarke, Grainne Mulvey**, Amy Rooney, and others. <https://diatriberecords.bandcamp.com/album/a-terrible-beauty>

The Tiger and the Clover

BLUE GRIFFIN RECORDING (FEBRUARY 2022)

With Wendy Case, violin. It includes *No. 19* by O'Leary plus works by **Judith Shatin, Judith Lang Zaimont**, Sungji Hong, Diana Rotaru, and others. <https://youtu.be/ypFRTknbIWo>

MEM

PHASMA MUSIC, RELEASED BY NAXOS (APRIL 2022).

The album presents the world premiere recording of 15 works by 13 contemporary composers of music for flute and/or saxophone. It includes *echoing voices* by O'Leary, performed by Iwona Glinka, alto flute solo. www.naxosdirect.com/items/mem-578175

Elena Ruehr: *Icarus—and other music by Elena Ruehr*

AVIE RECORDS, AV2502 (APRIL 2022)

The album includes String Quartet No. 7: "A Thousand Cranes," which evokes experiences and resilience of children in wartime, including the internment of Japanese in American camps, and her own father's escape from Nazi Germany (Delgani String Quartet with guest second violin Tom Stone). *Insect Dances: Suite for String Quartet No. 8* depicts a diverse family of bugs engaged in an impish dinner party (Arneis Quartet). Inspired by T. S. Eliot's *The Worlds Revolve*, the work conjures elements both ancient and prescient (Donald Berman, piano, Borromeo String Quartet). The title track, *Icarus* for clarinet and string quartet, centers on the Greek mythological character's excitement as he builds his wings of wax and dares to fly, rather than his dark demise as he flies too close to the sun (Jon Manasse, clarinet; Borromeo String Quartet).

Rain Worthington: *Passages Through Time*

NAVONA RECORDS NV6398, DIGITAL FORMAT (MARCH 2022)

In *Passages Through Time*, composer Rain Worthington explores the mystery of instrumental music's ability to communicate the universality of human experiences. She invites the listener into the realm of the nonverbal to reveal our primal commonality, directly touching the heart and soul with music that is delicate and subtle, yet powerful and transporting. This collection of both chamber and orchestral music includes two new recording releases: *Resolves* for solo cello performed by Carmine Miranda and the premiere recording of *Dreaming Through Fog* for orchestra, written during the autumn of 2020 and recorded by the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra, Stanislav Vavřínek, conductor. It also includes an encore release of *Balancing on the Edge of Shadows* from violinist Audrey Wright's debut album *Things in Pairs*.

L'Ombra Illuminata. Donne nella musica

A research project titled L'Ombra Illuminata. Donne nella musica (Illuminating Shadows. Women in Music) was founded in 2015 by Professors Angela Annese and Orietta Caianiello of the Conservatorio "N. Piccinni" of Bari, Italy, to develop yearly playlists of music by women composers; this is the first of its kind in Italy. The project has successfully helped to shed light on the extraordinary and unrecognized contribution of women's musical creations.

Over the past seven years, L'Ombra Illuminata has presented works by 83 women composers, with the participation of 39 teachers, 76 students, and 30 guest artists and scholars. On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, as a symbolic contribution to the worldwide celebration of women, a set of 15 videos, entirely dedicated to music by women composers, was posted on the YouTube channel of the conservatory.¹ Thirteen videos were shot during the pandemic, when the public was not allowed in concert halls. The two orchestral performances are live recordings of the final concert given by students in the conducting class.

The videos include works by Juliane Reichardt, Katharine Eggar, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, Clara Kathleen Rogers, Susan Spain-Dunk, Louise Charpentier, Louise Talma, Sofia Gubaidulina, Kaija Saariaho, Grazyna Bacewicz, Grace Williams, Giulia Recli, Jeanne Behrend, Luise Adolpha Le Beau, and Lizabeth Lutyens. Many more composers will be added to the playlist for the performances to be presented from May to October 2022. For more information, consult the web pages of the "N. Piccinni" Conservatory.²

1 https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0vABf-Xjjou4pov0Jqvq_5ZuCxntzvP

2 https://it-it.facebook.com/pg/conservatorio.piccinni.bari/posts/?ref=page_internal and <https://www.consba.it/it/5997/l-ombra-illuminata-donne-nella-musica>

Woven in Time: Contemporary Orchestral Works

NAVONA NV6369, DIGITAL (OCTOBER 2021)

The album includes **Marilyn Bliss's** *Veils*, which was inspired by a group of paintings from the 1950s by the great American abstract painter Morris Louis, one of the leaders of the Color Field movement. Louis devised a technique of staining the canvas, allowing the colors to mingle and to keep separate their identities, achieving his goal of unifying figure and ground. The results are paintings of delicate, veil-like translucence. Bliss translated some of these techniques and images into music. Winds are in pairs and usually appear together, purifying their colors; melodic lines in the strings are seamlessly passed from section to section; quasi-canonic passages create increasingly dense, but still translucent "veils" of sound. Throughout the piece, the principal oboe is the protagonist. It sometimes seems to stand aside, observing, reflecting, only to be swept back into the flow of the piece. *Veils* is performed by the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra, with Jiri Petrdlik, conducting. The recording also includes works by Richard E. Brown, Scott Brickman, Jay Anthony Gach, and Joseph T. Spaniola.

Women and Music

Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture is an annual journal of scholarship about women, music, and culture. It is published for the International Alliance for Women in Music by the University of Nebraska Press. Drawing on a wide range of disciplines and approaches, the refereed journal seeks to further the understanding of the relationships among gender, music, and culture, with special attention being given to the concerns of women. The publication is not included as part of IAWM membership. For information, see the journal's website

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR IAWM JOURNAL

We are working on the summer and fall 2022 issues of the *Journal of the IAWM*, and we hope to hear from you.

EVE R. MEYER

Due Dates

Major articles are due by June 15 and September 15 and should be submitted to me at evemeyer45@gmail.com.

Short articles and other information: June 30 and September 30 (or sooner).

Members News should be submitted to Anita Hanawalt: anita@hanawalthaus.net. The column is an excellent way to keep in touch, so please do not hesitate to inform us about your recent performances, publications and other musical activities. Since our space is limited, we prefer that you not send lengthy lists of performers.

Reports

- Women-in-music activities from our sister organizations
- Women in music festivals
- Women in music initiatives
- IAWM committees and board members
- IAWM information

Reviews

CD and book reviews should be submitted to our Review Editor, Laura Pita. If you would like to have your book or recording reviewed in the Journal, contact Laura: laurapita830@gmail.com

Awards

If you have received a major award, please send the information to me for the Journal's "Award Winners" column.

Advertisements:

As a benefit of membership, you can place an ad at a reduced rate! And if you are a member of any organizations that would benefit from the exposure the Journal can provide, please encourage them to take advantage of our inexpensive rates. Ads should be camera-ready, in a graphic file. Graphic files should be 300 or higher resolution and saved at the highest quality; do not use rzw compression.

Announcements

Please send announcements to me of recently released recordings and publications, and announcements about upcoming music festivals or other special events.

Letters to the editor. Suggestions for future issues.

IAWM Journal 2023

We are currently accepting proposals for articles for the 2023 journal issues. They will be judged by members of the Journal Board.

Please note:

If you have **moved** recently, be sure to change the address information on the IAWM website. Be sure your membership is up-to-date and invite your friends, colleagues and students to join.

REPORTS



ACWC | ACC

Association of Canadian Women Composers/ L'Association Compositrices Canadiennes

DIANE BERRY

Julia Mermelstein is the new chair of the ACWC/ACC. The organization had seen substantial growth in numbers and activities during Carol Ann Weaver's term, so Julia takes the reins of an active and vibrant organization, with a current membership of over one hundred composers. After celebrating their 40th anniversary in 2021 with a number of activities new to the ACWC/ACC, such as online concerts, panels, monthly playlists, and

member interviews, there is a desire amongst the board and the membership to build on the past year.

With the growth and changes over the past few years, the ACWC/ACC decided a new board position was needed. Emily Hiemstra is now the first Outreach Manager, a position that involves organizing a team to update and maintain the various social media platforms. It means she will be focusing on engaging with both the ACWC/ACC's ever-growing membership, as well as connecting with the broader community, including other arts organizations, educational institutions, composers, and performers.

In February 2022, the ACWC/ACC joined with the Canadian Music Centre and the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra to hold a workshop for composers of flute music, as part of the SPO's online festival of flute music by women. Two composer/performers, Sophie Lang and Anh Phung, worked closely with four composers on their works for flute. The composers participating were Coreen Morsink, who workshopped a piece for bass flute;

Diana Cotoman, who worked on ideas for arranging a flute trio consisting of two flutes and a bass flute; Jingchao Wang, who worked on a solo flute piece and discussed ideas for portraying narrative in solo instrumental music; and Camille Kiku Belair, who workshopped a graphic score. The organizing team consisted of Sara Constance and Catherine Bevan, both ACWC/ACC members and Matthew Fava from the Canadian Music Centre. The workshop was held on Zoom and was open to the public; an audio technician was hired to record the pieces for the participants. It was a first for the organization and is felt to have been a real success. The association is looking to build on this in the future.

The ACWC/ACC is looking forward to continuing to grow its membership, increase its activities and raise its profile in Canada and internationally. Join us on our very active Facebook page: **Association of Canadian Women Composers (ACWC/ACC)** or follow us on Twitter **@ACWComposers 2**.



UNC GREENSBORO

Black Identities on the Operatic Stage: A Symposium with Music

TESSA LARSON

On Saturday, March 26, 2022, the University of North Carolina-Greensboro hosted an all-day event on Black opera, organized by UNCG musicology professor Elizabeth L. Keathley and NC State University faculty Kristen Turner,

as part of Keathley's retirement celebration. The event included a symposium of scholarly papers held in the auditorium of UNCG's Weatherspoon Art Museum, with a lunchtime opportunity to view the Weatherspoon's current exhibit of the Black American conceptual artist Lorraine O'Grady (b. 1934). After a festive reception at the local Oden Brewery (an event sponsor), the day concluded with a recital of excerpts from operas by Black composers at the Tew Recital Hall in UNCG's School of Music.

As Gayle Murchison (William and Mary) articulated in her paper (see below), operas by Black composers are not isolated accomplishments, but rather constitute a substantial tradition. While Murchison harked back only to the early twentieth century, the

oldest opera represented in the evening recital was composed in 1777 by Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799).

The symposium was distinguished by a keynote presentation from Naomi André (University of Michigan), America's foremost scholar of Black opera, and a featured presentation by Paula Marie Seniors (Virginia Tech). Other presenters came from Michigan, Florida, Iowa, and the United Kingdom. Taken together, the research presented in the symposium showed not only a history of Black excellence in opera, but also how Black composers, singers, dancers, managers, and institutions have challenged the white supremacy that has dominated every aspect of our society, including our cultural institutions.

The opening presentation by Antonio C. Cuyler (Florida State University) on Black managers in the United States revealed the importance of Black impresarios and administrators not only to the production of Black opera, but also to opera's ability to engage Black audiences. Cuyler pointed to the dearth of research in this crucial part of the story of Black opera, but also the difference it makes to have African Americans in leadership roles in cultural institutions. He noted the distinction between "outreach" (come buy what we're selling) and "community engagement," which seeks to learn about community perspectives and how they intersect with opera's artistic purpose. This principle could be beneficial to apply across the enterprise of opera more generally, especially for those institutions that wish to transcend their reputation as a preserve of white elites.

Several other papers also took up the theme of Black excellence among administrative or creative teams behind the composers and singers of Black opera, what Naomi André has termed Black opera's "Shadow Culture." Cody Norling (University of Iowa) presented his research on community networks of the short-lived South Side Opera Company of 1920s Chicago, and Lena Leson showed the Black creative contributions to opera by dancers and choreographers. Leson's paper focused on *Porgy and Bess* and discussed dancer John Bubbles's creation of the role of Sportin' Life, and other dancers, including the universally admired poet Maya Angelou (1928-2014), who danced and played the role of Ruby in a 1950s tour of *Porgy and Bess* sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

Paula Marie Seniors discussed the original interracial team that produced the 1972 world premiere of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* (1911) in Atlanta, including the Black composer and orchestrator T.J. Anderson and choreographer and stage director Katherine Dunham. However, Seniors argued, white musicologist Vera Brodsky Lawrence, who had co-edited *Treemonisha*, gained control of its performance rights, and

both Anderson and Dunham were shut out of the Houston Grand Opera (1975) and future productions. The silencing of the Black creators in favor of white ones has enormous ramifications not only for the creators themselves, but also for communities they represent.

Cody M. Jones's (University of Michigan) presentation compared two tellings of the Amistad narrative—the rebellion of illegally enslaved Africans aboard the ship Amistad—both of which appeared in 1997. Analyzing both image and music, Jones argued that the operatic *Amistad*, composed by Anthony Davis on a libretto by Thulani Davis, represented the African mutineers as individual, complex characters, historical actors with a certain amount of agency, while Steven Spielberg's Hollywood film represented them as largely inarticulate beneficiaries of white men's heroism.

Not only who gets to tell the narratives of Black experience, but how we classify those narratives was central to Gayle Murchison's paper on "Topoi and Taxonomies of the African-American Opera Tradition." In her thought-provoking presentation, Murchison traced a throughline from 1910 to the present that constitutes a Black opera tradition, and recognized recurring topoi within that repertoire, such as social justice and Afrofuturism, which are distinct from white opera. Murchison's call to unlearn exclusionary classifications and relearn those that account for Black musical experience extended to music education. She noted (as had Cuyler earlier) that the Black church has served the role of a conservatory of Black music.

Two remote presentations considered operas by Black women composers: Kendra Preston Leonard, who has created a working group to recover and edit the unpublished operas of Julia Perry (1924–1979), analyzed Perry's 1964 opera *The Selfish Giant* with respect to the composer's social position and international experience as a Black American during the Cold War.¹

¹ See the article on Perry's *Stabat Mater* elsewhere in this issue.

Leonard highlighted Perry's distinctive use of minimalism and serialism. Jane Forner (University of Aberdeen, Scotland) reported on the dramatic increase of digital opera during the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the aesthetic and collaborative dimensions of two digital "opera shorts," *Blessed* (Courtney Bryan and Tiona Nekkia McClodden, 2020) and *Brown Sounds* (Ayanna Witter-Johnson and Raehann Bryce-Davis, 2021). Forner analyzed these creators' approaches to representing Black history and the events of 2020.

Naomi André's keynote, "Writing Opera, Singing Blackness," drew together the threads of the various conference presentations, adding insights from her own scholarship to represent the current state of the field in Black opera composition, performance, and scholarship. The best-known American scholar on Black opera and first Scholar in Residence at the Seattle Opera, André has published a monograph based on her opera research in the U.S. and South Africa (*Black Opera: History, Power Engagement*, 2018) and co-edited a collection of essays (*Blackness in Opera: How Race and Blackness Play Out in Opera*, 2014), among other publications.

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—TESSA LARSON

André highlighted milestones and figures in the history of Black opera in America, such as Marian Anderson, her performance at the Lincoln Memorial (1939), and her later role as Ulrica in Verdi's *Un ballo in Maschera* (1955), the first role sung by an African American at the Metropolitan Opera. Despite its historical elitism, exclusions, and offensive representations, André noted, opera's emotional power has been harnessed by Black singers, composers, and others to dramatize the full humanity of the Black characters and narratives it represents. She noted that opera has "met the moment" following a period of racist backlash and the rise of #BlackLivesMatter with three premieres of Black operas in 2019: Anthony Davis's *The Central Park Five*; Jeanine Tesori's *Blue*; and Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, the first opera by a Black composer to be produced at the Met.

There is nothing like a live performance to cap off a day of learning new musical knowledge: the evening Recital of Arias and Excerpts from Operas by Black Composers fulfilled a pedagogical as well as an artistic purpose. The concert repertoire spanned the period from Bologne's eighteenth-century *Scena* from *Ernestine* (mentioned above) to an aria from Terence Blanchard's 2013 opera *Champion* and included two compositions by women composers, Tania León (b. 1943) and Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962). More than half of the arias and duets performed were from five different operas composed by William Grant Still (1895-1978), most of them on texts written by his spouse, Verna Arvey (1910-1987).

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Please encourage your colleagues and students to join the IAWM and invite them to visit our new website at iawm.org. Ask your university library to subscribe to the *Journal of the IAWM*. To meet the goals of our organization, we need to continue to enlarge and strengthen our membership.

Several of the singers were out-of-town guests (soprano Dr. Allison Upshaw, Stillman College; tenor Namarea Randolph-Yosea, University of Houston; and soprano Sequina DuBose, Charlotte, NC), and others were graduate students in UNCG's opera program (Detra Davis, Reginald Powell, and Zachary Taylor). All arias and duets were performed with a collaborative pianist, all of them graduate students, alums, or staff accompanists at UNCG (Patricia García Gil, Rebecca Oden, Suzanne Polak, Jiawei Qu, and Tony Sanders). Professor Alexander Ezerman played the cello part for "Oh, Yemanjá" from Tania León's *A Scourge of Hyacinths* (1994).

The beauty of the performances says much about the excellence and importance of the Black composers

and librettists, but it also speaks well of the talent and professionalism of the performers, of the UNCG students' musical education, and of Dennis Hopson's excellent management of the Tew Recital Hall.

The event was funded by a number of entities across the UNCG campus, including the Weatherspoon Art Museum, the School of Music, the African American and African Diaspora Studies Program, the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, The Lloyd International Honors College, the Office of Research and Engagement, and a grant from the Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, as well as in-kind donations by Oden Brewing Company.

46th Annual National Women's Music Festival

June 30-July 3, 2022
Marriott Madison Hotel
Middleton, Wisconsin

National Women's Music Festival Orchestra

The celebration of women in classical music began with the 1983 Festival Chamber Orchestra and classical music series and was revived with the 2012 reprise performance of Kay Gardner's *A Rainbow Path*. The NWMF Orchestra Women Composers Series has actively sought to collaborate with contemporary women composers and to bring them to the Festival. Recent examples include the commission and premiere of *The Initiate* by Mary Watkins, the presentation of *The Journey of Phillis Wheatley* by Nkeiru Okoye, the works and artistry of composer and flutist Valerie Coleman, and the wonderfully evocative compositions of Alice Gomez. We also perform works by earlier women composers whose personal stories, creativity, talent, and perseverance are inspirational. Women composers, conductors, and performers continue to be vastly underrepresented within classical music, and we are thrilled to present their work to you as an important part of our musical and cultural herstory.

Come hear the Festival Orchestra on July 2, 2022, as we return to Saturday evening's SheRocks! stage with a very special program featuring music by renowned jazz guitarist Mimi Fox and the world premiere of *Remember* for orchestra and women's voices by Cara Haxo, winner of the NWMF Emerging Composers Competition. *Remember* sets to music the haunting words of Joy Harjo, poet laureate of the United States. Led by award-winning music director and conductor Nan Washburn, the NWMF Orchestra celebrates the diversity of women's musical expression through the presentation of works by women composers past and present.

For information: <https://www.nwmf.info/festival-info/>

AWARDS AND HONORS

The IAWM congratulates the following award winners!

Chen Yi was the recipient of a 2022 World Choir Festival-WYCCAA 25th Anniversary Lifetime Achievement Award for Choral Music. The Award is presented to selected international choral experts to honor their outstanding achievements and contributions to the choral field. Maria Guinand of Venezuela was also a recipient.

Jennifer Higdon and Annea Lockwood were elected to join the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters and were inducted into the Academy during its annual ceremony on May 18, 2022. Membership is limited to 300 architects, visual artists, composers, and writers who are elected for life and pay no dues. The honor of election is considered the highest form of recognition of artistic merit in the United States.

Menstrual Rosary, a video by **Stefania de Kenessey**, won four awards this year: a merit award in the experimental category in the 2022 Winter LGBTQ Unbordered International Film Festival, semi-finalist in the London Indie Short Festival, Semi-Finalist in the Rotterdam Independent Film Festival, and semi-finalist in the Paris Women's Festival of Ontario. *Menstrual Rosary* is a theater-performance piece in which two women dress like nuns and recite the rosary, but they wear bright red lipstick. The piece veers off periodically into bits and pieces of ads for feminine care products. The text was co-authored by feminist philosopher Chiara Bottici and poet provocateur Vanessa Place. The work was commissioned for the launch of the Gender and Sexuality Studies Institute (GSSI) at The New School. (<https://youtu.be/UZOIR4wLdFI>)

Catherine Lee's CD *Remote Together* has been nominated for a 2022 Juno Award in the Classical Album of

the Year—Solo category. The recording showcases her performances on the oboe, oboe d'amore, and English horn. The disc was reviewed by Anna Rubin in the *Journal of the IAWM* 27/2 (2021): 36-37.

María Eugenia León won the Gran Canaria Philharmonic Orchestra (OFGC) Composition Award for Female Composers, First Edition, this February. The winning work, titled *Busca la alegría* (Look for Joy), was premiered by the OFGC, under the direction of Karel Mark Chichon, on Friday, March 11 at the Alfredo Kraus Auditorium, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The jury members were conductor and composer Gloria Isabel Ramos Triano, composer Laura Vega, and Maestro Chichon. León received a prize of 2,000 euros and a diploma.

Shao Suan Low won the annual UK Songwriting Contest 2021 in the Melody Only category for her song *All This Time*.

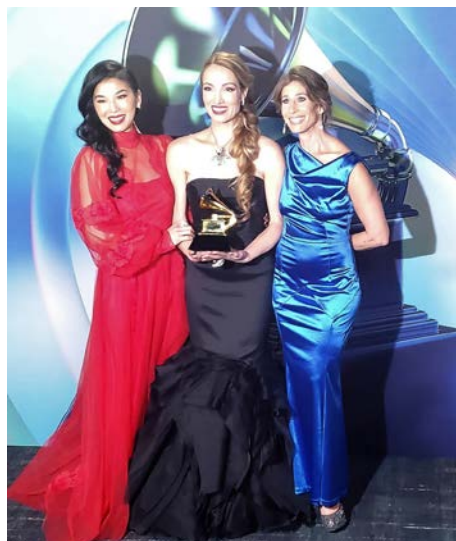
On March 18, 2022, **Marta Ptaszynska** received a high award: the Commander Cross of the Republic of Poland for outstanding achievements in the field of music composition. The award was presented at the Polish Consulate in Chicago and was followed by

the monographic concert of her music performed by the Zafa Collective, an excellent and energetic group of young musicians. The concert included six works: *Red Rays*, *Graffito*, *White Shadows*, *Lullaby for Benjamin*, *The Gates of Light*, and *Sappho Songs*. The link to the concert is on the webpage of The Zafa Collective, and it is available on YouTube.

Leah Reid was awarded a 2022 Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition.

The University of Chicago's Center for Contemporary Composition (CCCC) appointed composer and pianist **Ania Vu** as the 2022-23 Postdoctoral Researcher at the rank of Instructor in the Division of the Humanities. Vu will develop new works to be performed by the Grossman Ensemble and other guest artists during the upcoming season. She will also teach an undergraduate course, provide composition lessons, and participate in the Center's workshops and events.

Betty Wishart was awarded an Artist Support Grant from the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County. She was also selected as a semi-finalist in the Composition-Instrumental division of the American Prize.



Danaë Xanthe Vlasse (center) and soprano soloists Sangeeta Kaur and Hila Plitmann.

Danaë Xanthe Vlasse, Grammy Award Winner

Danaë Xanthe Vlasse's *Mythologies* won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. Inspired by her father's Greek heritage, Vlasse tells a story of ancient kings, heroes, and divinities, and of the destructive nature of seduction and lust as well as the divine power of true love's destiny. The album has seven songs for two soprano soloists and instrumental ensemble and was released by Cezanne in August 2021. Mary Dawood Catlin wrote an enthusiastic review of the album in the *Journal of the IAWM* 27/2 (2021): 38-39.



MEMBERS' NEWS

ANITA HANAWALT

Submissions are always welcome concerning appointments, honors, commissions, premieres, performances, and other items. The deadline for the next issue is June 30.

—ANITA HANAWALT


A new sound and score video was released with Artis Wodehouse performing **Beth Anderson's** 1983 composition, *Quilt Music*, for solo piano. Wodehouse performed the work live at Merkin Hall in New York City in 2005 and subsequently made a single-pass recording on a nine-foot Yamaha Disklavier at Yamaha Concert Artists (also in New York City) during the same time period as the live performance. The Disklavier on which Wodehouse recorded *Quilt Music* captured her keystrokes, note timings, pedaling and dynamics in the form of MIDI data. She was able to take this data and play it through Pianoteq's virtual piano program in classic nine-foot-Steinway sound heard in this video. *Beth Anderson Performs Selections from Namely* was released on November 10, 2021, on YouTube. "Namely" is her text-sound project based on the names of some people who have been important in her life and whose creative work she admires. The video was recorded at various locations around Brooklyn, New York.

On December 5, 2021, New York Women Composers Seed Money Grant recipients—violinist Moonkyung Lee and guitarist Jangheum Bae—performed their grant concert, which

included Anderson's *Guitar Swale*, at the Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA) Seoul, Republic of Korea. *Guitar Swale* was commissioned and performed by University of the Redlands New Music Ensemble, Barney Childs, director, and was also performed at California State University, Hayward's Musica Delle Donne.

Through Tears and Beyond, a set of four pieces for piano solo, either hand alone, by **Deborah Yardley Beers** was performed by Jonathan Levin in March 2022 on Concert 4 of the Music by Women Festival at Mississippi University for Women. A recording of the performance is available online at <https://www.muw.edu/musicbywomen/previous/2022/7899-music-by-womenfestival-2022-concert-4>.

Teil Buck was selected to present at the Charlotte BOOM festival in April 2022, an artist-led performance and visual arts showcase of contemporary and experimental works created on the fringes of popular culture. The 30-minute performance included oboe and electronic music called *Oboe-tronica* in a virtual tour around the musical world, including contemporary works from the Netherlands, Africa, Portugal, Ukraine, and America.



Orietta Caianello is one of the editors of the newly issued book, *Compositrici e Musiciste: Storia e Storie*, presented at the 6th annual "Le Musiciste" Conference held in Rome, Italy, October 11-12, 2021. Organized by the departments of Scienze della Formazione and Filosofia, Comunicazione e Spettacolo of the Università di Roma Tre, the event had been delayed due to the pandemic and was held in person. The text collects the contributions of the scholars who participated in the previous conferences and encloses a collection of eighteen essays encompassing several centuries, from Ancient Rome to modern times. Caianello also participated in the concert following the presentation as part of the Domus Piano Trio (Filippo Fattorini, violin, Paolo Andriotti, cello, and Caianello at the piano). The program was dedicated to French women composers and included music by Pauline Viardot, Mel Bonis, Nadia Boulanger, Clémence de Grandval, and Germaine Tailleferre. The Festival "Ombra illuminata: Donne nella musica," founded by Professors Angela Annese and Orietta Caianello in 2014, involves both students and professors in annual seminars, concerts, and research projects with a focus on the work of women composers, in both research and performance, with the purpose of integrating their music into the mainstream of the canonized Western music repertory. Now well rooted in the life and activities of the Conservatorio Di Musica "Niccolò Piccinni" Bari, the festival was included among the projects of cultural interest in the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, also receiving a grant from the Italian Ministry of University and Research in 2021. Each edition adds new women composers to

the list, now including nearly one hundred entries. The global pandemic delayed the 2020 festival to 2021, so the 6th and 7th festivals were held in the same year, in the spring and fall of 2021. Due to pandemic restrictions, the spring edition consists of fifteen video recordings, issued on the institutional YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0v-ABf--Xjjou4pov0Jqvq_5ZuCxntzvP.

Jerry Casey's *O, Death Rock Me Asleep* was presented by soprano Jessica Kahn and violinist Erica Donahoe at the NACUSA Dallas New Music Virtual Festival held May 21-23, 2021. Two of her works were performed on concerts at the Sixth International Festival of Music by Women at Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, Mississippi, March 3-5, 2022: *Fountain Fantasy*, performed by clarinetist Michelle Kiec and pianist Jonathan Levin, and "Jesus Has Come at Last" from *Seven Signs* (Song Cycle for Seven Singers and Seven Instrumentalists), performed by Dana Zenobi, soprano, and Ellie Jenkins, horn. Jerry Casey and Marika Kyriakos presented a lecture recital at the festival premiering *Mary Magdalene at the Tomb* for unaccompanied soprano. Casey spoke about its composition and Kyriakos addressed the various performance possibilities, followed by a performance of the work with dramatic background PowerPoint images.

At the 2022 Annual Conference of Christian Fellowship of Art Music Composers (CFAMC) held at Fresno Pacific University, Fresno, California, March 25-26, 2022, Casey's hymn, *I Take Thy Hand*, was used in the worship service. In a concert, her woodwind trio entitled *Harlequinade* was performed

by Elaine Wilkinson, flute, Joshua Jensen, clarinet, and Harmony Mendez, bassoon. On April 3, 2022, Women in Music-Columbus presented a concert of works by women composers at Messiah Lutheran Church, Westerville, Ohio, where Casey's setting of *A Birthday* (poetry of Christina Rossetti) for soprano and woodwind trio was premiered. Performers were Jessica Kahn, soprano, Sarah Luckey, flute, Joy Norris, clarinet, and Alan Ray, bassoon. Casey collaborated with a voice student of Cheryl Coker at Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi, in the writing of an art song. The student, Samantha Sherman, sang the song, *The Key-Note*, on her senior recital in late April 2022.

During the pandemic, **Emma Lou Diemer** produced a book, *My Life as a Woman Composer*, available at Amazon. She also wrote several works that are now published by Subito/Seesaw: *Pandemic Piano Collection* and *By the Sea* for piano four hands (written for Bradley Gregory and Tachell Gerbert). *Piano Trio No. 2*, written for the Rawlins Piano Trio and recorded by them, was also recently published by Subito/Seesaw.

Veronika Krausas announced the West Coast premiere of *Caryatids for Orchestra* on April 22, 2022, performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Thomas Adès, conductor, for Voices of a Generation: GEN X Festival. Commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as the winner of the 10th Annual Elaine Lebenbom Memorial Award for Female Composers, the piece was inspired by the caryatids or the female sculptures on Book Tower in Detroit. Premiered by the Detroit Symphony in 2021 during COVID lockdown with

limited musicians, this performance will be the full orchestral version for a live audience.

Pianist Inna Faliks performed the world premiere of the entire work, *The Master and Margarita Suite*, for speaking pianist on May 6, 2022, at the Wende Museum in Culver City, California. The *Suite* was commissioned by Faliks and the Wende Museum. A preview performance of five of the movements was given at the Bargemusic Concert Series in Brooklyn, New York early in 2020. The *Suite* will be recorded by Sono Luminus. *Wilderness (Rêve du Canada)* for French Horn and Narrator will be performed by Kristy Morrell on May 25 at the International Women's Brass Conference in Denton, Texas.

Krausas gave UPBEAT LIVE @ Disney Concert Hall pre-concert lectures in Disney Hall before the following concerts given by the Los Angeles Philharmonic: March 4-6, Elgar, Tchaikovsky & Fariás; March 12-13, Shostakovich, Prokofiev & Thorvaldsdóttir; April 22, Voices of a Generation: Gen X Festival; and April 23-24 Norman & Corigliano: Gen X Festival.

Shao Ying Low's compositions have been published since March 2021 by the renowned Viennese music publisher, Universal Edition.

Jane O'Leary announces a number of deferred premieres taking place in the coming months: *as the wind often does...* for bass clarinet, violin, cello, and piano will be premiered at the National Concert Hall on June 15 as part of the After Beethoven series, originally planned for 2020 and Beethoven's 250th birthday celebrations. Curated by O'Leary, the concert features *Bagatelles* by Beethoven, Elizabeth Lutyens, and O'Leary (*Five Bagatelles* from 2013), as well as works by Webern, Ed Bennett, Judith Ring, and Greg Caffrey, performed by pianist Xenia Pestova Bennett and members of Concorde ensemble. A piano concerto commissioned for the 40th anniversary of Music for Galway, *unfolding landscapes*, will be premiered

by the National Symphony Orchestra in Galway and Dublin on October 6 and 7 with soloist Finghin Collins and conductor Kenneth Montgomery. Other performances include pianist Isabelle O'Connell playing a solo recital at the Hugh Lane Galway in Dublin on June 5, including *breathing spaces*, a work written for O'Connell and inspired by the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. A trio for flute, clarinet, violin, *Winter Reflections*, will be featured on the June 17 Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble's Schoenberg Revisited program in Belfast.

Janice Macaulay's *C.D.D. in Memoriam* for solo viola was performed by violist Kimia Hesabi on the Baltimore Composers Forum Micro-Brewed: I Want to Be Left Alone virtual concert on March 5, 2022. The concert may be viewed any time on the Baltimore Composers Forum website. The video of *Three Pieces for String Quartet* performed by the Azimuth String Quartet is included on a virtual Baltimore Composers Forum concert called String Theory, available on the Baltimore Composers Forum website.

In January 2022, **Janice Misurell-Mitchell** and jazz singer Joanie Pallatto created a new work, *Night of the Living Flag*, for voices, flute, and assorted percussion at the New Music at the Green Mill series. In February, she presented a new version of her interpretation of Dadaist Tristan Tzara's *Proclamation without Pretension* for voice/flute and various percussion instruments at Constellation Chicago. *The Gift of Tongues*, her work about the Tower of Babel, was performed by Joan Collaso, vocalist; Misurell-Mitchell on flute/voice; Mwata Bowen, clarinet; and Yosef Ben Israel, bass. In early April, she performed on flute and voice with dancers and musicians from the ensemble Freedom From and Freedom To.

Deon Nielsen Price's *Silver and Gold*, duo for flute and piano; *To All Women Everywhere*, song cycle for soprano, flute, and piano, with poetry by Carol Lynn Pearson; and *Angelic Piano Pieces*, were performed in Music She Wrote:

A Celebration of International Women's Day at the Performing Arts Center, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, March 8, 2022. After presenting fifteen online concerts during the pandemic, in the fall of 2021, the Interfaith Center at the Presidio of San Francisco Sunday Series resumed in-person concerts in historic Presidio Chapel, now also live-streamed and posted on its YouTube channel. Price's works performed were Bach's famous *Arioso* arranged for violin and piano, October 17, 2021; *Gallery*, song cycle for medium voice and piano, text by poet laureate James Morehead, November 14, 2021; *Silver and Gold, To All Women Everywhere*; and *Whither Can I Go from Your Presence?* (Psalm 139) and *Nobody Knows De Trouble I've Seen* (traditional, arranged), both for voice and piano, March 20, 2022. On March 21, the audio was recorded in the same venue for a Cambria CD release of *Silver and Gold* and *To All Women Everywhere*, by Amy Goymerac, soprano; Suzanne Duffy, C and alto flutes; Susan Azaret Davies, piano; Barbara Hirsch, engineer; Jeannie G. Pool, session producer.

Catherine Reid performed five of her compositions with colleagues for an appreciative audience at Composers Share the Stage, held at the Strand Theater in Hudson Falls, New York, on March 5. A recording will soon be available at reidmusic.org. Another such concert is anticipated in November. Upcoming events include *Essential Voices* at the Hyde Collection in Glens Falls, New York, on May 22, a musical/theatrical/multimedia event based on interviews of essential workers. There will be a full production of *Nearby Faraway* (music by Reid, words by Neal Herr) at the Carriage House Theater in Lake George, New York, during the last two weekends in July. This musical is about the art and lives of Alfred Stieglitz and Georgie O'Keefe.

Clare Shore's *Full Moon Circle* for harp and fixed media (abridged version) was premiered by harpist Kristina Finch on March 26, 2022, as part of the Frontwave New Music Festival in West Palm Beach, Florida. Shore is currently

completing *Afterimages* for viola, piano, and fixed media for violist Michael Hall and pianist Kathleen Supové.

Laura Schwendinger's second opera, *Cabaret of Shadows*, a 2020 Fromm Foundation Commission, received its world premiere performances March 5 and 6 at MATCH (Midtown Arts & Theater Center) in Houston, Texas, sponsored by Musiq. The work is about artistic innovation in the cabarets of turn-of-the-century Paris. In these after-hours spaces, poets, musicians, painters, and bohemians of all sorts rubbed shoulders and laid the groundwork for the expressionist, abstract, and modernist movements that continue to shape our culture today. And it was here that an American-born dancer, choreographer Loie Fuller dazzled audiences, inspired artists from Toulouse-Lautrec to Isadora Duncan, and redefined modern dance, only to be largely forgotten in the decades that followed. The opera shines an overdue spotlight on the female creators of the Folies Bergère, Chat Noir, and other famous cabarets of the time. A collaborative work with writer Ginger Strand, *Cabaret* was directed by Stages Artistic Director Kenn McLaughlin and conducted by Opera in the Heights Artistic Director Eiki Isomura. Featured singers included Julia Fox, Megan Berti, Shannon Murray, Albert Stanley, Scott Clark, and Marina Harris. The instrumental ensemble included Doug DeVries (flute), Maiko Sasaki (clarinet), Jacob Schafer (violin), Nick Pelletier (viola), and Bree Ahern (cello).

Faye-Ellen Silverman's *Interval Untamed: Five Miniatures* was performed by Todd Rewoldt, alto saxophone, on a recital and masterclass held at Montclair (New Jersey) State University on October 21, 2021. On November 19, pianist Roberta Swedien performed "The Mysterious Stranger" from *Fleeting Moments* at The Thomas Center in Gainesville, Florida. The program was repeated on December 12 at Christ & St. Stephen's Church in New York City. On December 11, Veronique Valdes, mezzo-soprano, Lyda Chen-Argerich, viola, and

Happy 88th Birthday, Deon!



Deon Nielsen Price is a prize-winning pianist, commissioned composer, choral and orchestra conductor, recording artist, veteran educator, published author, and former president of the IAWM. Since the fall of 2017, she has curated the monthly Sunday Concert Series at historic Presidio Chapel for the Interfaith Center at the Presidio of San Francisco, where she is Composer-in-Residence.

As a solo and collaborative pianist since the early 1950s, she has performed regularly on university and community concerts across the continental United States, as well as at international festivals in the U.S.A., China, Italy, Austria,

Germany, England, France, Spain, Mexico, Panama, and Korea. Her compositions have been performed in many countries in Europe, former Soviet Union, Asia, and Central America, as well as across the United States. Most titles are published by Culver Crest Publications or Southern Music Company. Many chamber works are recorded on Cambria Master Recordings distributed by NAXOS.

Retired from the piano/theory faculty at El Camino College in Torrance, CA, Dr. Price has also taught on the music faculties at California State University, Northridge; University of California, Santa Barbara; University of Southern California; Los Angeles Harbor; Mission Colleges; Long Beach City College; and the Crossroads School of Arts and Sciences, as well as in her private studio.

Deon is author of *Accompanying Skills for Pianists*, 2nd Edition, and the manual *SightPlay with Skillful Eyes* (Culver Crest Publications). She has also written articles on piano accompanying and sight-playing for *Clavier Magazine* and *Keyboard Companion*, and she has edited the text *College Class Piano-Comprehensive Approach* (Demibach Editions; Reading Keyboard Music, Ltd.).

Titta Carvelli, piano, gave the world premiere performance of *Reflections on a Distant Love* for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano at the Theatre des Salons in Geneva, Switzerland. Amy Gilreath will give the world premiere performance of *A Time to Mourn* for flugelhorn (dedicated to the memory of Joan Fann) on May 25, 2022, at the welcome concert and opening ceremony of the 2022 International Women's Brass Conference held at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. On May 26, Silverman will lead the Composers Panel at the conference.

Elizabeth Start has had three well-received premieres thus far this season. On October 4, 2021, *O, Aedificatio* for 10 players was premiered by the ensemble Unsupervised on New Music Chicago's Ear Taxi Festival; on October 16, 2021, *Traces*, commissioned for the 100th Anniversary of the Kalamazoo Symphony (originally scheduled for September 2020) was premiered; *Conclusions* was premiered by Spektral Quartet on a Chicago Composers' Consortium concert, also including nine premieres of works by Bernard Rands and C3 members.

Originally scheduled for April 19, 2020, this concert was performed on March 7, 2022, in Kalamazoo Michigan, on March 14 in Chicago, Illinois, on April 2 in Madison, Wisconsin, and on April 15 in Carbondale, Illinois. *Echoes in Life* appears on Thomas Mesa's *Division of Memory* album, which won a bronze prize in the 2022 Global Music Awards. On May 15, 2022, the Durward Ensemble premiered *Together 360* in Chicago. Start recently learned that on June 26, 2021, Amanda Laborete performed *Echoes in Life* on a virtual concert presented by the Filam Music Foundation, available on YouTube.

Hilary Tann was the "Special Guest Composer" at CAMPground22 in Tampa, Florida, March 21-29. CAMP stands for Contemporary Music Arts Project and will be an annual event worthy of your attention. *No Wind Yet Leaves Fall* for violin solo (Sini Virtanen) and the Robert McCormick Percussion Ensemble was Tann's contribution (a premiere postponed for two years due to the pandemic). Gradually, some degree of normalcy is returning: a quintet premiere with the 21st Century Consort in Washington, D.C., April 9 (*In the Enchantment*); a chamber orchestra piece in Cleveland, Ohio, May 7 (BlueWater Chamber Orchestra, *with the Heather and Small Birds*); and a string quartet at Tanglewood, July 2 (*And the Snow Did Lie*). New CDs are also in the pipeline: *On Ear and Ear* (cello and piano) with the Fischer Duo (Parma) will be released in September, and *First Light*, launched in Bangor, Wales (piano and violin), also in September.

Pianist **Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi** performed several preludes from **Betty Wisharts's** *Preludes: In Memoriam, Atmospheres,* and *Illusions* suites on the Women in Music: 19th-21st Centuries concert at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina on October 19, 2021. Astolfi also performed Preludes No. 9 and No. 10 at the Campbell University Living Composers Concert on October 21. Faculty from Campbell University and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro premiered *Prelude to Praise* and *Fanfares* Nos. 2 and 3 for brass quartet. Astolfi performed *Illusions, Preludes: In Memoriam* Nos. 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8, and the *Vibes* suite at Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina, on March 18, 2022, and at the University of North Carolina-Pembroke on March 20. On April 6, she performed *Fanfares* Nos. 1, 2, and 3 on the Cape Fear New Music Recital at Methodist University.

The Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Elias Brown, premiered **Rain Worthington's** *Dream Vapors Suite* for orchestra on April 20, 2022, in Aram Khachaturian Hall, Yerevan, Armenia. The United States premiere of *Resolves* for cello was performed by Esther Seitz, cello, and The Bowery Trio for the New York Contemporary Music Symposium 2022 at Columbia University's St. Paul's Chapel in New York City, with both an in-person audience and a webcast via Columbia University. On February 25, violinist Audrey Wright and pianist Yundu Wang gave the world premiere performance of *Balancing on the Edge of Shadows* for violin and piano at An die Musik Live in Baltimore, Maryland. On December 5, 2021, violinist Moonkyung Lee and guitarist Jangheum Bae gave the version premiere performance of *Jilted Tango* for violin/guitar at the Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA) in the Republic of Korea.

On December 12, 2021, *Shredding Glass* received its North American premiere in two performances with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Ulysses James, conductor, at the Annandale United Methodist Church, Annandale, Virginia, and then at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia. On December 15, 2021, the version premiere of *On Curious Reflection* for piano/vibraphone was performed by Andrea Lodge, piano, Chris Graham, vibe, and the Hypercube Ensemble at the Greenwich House Music School in New York City.

Members' News Submissions

News items are listed alphabetically by member's name and include recent and forthcoming activities. Submissions are always welcome concerning appointments, honors, commissions, premieres, performances, and other items.

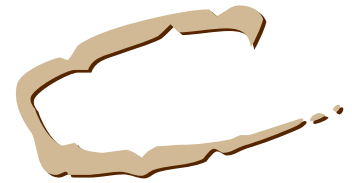
We recommend that you begin with the most significant news first and follow that with an organized presentation of the other information. Due to space limitations, information such as lengthy descriptions, lists of performers, long websites, and reviews may sometimes be edited.

The deadline for the next issue is June 30. Please send your news to Members' News Editor Anita Hanawalt at anita@hanawalthaus.net. Anita does not monitor announcements sent to the IAWM listserv; be sure to send the information directly to her.

NB: The column does not include radio broadcasts; see Linda Rimel's weekly "Broadcast Updates." Awards and recent publications and recordings are listed in separate columns. Send this information to the editor in chief, Dr. Eve R. Meyer, at evemeyer45@gmail.com.

A stylized, abstract illustration in shades of purple, pink, black, and beige. It features a woman's face with large eyes, a wide smile, and a large hoop earring. The face is partially obscured by a large, dark, curved shape that resembles a musical instrument, possibly a trumpet or trombone. Below this, there are vertical lines and shapes that suggest a piano keyboard. The overall style is modern and graphic.

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