



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN IN MUSIC

IN THIS ISSUE:

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser
and *The Seal-Woman: Selkies,
Scotland, and Song*

IAWM Annual

Concert Winners

IAWM Conference Report

Women Presenting Women
at SAM

Reviews

Members' News



Drs. Rosalyn Wright Floyd, Marcía Porter, and Alexis Davis-Hazell

CONCERT

Orchestra and Chamber Music
Museum Schnütgen

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025
17:30-19:30

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MUSEUM ADMISSION REQUIRED TO ATTEND

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Schnütgen



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Orchestra in D major

+ Additional Works by
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INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN IN MUSIC

1 Message from IAWM's President

CHRISTINA RUSNAK

IAWM NEWS

2 Call for Contributions to the IAWM Journal

ARTICLES

3 Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and *The Seal-Woman*: Selkies, Scotland, and Song

CHRISTOPHER WILEY

12 IAWM Annual Concert Winners

REPORTS

14 IAWM Conference Report

CHRISTINA RUSNAK

16 Women Presenting Women at SAM

J. MICHELE EDWARDS

REVIEWS

RECORDING REVIEWS

18 Peter Mallison and Lynn Arnold: *Brief Encounters*

ELIZABETH START

20 Anna Rubin: *Powehi*

ANGELA MILLER-NILES

MEMBERS' NEWS

22 Members' News

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—CHRISTINA RUSNAK

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, its website, a free listserv, international competitions for researchers and composers, conferences, 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.

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Your donations enable IAWM to fulfill its mission and vision. Our awards, grants, and advocacy efforts bring greater equity and awareness of the contributions of women in music. Any amount helps to fund our concerts, conferences, the *Journal of the IAWM*, grants, and all of our member services. To donate:

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Christina Rusnak | Photo: Rachel Hadiasher

Message from IAWM's President

Dear Members,

We cannot ignore that we are living through a challenging period of time, where gender equality is being challenged, where diverse perspectives are being questioned and inclusion is increasingly exclusionary, and funding for the arts is being withdrawn for the very ideas upon which IAWM was founded. IAWM affirms Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These represent our core values. A diversity of ideas, approaches, disciplines, and musical styles are essential to inclusion and equality, and contribute to greater understanding, knowledge, and creativity.

Conferences and Festivals!

One of the greatest opportunities we have to ADVOCATE for Women in Music is through our research, performances and works at conferences and festivals. Monthly, we bring you upcoming conferences and festivals listed midway down the Home Page of our website. This summer is so full of them we can hardly keep track! Our team also researches opportunities for you to get involved by listing conferences and festivals here in the journal for the next three months. Please send calls for conference submissions to communications@iawm.org, so we can post them on our social media.

The 2025 IAWM and College Music Society International Conference, held from June 15–24 in Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia, brought together scholars, educators, and performers from across the globe. A resounding success, the conference was a memorable event for all attendees. With many CMS members unaware of IAWM, my opening remarks provided an opportunity to advocate about IAWM to CMS attendees. 32 IAWM and 82 CMS members performed and/or presented papers on a diverse set of topics. With the IAWM theme “Women in the World,” the conference introduced lesser-known works by female composers, opening dialogues and discussions regarding female musicians and educators in music. The cultural immersion aspect of the trip coordinated by CMS was remarkable! I worked with several presenters to create articles for our journal to bring topics from the conference to you, our members. Read the entire report on page 14. If you would like to host and/or partner for our *next* conference in 2028, please send a note to president@iawm.org. IAWM and CMS are already talking about a future international conference collaboration in 2031!

In November, IAWM will have a booth at the joint American Musicological Society (AMS) and Society for Music Theory (SMT) annual conference on November 6–9, 2025 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. If you are presenting at the conference, please consider submitting a version of your paper for volume four of the journal.

Music, Events, and Opportunities

The 2025 Concert for chamber orchestra and ensemble will take place in Cologne, Germany, at St. Cecilia's Romanesque Church, Museum Schnütgen on September 25, 2025, with the opportunity to work with Virago Symphonic Orchestra from Antwerp, Belgium. See page 12 for a list of the selected composers. For 2026 we are planning IAWM's first Choral/Vocal concert in 10 years! Let us know if you would like to host this concert, or have connections with choirs we should contact!

Updates & Communication

We are continually evaluating our communication to reach all of you through your preferred method of contact so that we can keep you up to date with IAWM and the activities of women in music everywhere. In order to reach toward that goal, we want to hear from you for improvements we can make. Please contact: communications@iawm.org

In the meantime, we've implemented a couple of your suggestions. We've added a dropdown for the new Google List iawmlist@googlegroups.com in our PROGRAMS tab at the top and currently we have a link to it under LATEST NEWS & UPDATES on the Home Page. Lower down on the Home Page, we have expanded our Opportunities section to include AWARDS, CONCERTS and COMPETITIONS. All of these are, and have been, under the PROGRAMS tab, but expanding this section allows everyone to see and link to IAWM's programs more easily.

IAWM's membership continues to grow. Women are creating and exploring wonderful music. Let members learn more about you and your work. Update your image and website information on the Members page. Log in, and click on the Members page to Member Profile. Click EDIT PROFILE, to add your information. I love to read about the work you're doing, the pieces you're creating, conducting and/or performing, the books and articles you're writing. So PLEASE, don't be shy! Submit your research, your reports, interviews, news and more news to journal@iawm.org.

Last, but not least, your support and donations make our work possible. You can do so directly from our WAYS to SUPPORT page. Donate to fund a musician for our annual concert, an intern for a semester, or for one of the new music awards. IAWM can also manage larger gifts to provide IAWM with a longer legacy. **Consider becoming a BOARD MEMBER or a volunteer.**

Thank you all for your membership!

Christina Rusnak
CHRISTINA RUSNAK
President, IAWM

Call for Contributions to the IAWM Journal

NEXT DEADLINE FOR JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS: NOVEMBER 30 2025

Editors await IAWM members' articles, tributes, reviews, and news!

Guidelines for Contributors

All Contributions: Submit all contributions as email attachments in Microsoft Word to journal@iawm.org. Identify the type of submission in the subject line of the email. The journal follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*, including documenting your sources in [footnotes](#). We use the Oxford comma. Only one space after a period, please.

Articles: Before submitting an article, submit a [proposal](#) comprising an abstract of about 250 words and your short biography, about 50 words. Send it as an e-mail attachment in MS Word to journal@iawm.org with "[Article proposal](#)" in the subject line of the e-mail. The abstract should articulate the thesis of your inquiry (what you will to show), what evidence you will use (how you will show it), and how it relates to the mission of the IAWM (women in music in any period, location, or field). Make clear what is already known about your topic (prior research) and what you will contribute that is new. Estimate the number of words your article will be (1000 to 5000 words, including footnotes, is typical). A short bibliography (about 3-4 reliable sources) is helpful to assess your proposal, as is a short list of musical examples, photographs, or other illustrative material you intend to use. If the proposal is approved, the editor will send more detailed information about your individual submission.

Submitted articles *must be complete for professional publication*. Please proofread your own writing. For musical examples, print-quality pdf

files are preferred; high resolution, (minimum 300 dpi) TIFF or JPEG are also acceptable. Photos should be in color and high resolution, and a minimum 300 dpi at the size to be used. Submit [minimum](#) 2.5×3.5 for headshots, 5×4 for articles, 5×6 for cover. Submit the completed article with "article submission" in the subject line and submit the illustrations as separate attachments in the same e-mail.

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Announcements and Reports: To [announce](#) new recording releases or upcoming events (conferences, festivals, news items, women-in-music initiatives, etc.), or to contribute a [report](#) on a recently past event, email the information as an email attachment in MS Word to journal@iawm.org with either "Announcement" or "Report" in the subject line.

Reviews: To request a review of your book or recording, email the information to journal@iawm.org with "Review Request" in the subject line. Our review editor, Dr. Kathleen Carter Bell, will be in touch regarding next steps. If you wish to review books or recordings for the journal, put "Review List" in the subject line, and the review editor will contact you if she needs additional information to add you to her list. To submit a completed review, send it as an email attachment in MS Word

to journal@iawm.org with "Review" in the subject line. Reviews are typically about 900 words. Submit illustrations as separate attachments to the same e-mail. See "Articles," above, for instructions about illustrations.

Members' News: Please send your news and updates as an attachment in MS Word to journal@iawm.org with "Members' News" in the subject line. With quarterly opportunities for submission, news contributions should reflect the past 3-6 months, a paragraph limited to 200 words or less, and include one illustration (see "articles," above, for specifications) or headshot photo and one link to an audio or audiovisual recording.

Helpful resources

Chicago's *Turabian Quick Guide* gives footnote formats for most source types: <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/turabian-notes-and-bibliography-citation-quick-guide.html>

Consult *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* for authoritative definitions and spelling: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Grove Music Online, which most university libraries and many public libraries subscribe to, is a good place to check facts about music and musicians.

You don't have to wait until the deadline to submit your contribution: the earlier you submit it, the smoother the journal production process.

Proposals received past the deadline may be considered for future issues of the Journal of the IAWM.

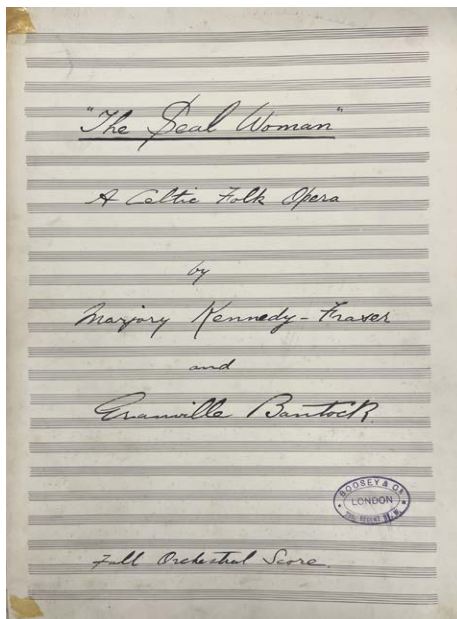


Fig. 1(a): The front page of the rediscovered autograph score of Kennedy-Fraser and Bantock's *The Seal-Woman*. | Photo Credit: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and *The Seal-Woman*: Selkies, Scotland, and Song

CHRISTOPHER WILEY

In 2015 James Eggleston, Head of Publishing at Boosey & Hawkes, came upon an old, collapsed box numbered 518 while moving the London publisher's archives from Holborn to Croydon. Opening the box, he discovered the lost autograph of the full orchestral score of *The Seal-Woman* (1917–24), primarily known as a two-act opera composed by Granville Bantock (Fig. 1).¹ But he also lifted the lid on the significance of Bantock's lesser-known collaborator, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, the Edinburgh-based musician, teacher, lecturer, collector of Scottish folksong,

1 Richard Bratby recounts the score's rediscovery in "The Forgotten Story of British Opera," *The Spectator*, May 24, 2025, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-forgotten-story-of-british-opera/>. Bantock (1868–1946) was best known as the composer, conductor, and academic who held the post of Peyton Professor at the University of Birmingham from 1908, in succession to Elgar. In his prolific compositional output, he is particularly recognized for his imaginative orchestrations; as a conductor, he was key to founding the ensemble now known as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

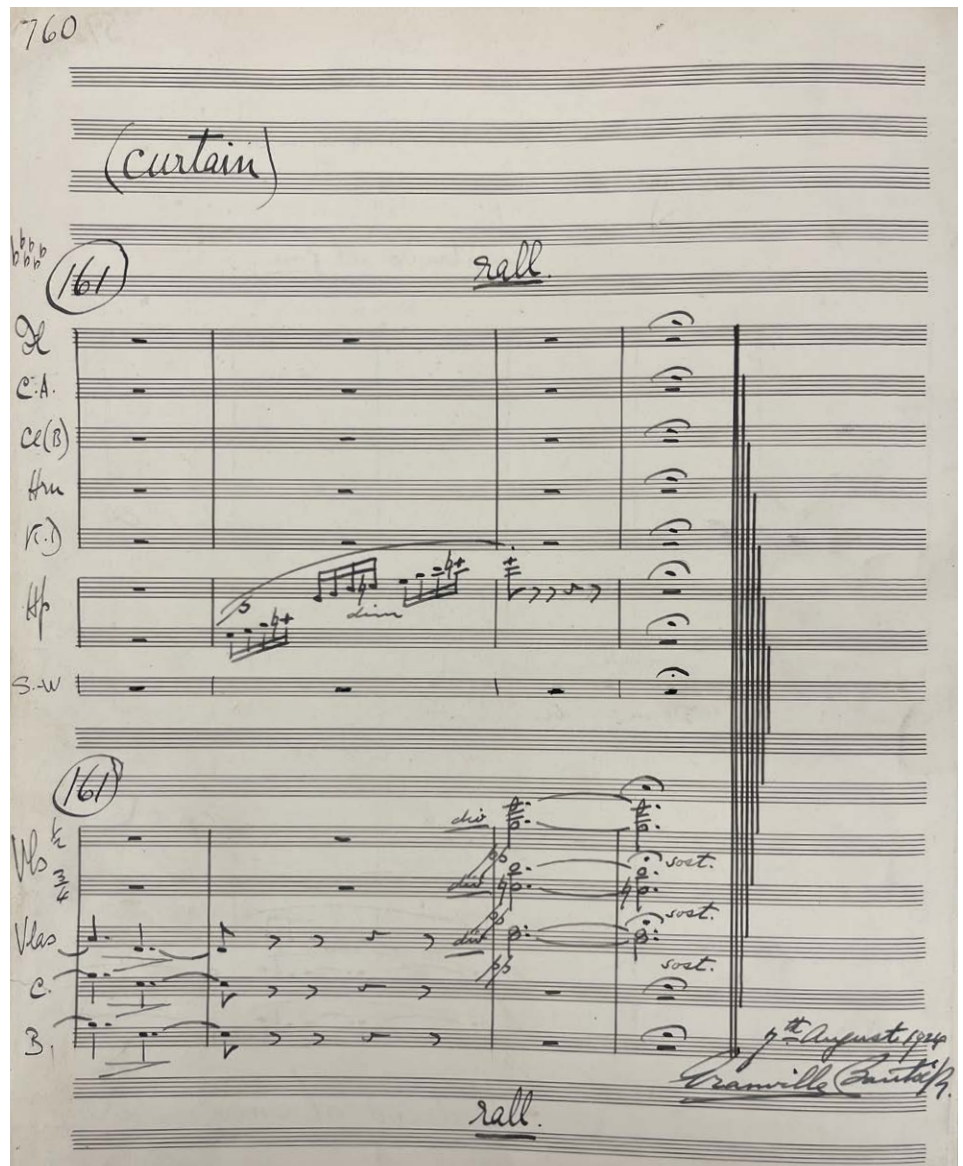


Fig. 1(b): The final manuscript page of the full orchestral score of *The Seal-Woman*, bearing Bantock's signature and the date August 7, 1924. | Photo Credit: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

and co-creator of the work they described as a "Celtic Folk Opera." First produced in 1924 and revived (subsequent to a radio broadcast) in 1928 and 1936, the score had been missing for some 40 years, following its last full-scale performance in Fulham Town Hall in May 1975.² Mr. Eggleston recognized immediately the musical treasure he had just unearthed, which, in addition to *The Seal-Woman*, included a lost score by Arthur Somervell contained in the same anonymous box.

2 See Trevor Bray, "Bantock's 'Seal-Woman,'" *The Musical Times*, Vol. 116 (1975), pp. 431, 433. Joseph Vandernoot conducted the opera.

This article draws attention to Kennedy-Fraser's pivotal contribution to *The Seal-Woman*, not only as the librettist and the performer who originated the role of The Cailleach, but also as the collector who notated and arranged the Hebridean folksongs essential to the opera's composition. The score drew substantially on these folk songs, and the opera contributed to keeping this repertory from vanishing from historical memory. *The Seal-Woman* was part of the wider contexts of the Celtic Revival and folksong collecting, of which Kennedy-Fraser was an important part, and of



Fig. 2: Portrait of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser appearing in Vol. 1 of her *Songs of the Hebrides* (1909).

the rich lineage of artistic representations of the Selkie legend on which the opera was based. The rediscovery of the autograph score made possible the first recording of *The Seal-Woman* with its original orchestration, which was produced by Retrospect Opera in Glasgow on March 4–7, 2024 with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera conducted by John Andrews and a cast of predominantly Scottish artists.³ In addition to the premiere professional recording, the Scots Opera Project has staged multiple productions of *The Seal-Woman* in recent years, played to full houses.⁴

The daughter of the internationally renowned Scottish tenor David Kennedy (1825–1866), Perth-born

*Kennedy-Fraser was not merely the librettist for the opera *The Seal-Woman*; her work in gathering and arranging Hebridean folksong was absolutely fundamental to its composition, and its score was heavily dependent on these materials.*

— CHRISTOPHER WILEY

Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) (Fig. 2) was introduced to folksong in childhood, touring with her father as his piano accompanist from her early teenage years. She started collecting folksongs in 1882 in tandem with her developing interest in the Celtic Revival, a set of cultural movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that piqued public fascination with Celtic culture, literature, and art. She settled in Edinburgh, where she studied at the University under Frederick Niecks (1845–1924) as one of its first female students. On the death of her husband (1890) she devoted herself to gathering, writing down, and arranging Gaelic folksong.

Kennedy-Fraser's interest in the music of the Hebrides stemmed from her close friendship with the Scottish painter and illustrator John Duncan (1866–1945), one of the leading exponents of the Celtic Revival in visual art: his oil painting of her against the Eriskay landscape is now held by the National Galleries of Scotland.⁵ At Duncan's urging, in 1905 she visited Eriskay, a small island in the Outer Hebrides, and started to collect and document the folksongs she encountered there and on neighboring islands. She notated these ballads fully, regularizing them into beats and measures, mapping the Gaelic scales and temperaments to the Western diatonic system, and adding harmonizations and simple accompaniments (principally for piano, but also for harp or *clàrsach*), which she composed herself. The music she collected was organized into five main volumes of Hebridean

folksongs published between 1909 and 1929, the first of which, accompanied by extensive prefatory commentary, she dedicated "To the Women of the Hebrides."⁶ For the English translations of their lyrics she was assisted by another expert in Celtic folklore, Rev. Kenneth Macleod (1871–1955), himself a native Gaelic speaker as well as a poet, who on occasion also supplied completely new lyrics. As a singer, Kennedy-Fraser presented these Anglicized versions in recital, sharing the platform (as her father had before her) with family members, including her daughter Patuffa, who had started to join her mother in her fieldwork. Politically, she supported causes including women's suffrage, pacifism, and Scottish independence.⁷

Kennedy-Fraser was not merely the librettist for the opera *The Seal-Woman*; her work in gathering and arranging Hebridean folksong was absolutely fundamental to its composition, and its score was heavily dependent on these materials. Music history offers many examples of opera librettists having input into the score of an opera, and reciprocally, many composers help to shape an opera's libretto. But in this case, *The Seal-Woman* simply could not have come into being without Kennedy-Fraser's labor researching and documenting this repertory, which

3 Marjory Kennedy-Fraser and Granville Bantock, *The Seal-Woman: A Celtic Folk Opera* (Retrospect Opera RO012, 2025). The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, John Andrews (cond.). Yvonne Howard (The Cailleach), Catherine Carby (The Seal-Woman), Catriona Hewitson (The Seal-Sister), Seumas Begg (The Islesman), Arthur Bruce (First Fisher), Christian Loizou (Second Fisher, The Water-Kelpie).

4 Scots Opera Project, "The Seal-Woman," <https://www.scotsoperaproject.com/copy-of-the-seal-woman-1> (accessed July 17, 2025); highlights of one of their productions, performed with piano accompaniment, are available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0OoCvzk5Hg> (Act 1) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPaqEgOX9EU> (Act 2). A subsequent production will run in August–September 2025 at Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Perthshire: <https://www.pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com/whats-on/the-seal-woman/> (accessed July 17, 2025).

5 National Galleries of Scotland, "John Duncan," <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/2481> (accessed July 17, 2025).

6 Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, *Songs of the Hebrides*, 3 Vols. (London: Boosey & Co., 1909, 1917, 1921), *From the Hebrides: Further Gleanings of Tale and Song* (Glasgow: Paterson, 1925), and *More Songs of the Hebrides* (London: Boosey & Co., 1929). See further, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, "Songs of the Hebrides" [November 5, 1918], *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, Vol. 45 (1918–1919), 1–12.

7 See also Per G. L. Ahlander's biographical essay, "Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930)," in the liner notes to Retrospect Opera's recording of *The Seal-Woman* (cited above, n. 3).

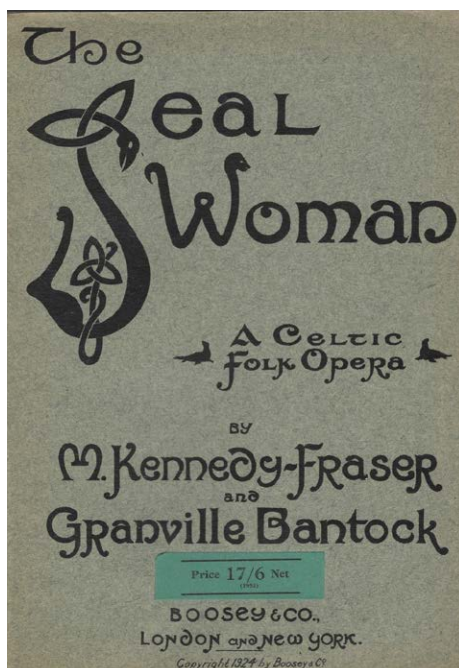


Fig. 3: Front cover of the vocal score of *The Seal-Woman* (1924), featuring Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's original design.

previously had only been disseminated through oral tradition. It is not without good reason that her name appears before Bantock's in the published vocal score (Fig. 3), notwithstanding women's secondary social status at that time.⁸

Kennedy-Fraser's work on folksong represented a continuation of the long-standing popularity of Scottish and Irish traditional music (even if some of it was of questionable authenticity), seen a century earlier in anthologies such as those published by George Thomson (1757–1851) and Thomas Moore (1779–1852). Folksong collection had flourished in different parts of Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prominent exponents including Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp in Britain, Janáček in parts of the present-day Czech Republic, and Bartók and Kodály in and around Hungary. The fascination for Celticism in art more broadly may be traced to James Macpherson's wildly popular fabricated translations of the poetry of the Gaelic bard "Ossian," published

in the 1760s and disseminated across Europe, giving rise to a flurry of operas and songs. As Anne-Marie Forbes has discussed, Celticism newly attracted the attention of a number of English-born composers in the 1910s and 1920s, among them Arnold Bax and Joseph Holbrooke as well as Bantock, following a revival of interest in the later nineteenth century within the Celtic nations themselves.⁹

It was the composer Rutland Boughton (1878–1960) who first brought Kennedy-Fraser's work to Bantock's attention. The Hebridean melodies may have resonated with Bantock's own Scottish patrilineage, for Bantock did not otherwise partake in the contemporary trend for collecting British folksong,¹⁰ but rather turned to Celtic, particularly Hebridean, music as a source of inspiration for his own compositions, beginning in 1913 with his settings of some of the folksongs Kennedy-Fraser had collected. His larger-scale compositions include his *Hebridean Symphony* (1915), which he dedicated to Kennedy-Fraser, and his much later *Celtic Symphony* (1940).

Bantock initiated the collaboration for *The Seal-Woman* by approaching Kennedy-Fraser about writing a libretto for a new stage work. Their initial concept for a primarily spoken "Gaelic Folk Drama" on Hebridean legends soon evolved into a full opera, and they worked closely throughout the work's long gestation period between 1917 and 1924. Kennedy-Fraser's autobiography recalls how Bantock had long kept on his desk the first two volumes of her *Songs of the Hebrides*, having himself contributed five song settings to the second.¹¹

Kennedy-Fraser and Bantock believed they might be writing the first ever work of its kind, but Forbes's research

indicates that the context for Celticism in British opera was broader than that.¹² The context for operas based on myths and legends was, of course, wider still, as the nineteenth-century resurgence of interest in mythology fired the Romantic imagination, often serving nationalist agendas, and inspiring the use of folk idioms in the musical score. Wagner's music dramas contributed to the popular fascination with the concept of myth,¹³ and Bantock had studied under the Wagner proponent Frederick Corder (1852–1932) at the Royal Academy of Music. Early in his career, Corder had himself written a national opera drawing on Arthurian legend, *Le morte d'Arthur* (1879), in a bid to create a serious English equivalent to Wagnerian music drama.¹⁴ Wagner's influence on *The Seal-Woman* is evident in some of Bantock's sophisticated harmonic writing.

The legend that primarily inspired *The Seal-Woman* was that of the Selkie, first encountered by Kennedy-Fraser during her research on Eriskay. This ancient and much-loved story is particularly associated with Celtic and Norse cultures, including Ireland, Norway, and beyond, in addition to Scotland. Selkies are mythical sea creatures who live in the form of a seal but have the power to transform into humans upon shedding their sea robes (seal skins). In a common retelling, an island-dweller steals the sea robe of a seal-woman, forcing her to live in human form, and he takes her as his wife. She reluctantly starts a family with him, but yearns to return to the sea. One day she discovers where he has hidden her sea robe, dons it, and returns to her marine form, escaping his clutches.

8 M. Kennedy-Fraser and Granville Bantock, *The Seal Woman: A Celtic Folk Opera* (London: Boosey & Co., 1924). The vocal score was prepared and released on October 7, 1924, an astonishingly quick turnaround given that the final page of the manuscript of the full score (Fig. 1[b]) is autographed and dated just two months earlier.

9 Anne-Marie H. Forbes, "Celticism in British Opera: 1878–1938," *The Music Review*, Vol. 47 (1986), 176–183.

10 The influence of this trend is seen elsewhere in British opera of the time, for instance, in Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover* (1924), which is also heavily influenced by folk music and premiered in the same year as *The Seal-Woman*.

11 See Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, *A Life of Song* (London: Humphrey Milford/Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 183.

12 Anne-Marie H. Forbes, "Celticism in British Opera of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries" (PhD diss., University of Queensland, Australia, 1993).

13 See Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 57–66.

14 See David Chandler, "Mediating Richard Wagner and Henry Bishop: Frederick Corder and the Different Legacies of German and English Romantic Opera," in *Romantic Legacies: Transnational and Transdisciplinary Contexts*, edited by Shun-Liang Chao and John Michael Corrigan (New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 123–38.

The tale has been a great source of artistic inspiration in a variety of media. In literature, it has inspired Eliza Keary's poem *Little Seal-Skin* (1874) and books such as Mollie Hunter's *A Stranger Came Ashore* (1975) and Susan Cooper's *The Selkie Girl* (1986). Examples on screen include John Sayles's *The Secret of Roan Inish* (1994) and the animated *Song of the Sea* (2014), while another variant of the story framed an episode of the Scottish television crime drama *Annika* (2023). In the visual arts, Hans Pauli Olsen's nine-foot statue of the seal-woman Kópakonan, cast in bronze and stainless steel, was installed in Mikladalur on Kalsoy in the Faroe

Islands (2014).¹⁵ The Selkie was recently included in Adam Simpson's artwork for a new set of eight "Myths and Legends" stamps issued by the UK's Royal Mail, celebrating famous mythical creatures of the country's folklore from Beowulf to the Loch Ness Monster (2025).¹⁶ But it is the field of music that bears witness to some of the most enduring iterations of art inspired by the legend.

15 The Faroe Islands, "Kópakonan (Seal Woman)," [https://old.visitfaroeislands.com/en/be-inspired/in-depth-articles/legend-of-kopakonan-\(seal-woman\)/](https://old.visitfaroeislands.com/en/be-inspired/in-depth-articles/legend-of-kopakonan-(seal-woman)/) (accessed July 17, 2025).

16 Royal Mail, "Timeless Tales from our Mythology: Myths and Legends," <https://shop.royalmail.com/special-stamp-issues/myths-and-legends> (accessed July 17, 2025).

These include the traditional ballad "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry," collected by Francis James Child in his famous nineteenth-century anthology and popularized by Joan Baez in her 1961 recording, "Silkie."

In *The Seal-Woman*, stories of the Selkie reached their musical apotheosis in an opera. Kennedy-Fraser's libretto, to which Bantock contributed, elaborates the prevailing version of the myth, whose core elements remain clearly recognizable. Taking place on an unspecified island in the western Hebrides, the plot unfolds through the character of The Cailleach (contralto). Described as "An Old Crone," she speaks of ancient Celtic tales, including one that forms in her dreams and visions, of seals that can transform into women; these are children of the King of Lochlann, who have been enchanted by their jealous stepmother. The voices of two of them, The Seal-Woman (mezzo-soprano) and The Seal-Sister (soprano), are heard in dialogue. Two Fishermen (baritone, bass) and an Islesman (tenor) approach the uninhabited isle, the latter being left to set up his fishing nets. There he stumbles upon The Seal-Woman and The Seal-Sister, in the human form into which they change three times a year. Falling in love with The Seal-Woman, he steals their sea robes, returning only that of The Seal-Sister, and compelling The Seal-Woman to remain and marry him. Seven years pass between the opera's two acts, during which The Islesman and The Seal-Woman have had a daughter together and lived happily. The Cailleach visits them, taken back to the island by the two Fishermen, and she dreams of three Swan Maidens (soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto) who are children of King Lir, the god of the ocean. They reveal that the seal-folk are angry with The Islesman for holding The Seal-Woman on land, but prophesy that she will not be freed until their child, Morag (silent role), finds her sea robe. When Morag discovers it secreted in a peat stack, The Seal-Woman is finally able to escape back to the sea and cannot resist returning there, leaving

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The Islesman and her daughter with the parting gift that their nets will be filled with the best fish.

While The Seal-Woman is the title character, the one with the greatest narratological significance is The Cailleach,¹⁷ a Gaelic mythological figure not part of the original Selkie legend, who both narrates the opera's story and participates in it. Kennedy-Fraser created the role of The Cailleach at the opera's premiere production, which opened on September 27, 1924 and comprised fourteen consecutive performances at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Adrian Boult conducted the opera, and it was directed and produced by the theatre's founder, Barry Jackson, who personally requested that Kennedy-Fraser play this role. Her own description of The Cailleach as a "once-famous singer and collector and maker of songs" seems transparently autobiographical, although her memoir (1929) further identifies the character with Mary Macleod, "the famous old Hebridean song-maker of three hundred years ago" ("Mary of the Songs" in the libretto).¹⁸ Fittingly, the singer cast as The Cailleach in Retrospect Opera's recording, international mezzo-soprano Yvonne Howard, has been familiar with Kennedy-Fraser's work throughout her career: during her time as a student at Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music, she learned "quite a few" of Kennedy-Fraser's Hebridean songs, including several that were incorporated into *The Seal-Woman* itself. Howard is now Professor of Singing at the College.¹⁹

In a statement apparently inserted into the program for its premiere production (1924), Kennedy-Fraser explained the opera's relationship to the Selkie legend and the Hebridean folksongs she had collected.²⁰ In it, she outlined how the three seal-airs and mermaid's

17 IPA: /'kal(j)əx/

18 Kennedy-Fraser, *A Life of Song*, p. 183.

19 Yvonne Howard discusses *The Seal-Woman*, the character of The Cailleach, and what Kennedy-Fraser means to her personally, in a video posted to Retrospect Opera's Instagram account at <https://www.instagram.com/p/DLJ-ci2z0EU/> (accessed July 17, 2025).

20 Kennedy-Fraser's statement has been appended to this article in full for the reader's reference.

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song in *The Seal-Woman* were ballads she perceived to be either imaginings of the folksongs that the islanders believed the mythical sea-dwellers might sing, or sung in imitation of (and imitated by) the seals themselves. These, she indicated, were joined by over a dozen other traditional Hebridean ballads, totaling twenty authentic folksongs that form the backbone of *The Seal-Woman*. Several songs include words by Kenneth Macleod, and some employ vocables, the non-lexical syllables that are commonplace in Gaelic folksong. All the songs are drawn from Kennedy-Fraser's three volumes of *Songs of the Hebrides*, with the exception of "Ailein duinn," written by Annag Chaimbeul (Annie Campbell) in the late eighteenth century and previously published by Paterson. Songs from Kennedy-Fraser's collections account for nearly all of the songs in the opera.

Of these ballads, only a few specifically concern the Selkie myth in their original incarnations, notably "The Seal-Woman's Croon" and "Seal-Woman's Sea-Joy";

the remainder are included to evoke the opera's Celtic setting. For Anne-Marie Forbes, most may be categorized into three different groups according to their function in the narrative:

1. songs "central to the opera for elements of characterization" of either a. The Seal-Woman or b. The Islesman;
2. those "introduced to round out the drama"; and
3. those "included for their own sake, extraneous to the drama."²¹ (One notable exception is "An Eriskay Lullaby," used instrumentally as an Interlude between the opera's two acts.)

The resulting assortment of pre-existing songs, wound around a story to which, for the most part, they had previously been unrelated (analogous to the modern jukebox musical), marks

the opera as a distant successor of John Gay's milestone *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), which features a compilation of popular tunes drawn from a variety of traditional and operatic sources and arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch. Perhaps because they originated outside of the opera and do not collectively tell a unified story, when the Hebridean folksongs appear in *The Seal-Woman*, the characters who present them are invariably intended to be performing them within the diegesis of the drama. A number of fragments of ancillary legends that have little bearing on the main plot are similarly woven into Kennedy-Fraser's libretto, including that of The Water-Kelpie (bass), which correspondingly enabled "The Water-Kelpie's Song" to be included in the score. For its patchwork nature, one contemporary critic expressed the forthright view that *The Seal-Woman* was "unfortunately not opera."²²

²¹ Anne-Marie H. Forbes, "A Comparative Study of Folk Material in Opera: Bantock's *The Seal-Woman* and Rootham's *The Two Sisters*," *The Music Review*, Vol. 51 (1990), 95–115, at pp. 101–2; see further, the detailed table of these folksongs and their placement within *The Seal-Woman* at *ibid.*, p. 111.

²² F.B., "The Seal-Woman," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 65 (1924), pp. 994–5.



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Bantock employed his considerable skill as an orchestrator to great effect in reworking Kennedy-Fraser's folksong harmonizations and accompaniments for a modest instrumental ensemble: her autobiography describes him as "a superb orchestral-tone-colour painter of the sea."²³ Some of his musical choices were dictated by pragmatism, for example, the soloistic scoring for an intimate, sixteen-member chamber orchestra, in which the strings are reduced to a single player per part when *divisi*. Where Bantock had originally envisioned a larger ensemble, the forces were partly the consequence of a combination of limited funds and space constraints in Birmingham Repertory Theatre's small pit. However, others were clearly aesthetic choices, such as the ingenious substitution of English horn for oboe to yield a richer, darker orchestral timbre, and the inclusion of harp and judicious use of string harmonics for color. Just as one of the principal functions of Kennedy-Fraser's libretto was to connect the pre-existing songs into a coherent narrative through the addition of linking prose, one of Bantock's most significant contributions to the musical score concerned the setting of these passages through the composition of original recitative to stitch the folksongs together musically, particularly in Act 2 of the opera.

Bantock's role in *The Seal-Woman* was by no means relegated to that of orchestrator. He also reworked several of the folk melodies into his original score as recurring phrases akin to Wagnerian leitmotifs, including "The Seal-Woman's Croon," used as a calling-card for the title character, and, as Kennedy-Fraser herself noted, "Love-Wandering," which features throughout the opera as the love theme for *The Seal-Woman* and *The Islesman*. Notable passages freshly composed by Bantock include the love duet for the same two characters, which appears towards the end of Act 1. Such endeavors ran the obvious risk of incongruence between the modal (primarily Ionian and Aeolian) folksongs

²³ Kennedy-Fraser, *A Life of Song*, pp. 183–4.

Retrospect Opera's recording offers a timely opportunity not just to discover The Seal-Woman, but also to recognize and celebrate the full extent of Kennedy-Fraser's pivotal influence on the opera's creation and performance, extending to the libretto, the score, and the premiere production.

— CHRISTOPHER WILEY

set to Kennedy-Fraser's straightforward, sparse, diatonic accompaniments, and Bantock's own more chromatic, late Romantic compositional voice. Nonetheless, the sense of aesthetic integration in *The Seal-Woman* is high, facilitated dramatically since the pre-existing songs are almost always presented diegetically, and musically by Bantock's incorporation of fragments of their tunes into his original passages, lending the score homogeneity. In consequence, some of the opera's prominent melodies are instantly recognizable, notably "An Eriskay Love Lilt," one of Kennedy-Fraser's best-known and most popular folksong arrangements, as well as "Sea Sounds" and the aforementioned "Seal-Woman's Sea-Joy," which is reprised at the conclusion of the story. The charming folk tunes, coupled to Kennedy-Fraser's simple accompaniments and Bantock's lush orchestrations, make this an accessible work ideal for those with only a passing acquaintance with opera and seasoned lovers of the genre alike.

It comes as little surprise, then, that following the rediscovery of the full orchestral score, *The Seal-Woman* presented itself to Retrospect Opera—an independent label that researches and professionally records neglected British and Irish opera and related works from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries—as an attractive proposition for an upcoming recording project. Women composers have always occupied a prominent place in Retrospect Opera's catalogue: its inaugural release

was Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate*, and three of its first twelve CDs have been recordings of Smyth's operas.²⁴ As a label distinctive for being managed by a team of academics, Retrospect Opera's releases are well-known for featuring extensive liner notes including scholarly essays contributed by leading experts. In the case of its recording of *The Seal-Woman*, released on June 20, 2025, these essays appear alongside Kennedy-Fraser's statement on *The Seal-Woman* for the 1924 program, which the liner notes reproduce in full, together with a table systematically identifying the Hebridean songs found in the opera and their placement on the CD. Also included is the full libretto, as for all of Retrospect Opera's releases, together with a glossary of Gaelic words appearing therein, compiled by Màiri MacMillan, the award-winning *Gàidhlig* singer who served as the Gaelic coach during the studio sessions.

Retrospect Opera's recording offers a timely opportunity not just to discover *The Seal-Woman*, but also to recognize and celebrate the full extent of Kennedy-Fraser's pivotal influence on the opera's creation and performance, extending to the libretto, the score, and the premiere production. The Hebridean folksongs she collected, harmonized, and arranged go hand in hand with Bantock's creative orchestration and original composition such that, as Anne-Marie Forbes has acknowledged,

²⁴ For Retrospect Opera's complete catalogue, see: <https://retrospectopera.org.uk/shop/> (accessed July 17, 2025).

there were “two composers of *The Seal Woman*—for neither can be seen as the sole composer” (just as Bantock, and indeed Kenneth Macleod, had a hand in a libretto that was principally Kennedy-Fraser’s).²⁵ Retrospect Opera emphasizes Kennedy-Fraser’s authorship of the work, consistently following the convention enshrined in the published vocal score as well as the recently unearthed manuscript (see above, Figs. 1[a] and 3) of listing her name before Bantock’s. Emblematic of the significance of the former, the front cover of Retrospect Opera’s CD (Fig. 4) adapts Kennedy-Fraser’s original design for the vocal score in lieu of the pictorial images used in the label’s other releases.

Kennedy-Fraser remains a controversial figure in Scotland for the Anglicizing of the folksongs she collected (even if she published the original Gaelic words in addition to the English translations), as well as for altering and distorting their pitches, rhythms, and lyrics in turning them into fully notated works of Western art music—and, above all, for commercializing them through publication.²⁶ The conductor for the recording of *The Seal-Woman*, John Andrews, contends that Kennedy-Fraser’s work with folksong leans toward preservation, treating the originating materials

25 Forbes, “A Comparative Study of Folk Material in Opera,” p. 115.

26 See John Purser’s short essay “Marjory Kennedy-Fraser Revisited” in the liner notes to Retrospect Opera’s first recording (for citation see above, n. 3).

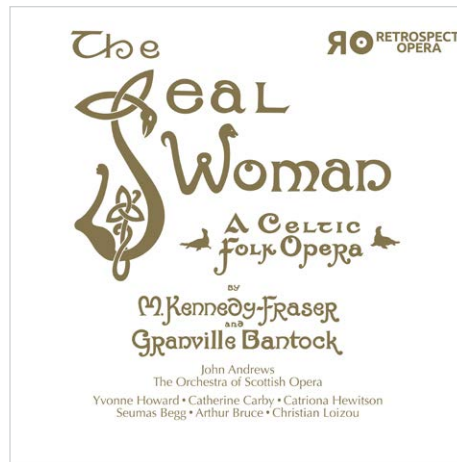


Fig. 4: Front cover of Retrospect Opera’s CD recording of *The Seal-Woman* (2025). Credit: Retrospect Opera.

sensitively and respectfully, rather than cultural appropriation.²⁷ She pursued these activities to conserve this repertory and facilitate its dissemination across Britain, in order to safeguard centuries of cultural heritage and enable obscure music from an isolated corner of the British Isles to enter the mainstream, believing that otherwise it would simply become forgotten. In this she was probably right, despite her awareness of the advent of early sound recording technology: she adopted an early wax cylinder phonograph to facilitate her fieldwork activity, but she never imagined that her recordings would survive, and continue to be heard, a century later. The irony is that

27 John Andrews, “Appropriation versus Preservation: the Dilemma of Folk-Opera,” *Classical Music*, June 19, 2025, <https://www.classical-music.uk/features/article/appropriation-versus-preservation-the-dilemma-of-folk-opera>.

like the folksongs she enthusiastically collected, Kennedy-Fraser has come to be in danger of being lost to history herself.

Kennedy-Fraser’s achievements have by no means gone entirely recognized. Having studied singing in Milan and Paris and subsequently reading music as an extra-academical student at the University of Edinburgh (where, as a woman, she was not eligible to receive the full degree), in 1928, towards the end of her life, her Scottish alma mater granted her an honorary doctorate.²⁸ She donated her archive to that university two years later, where it remains today; that archive includes some 300 wax cylinder recordings of over 500 songs that have since been transferred to other media for preservation.²⁹ The sense of divisiveness with which her activities continue to be viewed has also permeated the critical response to the revival of *The Seal-Woman*, as seen in the two reviews of Retrospect Opera’s recording that have appeared at the time of writing, Jim Westhead’s for *MusicWeb International* being complimentary and Andrew Clements’ for *The Guardian*, somewhat less sympathetic.³⁰ It is hoped that the serendipitous rediscovery of the full orchestral score of *The Seal-Woman*, and the subsequent live productions and first modern recording, will help to restore this fascinating woman in music to her rightful place in operatic history.

28 Kennedy-Fraser was also awarded the rank of Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1924. Bantock similarly received an honorary doctorate from the University of Edinburgh, in 1920, as well as a knighthood in 1930.

29 The University of Edinburgh Alumni Services, “Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930),” <https://alumni.ed.ac.uk/services/notable-alumni/alumni-in-history/marjory-kennedy-fraser> (accessed July 17, 2025); The University of Edinburgh Archives Online, “Papers of Marjory Kennedy-Fraser,” <https://archives.collections.ed.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/418> (accessed July 17, 2025).

30 Jim Westhead, “Kennedy-Fraser/Bantock: *The Seal-Woman* (Retrospect Opera),” *MusicWeb International*, July 13, 2025, <https://musicwebinternational.com/2025/07/kennedy-fraser-bantock-the-seal-woman-retrospect-opera/>. Andrew Clements, “Bantock: *The Seal Woman* album review—Celtic folk opera that never quite gets its head above water,” *The Guardian*, June 26, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/26/bantock-the-seal-woman-album-review>.



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Appendix

Statement by Margaret Kennedy-Fraser appearing on an insert presumed to have been included in the program for the original production of *The Seal-Woman* in Birmingham, 1924.

The Seal-Woman Legend

The story of the Seal-Woman I first heard in a little remote isle of Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides. Only in such remote isles were seal-stories current. None were to be found in Skye, say, or the Inner Hebrides. The ancient Celtic legend of the human origin of the seals (which helps to explain the story) was given in Gaelic. The English of it is by my island collaborator, Kenneth Macleod. It runs:

The Seals are the children of the King of Lochlann under spells. Beauty, wisdom, and bravery were in their blood, as well as in their skins, and that was why their stepmother took the hate of destruction for them, and live she would not, unless she got them out of the way...

Seven long years did she spend with a namely magician, a-learning of the black art, until she was as good as her master at it, with a woman's wit forbye [besides]. And what think ye? Did not the terrible carlin put her stepchildren under eternal spells that they should be half fish, half beast, so long as waves should beat on the shores of Lochlann? Och, och [alas], that was the black deed! Sure you would know by the very eyes of the seals that there is kingly blood in them... But three times in the year, when the moon is full, the seals must return to their own state, whether they wish it or no. And if you were to see one of them, as they should be always, you might take the love of your heart for that one, and if weddings were in your thoughts, sure enough a wedding there might be.

When asked, as I frequently am, if the islesfolk really believe such legends, the only answer is that the poetic Gaels, in common with other poets, are more concerned with truth than with fact.

The seal and mermaid airs embodied in the opera were gathered orally some dozen years ago, and regarded by me then as clever inventions, as imitations of what the islesfolk thought that the sealfolk might sing. But an experience I had a year ago tends to change the point of view.

Resting one late-summer afternoon on the white sands of the coast of Barra [the Hebridean island immediately south-west of Eriskay], I was induced by two friends (musicians interested in Hebridean song) to sing the opening phrase of the seal-air, "lonn da," to a group of the great grey seals that were basking there on a long reef that ran parallel with the shore. I did not rise to my feet—they were at a considerable distance—they may have mistaken me for another seal. When I ceased singing there was an instant response all along the line of the reef. Answering notes came rapidly in succession like a fusil[!]ade. Then, after a few seconds of intense silence, a great solo voice rose from the extreme end of the reef and a phrase was sung with beautiful human-like tone and perfect human intonation, a phrase I had never before heard. I wrote it down. Had I been an isleswoman should I not have memorised it and added it to my traditional stock of seal-tunes?

In addition to the three seal-airs and a mermaid's song we have incorporated in the opera about a dozen other Songs of the Hebrides, predominant among these being the "Love-Wandering" theme used throughout as the love motive.



The Statue of Kópakonán - The Seal-Woman. Mikladalur, Faroe Islands

Synopsis of the Opera

An old crone (Gaelic "Cailleach,") a once-famous singer and collector and maker of songs, was wont to sing songs and tell tales to herself when there was no better audience near. And one of these old Celtic tales of seal-women, sacred wild swans, and mystic seagull of the Land-under-Waves takes shape and comes to life in her dreams.

Act 1—An Islesman there was who fell in love with a seal-woman. By mischance he is left by his mates on an uninhabited isle. There he meets the woman of his love-dreams, and, withholding her enchanted sea-robe, without which the seals cannot return to their sea-life, he carries her off with him next day and weds her.

Act 2—But once in seven years, the sea-call is strong on the seal-women and, just at such a time, by mischance, their child Morag discovers the enchanted seal-robe hidden by her father in the peat-stack. The mother, in her sea-madness, dons it and singing "The Seal-Woman's Sea-joy," vanishes from the sight of husband and child.

Dr Christopher Wiley is Head of Music and Media and Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Surrey, UK. He is widely published in areas including music and women's studies, musical biography and life-writing, music in popular culture, and Ethel Smyth, having written many book chapters and articles in journals including *The Musical Quarterly*, *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, and *Music & Letters*. His seven volumes include the co-edited *Women's Suffrage in Word, Image, Music, Stage, and Screen* (2021), and he is currently editing *The Cambridge Companion to Ethel Smyth* and co-editing *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Biography and Life-Writing*. For ten years he was a Trustee of Retrospect Opera. Website: <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/people/christopher-wiley>



IAWM 2025 Annual Concert Winners

IAWM's concert on the 25th of September 2025 celebrates women across the ages. The concert location is St. Cäcilien church, one of twelve Romanesque churches in Cologne Germany. Its origin was a women's convent founded in the 9th century. In the 12th century, the building was replaced with a three-aisled column basilica without a tower, and in 1474 the abbey morphed into an Augustinian convent. Since 1956, St. Cäcilien has served as the collection for the Museum Schnütgen for medieval art.

We have six winners for the 2025 Call for works, five for chamber orchestra and one for smaller ensemble. A review of the concert will be in issue #4 of the IAWM journal in November.

Tao Yu, *Desert Reign*, is distinguished as a composer, performer, and organizer of international cultural projects. She studied at the China Conservatory of Music and the Geneva Conservatory of Music and her works have been commissioned by prestigious institutions, ensembles, and artists. Selected to participate in seminars at IRCAM in Paris, she further honed her mastery of modern compositional techniques. Her compositions include works for symphonic orchestra, chamber music, traditional Chinese instruments, and electroacoustic setups. Originally from Beijing, she currently resides in France. TAO Yu's works have been performed on all continents, covering countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland,

Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Poland, Russia, Israel, Australia, Brazil, and the United States. Her music contributes significantly to the dialogue between Eastern and Western musical cultures. <http://www.composers21.com/compdocs/taoy.htm>

Adi Shapiro, *Dragonflies*, is an Israeli-British composer and singer songwriter whose orchestral, chamber and vocal compositions have been performed internationally and have received multiple awards. At age 17, she was awarded the Promising Young Talent Prize, Vienna Classical Music Academy International Composition Competition. She currently studies composition at the Purcell School in the UK, and has been accepted to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Stefania de Kenessey, *Unorthodox Redux*, DE KENESSEY's music has been performed throughout New York City, from Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center to Joe's Pub and La Mama; internationally, it has been heard in more than 35 countries, from Australia to Venezuela. Her output ranges from choral, vocal and operatic pieces to chamber and orchestral work, as well as scores for film, theater and dance. De Kenessey is the inaugural Composer-In-Residence for the Dal Sogno Ensemble, which commissioned "The Names of Woman", a cantata dedicated to women who have been unjustly neglected by history. De Kenessey is also the first Composer-In-Residence for the Accord Treble Choir, which commissioned and premiered her "Urgent Earth" (2024), feminist eco-cantata about the climate change crisis, setting a text by the noted Wiccan poet Annie Finch. She has collaborated regularly with the all-female Ariel Rivka Dance Company and its founding choreographer Ariel Grossman, and

now also serves as that company's Composer-In-Residence. De Kenessey is committed to helping women composers and musicians achieve parity in an unequal, biased world. She is the founding president of the International Alliance for Women in Music and serves on the board of New York Women Composers.

<http://www.stefaniadekenessey.com/about>

Ala Gialla, *Dearly Beloved*, is multifaceted as a composer, pianist, educator, arranger and author. With a Master's degree in Piano Performance from Indiana University she a Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music in the UK. Ala has recently started focusing on composing and performing her own original music of a classical crossover style. "Dearly Beloved" was released in 2024 with positive acclaim. Ala's mission is to tell a story through her own music and words, and make them accessible for everyone.

<https://ala-gialla.com/about/>

Ayça Akin, *Tempesta*, is a Turkish-American composer. Akin studied piano performance for ten years at Carnegie Mellon University's Music Preparatory School under teacher Ralph Zitterbart. From 2022 to 2024, Akin completed her orchestral composing studies under composer and teacher Leon Willett.

Recognized for her strong musical intuition and emotional depth, Akin has since composed concert works and scored several films. In 2025, Akin was nominated for "Best Composer of the Future" at the Cannes World Film Festival for her original score for award-winning film *The Balloon* (2025). Recent commissions include new work that was recently premiered in New York City for Ensemble Ipse, and new music for Confluence Ballet



Company for the Spring 2026 season. Akin produces and publishes electronic music in addition to writing for film, chamber ensembles, and symphonic orchestras. She lives with her husband, two children, and dog in Pittsburgh, PA.
<https://www.ayca-akin.com>

Indigo Knecht, *Self-Destruction at its Finest*, is a composer, tubist, and educator fascinated with the challenges people face as they navigate this world. Through a synthesis of contemporary classical music and rock & roll, Indigo explores themes such as environmentalism, mental illness, and self-realization.

Indigo has a BM in Composition from Bowling Green State University and a MM in Composition from University of Michigan. They are currently in their fourth year at University of Miami pursuing a DMA in Composition under the guidance of Dr. Dorothy Hindman. Their multimedia installation, "The Chanting of Coral Reefs: Bringing Awareness to the Endangerment of Coral Reefs Through the Sonification of Settling Larvae," received the 2024 Presser Foundation Graduate Award. After graduation, Indigo intends on teaching music theory and composition at the university level while continuing to develop expansive compositions that bring awareness to issues in our world with groundbreaking technology.

<https://indigoknecht.com/about>

In addition, the Virago Symphonic Orchestra will be performing Emilie Mayer's *Overture 2* in D, Caroline Shaw's *Entracte*, and Alicemary Smith's *Andante* for Clarinet and Orchestra in D major.

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<https://www.music.org/2025-natl-overview.html>

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U.S. Spokane, WA
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American Musicological Society (AMS)

November 6-9, 2025 | Annual Meeting jointly with the Society for Music Theory (SMT)
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<https://member.aosa.org/member/conference/aosa-annual-conference>

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November 20-21, 2025
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IAWM / CMS International Conference Report

Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia, June 15-24, 2025

CHRISTINA RUSNAK

The 2025 IAWM and College Music Society International Conference, held from June 15–24 in Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia, brought together scholars, educators, and performers from across the globe. A resounding success, the conference was a memorable event for all attendees. CMS President Brian Chin and IAWM President Christina Rusnak opened the conference and spoke about our respective organizations' missions and visions for the future with a shared focus on advocacy, collaboration, and making a difference in our respective musical realms. Many CMS members were unaware of IAWM, so the opening remarks provided an opportunity to elucidate our ideals and activities for CMS attendees.

Jeff Loeffert, CMS Executive Director, stated that this conference had the largest attendance of any CMS

International conference ever with 150 attendees. Thirty-two IAWM members and eighty-two CMS members performed and/or presented papers on diverse topics. With the IAWM theme "Women in the World," the conference introduced lesser-known works by female composers, opening dialogues and discussions regarding female musicians and music educators. Most presentations integrated South American composers, scholars, and performers, with a number of papers addressing social change and social justice.

The ten-day conference was balanced between presentations and excursions. It began in Bogotá, at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Xavier Pontifical University), founded 1623, and there we enjoyed two full days of performances and presentations. After four

days, a chartered plane delivered us to Medellín, northwest of Bogotá, for the second half of the conference at EAFIT University [School of Education, Administration, Finance, and Technological Institute], founded in 1960. There we enjoyed two and a half more days of presentations and concerts. Nearly two-thirds of all presenters, performers, and composers were women, and the presentations and recitals included profiles and works of remarkable women whose histories have been marginalized. The sessions featured women composers from across the globe; the works of some of them had nearly been lost. Here are some of the great presentations we heard:

- *Cuban Women in Music: A Case Study of Ernestina Lecuona (1882-1951)*, which included a performance of "Searching for the Andean Sound through Sonata Andina."
- *Soliloquios: The Piano Music of Colombian-American Composer Alba Potes*. Shannon Wettstein Sadler introduced the audience to Alba Potes and her music.
- *Exploring Piano Works by Colombian Women Composers*. Rebecca Soley's lecture recital introduced several pieces written by two living Colombian women, Carolina Calvache and Amparo Angel. It included a performance of Calvache's *Te Agradezco* [I thank (or appreciate) you].
- *Female Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Pianists—Composers from Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Cuba*. Annette DiMedio's performance presented many great pieces new to us, including *Une revue à Prague* by Teresa Carreño.
- *¿Quién es Graciela Agudelo? Rediscovering Graciela Agudelo's Piano Music for Beginners to Advanced*. Kowoon Lee introduced us to the music of Mexican composer and pianist Graciela Agudelo, who composed piano music for all skill levels.
- *A Musician Without Borders: The Life and Music of Teresa Carreño*. Julia Mortyakova shared the fascinating life of Teresa Carreño and



CMS photo; pictured (left to right): Christina Rusnak, Brian Chin, Jeffrey Loeffert]

conveyed Carreño's courage, independence, and compositional skill, as well as her own powerhouse piano skills, in her performance of Carreño's compositions.

- *Stefania Turkevych, The Lost History of Ukraine's First Female Composer*, traced the prolific life of this child prodigy, whose works are complex, extensive, and worthy of our attention.

Scholars also explored the landscape of issues facing women in music.

- Danni Gilbert revealed some of these in "Stressed, Sad, and Stuck: Women's Experiences in University Music Settings," citing recent interviews and statistics.
- Tiffany du Mouchelle presented the lecture recital *Breaking the Silence: Female Voices, Tradition, and Creating Empowerment*.

Several other provocative papers and presentations addressed topics of identity and social justice. A few include:

- *Toward an Anti-racist Piano Pedagogy*, presented by Vanessa Cornett
- *Teaching for Social Justice: Exploring New Paradigms for Music Teacher Education*, presented by Nancy Barry
- Jillian Vogel's *Music's Subversive Power in Anti-Violence Protests*.

A unique aspect of CMS's International Music conferences, which was very appealing to members of IAWM, is the cultural immersion in the conference region. Colombia has transformed itself in the last twenty-five years through music, the arts, and social change. In much of Latin America, traditional music and Western classical music are closely intertwined, and this was evident in several performances and presentations at the conference. We were guided for two-and-a-half days through the region of the upper Andes culture. We toured a coffee farm and one of the world's largest salt mines, with a cathedral built into its walls. We visited Bogotá's colonial Candelaria neighborhood, whose city square reflects its Spanish roots. We learned about the resilience of the Colombian people and



2025 Conference Attendees



the importance of their traditional music—its integration into daily life as well as inspiration for classical music. In Medellín, we visited Comuna 13, a neighborhood that was caught in the middle of the violence of the 1990s and has transformed through the arts, social inclusion, entrepreneurship, and tourism. Our cultural immersion exceeded the expectations of several attendees. Integral to our experience was the tour company Colombia 57 and their expert local guides.

There were many networking opportunities throughout the 10-day conference. We encouraged presenters to write for the journal. We shared our cards and told CMS women about IAWM. On our first day in Medellín, Fanny Head and Christina Rusnak hosted a pre-dinner meet-and-greet event for IAWM members.

Our university hosts, Luís Gabriel Mesa, Patricia Venegas Ruiz of Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, and Andrés Gómez Bravo of EAFIT University, worked to ensure a seamless experience for all of us. At IAWM, we recognize and DEEPLY thank the College Music Society including Hannah Pearson, and Charlie Chadwell for doing the "heavy lifting" in the conference planning, registration, organization and logistics.

IAWM's next conference will take place in 2028 and are looking for a US or Canadian-based host. IAWM is eager to collaborate with another music organization to increase our collective advocacy, visibility, and collegiality. For 2031, our next international conference, Jeffrey Loeffert, CMS Executive Director, and IAWM's Christina Rusnak are already talking about collaborating once again. Location: TBD.



Drs. Rosalyn Wright Floyd, Marcia Porter, and Alexis Davis-Hazell presented "My Sister's Keeper: A Lecture Recital Highlighting Art Songs and Spirituals by African American Women Composers."

Review of Women Presenting Women at SAM

J. MICHELE EDWARDS

Among the highlights for me at this year's Annual Meeting of the Society for American Music (Tacoma, WA, 19-23 March 2025) were three lecture-recitals, each of which exclusively presented women composers and women performers. This was not the only commonality as each program offered compelling repertoire performed at a high level both musically and technically plus informative, contextualizing commentary. They also showcased meaningful issues or topics, which I view as a significant—and welcome—shift in programming of concerts during the past few years that reflects on our wider world.

I was particularly moved by Rosephanye Powell's setting of "I Want to Die While You Love Me," an intimate song and performance by Porter and Floyd, setting a poem by Georgia Douglas Johnson, one of the foremost female poets of the Harlem Renaissance.

— J. MICHELE EDWARDS

Drs. Marcia Porter (soprano and professor of voice, Florida State University), Alexis Davis-Hazell (mezzo-soprano and assistant professor of voice and lyric diction, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa), and Rosalyn Wright Floyd (piano and professor of music, Augusta University) presented "My Sister's Keeper: A Lecture Recital Highlighting Art Songs and Spirituals by African American Women Composers." They established My Sister's Keeper in 2018 as a vehicle to explore the music of African American women composers from their perspective as Black women. The program featured a broad range of compositions, encompassing the entire 20th century and up to recent years, "which illuminates the effects of race, gender, and class" on composers who "should be part of the 'mainstream' canon"¹ as they are an essential part of American music. Their program opened with several songs by "Pioneers" Florence Price and Margaret Bonds, followed by "Innovators" Lena McLin and Irene Britton Smith, and music by "The New Generation" including Rosephanye Powell, B.E. Boykin, and Briana Lightbourn (b. 2000). Concluding the performance were sacred songs,

1 Program Abstract, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HA35Q4YMguzE9eHatEABC8vSXD8QldWXfks20x3FwcM/edit?tab=t.0> (Accessed 21 May 2025).

including some by Julia Perry. They saved spirituals for the end, including the only work for all three performers, a lively arrangement of "Git on Board" by Evelyn Simpson Curenton. The performers took turns offering brief historical insights about the compositions they performed.

I was particularly moved by Rosephanye Powell's setting of "I Want to Die While You Love Me," an intimate song and performance by Porter and Floyd, setting a poem by Georgia Douglas Johnson, one of the foremost female poets of the Harlem Renaissance. Standing in powerful contrast was B. E. Boykin's dramatic "We Wear the Mask," performed by Davis-Hazell and Floyd.² Boykin revised her setting of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem in reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement and George Floyd's murder in 2020.



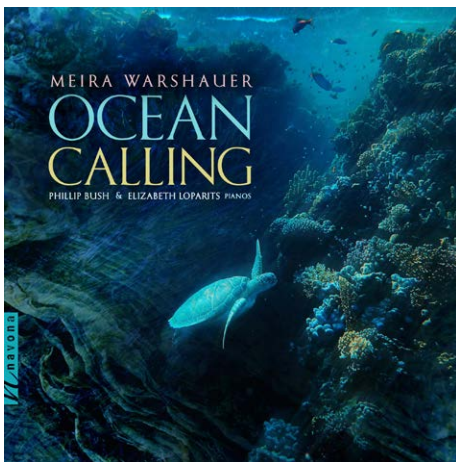
Dr. Margaret Lucia

Dr. Margaret Lucia (professor of music, Shippensburg University, PA) offered a sampling from the piano music of Sheila Silver,³ who was born and raised in Seattle, WA, near the conference site. Silver is the recipient of many awards (e.g., 2013 Guggenheim Fellowship) and commissions. Lucia performed

2 A recording by the same performers in a 2022 concert performance is available at <https://songofamerica.net/song/we-wear-the-mask-2/#> (Accessed 15 May 2025).

3 See <https://www.sheilasilver.com/>.

"Water" from *Resilient Earth* (2022), a suite of seven piano preludes composed during the isolation of the Covid pandemic; "In the Half-Burned Forest," from *Six Preludes on Poems of Baudelaire* (1991), composed during a residence in Cassis, France and stimulated by seeing a post-fire revival and revitalization of a forest; and *Nocturne* (2015) based on *Raga Jog*, written after her residence in India (preparation for her opera, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, based on Afghan American Khaled Hosseini's 2007 #1 *New York Times* best-selling novel). Lucia's comments focused on Silver's interdisciplinarity and how she immerses herself in various environments and integrates aspects of these milieus into her musical framework. For example, in *Nocturne*, elements of raga and Khyal (Hindustani) singing are discernable but integrated into Silver's extended bluesy harmonic language. Lucia's particular skills and playing style match well with the demands of Silver's music and its utilization of the full scope of the piano's range. She gives careful attention to touch and timbre in her playing as well as to phrase shapes. The result was a sensitive as well as dramatic performance.



Ocean Calling

Meira Warshauer's *Ocean Calling* (2013), a moving 40-minute trilogy—"Waves and Currents," "From the Depths," and "The Giant Blue," is "an impassioned plea on behalf of Earth's greatest natural resource."⁴

⁴ <https://www.parmarecordings.com/inside-story-meira-warshauer-ocean-calling/> (Accessed 15 May 2025).



Dr. Meira Warshauer

Ocean Calling was the winner of the American Prize Charles Ives Award for chamber music in 2024.

Dr. Warshauer (composer, recipient of residency fellowships and many commissions) and Elizabeth L. Keathley (professor emerita of music history and women's, gender, and sexuality studies, University of North Carolina Greensboro) both participated in the commentary, with Warshauer sharing her inspiration and compositional details and Keathley linking this work's focus to the local marine ecology and its creatures, in the Puget Sound and the Salish Sea.

Scored for two pianos (one played only on the keys, the other also played inside the piano directly on the strings), *Ocean Calling*, was performed by wonderful pianists: Dr. Elizabeth Lopartis (lecturer, collaborative and applied piano, University of North Carolina Wilmington),⁵ and Oksana Ejokina (associate professor of music, Pacific Lutheran University). The music reveals an incredibly large and creative range of timbres throughout, evoking images of the ocean and sea life, but moving well beyond conventional imitation. By extending the capabilities and timbres of the piano, the composer

⁵ Lopartis recorded *Ocean Calling* with Phillip Bush for the Navona label (2023). <https://www.navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6535/> (Accessed 15 May 2025).

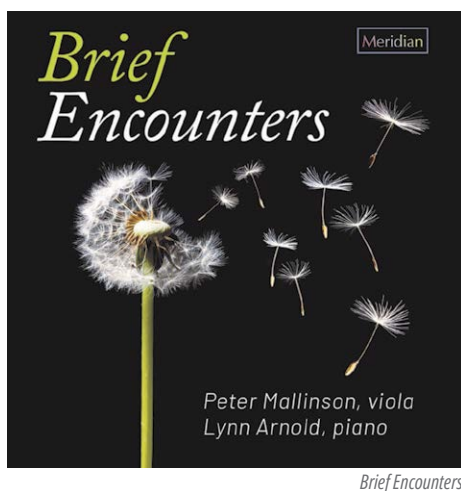
and performers magnify its expressive power. The performers exhibited very tight ensemble—audibly and visually—and projected an emotional unity, especially given their minimal rehearsal time together during this initial meeting. The composition, performance, and commentary together were an artistic and powerful voice for the fragility of our environment and a call to action on behalf of the natural world.

IAWM members were represented among the performers, presenters, and composers: Keathley and Lucia are longtime members, and Warshauer has been a member since IAWM's inception (1995).

J. Michele Edwards, conductor and musicologist, is professor emerita of music, Macalester College, and holds a doctorate from the University of Iowa. She held long-term appointments as conductor with Macalester Festival Chorale, Calliope Women's Chorus, Minnesota Center Chorale, and a double WWQ + piano ensemble. Frequently commissioning and conducting premieres, Edwards has long been committed to programming compositions by women as well as teaching, researching, and writing about women in music. She is coauthor of *Chen Yi*, published by University of Illinois Press (2020) and winner of the 2022 Pauline Alderman Award. She was a member of two of the merging organizations that became IAWM (International League of Women Composers and International Congress on Women in Music) and has been a member of IAWM since its inception in 1995, serving on the Board of Directors (1997-2006) and Treasurer (2004-2006).

REVIEWS

RECORDING REVIEWS



Peter Mallinson and Lynn Arnold: *Brief Encounters*

ELIZABETH START

Brief Encounters is a 2 CD collection of mostly short works, 37 tracks in all, featuring violist Peter Mallinson and pianist Lynn Arnold, with a brief appearance by violinist Shirley Turner. Though two CDs may seem daunting, the variety of classical music styles combined with vernacular and light classical works keeps the listener's interest throughout.

In the liner notes, Mallinson references the different relationships to brevity these pieces have: some are miniatures, some experienced intense short-term popularity, some were written by composers whose lives were cut short (in some cases due to war), and some seem brief departures from the more characteristic voices of well-known composers. The time and research that went into assembling this music is apparent and commendable, and the performances by these fine musicians are convincing interpretations of sometimes obscure works in a variety of styles. Some of the works were not originally written for viola, but the arrangements work well. Two solo piano works and one string trio arrangement further add to the variety of sonorities and textures.

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— ELIZABETH START

In this array of little-known works by well-known composers, as well as works by lesser-known composers, eleven women are featured. Many of the male composers featured were pioneers in their genres and/or had interactions with these female composers. One cannot listen through this collection, nor simply peruse the names, without wishing to explore these composers further. The liner notes are very informative while also feeding the desire to learn more. This wealth of interesting music underscores the fact that at any given time many people are creating wonderful works that for whatever reason escape our notice. Kudos to these performers for bringing these works to our attention, helping us appreciate the depth of human creativity and the interrelationships of artists.

It is impossible to address all works in depth, but a quick summary of the eleven women's works follows. The first and thirty-fifth tracks contain works by

Ruth Gipps (1921-1999). The first, *Jane Grey*, was written when Gipps was 22, and the second, *Lyric Fantasy*, was composed when she was 34. Both contain wonderful writing for the viola. *Jane Grey* expresses defiant resistance with increasingly insistent statements leading to quiet reminiscence and resolve, while the later work shows more compositional maturity and evokes the calmness of the English landscape in a post-war world.

Track 2, *Ritournelle* by Czech Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915-1940), shows influences reminiscent of one of her teachers, Bohuslav Martinů, and features three distinct characters: technically challenging and active, mysterious and unpredictable, and quietly lyrical. This work was written at the beginning of her terminal illness in 1940. The piece survived because Hermann Grab, who was to premiere it, took a copy with him when he fled from the German invasion of France which had canceled the concert.

Join the IAWM Google Group

The IAWM Google Group is an online member community united by an interest in the music of women composers and the achievements of women in music across time, locations and disciplines. The forum provides members with the opportunity to connect, to network, and to share ideas. You may also share local events that may not qualify for an IAWM social media post.

To join the IAWM Google Group members must opt in through a Google Form. They must email communications@iawm.org. In the subject line, put IAWMLIST FirstNameLastName. The Operations Administrator will send the member the form. The subscriber receives a welcome statement and a message with details to successfully use the list. Subscribers may send posts directly to the list address.

Three Pieces by Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), who was another teacher of Kaprálová, follow. These movements, the first two of which were originally for organ, were written between 1911 and 1913. The works give insight into a young composer who became much more known for her pedagogy and championing of her sister Lili's works. Boulanger adapted these two movements for cello and piano, adding the third movement, a delightfully lively and contrasting *Danse espagnole*. The viola edition here was published by Alphonse Leduc.

The one selection by Rebecca Clarke, *I'll bid my heart be still*, is preceded by an Elegy by James Friskin, who married Clarke later in life. Clarke's 1944 work is based on a Scottish ballad by Thomas Pringle which laments the death of a young soldier, and one can almost hear the words and rhyme. Clarke's connections are reflected in other works on these CDs: *Two Songs* by her teacher Percy Hilder Miles, and Cecil Forsyth's unpublished *Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright*, which was dedicated to her.

The only work by a living composer, *The Tunnel*, by Julia Simpson (b 1977), was inspired by Siegfried Sassoon's poem "Suicide in the Trenches." Her evocative work reflects the soldier's internal struggle, presenting conflicting ideas of remembered happiness and current horror that recur and build, finally settling into longer lines and ending with descending glissando, a sad resolve.

Alison Dalrymple (1890-1959), an early cello teacher of both Jacqueline du Pré and Julian Lloyd Webber, is represented by a beautiful and simple *Lullaby*, with accompaniment written by Dorothy Howell (1892-1982), who herself was hailed as the "English Strauss." Howell is represented by an early and a late work. Her 1920 solo piano *Boat Song*, which takes the boat through many different moods, was included in "Repertoire Series of Pianoforte Music by Modern British Composers." Her unpublished lyrical *For Myfanwy* was written for her niece, a violist, in the late 1960s/early 1970s.



Canyon with Crows (1917), Georgia O'Keeffe | Courtesy Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Kathleen Carter Bell and Conor Bell Recital at West Texas A&M University

On October 7th at West Texas A&M University, Kathleen Carter Bell and Conor Bell will present a recital of newly commissioned works for oboe, bassoon, and piano. Each piece celebrates a unique facet of the Texas Panhandle's cultural heritage by highlighting the art and writing of Georgia O'Keeffe, who spent time teaching and painting in Canyon, TX, home of WTAMU. The program will feature works by Carrie Magin and Kincaid Rabb, as well as a presentation by O'Keeffe scholar Amy Von Lintel. The works were made possible through the WTAMU Killgore Grant, which the Bells received last fall.

Amy Beach's (1867-1944) *Romance*, originally written for violin in 1893 and dedicated to Maude Powell, works well on the viola in this Courtney Grant transcription. This early work was performed by Beach and Powell at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair "Women's Musical Congress" to rave reviews.

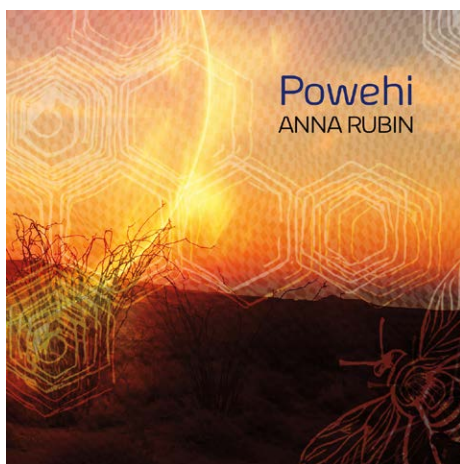
Two works by Muriel Herbert (1897-1984), written 1916 and 1919, arranged here by Simon Rowland-Jones, are based on poems. *To Daffodils*, based on Robert Herrick's poem, reflects on a brief life span full of beauty; *Tewkesbury Road*, based on John Masefield's poem, is a lively and light celebration of the wonders of nature.

The penultimate track, *Chant Élégiacque*, by Kalitha Dorothy Fox (1894-1934) was written in 1921 for cello and piano, but

no changes are needed for the viola to play it. The beauty of this work is all the more haunting knowing that Fox took her own life.

This 2 CD set is a wonderful journey which is well worth taking. It gives voice to little known works which create a tapestry of connections and encourage a thoughtful, deeper look into artists of our past and present.

Dr. Elizabeth J. Start is a cellist and composer, Executive Director of the Connecting Chords Music Festival, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Kalamazoo Federation of Musicians, Local 228 AFM. Her degrees in performance and composition are from Oberlin Conservatory, Northern Illinois University, and the University of Chicago. She divides her time between the Kalamazoo and Chicago areas.



Powehi

Anna Rubin: *Powehi*

ANGELA MILLER-NILES

This double album by Anna Rubin features a unique combination of environmental activism, social commentary, and electronic music that is timely given issues in the world today. Disc 1 includes works for fixed media, usually paired with a live musician. The works in Disc 2 are all fixed media without live performance.

Everything Goes Bee is an angular, dissonant piece for soprano, violin, and fixed media. The text is based on Canadian poet Di Brandt's *Interspecies Communication*, which celebrates bees and describes threats to their survival. Unique effects for violin combine with electronic noises that sound like insects swarming and honey melting, creating an unsettling musical picture that adds to the spoken text.

For the Love of Bees is a six-part suite for piano and narrator. First written in 2010, it was revised and expanded in 2019. This piece is a distinctive combination of science and art. The spoken word text includes information about bees and is based on interviews Rubin

had with experts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Narrator Pamela Fields's clear and expressive performance brings the nonfiction text to life. Throughout the piece the music helps illustrate and color the spoken text. The work feels almost like a play, with the piano playing the part of the bee. Each piece features a specific challenge for the pianist, with technical issues like clusters, hand-crossing and trills. All were skillfully performed by Sandrine Erdely-Sayo.

"Swarm" begins the set, with short piano trills and tremolos emulating flying bees. "Sting" is more angular to emphasize the negative tone of the text. "Solitary" is lyrical, using a quasi-Romantic texture and lonely character in the piano. "Myth of the Assassin Bees" is aggressive and features repeated chords that jump around on the piano, including some jazz-like harmonies. "Honey Queen" is more sustained, featuring slower arpeggiations of colorful harmonies. It has a much slower and heavier feel than the early movements. "Ode to Bees and Their Keepers" finishes the set with chord tremolos that slowly move outward to use the full range of the keyboard.

The Beekeepers is a work for cello and fixed media, and is part of a series of pieces about the environment commissioned by cellist Madeleine Shapiro. Expertly played by Michal Schmidt, the cello part features many modern techniques including harmonics, saw-like bowing, pizzicato, and portamento. Noises in the fixed media sound like insects, from cicadas to bee swarms. The work is free rhythmically and has a darker feel overall. Spoken words are from recorded interviews with beekeepers who tell stories about their work.

Powehi: The Darkest Heart of the Galaxy is a remarkable work about black holes and was composed for spoken word and two pianos. Powehi is the Hawaiian term for a black hole, and the work was commissioned by Piano on the Rocks International Festival in Sedona, AZ.

— ANGELA MILLER-NILES

Powehi: The Darkest Heart of the Galaxy is a remarkable work about black holes and was composed for spoken word and two pianos. *Powehi* is the Hawaiian term for a black hole, and the work was commissioned by Piano on the Rocks International Festival in Sedona, AZ. The composer writes that the piece is a "dramatic evocation of the astronomical mysteries of dark matter, dark energy and black holes themselves."¹ The pianos add atmosphere and illustrate the nonfiction text. The piano parts are virtuosic and are performed by Sandrine Erdely-Sayo and Cynthia Raim with expression and a wonderful sense of timing. The music colors the text and helps illustrate it. There are more moments of piano alone than in *For the Love of Bees*, and the two pianos create a lush, orchestral sound. The composer made smart orchestration choices, with softer piano parts while the narrator is speaking.

The seven-movement suite describes different scientific concepts related to black holes. The opening "Prelude" sets the stage for the rest of the work. "Gravity" features gestural piano writing, starting in free rhythm and moving into a Romantic-style waltz. "Dark Matter" is less structured rhythmically, with swirling sounds in the pianos. "Dark Energy" is more active in the pianos with fast runs and tremolos. Punctuated musical gestures evoke the more sinister ideas from the text, with a darker sound and more harsh dissonance. "Black Holes" is softer, juxtaposing very high and very low registers in the piano. Part of this movement illustrates the concept of a black hole with slower motives and stillness. "Gravitational Waves" features punctuated gestures, contrary motion motives, and a build to the middle of the movement with loud chords moving around the keyboard. The final movement, "Powehi," begins with a more chaotic character. As the movement unfolds, the piano morphs into a Romantic texture, with the melody in octaves and rolling arpeggios for accompaniment.

¹ Anna Rubin, "Black Holes and Other Highlighted Works," Anna Rubin Music, 2025, <https://annarubinmusic.com/black-holes/>.

The second disc of the album contains works for fixed media without live music interaction. There are a variety of sounds throughout, and most include recorded spoken word. *Automaton Monk* and *Karina's Journey* especially stand out with commentary on social issues seen in our world today.

The first piece, *Automaton Monk*, includes a variety of computer-generated and found sounds. The text by Rebecca Morgan Frank is a biting response to the use of machines and robots in modern life. There is a dystopian feel to the work, with a variety of textures and freedom in rhythm and form.

A Storm Event sets Yen Ha's multilingual poem to an atmospheric accompaniment of electronic sounds. Many of these are reminiscent of storms and include rain and thunder.

Late at Night is a fixed media work with spoken word. There are few actual words, using primarily breath sounds and laughter combined with computer-generated and found sounds.

Second Nature is more "traditional" electronic music, using recurring melodies that loop and instrument-like sounds. There is more of a sense of pulse than in the other electronic works in this second disc.

Karina's Journey is for fixed media and includes an important component of spoken word. The speaker is Karina who tells the story of her childhood in Mexico and her experience crossing the border to the United States in the early 2000s. The composition feels like background to her talking, with sounds from nature like crickets and other insects. There are also short musical motives on a harp-like instrument that recur throughout the piece. The music helps emphasize the speaker's emotion, creating a touching story. Even though it was written in 2019, this is a very timely subject considering current events.



Anna Rubin

If I Could Sing Like a Bird, a work for fixed media with spoken word and some very short singing fragments, was co-composed with Momilani Ramstrum. It is a gentle reflection on nature and features many sounds from the outdoors, including bird calls, insect noises, and walking. These are mixed with electronic musical sounds which are reminiscent of strings and flutes.

Anna Rubin is an American composer who focuses on electroacoustic and instrumental music. Her work has been heard throughout the US and around the world, with recent commissions by the Piano on the Rocks International Festival in Sedona, AZ, and the Washington International Chorus in Washington, DC. She has been active in the new music community, serving as board member and president of the International Alliance for Women in Music and as member of the editorial board of *Perspectives of New Music*.²

² Anna Rubin, "About Anna Rubin," Anna Rubin Music, 2025, <https://annarubinsteinmusic.com/about/>.

Dr. Angela Miller-Niles is Professor of Piano at Wayne State College in Wayne, NE. She also serves as Music Department Chair and director of the WSC Music Academy. She teaches applied piano, group piano classes, piano pedagogy, and music technology. She has been published in *American Music Teacher*, the *Journal for the International Alliance for Women in Music*, the College Music Society's *Symposium* and the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society's *On Collaborating*. She performs as both soloist and collaborator, including chamber group Trio Mezzklarno and piano duo Deux Femmes Pianistes.

Support the IAWM

Your donations and support enable IAWM to fulfill its mission and vision. With your generous gifts, our programs continue to cultivate diversity and inclusivity throughout the world of classical music in countless facets. Our awards, grants, and advocacy efforts bring greater equity and awareness of the contributions of women in music.

DONATE: Any amount helps to fund our concerts, conferences, the Journal of the IAWM, grants, and all of our member services. The International Alliance for Women in Music is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. The full amount of your gift may be deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent of U.S. laws. Just click the DONATE button at the bottom of the page on iawm.org.

PLANNED GIFT: If you would like to include IAWM in your estate planning, IAWM can set up Restricted or Unrestricted Endowments. Contact president@iawm.org for more information.

IN-KIND SUPPORT: If you can provide time and/or services rather than funding to support IAWM, please contact Christina Rusnak at president@iawm.org for more information.

SPONSORSHIP: Sponsor a concert, conference, webinar, award, or more. You will make a difference and reach diverse musician members globally. Contact Christina Rusnak at president@iawm.org for more information. You can also sponsor a student membership for \$30 or a full membership of \$75. Each membership enriches their understanding of Women in Music. Please contact membership@iawm.org for more information.



MEMBERS' NEWS

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. 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. 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. Send Members' News submissions to journal@IAWM.org with Members' News in the subject.

Submissions are always welcome concerning appointments, honors, commissions, premieres, performances, and other items. Deadlines are November 30, February 28, May 30, and August 30.

—DR. AMY ZIGLER
MEMBERS' NEWS EDITOR



Beth Anderson

Beth Anderson's *October Swale*, for string orchestra and saxophone, was premiered in New York City by Javier Ovieda and the Classical Sax Project Orchestra March 27, 2025. *Indigo Swale* for saxophone or bassoon and piano, originally premiered in 2024 in New York City by Javier Ovieda, was performed by Dr. Christin Schillinger at Ithaca College on April 26, 2025 and at County College of Morris, NJ December 9, 2024. *Waiting* for piano solo was premiered by Amy Wurtz in New York City on April 19, 2025; Wurtz also performed it three times in Chicago. *Eight*, for solo soprano, was broadcast on June 7, 2025 on cable television, performed by Mary Hubbell. *Moment* for clarinet solo was broadcast on cable television January 4, 2025, performed by Kristen Mather de Andrade.



Marilyn Bliss

Marilyn Bliss was honored as composer-in-residence at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa in April, where a full concert of her music was performed and is available on the Coe College Music Department's YouTube channel. Coe's flute professor Rose Bishop commissioned and premiered a new piece for flute and piano called *Sky Blue Pink*. Additionally, Bliss's 2023 piece for woodwind quintet, *The Discovery of Honey*, has been recorded and released on Navona Records NV6725 and her trombone piece *Three Short Movements* will be released on that label in June.



Marieke Dobewell

Marieke Dobewell released her debut album, *Raindrop Shadows*, which came out on June 27, 2025, via the Australian labels Caterpillar Records and Splitrec. The album is a quiet, eco-musical composition for winds and voice. It was created during an artist residency in Sydney and performed with members of the local Splinter Orchestra. *Raindrop Shadows* is based on a visual score that she developed as part of her ongoing artistic research on nature scores.



Pierrot Lunaire

Two new volumes from Cambridge University Press, both of their “In Context” series, include articles by **Elizabeth Keathley**. Her essay, “Women, Gender, and Sexuality” comprises chapter 16 of *Leonard Bernstein in Context*, edited by Elizabeth A. Wells (2024). Keathley analyzes the ways that the dynamics of gender and sexuality in Bernstein’s works for opera and musical theater reflect and refract changing social and familial roles in the composer’s milieu.

Arnold Schoenberg in Context (forthcoming 2025), edited by Alexander Carpenter, includes Keathley’s chapter about the women librettists of Schoenberg’s two operas, *Erwartung*

(*Expectation*) and *Von Heute auf Morgen* (From today till tomorrow), Dr. Marie Pappenheim, and his second wife, Gertrud.

Elizabeth Keathley’s article “Cleo Laine Performs Schoenberg’s Jazz Masterpiece, *Pierrot lunaire*” is soon to be published in a special issue of the *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Center*, along with other papers read at the Schoenberg Center in Vienna last year (2024). Ms. Laine (1927–2025), the beloved Afro-British jazz singer and actor, died this year at the age of 97. Her recording of *Pierrot* (1974) was the first in English translation. The entire recording is on YouTube and well worth a listen.



Janice Misurell-Mitchell

In May **Janice Misurell-Mitchell** completed her work commissioned by Bay Area flutist, Meerennai Shim, *O Sapientia*, for flute/alto flute and fixed electronics. Ms. Shim will be including it on her upcoming CD, scheduled for release this September. Janice has also completed a short commission by Lisa Bost-Sandberg, for solo flute, *von Bingen Variations*, to be included in *Fifteen Minutes of Fame for Solo Flute*. In January she produced a video for the University of Chicago’s Smart Museum, The Infinite Cube. The video featured the cube sculpture by British sculptor Antony Gormley, with music by Janice and

Chicago vocalist Dee Alexander; it was edited by Carmen Elena Mitchell and shown in Chicago, and later in Palermo and Lucca, Italy to accompany a lecture on infinity by WJT Mitchell. In January she also performed her vocal/flute work, *Give Me an A!* at New Music at the Green Mill, in Chicago. In March, Janice and bass clarinetist Katherine Jimoh, performed Janice’s *Profaning the Sacred III* at the College Music Society Great Lakes Chapter conference and at the 6Degrees Concert, both in Chicago. In April Janice gave a recital in Lucca, Italy, that included her pieces, *Sub-Music and Song*, and *Uncommon Time*, both for solo flute.

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Jane O'Leary | Photo: Mike Shaughnessy



Clare Shore | Photo: Navona Records

Jane O'Leary will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award in Ireland on October 24. It will be presented at a concert in Dublin on October 24 when her orchestral work *Triptych* (for string quartet and symphony orchestra) will be performed.

Clare Shore's new work, *Persistence of Vision*, for cello, piano, and fixed media, was premiered by Michael Hall, viola, and Kathleen Supové, piano, on May 3, 2025, at the New York City's Composers Concordance Festival.



Do you want to help shape the future of IAWM?

We have a few additional opportunities for board members who are dedicated to supporting and advancing awareness of women's music.

IAWM is looking for diverse individuals from a variety of musical disciplines, interests, in various aspects and levels of their careers! As a volunteer board, we are especially seeking board members with skills in fundraising development, marketing, programming, membership advocacy, digital presentations, and relationship building. We have an exciting year planned! The 2025 Annual Concert features the Virago Symphonic Orchestra in Cologne Germany. We are planning multiple opportunities in 2026. **IAWM** is committed to gender equality and inclusion of diverse members of the musical community. See more at <https://iawm.org/about-us>

The call for nominations closes **October 1st, 2025**. All Nominees must be IAWM members (Click on <https://iawm.org/> to join). All we need is one-page resume (PDF)

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Faye-Ellen Silverman | Photo: Russell Dian

Laura Melnicoff has given several performances of **Faye-Ellen Silverman's** *Reaching the End of the Dance* for solo cello (published by Seesaw Music, a division of Subito): Union College in Schenectady (January 12, 2025), Albany Senior Center (January 19, 2025), Clover Pond Vineyard in Altamont, NY (February 23, 2025), Albany Public Library (March 30, 2025), Schenectady Public Library (April 6, 2025).

Silverman's *Dialogue* (also published by Seesaw/Subito) was performed on February 15, 2025, by John Clark, horn and Dave Taylor, bass trombone on a Composers Concordance concert in NYC.

On April 19, 2025, pianist Amy Wortz performed Silverman's *Embracing the Woman in Red* (Seesaw/Subito) at the National Opera Center in NYC. She had previously included this work as part of her streaming of one work by a woman composer for each day of International Women's Month via a youtube video that also included a short interview with the composer. Silverman's piece was performed on March 8, 2025, and can be found here: <https://youtu.be/QmvqVhCnQdg>

Silverman created two versions of *From Eve's Perspective* (Seesaw/Subito), based on the *Diaries of Adam and Eve* by Mark Twain as a companion piece to *From Adam's Diary* for tenor and clarinet. Both versions had their world premieres during May 2025. The version for soprano, violin, and piano was performed on May 2, 2025, at the Greenwich Music School in NYC by Sara Paar, soprano, Lynn Bechtold, violin, and Marcia Eckert, piano. The version for soprano, trumpet, and string quartet was performed on May 10, 2025, by Sara Paar, soprano, Franz Hackl, trumpet, and the CompCord String Quartet (Marc Zaki and Lyn Bechtold, violins; Artie Dibble, viola and Mary Wooten, cello) at a Composers Concordance concert in NYC.

In March 2025, *Conversations Continued* was featured in the March edition of Flute Examiner: <https://thefluteexaminer.com/nywc-faye-ellen-silverman>

In April 2025, Guitarist Sergio Puccini released Silverman's *Processional* on his CD *Self Portraits*, along with works by Broadbent, Ravel, and Cáceres on Dreams Records.



Betty Wishart

Betty Wishart's *Bonnie Scotland* and *Memories of Scotland* for viola duo were performed by Carey Sleeman and Kimberley Simpkins at Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC on January 27th. Pianist Jeanette Winsor also performed Romanze 1, 2, and 3 on the same concert. David Peoples (piano) performed Romanze No. 4 and *Vibes: Blue* at the Murrayville Library in Gainesville, GA on January 16th, February 6th, and March 6th. On 8th pianist Brendan Jacklin performed *Preludes: In Memoriam* at Fisk University in Nashville, TN. Cuong Tran performed 6 Bagatelles for flute solo at NACUSA Concerts at the Library in Murrayville, Ga on March 20th.



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