



New Music Series Chamber Music

ARTS & VISUALS

AVA BLOOMFIELD

“The Walk (La Promenade)”



Ava Bloomfield wrote “The Walk (La Promenade)” based on the painting by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. This beautiful painting depicts a young couple entering a forest. When Ava first started writing this piece, she wanted it to feel like a conversation between two melodic voices, and therefore a conversation between two people. While the specifics of this couple’s conversation are unknown, she tried to focus on the feeling of their dialogue rather than a formal subject matter. The piece begins with a feeling of uncertainty, as it looks like they’re sneaking away from an event or a situation that only the two of them know of. The man seems to be clearing the way for them to enter. The violin and cello continuously pass the melody around as it transitions into a more assuring, repeating theme. This becomes the basis of the piece, and we return back to it as the conversation between these two individuals comes full circle.

Ava also wanted to consider the setting of this painting and how it relates to the two individuals passing through. The piece starts the same way it ends, just as nature does in between it’s passersby. The couple enters the forest, sharing a moment together until they leave the scene. Environments like this hold some of the greatest stories, ones we may never know. Whether you’re currently traveling through a new environment or not, the setting remains long before and long after you depart.

Ava Bloomfield is 17 years old and graduating in June of 2021 from the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts in Bethlehem, PA. She has been playing piano for about 8 years, and music has since become a huge part of her life. She started taking her study of piano and composition more seriously a couple of years ago after discovering a passion for classical music. She never would have expected the impact it would have in her life. She started smaller with compositions for solo piano, but the more she exposed herself to bigger works, the more she wanted to branch out in instrumentation and presentation. More recently, she has participated in many performances and events, including honors recitals, achievement awards, and Guild auditions.

Although Ava isn’t done learning and experimenting, she enjoys sharing her progress. She is continuing to study music and composition, while teaching private piano lessons in her home studio.



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MORGAN KELLY MOSS

*Storks
Piano Trio*



Morgan Kelly Moss has been playing piano and studying music since she was three, and is currently a Composition and Piano Performance double major at Temple University Boyer College of Music and Dance. Recently, Moss won the Chester County Community Band Competition Contest and was the youngest person at 19 and first woman to have won this competition. Moss studies composition with the highly respected Prof. Jan Krzywicki, and studies piano under world renowned pianist Sara Davis Buechner, and has worked with many others such as Charles Abramovic, Timur Moustokimov, Emiko Edwards, and Dennis Varley. Moss is also very active in film score, and has composed for 4 award winning short films in her years so far at Temple University. She is also very proud to be a teacher of piano, theory, and voice at the Music Studio of Patricia Keith in Boyertown, PA. Moss is very passionate about music and would like to share this joy with as many people as she can, whether it is through listening, teaching, or collaborating. Moss plans to graduate from Temple in 2022 and continue her studies as a composer and pianist at the graduate level.

PROGRAM NOTE

Moss's "Storks" Piano Trio is a nostalgic work based on a series of paintings by her grandmother. Moss has always enjoyed combining different types of art to create an overarching experience for the listener, both auditory and visual. The "Storks" Piano Trio is based upon a theme and variation and travels through the warm, misty atmosphere of the paintings, touches upon themes such as flying and leaving the nest, and personifies the nest when it is no longer used. The piece is very personal to Moss, and she hopes the listeners will enjoy experiencing "Storks" as much as she enjoyed creating it.



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SCOTT WATSON

John the Baptist



Dr. Scott Watson received his B.S., Music Education from West Chester University and his M.M and D.M.A., Composition from Temple University (principal teachers Maurice Wright, Matthew Greenbaum and Clifford Taylor) and has taught music for 35 years in the Parkland School District (Allentown, Pennsylvania) where he currently coordinates a large, vibrant elementary band/strings program and teaches several popular, creativity-infused high school music electives. Watson was recognized by the Parkland School District in 2015 with a *Parkland Pride Award* for outstanding achievement, and in 2020 he was awarded the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District 10 *Citation of Excellence in Teaching Award*. Additionally, Dr. Watson is an adjunct professor for a number of Philadelphia-area universities (Cairn University, University of the Arts, Moravian University).

An award-winning and frequently commissioned composer, his unique voice - evident in more than 100 published concert band, string orchestra and chamber works at all levels - is informed equally by his experiences with contemporary concert art music and the band world. Watson's music has been performed around the world and in the U.S. at such prestigious venues as Philadelphia's Academy of Music, the White House, and the Midwest Clinic (Chicago). Described as "outstanding...with beautiful melodies and interesting harmonies" (The Instrumentalist) and "written with supreme craft" (Percussive Arts Society Percussive Notes), Watson's music has received awards and recognition from the American Composers Forum, the American Music Center, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the Percussive Arts Society, and others. Recent commissions include works for: East Stroudsburg (PA) Area School District *Composers Series* Commissions (in 2021 and 2012!), Composers and Schools in Concert (for a consortium of 12 university and high school bands across the U.S.), Magic Valley Symphony Orchestra (Twin Falls, ID), Albemarle County (VA) Middle School Honors Band, Music Alliance Honor Band Camp (Cleveland, OH), the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association, and many school ensembles. Watson is an exclusive composer/clinician for Alfred Publications and a contributor to the Sound Innovations band series. He (with co-authors Brian Beck and Robert Sheldon) created Alfred Music's *Sound Sight-Reading* method for concert band.

Watson has presented numerous workshops/clinics for music educators, including the 2019 New Hampshire Music Educators Association Conference, 2017 Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic (Chicago, IL), 2017 MENC Eastern Division Conference (Atlantic City, NJ), 2015 NAFME National Conference (Nashville, TN), the keynote for the 2013 Music Technology in Education Conference (Melbourne, Australia) and many other conference and school district presentations and professional development workshops. He frequently serves as guest conductor for honor bands/festivals, including the 2021 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County (N.C.) Middle School All-County Honor Band, 2020 East Central Mississippi Band Director's Association High School Honor Band, 2019 Mississippi Middle School All-State Band, 2019 PMEA 12 Delaware County 5th/6th Grade BandFest, 2018 PMEA 10 Elementary Band Festival, 2017 PMEA District 5 Freshman Band Festival, and the 2015 All New England High School Band Festival (Plymouth State University, NH). He is the author of the highly regarded music education text, *Using Technology to Unlock Musical Creativity* (©2011, Oxford University Press) and a member of the Buffet Crampon Educational Advisory Board. To learn more, visit www.scottwatsonmusic.com.

PROGRAM NOTE

John the Baptist, for flute, piano, cello and narrator, portrays the ministry of the great ascetic New Testament prophet, with text extracted from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. After a hymn-like introduction, the music largely serves to underscore and amplify the text. Elsewhere, to portray Christ's moving baptism by the Holy Spirit and for John's tragic death, the music symbolically and dramatically supersedes the text.

The specific verses used in the narration for *John the Baptist* include: Matthew 3:1-12, Luke 3:10-16, Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:18-20 and Mark 6:18-29 (translation from the New American Standard Bible).

Just as this musical work was inspired by the story of John the Baptist, many painters have responded with works of their own to the powerful Biblical narrative. Two paintings similar in tone to my music are:

St. John the Baptist Baptizes the People, by Nicolas Poussin. In this dark and somber 17th-century painting we see the prophet at work in the countryside on the bank of the Jordan river.

Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist, by Andrea Solario (an Italian contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci). This 16th-century work shockingly juxtaposes the beautiful Salome with her prize, the head of John the Baptist.



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LARRY LIPKIS

Ukiyo~e

*Pictures from a
Floating World*



Dr. Larry Lipkis is Composer-in-Residence and Bertha Mae Starner '27 and Jay F. Starner Professor of Music at Moravian College. He has composed over 100 compositions for a variety of vocal and instrumental ensembles, including several concertos which have been performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, and Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra. His works are published by E.C. Schirmer and J. W. Pepper and have been recorded on the Koch and Music and Arts label. He is also a member of the early music ensemble The Baltimore Consort, which tours nationally and internationally and has made 17 recordings on the Dorian/Sono Luminus label.

More information at www.larrylipkis.com.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ukiyo~e translates as "pictures of a floating world." The term refers to the genre of woodblock prints and paintings from the Edo period in Japan (17th to 19th centuries). Works in this style typically depict scenes of the natural world, kabuki actors, geishas and teahouses, folktales, and erotica.

The contemporary author Asai Ryoi describes *Ukiyo~e* as " ... living only for the moment, savoring the moon, the snow, the cherry blossoms, and the maple leaves, singing songs, drinking sake, and diverting oneself just in floating, unconcerned by the prospect of imminent poverty, buoyant and carefree, like a gourd carried along with the river current."

Ukiyo~e was premiered in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 2014 by members of SATORI: Nora Suggs, flute; Deborah Davis, cello; and Martha Schrempel, piano.



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KIRK O'RIORDAN

Water Lillies



Kirk O'Riordan's music has been referred to as "unapologetically beautiful" and is often praised for its uniquely "visual" qualities that depict a wide range of striking moods. His music was praised by Audiophile Audition as "one of the most impressive and beautiful collections of chamber music I have heard in a while....This is all just so lovely and invokes exactly the emotions that good music should be able to induce in all of us." Gramophone Magazine described O'Riordan as "a composer for whom imagery is a defining inspiration....[he] is a deeply sensitive composer who savours going gently into the night." According to the Morning Call, O'Riordan "possesses that rare quality of capturing a vivid musical landscape with Webern-like efficiency."

Dr. O'Riordan joined the faculty of Lafayette College in 2009, and now serves as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Bands, teaching courses in music theory, and composition. In addition, he conducts the Lafayette College Concert Band and Contemporary Music Ensemble. Previously, he served on the faculties of Bucknell University and Susquehanna University where he taught music theory, composition, music appreciation, and (English) writing. He has also served on the faculties of Lock Haven University, Colorado Christian University, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, and Paradise Valley Community College. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Arizona State University (the first recipient of that degree from ASU); the Certificate of Performance in Saxophone from Northwestern University; and three Master of Music degrees (composition, saxophone performance, and conducting).

Kirk has studied composition with Rodney Rogers, Randall Shinn, James De Mars, Glenn Hackbarth, Jay Alan Yim, Burton Beerman, Marilyn Shrude, and Donald M. Wilson. He has studied saxophone with Frederick L. Hemke, John Sampen, Eugene Rousseau, and Iwan Roth.

Water Lilies (2000)

PROGRAM NOTES

Water Lilies for Solo Piano is the second in a series of Water Lilies pieces, which also includes versions for chamber winds and orchestra. Each version is based on the same melodic idea; in each piece this idea is developed using different compositional procedures. The result is a series of noticeably related but distinct pieces. The idea for these pieces comes from my impressions of an exhibit of Monet's Water Lilies at the Musée de L'Orangerie in Paris. The room that these magnificent works are displayed in is in the shape of an oval; and when sitting in the middle of the room one has the distinct impression that one is in the middle of Monet's pond. My Water Lilies are not necessarily an attempt to reproduce each painting in sound; rather, they represent the attempt to reproduce the feeling of being surrounded by these images, which from far away seem perfectly clear and photographic but up close are rather blurry and repetitive. Indeed, Monet's genius lies in his ability to make his audience look upon his art from afar, taking in the whole view at once rather than focusing on the details of its construction. This series of pieces attempts to recreate this effect in sound.



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ARTS & VISUALS

**CHRIS
ROGERSON**

Nocturnal Prayer



Nocturnal Prayer was written in 2014 for my good friend Brook Speltz, now cellist of the Escher Quartet. The work was inspired by Van Gogh's "Landscape at Dusk", made in 1885 a beautifully evocative and almost lyrical painting. In my work I try to evoke this sense of lyricism--convenient as it is also one of Brook's great gifts as a cellist, his wonderful expressiveness. This warmth is contrasted by the sharp chords at the beginning which are meant to represent the coldness of the coming night.



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JENNIFER HIGDON

Piano Trio

Jennifer Higdon is one of America's most acclaimed and most frequently performed living composers. She has is a major figure in contemporary Classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, a 2010 Grammy for her Percussion Concerto and a 2018 Grammy for her Viola Concerto, and a 2020 Grammy for her Harp Concerto. Most recently, Higdon received the Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University, given to contemporary classical composers of exceptional achievement who have significantly influenced the field of composition. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and *blue cathedral* is today's most performed contemporary orchestral works, with more than 650 performances worldwide. Her works have been recorded on more than sixty CDs, and her Percussion Concerto recording was recently inducted into the Library of Congress National Recording Registry. Higdon's first opera, *Cold Mountain*, won the prestigious International Opera Award for Best World Premiere. Dr. Higdon holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

PROGRAM NOTES

"Piano Trio"

Can music reflect colors and can colors be reflected in music? I have always been fascinated with the connection between painting and music. In my composing, I often picture colors as if I were spreading them on a canvas, except I do so with melodies, harmonies and through the instruments themselves. The colors that I have chosen in both of the movement titles and in the music itself, reflect very different moods and energy levels, which I find fascinating, as it begs the question, can colors actually convey a mood?

This work was commissioned in 2003 by the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, Vail, Colorado.

--Jennifer Higdon