

ABOUT LIBBY LARSEN

of the eight best classical music events of 1990 by USA Today. The first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra, she has held residencies with the California Institute of the Arts, the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the Philadelphia School of the Arts, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony. Larsen's many commissions and recordings are a testament to her fruitful collaborations with a long list of world-renowned artists, including The King's Singers, Benita Valente, and Frederica von Stade, among others. Her works are widely recorded on such labels as Angel/EMI, Nonesuch, Decca, and Koch International.

As a past holder of the 2003-2004 Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education at the Library of Congress and recipient of the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Libby Larsen is a vigorous, articulate champion of the music and musicians of our time. In 1973, she co-founded (with Stephen Paulus) the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composers Forum, which has been an invaluable advocate for composers in a difficult, transitional time for American arts. Consistently sought after as a leader in the generation of millenium thinkers, Libby Larsen's music and ideas have refreshed the concert music tradition and the composer's role in it. For more information, libbylarsen.com.

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Season 113, Program 70



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

MASTER CLASS + CONCERT **Libby Larsen**

featuring

University Singers
Chris Boveroux, conductor

Sospiro Vocal Ensemble
Alexander Johnson + Robert Chastain,
conductors

Ova Novi Ensemble
Diana Rosenblum, director

Beall Concert Hall
Sunday, May 11, 2014 | 4 p.m.



MASTER CLASS

Myself with Wings
(from *Seven Ghosts*) Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

University Singers
Chris Boveroux, conductor

Mediocrity in Love Rejected Robert Chastain (b. 1981)***

Sospiro Vocal Ensemble
Robert Chastain, conductor

O Anima fugitiva Alexander Johnson (b. 1990)

O fleeting Soul,
you shall be strong,
and wear your armor of light.

God so loved the world Libby Larsen

Sospiro Vocal Ensemble
Alexander Johnson, conductor

How It Thrills Us Libby Larsen

Sospiro Vocal Ensemble
Robert Chastain, conductor

INTERMISSION

CONCERT

Slow Structures Libby Larsen

II. Slow Structures

Matthew Zavortink, flute
Jennifer Jordan, violoncello
Hui-Ling Khoo, piano



Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over 15 operas. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. Constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras

around the world, Libby Larsen has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.

Larsen has been hailed as "the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively" (*USA Today*); as "a composer who has made the art of symphonic writing very much her own" (*Gramophone*); as "a mistress of orchestration" (*Times Union*); and for "assembling one of the most impressive bodies of music of our time" (*Hartford Courant*). Her music has been praised for its "clear textures, easily absorbed rhythms and appealing melodic contours that make singing seem the most natural expression imaginable" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*). "Libby Larsen has come up with a way to make contemporary opera both musically current and accessible to the average audience" (*The Wall Street Journal*). "Her ability to write memorable new music completely within the confines of traditional harmonic language is most impressive" (*Fanfare*).

Libby Larsen has received numerous awards and accolades, including a 1994 Grammy as producer of the CD: *The Art of Arlene Augér*, an acclaimed recording that features Larsen's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Her opera *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* was selected as one

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE for "Myself with Wings"

Casey Riley and Brit Englund, trumpet
 Kelsi McGlothin, horn
 Max Burns, trombone
 Stephen Young, tuba
 Colin Hurowitz, percussion
 Hung-Yun Chu, piano

SOSPIRO VOCAL ENSEMBLE**SOPRANO**

Kathleen Murphy-Geiss
 Mikaela Jaquette
 Noelle Goodenberger
 Rebecca Chen
 Carolyn Quick

Jasper Freedom
 Gabriel Elder
 Robert Chastain
 Alexander Johnson

ALTO

Julia McCallum
 Emily Hopkins
 Austin Skelton
 Mary Bradbury
 Anna Kincaid
 Nikki Forrest
 April Phillips

OVA NOVI STRING ENSEMBLE**VIOLIN I**

Lois Geertz
 Michael Weiland

VIOLIN II

Tiffany Holliday
 Olivia Davis

VIOLA

Merietta Oviatt
 Annissa Olsen

VIOLONCELLO

Kelly Quesada
 Nora Willauer

TENOR

Jack Strother-Blood
 Riley Forrest
 David Eisenband
 Austin Mahar
 Kyle Ludwig

CONTRABASS

Milo Fultz
 Evan Pardi

BASS

Kevin Wyatt-Stone
 Kodiak Hast
 Chris Almasie

III. Silent Syllables
 IV. Snow Melting Times

Sarah Pyle, flute
 Diana Rosenblum, violoncello
 Julia Lin, piano

Living

Nicole Portley (b. 1980)

I. The Quest
 II. Ache of Marriage
 III. Joy
 IV. Hymn to Eros
 V. Losing Track
 VI. Living

Laura Wayte, soprano
 Christopher Stark, violin
 Avery Pratt, viola
 Pecos Singer, violoncello

Violin Quartet no. 1: "O"

Olivia Davis (b. 1990)

Christopher Stark, violin
 Olivia Davis, violin
 Amara Sperber, violin
 Avery Pratt, violin

Runes

Diana Rosenblum (b. 1983)

Diana Rosenblum, piano

Full Moon in the City

Libby Larsen

I. ...at 3 am
 II. Juking the Moon
 III. ...5 am

Robert Chastain, bassoon
 Andrew Stiefel, conductor
 Ova Novi String Orchestra

Myself with Wings (from Seven Ghosts)

From the score:

Grandson of the Swedish ex-patriot August Lindbergh (Ola Mansson), son of Congressman Charles August Lindbergh, Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) grew up simultaneously on a farm in Little Falls, Minnesota and in Washington DC. He bought his first barnstorming airplane in 1923. He enlisted in the army where he flew night mail in 1925/26. In 1927 Charles Lindbergh made the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris in the "Spirit of St. Louis", immediately catapulting him into world notoriety. He lived his life as an aviator, scientist, soldier, conservationist, and advisor to the government on industry and flight. His integrity as a person infiltrated every area in which he worked.

"I used to imagine myself with wings on which I could swoop down off our roof into the valley, soaring through the air from one river bank to another. Flying!"

Mediocrity in Love Rejected

Set to Thomas Carew's (1595-1640) poem of the same name, this piece takes on a text of an almost teenaged view of romantic love. Carew's words "Give me more love or more disdain..." are expressed in a fit of frustration as the author would prefer a tumultuous relationship over one with ambiguity or without passion. One finds a more mature expression of romantic love in a relationship refined by years than Carew's desperate cry. After the passion of infatuation, one can take heart in knowing that the person opposite of them, in mature love, is not going anywhere, even when the day's stress has left you feeling not so passionate.

While my teenaged view of romantic love was much like Carew's, I have since grown beyond his sentiment. Yet, I fear the day when the words of this poem are no longer applicable to some area of my life. I still feel so alive when I can fall head-over-heels for a new piece of music, idea, or finely crafted beverage or meal. On the other hand, that sense of living is confirmed when I know that I can

"Bike Ride to the Moon" – Dukes of Stratosphere
 "Howling at the Moon" – The Ramones
 "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" – Hawley Ades

PERSONNEL**UNIVERSITY SINGERS****SOPRANO**

Rebecca Chen
 Sarah Derhalli
 Bridget Dolan
 Lauren Duplessie
 Kelsey Gregory
 Mikaela Jaquette
 Emma Knox-Hershey
 Alana McKenzie
 McKenzie Messer
 Kathleen Murphy-Geiss
 Alishia Piper
 Megan Prehm
 Camille Robinson
 Kelsey Spelich

ALTO

Maklyn Baley
 Erin Batali
 Moriah Bishop
 Mary Bradbury
 Natalie Carrigan
 April Dimmick
 Mahsheed Massarat
 Julia McCallum

Leanne Merrill
 Ruthie Millgard
 Anna Neufeld
 Helen Rawlins
 Austin Skelton
 Courtney Stinson
 Glenna Unfred
 Joslyn Vargas
 Peyton Ziegler

TENOR

Ethan Alvarez
 Jake Buhlmann
 Dante Haruna
 Kyle Ludwig
 Austin Mahar
 Jace Saplan
 Joshua Searl
 Austin Walker
 Daniel Wesselink

BASS

Austen Allen
 Chris Almasie
 Matthew Brown

Kelvin Close-Kung
 Colin Cossi
 Gabriel Elder
 Nathan Engelmann
 Zeke Fetrow
 Zachary Fitzgerald
 Kodiak Hast
 Zachary Horn
 Alex Kenton
 Ian Magill
 Alec Malnati
 Tim McCoy
 Conor O'Brien
 Brendan York
 Calvin Yue

SOLO QUARTET for

"Myself with Wings"
 Kathleen Murphy-Geiss
 Alishia Piper
 Austin Walker
 Colin Cossi

I'm proud to say that George Sakakeeny is my friend! I am in awe of his talent and I am humbled by his generosity as a teacher. We also have a good deal of fun together and that is how our new work, *Full Moon in the City* came to be—through our friendship, deep and not so deep conversations and general devotion to music as a way of life.

Full Moon in the City, a stroll for bassoon and strings, imagines a bassoon, after hours, out on a walk in the club district of an unnamed city. A triptych, the movements are titled "...at 3am," "Juking the Moon," and "...5am." The sound of the music borders on jazz but is not jazz—rather it is a noire portrait of echoes of late night music, the kind of music that evokes party fatigue and staying up all night. It's a genre of American music which I like to call Tony Franciosa (actor) music.

"...at 3am," the first movement, and "...5am," the third movement, are lyrical and use the technique of meander to move somewhere but stay in the same place—on the same block of the same street, if you will. "Juking* the Moon," the inner movement, muses on the idea of the bassoon around 4am, strolling along the street, detecting fragments of songs about the moon as juke boxes and bar musicians play out into the night. I referenced fragments from nine songs about the moon, abstracted them and created a Red Grooms (artist) inspired tone poem.

*Juke. n.

1. A cheap nightclub or bar (ie. juke joint).
2. A style of jazz music performed in bars and brothels.
3. A coin-operated machine that plays records.

(Verb): to tour juke joints, usually with a date; to drive one cheap bar to the next for the entire night.

References include:

"Moondance" – Van Morrison "Astronomy Domine" – Pink Floyd
 "Space Oddity" – David Bowie
 "Fly Me to the Moon" – Bart Howard "Walking on the Moon" – The Police
 "Moon River" – Henry Mancini

still get angry at bad ideas, particularly those that I find damaging to the person or the culture.

I know that is why this poem persisted in my memory until I set it. As the storm and stress of my once young adult set of emotions age out into a more emotionally settled person, I know it is ever more important to retain my sense of passion. Even in a relationship, death can follow maturity if sparks of passion are not retained. We must all be ever-vigilant to reach out and give more love!

O Anima fugitiva

This brief text is an excerpt from Hildegard's liturgical drama *Ordo Virtutum*. The earliest known work of its kind, *Ordo* tells the story of the Anima, or the Soul of humanity, that is torn between the sixteen Virtues and the Devil. The text excerpted for this piece is sung by the Virtues as they plead for the Soul, who is weary and desperate for salvation, to come to the side of goodness and light and be healed by God. I set this text not for its sacred implications, but for a more universal application that appears to me when this excerpt is taken out of context as it has been for this piece. There are times in all human lives when we need to be reminded that the power to overcome adversity is in fact within ourselves.

Slow Structures

Commissioned by the Minnesota Commissioning Club for the Meiningen-Trio

Premiered June 17, 2005

at the Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci Festival, Potsdam, Germany

I have lived much of my life in Minneapolis, Minnesota, near the Canadian border in the United States, where a kind of frozen, austere beauty inspires the hundreds of writers, painters, dancers, and composers who live here. Here, we know the rhythm and flow of water in all its guises in ways that are known only to people who

live in cold, northern climates. Living with snow tutors the soul in mystical understanding of how time operates on us as human beings.

Slow Structures for flute, cello, and piano, is a composed in the manner of an object poem, which takes its inspiration from winter snow: its tempi, its beautiful, translucent light, its mystic, infinitely shifting suggestive shapes. The title of each movement is inspired by fragments of poetry of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Tomas Tranströmer. The piece examines the slow formation of frozen form. The music begins with the force of a blizzard, slightly fierce, virtuosic in its gestures, and given form by the impetus of the force of nature. Then, the musical motives begin to settle in relationship to each other, slowly creating a structure which is both recognizable and unrecognizable. Within the structure, the musical gestures of the opening express themselves in new ways in which we recognize them only by what we can no longer audibly perceive. Finally, the slow structures in which the musical elements have been operating begin to loosen, melt as it were, creating a hypnotic atmosphere—much like the hypnotic effect of the drip of a melting icicle.

- Libby Larsen

Living

Nicole Portley was introduced to the poetry of Denise Levertov by UO composition Professor Robert Kyr, who himself knew the poet. Levertov was born in England in 1923 to the daughter of coal miners and the son of a Russian Hasidic Jew who was held as an enemy alien in Germany. After emigrating to the United Kingdom, her father converted to Christianity and became an Anglican priest. The poet wrote about her disparate cultural background as helping her to feel special and individual, and that “[I knew] before I was ten that I was an artist-person and [that] I had a destiny.” She grew up to be a writer and professor, living in Massachusetts, California and Washington. She loved Mt. Rainier and the Pacific Northwest, writing poetry about nature, but also about other

diverse topics including love, protest, and pacifism. These six songs are part of an envisioned set of twelve to be recorded in 2014.

Violin Quartet: “O”

I began writing this piece as part of a set of violin duets inspired by the alphabet. Each violin duet -- its character, style, harmonic language, etc. -- was supposed to reflect how I thought of the letter, and how the letter influenced how I composed that specific duet. Each duet had a letter for its title, with this piece initially being “O,” and its middle section as “K” (with a return to “O” at the end). Because of its complexity I turned it into the violin quartet it is now. It was mostly a study on harmony, and my experimenting with a new harmonic language.

Runes

The chordal structures in this piece are dense and clustered, yet (despite their seemingly repetitive quality) none is exactly alike to another.

Whereas tone clusters are often a coloristic effect, I desired to create a piece in which every clustered tone within these chords plays a distinct role in voiceleading. As each stack of tones yields the next, strands of embedded melody emerge at every layer of the vertical formation.

Over time and via motivic development, the ear acclimates to the density of these chords. A strong tonal grammar underlies the vibrational resolution of these alike-yet-distinct chords as they proceed (ruminatively and spaciouly) from one to the next.

Full Moon in the City

Commissioned by The Oberlin Conservatory of Music

Premiered May 10, 2013 by George Sakakeeny, bassoon, and The Oberlin Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble.