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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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 Benjami

USA Today

Gramophone

Times Union

Hartford Courant

Philadelphia Inquirer

The Wall Street Journal

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
**PROGRAM**

**CHAMBER ENSEMBLE** for “Myself with Wings”
Casey Riley and Brit Englund, trumpet
Kelsi McGlothlin, 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

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

**BASS**
Kevin Wyatt-Stone
Kodiak Hast
Chris Almasie

**OVA NOVI STRING ENSEMBLE**

**VIOLIN I**
Lois Geertz
Michael Weiland

**VIOLIN II**
Tiffany Holliday
Olivia Davis

**VIOLA**
Menetta Oviatt
Annissa Olsen

**VIOLONCELLO**
Kelly Quesada
Nora Willauer

**CONTRABASS**
Milo Fultz
Evan Pardi

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-heals 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
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 noir 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 Meininger-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 daugther 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-different chords as they proceed (ruminatively and spaciously) 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.