

Presented by Jessica Pollack
Assisted by Galen Dean Peiskee, Jr.

Part of Me Is Water

*For anyone who loves something forever
And anyone who loved then stopped*

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Unintentional Dances (2016)	George, Whitney (b. 1986)

- I. Refuse to Die (Tango)*
- II. There I am a Lie (Scherzo)*
- III. As if Standing on Fishes (Waltz)*
- IV. The Wingbeats of your Flight (Two-Step)*

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Part of Me is Water Program Notes

SchiZm
1994

Derek Bermel b.1967

I. Field of Stars

Field of Stars provides the landscape and setting for the whole show. Delicate piano chords and a floating high-pitched clarinet melody combine to create a beautiful and mysterious atmosphere, of cool colors and glass-smooth surfaces and twinkling ripples. Embedded within the piece is what Bermel describes as a “short musical puzzle.” The left hand piano in 5/4, right hand of piano in 4/4, and the clarinetist in 6/4, create three intertwining lines that subtly align every 60 beats. These lines glide smoothly past each other, stretching the listener’s ear across long and lyrical phrases.

In the full presentation of SchiZm, the first movement offers a setting from which the second movement, Puppet State, breaks, splitting the work into two vastly different moods and styles. Derek Bermel is an American clarinetist and composer known for his extensive use of color and creative use of style. His international studies in ethnomusicology give his works a unique and authentic perspective, and open a wide range of stories.

Barnegat Bay
1993

Jacob ter Veldhuis b.1951

Barnegat Bay places the listener on a stretching shoreline before a storm. Abstract sounds floating, looming, growing, and fading create the effect of 3-dimensional space. Within the depths of beauty, power, innocence, terror, and even humor the piece offers a sense of intimacy with this force of nature. Bursts of character and hints of melody reveal the complexity of this moment before the storm. Within the narrative and special effects, several sets of tone rows ground the work, moving through the same pitches in the same order but in different patterns, cycles repeating themselves in new ways, and new characters, until they evolve to a new form, and then eventually break.

Excerpt from Jacob TV’s program notes:

“Barnegat Bay, for Bb clarinet solo, was composed in Ship Bottom, Long Beach Island, NJ, USA in the winter of 1992 and dedicated to British clarinetist Roger Heaton.

In the cold winter of 1992 I survived what Americans called ‘*The Storm of the Century*’ in a wooden beach house on Long Beach Island. I used to stroll along the beaches of Barnegat Bay, listening to fog horns in the distance. The area surrounding that bay was described by Henry Hudson in 1609: “*A great lake of water, as we could judge it to be. The mouth of the lake hath many shoals, and the sea breaketh on them as it is cast out of the mouth of it.*” The bay was originally called ‘*Barendegat*’ by Dutch settlers, meaning: *inlet of breakers*, referring to the waterway’s turbulent channel.”¹”

Jacob ter Veldhuis is a “Dutch ‘avant-pop’ composer” who started his journey with music as a rock musician.² He is internationally known for his Boombox repertoire for live instrument and track. “The

¹ “Barnegat Bay,” Jacob TV, accessed Oct. 1, 2022 , <https://www.jacobtv.net/product/barnegat-bay/>

² “Biography,” Jacob TV, accessed Oct. 1, 2022 ,<https://www.jacobtv.net/composer/#biography>

power of his work comes from things that consciously or unconsciously occupy everybody: pleasure and beauty vs. pain and violence, two sides of the same coin.”³

the waters wrecked the sky
2012

Evan Williams (b. 1988)

the waters wrecked the sky explores the storm from a different perspective, embodying the way it completely envelops the surrounding earth and sky. The storm is beautiful and vast, with flashes of lighting and cracks of thunder, water swelling and crashing through a whole landscape. This work bears witness to a storm’s approach, powerful destruction, and the vast aftereffects of devastation it leaves behind.

“*the waters wrecked the sky* takes its title and subject matter from Emily Dickinson’s poem below. Just as the poem anthropomorphizes a storm and the affected area, the clarinet brings life to the words with tremolos representing the winds, beautiful gestures and multiphonics representing the sky, and violent sweeping gestures representing the stormy waters.”⁴

Evan Williams is an American composer and conductor. His work “explores the thin lines between beauty and disquieting, joy and sorrow, and simple and complex, while often tackling important social and political issues.”⁵

Fantasy on Fear a’ Bhata
2013

Chelsea Komschlies (b.1991)

The work is based on the melody of the 18th-Century Gaelic folk song, Fear a’ Bhata. The same tune repeats through many verses as the singer tells her story. Though many differing versions exist, they all tell the potentially true story of a woman mourning the loss of the sailor she loves gone to sea. Some legends of the song suggest a happy ending, in which the sailor returns and the couple eventually weds. But the narrator of the song lives in that time of grief and uncertainty, facing separation from the sailor she loves, whom she fears will never return.

The Fantasy never presents the original tune in full, only variations, distortions, and developments that move through different experiences of longing. The work opens with an abstract expression of emotion guided by the pitches of the song. The music flows between such expressionism to beautiful forlorn melodies and high energy Gaelic-inspired dance figures. The story of the woman and her sailor is recontextualized here to explore identity and loss of self.

Chelsea Komschlies is an American composer inspired by the way music interacts with extramusical ideas and associations. Her work evokes color, texture, and character in the sound. However, she frequently complements her work with an extramusical idea, such as digital artwork, she gives to the performer or audience. “Her work springs from spontaneous subconscious mental imagery, and she combines musical elements from across time and tradition, from ancient to modern and from the traditional to the strange, to trigger the same in her listeners. One of her goals is that listeners make deep, instinctual associations with her music, be they emotional, visual, or otherwise abstract.”⁶

³ “The Music of Jacob TV” Jacob TV, accessed Oct. 1, 2022, <https://www.jacobtv.net/the-music-of-jacob-tv/>

⁴ “the waters wrecked the sky,” Evan Williams, accessed Oct. 1, 2022 <http://www.evanwilliamsmusic.info/the-waters-wrecked-the-sky.html>

⁵ “Biography,” Evan Williams, accessed Oct. 1, 2022, <http://www.evanwilliamsmusic.info/bio.html>

⁶ “About,” Chelsea Komschlies, accessed Oct. 1, 2022, <https://www.komschlies.com/about>

hands
2017

Cassie Wieland (b. 1994)

hands explores intimacy and vulnerability. The timbre presents the clarinet in the threshold between air and sound, creating the exposed emotion of the piece. Growing and expanding leaps and intervals take this vulnerability and ultimately lead to a place of authenticity.

“While writing this piece, I was thinking about how much you can tell a lot about a person by looking at just their hands. The gestures a person uses when they talk, the way they keep their nails are kept, the way their fingers are slightly molded from the type of work that they do- all of these characteristics tell a story. This piece is a sort of illustration of examining a loved one’s hands- of zooming in closer and closer and uncovering a story in the tiny details.

*“Hands” is a part of ANATOMY, a series of solos for various instruments based on different parts of the human body.”*⁷

Cassie Wieland is an American composer, arranger, and audio-engineer based in Brooklyn. Though she started as a clarinetist, this work for clarinet was inspired by her friendship with clarinetist *Ford Forquarean*, who premiered the work.

Peace
2020

Jessie Montgomery (b.1981)

“Written just a month after the Great Sadness of the first quarantine orders due to COVID-19, facing the shock felt by the whole globe as well as personal crisis, I find myself struggling to define what actually brings me joy. And I’m at a stage of making peace with sadness as it comes and goes like any other emotion. I’m learning to observe sadness for the first time not as a negative emotion, but as a necessary dynamic to the human experience.”⁸

The work was commissioned and premiered on violin.

Jessie Montgomery is an American composer, violinist, and educator from the Lower East Side of Manhattan. She attributes much of her musical identity to the artists working around her as she grew. Her style of incorporating a range of musical influences and Local artists were forming community and exploring artistic ideas, to her parents, both artists and activists engaged with their community. She is currently a Professor of Violin at The New School in New York.

⁷ “hands,” Cassie Wieland, accessed Oct. 1, 2022 <https://cassiewieland.com/music-hands/>

⁸ Peace for clarinet and piano,” Jessie Montgomery composer, violinist, accessed Oct. 1, 2022, <https://www.jessiemontgomery.com/work/peace-clarinet-piano/>

Unintentional Dances
2016

Whitney George

“To the Dearest and Dedicated,

It’s hard not to name you—but that’s just the way things are: difficult- tangled in code and riddled with no hope of ever becoming unwound. I’ve managed to write you these four letters—unintentional dances, if you will—in remembrance of our brief time together. I could write pages over you, and have on many occasions—how could I not? You make me think that pose is poetry...that we’re living in a rich painting, saturated with color, smelling of exotic linseed oil, morphing and forever changing. I can now only hope that you recall that tender moment when we were able to dance together—and that someday you may return to it—there can be so much more of it. I have wasted too many days without you, and do not wish to continue watching them drift as if they were dry leaves in the wind—the seasons, the doors closing—do not let them shut. Return to me—my heart. It beats for you.

-R. Rilke”⁹

- I. Refuse to Die (Tango)
- II. There I am a Lie (Scherzo)
- III. As if Standing on Fishes (Waltz)
- IV. The Wingbeats of your Flight (Two-Step)

“Whitney George’s music traverses the affective terrain between tragedy and ecstasy, fragility and strength, bringing together romantically delicate intimacy and the spectacular darkness of the macabre. Her operas, staged multimedia works, and chamber music have had both international and domestic premieres. Most recently, George was commissioned by dell'Arte Opera to write *Princess Maleine*, an adaptation of a Grim fairytale. She received the 2017 Elebash Award for her orchestration of Miriam Gideon’s opera *Fortunato*, which premiered under George’s baton in May 2019.

George is the artistic director and conductor of The Curiosity Cabinet, a chamber orchestra formed in 2009. She holds an undergraduate degree from the California Institute of the Arts, a master’s degree from Brooklyn College, and DMA from the CUNY Graduate Center. In addition to her composing and conducting, George teaches at the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music, works at the Hitchcock Institute of American Studies, and is on the composition faculty for Face the Music.”¹⁰

⁹ Whitney George, *Unintentional Dances*. (Whitney George, 2016)

¹⁰“Bio,” Whitney George composer conductor, accessed Oct. 1, 2022, <https://www.whitneygeorge.com/bio>

POETRY

Introduction Poem.

A single clear drop
 Tiny crystal ball
 So full it holds itself together
 Gravity all its own

Reaching for another
 Always, quiet, persistent
 Melting unquestioningly
 Into the whole of water
 So instantly accepted
 You can never take it back

If I could move and love and be like water--

My favorite
 Place, color, sound, element,
 Disaster

Edge
 of waves and waves
 Where I watch drops
 Dance over and over
 Flowing diamond crests
 Playing, breaking with innocent surety
 Confident abandon
 To pieces and back
 Never left to dry

I reach into water
 With my hand

Water tastes
 Like a caress
 Incarnate

I place a drop in the ocean
 and change forever
 Everything in the water

The devil is details
 Secrets others miss
 Enveloping the earth, seeping into hands and
 eyes and tongues
 But love got there first

Reaching, quiet, persistent
 You can never take it back

If I could move and love and be like water--

They'd tell the sailor
 Lost at sea
 Your love for water's too small
 For everything
 Water knows
 To move and live and be
 Still
 Water knows
 How to find its way
 Below any rock
 Bottom

Poem I.

water pools
reflects
the world above
offers its stillness
so we can look down
and still
see
fireworks dance
with stars in the sky

Poem II.

When my eyes leave the water
 They turn to the clouds
 And drink in the water
 From the air

That's how I know
 I love
 Water
 In every form

I go back to it
 Over and over the
 Line of tension on my hand
 At the surface the taste
 In my own tongue

My favorite tension
 Still
 The edge where water breaks to air
 In the palm
 Of my second hand

Losses
 I've watched ripped in someone else's tide
 Billowed, bruised, purple
 Gifted sunrise

Greedy with thirst
 Swallowed
 Down the right way and the wrong

Drawn through my veins over and over
 Flowing through my heart
 Til the better part of me is water

Chasing horizons and storms and
 Mist-cushioned skies

Diving throat first
 In any water I could find
 Tidal waves, puddles, cliff seashores

The more it wrecks
 The more I'm sure
 I love
 Water
 In all its forms
 I know

The salt from the rock
 is not the sea water's fault
 I go back to it over and over

Til the better part of me is
 Water
 As I marvel a wave
 That takes
 My breath away

I thought I'd have more grace
 When I drown

Poem III.

Water cleanses
Skies, streets, thoughts, eyes
Hands more than sins
It rips

Gravel from the earth, tears
Layers of skin, peels
Bark from the tree, roots up
Signs from our town
Carried away and down cracks born
Slowly
And all at once
Water takes back the glow
Lent our streets, our hearts, our homes

Made new by becoming
Broken
Open, old, worn

Poem IV.

this lonely feeling always
lasts just longer than I can
stand so I do not and I do no
thing and I do it again still
er than a lonely iceberg desolate but which may
melt to spring someday I know I
no I know I freeze like a cliff like decay caught mid
air with sharp edges that mourn how the whole earth has
torn itself away leaving a precipice
pressed by this hope between a rock and a bay
forced purpose
forced to break waves and waves and waves that
fail to push me from this state I stay surrounded
by screaming air abandoned by the sea right by the
sea right where I see the sailor I loved each day bombarded
by the sea abandoned by the earth lost ground giving
way under water I discover
abandoned and surrounded break the same
cracks edges under waves and waves and waves
that keep moving and moving away bits of me I don't
know to call separate don't know to call
hope til gone among the many lost
treasures I discover too late to be of use
I must have loved myself after all
among the many treasures lost
to miss myself so much under water
under waves and waves and waves

Poem V.

Left

Hands bare

Palms open

To the sky

Cracks in my eyes

Tears in my hands

Dancing like waves

Still enough to catch rain

Poem VI.

We go down like rain
 Thick
 Drops falling fast
 Woven tapestry of fury
 Linked chain mail of grief

A Body too heavy for air

Peace has a gravity
 I never noticed before

I never had something
 So heavy hit so
 Soft

Lucky me
 I was born to breathe
 Air so thick with water
 I cry for how hard gravity
 Has to try to hold the earth together

Bear stillness
 Hold fast

For all the wind and water strive
 No force can pry
 Breath through lungs
 Blood through heart
 If we have even one

Piece of armor left to guard
 Our eyes, hands, tongues, heart
 Miss

A whispered promise
 Subtle breath
 Of rain at rest in the clouds up high

A body just light enough to float

For all we search the horizon
 We can never find
 A place where water meets the sky

Til we look up
 To see water
 Rise

Poem VII.

I stand on sun-spotted shores
 In the wake of hurricanes
 And all the ways a day can break
 Still

Here
 At the water's edge
 Wreck
 With beams of wood and beams of light
 Bearing unintended knowledge
 Growing ruthless
 Peace in the wake of hurricanes
 And all the ways a day can break

Here
 A secret (sorcery)
 Dancing along the edge of water
 The better part of me
 Still

Magic
 Makes the water dance
 And me along with it
 No matter how many times
 The waves themselves break
 The better part of me

Is Magic
 Here
 For better or worse
 I know
 All the ways a day can
 Break the better part of
 Me

Water
 Is magic
 Here
 Dancing in my heart my veins my hands
 Weaving peace
 (A daily ritual)
 Still
 In the wake
 I know
 A secret

All the ways that I can break
 And all the ways I didn't