Celebrating Jennifer Margaret Barker

*Geenyoch Ballant* (2002)
Francesca Hurst, piano

*Ocean of Glass* (2021)
Eileen Grycky, flute
Christopher Nichols, clarinet
Marie-Christine Delbeau, piano

*Tout Entière* (2001)
Poetry by Charles Baudelaire
*Tout Entière (All of Her)*
28
Brian Carter, baritone
Marie-Christine Delbeau, piano

*Chincoteague* (2018)
Genevieve Hahn, flute
Charity Chin, flute
Janelle Gillespie, flute
Robert Strauss, flute

*umurangi*
kikorangi
Erin Banholzer, oboe
John David Smith, horn
Marie-Christine Delbeau, piano

*Two Poems* (2003)
Poetry by Stephen Dunn
*The House Was Quiet*
*Circular*
Kaitlyn Tierney, soprano
Guillaume Combet, violin
Elias Goldstein, viola
Lawrence Stomberg, violoncello
Timothy Broscious, percussion
Jennifer M. Barker, conductor
Program Notes

- Jennifer Margaret Barker -

**Geenyoch Ballant** was written for the 2003 American Liszt Society Conference hosted by the University of Florida. The title is in the Scots language. Over eight hundred years old, this ancient language is still spoken in Scotland today, alongside Scottish Gaelic and English. Geenyoch means 'ravenous' or 'insatiable' and ballant means 'ballad'. By combining these two words to create a title, I sought to acknowledge the heightened emotionalism, the drama and the passion of the music.

In approaching the composition of this work I wanted to pay homage to the great piano masterpieces of the nineteenth century. Having trained as a pianist before finding composition in my twenties, I have many wonderful memories of practicing and performing these magnificent works. In addition to the exquisite emotion, heightened drama and endless variety of timbres and colors, I found the physical mechanics of performing these works to be most satisfying. The music fits the hands, allowing each hand to fulfill a role while complimenting and conversing with the other. It was therefore my goal, in composing *Geenyoch Ballant*, to create a piece that fit the hands in this traditional manner, while paying reference to the emotion, drama and compositional techniques and characteristics of the nineteenth century masterpieces.

*Geenyoch Ballant* was premiered by pianist Kevin Robert Orr at the 2003 American Liszt Society Conference and recorded for CD in 2004. Francesca Hurst subsequently presented this work as part of a lecture-presentation on ‘The Music of Jennifer Margaret Barker’ in 2011. Most recently, the work won the 2022 New Ariel Composition Competition, which resulted in a further recording of the work by Jeffrey Jacob, released in December 2022. Dr. Hurst will also record *Geenyoch Ballant* for her new solo CD featuring the piano music of Faina Lushtak and Jennifer Margaret Barker this coming summer 2023.

**Ocean of Glass** was commissioned by flutist, Eileen Grycky, for premiere at the 2021 National Flute Association Convention. The premiere was presented virtually on August 13th 2021 by the Tiger Lily Trio. Subsequent performances of the work have included a June 2022 performance at the Victoria International Arts Festival in Malta. The trio will also release a CD recording of the work on the Meyer Media record label later this year.

The work was inspired by the composer's June 2019 journey through Alaska's Inside Passage.

**Tout Entière** was commissioned by baritone Tod Fitzpatrick as a gift for his wife, Elaine, on the occasion of their tenth wedding anniversary. It is a setting of two poems by Baudelaire. The highly romantic nature of the musical setting was chosen to compliment both the essence of the poetry and the occasion for the commission. The two poems are presented as one through-composed work, with motivic material being shared between the respective accompaniments.

**Tout Entière**
Le Demon, dans ma chambre haute,
Ce matin est venu me voir,
Et, tachant a me prendre en faute,
Me dit: ‘Je voudrais bien savoir,

Parmi toutes les belles choses
Dont est fait son enchantement,
Parmi les objets noirs ou roses
Qui componsent son corps charmant,

Quel est le plus doux.’ – O mon ame!
Tu repondis a l’Abhorre:
‘Puisqu’en Elle tout est dictame,
Rien ne peut etre prefere.

Lorsque tout me ravit, j’ignore
Si quelque chose me seduit.
Elle eblouit comme l’Aurore
Et console comme la Nuit;

Et l’harmonie est trop exquise,
Qui gouverne tout son beau corps,
Pour que l’impuissante analyse
En note les nombreux accords.

O metamorphose mystique
De tous mes sens fondus en un!
Son haleine fait la musique,
Comme sa voix fait le parfum.’

Translation:

All of Her
The Devil came to see me this morning in my bedroom upstairs and trying to fool me said, ”I should dearly like to know,

“Among all the beautiful things of which her enchantment is made,

Among the black or pink objects which make up her charming body

Which is the sweetest?” – Oh my soul! You replied to the despised one:

“Since in her everything is perfect, nothing can be preferred.

“When everything enraptures me, I do not know if any one thing delights me more. She dazzles like the Dawn and consoles like the Night;

“And too exquisite a harmony governs her beautiful body to allow a weak analysis to note its multiple chords.

“O mystic metamorphosis of all my senses melted into one! Her breath makes the music like her voice makes the perfume.”

Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre ame solitaire,
Que diras-tu, mon coeur, coeur autrefois fletri,
A la tres belle, a la tres bonne, a la tres chere,
Dont le regard divin t’a soudain refleuri?

- Nous mettrons notre orgueil a chanter ses louanges:
Rien ne vaut la douceur de son autorite;
Sa chair spirituelle a le parfum des Anges,
Et son oeil nous revet d’un habit de clarte.

Que ce soit dans la nuit et dans la solitude,
Que ce soit dans la rue et dans la multitude,
Son fantome dans l’air danse comme un flambeau.
Parfois il parle et dit: ‘Je suis belle, et j’ordonne
Que pour l’amour de moi vous n’aimiez que le Beau;
Je suis l’Ange gardien, la Muse et la Madone.’

Translation:
28
What will you say this evening, poor solitary soul, what will you say, my heart, my once-withered heart, to the
most beautiful, the best, the dearest one, whose divine look has suddenly flowered again?
We shall be proud to sing her praises. Nothing equals the sweetness of her authority; her spiritual flesh
has the scent of Angels, and her eye cloaks us in a garment of light.
Be it in the night and in solitude, be it in the street and in the multitude, her spirit dances in the air like a
burning torch.
Sometimes it speaks and says: “I am beautiful, and I command that for my love, you love only the
Beautiful; I am the guardian Angel, the Muse and the Madonna!”

Commissioned to honor the retirement of Dr. Lynne Cooksey from The Music School of
Delaware, Chincoteague acknowledges her love for horses, as well as her career as a
flautist. Inspired by the wild Chincoteague ponies on Assateague Island, the composition
seeks to capture in music a sensory depiction of the natural elements on the island as
experienced by these beautiful wild animals: gentle ocean breezes, whirling grasses, calm
inlets, beckoning tidal flats, sand dunes and plateaus, peaceful glades, and ocean waves breaking on the shore.

umurangi-kikorangi is Maori for ‘red sky-blue sky’. The original one-movement work, written in 2002,
was titled Red Sky at Night. That work subsequently became the second movement of this piece, kikorangi.

Red Sky at Night was commissioned by resident University of Delaware chamber ensemble, Trio Arundel
(Timothy Clinch, oboe; Cynthia Carr, horn; Julie Nishimura, piano), with a grant from the International Horn
Society’s Meir Rimon Commissioning Assistance Fund in 2002. Trio Arundel commissioned a further
movement (umurangi) in 2007 with financial assistance from the University of Delaware.

The title of the expanded two-movement work was inspired by the vast and exceptionally colorful skies
witnessed during a trip to New Zealand in 2007. The overall nature of the piece is one of changing harmonic
and timbral colors. The ideas are at times fleeting, some strong and vibrant and others quirky and wispy, like the
beautiful color palettes that paraded through the skies. Much of the compositional material was created with the
members of Trio Arundel in mind.

Two Poems
In setting these two poems by Stephen Dunn, I sought to identify them as one unit through the motivic material
and the overall musical structure. The nature of the poetry inspired me to maintain as much of the natural
spoken lilt and flow of the words as possible. In partnership with this I found myself drawn to the idea of
creating a bed of sound upon which the poetry could float, rather than a musical fabric that conversed with the
poetry. At times this bed of sound complements the words and at other times it stands in direct contrast to the
words.

This work was commissioned by Network for New Music with support from the Philadelphia Music Project,
funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, administered by Settlement Music School. The poetry was chosen by
Network for New Music in acknowledgement of Dunn’s 2001 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.
The House Was Quiet

The house was quiet and the world vicious,
peopled as it is with those deprived
of this or that necessity, and with weasels, too,
and brutes, who don’t even need
a good excuse. The house was quiet as if it knew
it were being split. There was a sullenness
in its quiet. A hurt. The house was us.
It wasn’t a vicious house, not yet. We hadn’t
yet denuded its walls, rolled up its rugs.
It had no knowledge of the world
and thus of those who, in the name of justice,
would ransack belongings, cut throats.
Once the house had resounded with stories.
Now it was quiet, it was terrible how quiet it was.
And, sensing an advantage, the world pressed in.

Circular

Daylight illuminated, but only for those
who had some knowing in their seeing,
and night fell for everyone, but harder for some.
A belief in happiness bred despair,
though despair could be assuaged by belief,
which required faith,
which made those who had it
one-eyed amid the beautiful contraries.
Love at noon that was still
love at dusk meant doubt had been subjugated
for exactly that long, and best to have music
to sweeten a sadness, underscore joy.
Those alone spoke to their dogs,
but also to plants,
to the brilliant agreeableness of air,
while those together were left to address
the wall or open door of each other.
Oh for logs in the fireplace and a winter storm, some said.
Oh for scotch and a sitcom, said others.
Daylight concealed, but only for those
fond of the enormous puzzle,
and night rose up earth to sky
pagan and unknowable.
How we saw it was how it was.