Bring water with you if you come to live here—
Cold tinkling cisterns, or else wells so deep
That one looks down to Ganges or Himalayas.
Yes, and bring mountains with you, white, moon-bearing,
Mountains of ice. You will have need of these
Profundities and peaks of wet and cold.

Bring also, in a cage of wire or osier,
Birds of a golden colour, who will sing
Of leaves that do now wither, watery fruits
That heavily hang on long melodious boughs
In the blue-silver forests of deep valleys.

I have now been here—how many years? Years unnumbered.
My hands grow clawlike. My eyes are large and starved.
I brought no bird with me, I have no cistern
Where I might find the moon, or river, or snow.
Some day, for lack of these, I’ll spin a web
Between two dusty pine-tree tops, and hang there
Face downward, like a spider, blown as lightly
As ghost of leaf. Crows will caw about me.
Morning and evening I shall drink the dew.

Conrad Aiken, 'Exile' from Collected Poems.
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II. Exile (after the Chinese)

My hands have not touched pleasure since your hands —
No, nor my lips freed laughter since ‘farewell’,
And with the day, distance again expands
Voiceless between us, as an uncoiled shell.

Yet love endures, though starving and alone.
A dove’s wings cling about my heart each night
With surging gentleness, and the blue stone
Set in the tryst-ring has but worn more bright.
I. At Night Came His Revelry

The livelong day he sat in his loom, his ear filled with its monotony, his eyes bent down on the slow growth of sameness in the brownish web, his muscles moving with such even repetition that their pause seemed almost as much a constraint as the holding of one’s breath. But at night came his revelry: at night he closed his shutters, and made fast his doors, and drew out his good… He loved the guineas best, but he would not change the silver… he loved them all. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them; then he counted them and set them up in regular piles… and thought fondly of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end quite hidden by countless days of weaving.

II. The Bewilderment of Waking

… to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold — his own gold — brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! His heart began to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to grow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched out his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls… It was a sleeping child — a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head.

Exiles

I. Exile

These hills are sandy. Trees are dwarfed here. Crows Caw dismally in skies of an arid brilliance, Complain in dusty pine-trees. Yellow daybreak Lights on the long brown slopes a frost-like dew, Dew as heavy as rain; the rabbit tracks Show sharply in it, as they might in snow. But it’s soon gone in the sun — what good does it do? The houses, on the slope, or among brown trees, Are grey and shriveled. And the men who live here Are small and withered, spider-like, with large eyes.
James Baker

James Baker is Principal Percussionist of the New York City Ballet Orchestra. He is Music Director and Conductor of the Composers Conference at Wellesley College and Director of the Percussion Ensemble at the Mannes College of Music. He regularly conducts and plays for both the New York New Music Ensemble and Speculum Musicae.

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John Shirley-Quirk, Narrator
The Peabody Trio

Violaine Melancon, Violin • Natasha Brofsky, Cello • Seth Knopp, Piano

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Sequitur

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Paul Hostetter, Conductor

V. Tennis (“Yes, he could do this sort of thing all day…”)
VI. At Night (“At night, the Department’s offices are empty…”)
VII. Experience (“Sindbad learns nothing from experience…”)
VIII. Water Cannon (“The graduates don’t wish to leave the campus…”)
IX. Waltzes (“Sindbad gets to his feet, shakes himself, and heads toward the tree line…”)
X. Teaching (“I reentered the classroom and fixed them with my fiercest stare…”)

Exiles (2001) 14:58
Harold Meltzer (b. 1966)

Brion • Two Songs from Silas Marner • Sindbad • Exiles

The four works on this disc are representative of a wide range of musics all too inaudible in today’s sonic landscape, among them the works of Franco Donatoni and the Stravinsky of things of the world and by a wide range of musics. The impetus was a visit to the magical Brion-Vega cemetery, in the countryside east of Venice, designed by Carlo Scarpa in the early 1970s. The composer writes:

In the spring of 2005 I made a pilgrimage to the Brion-Vega sanctuary, Scarpa’s last work, in San Vito d’Altivole. The music describes, not in real time, but a proportional time, the several hours I communed with its sculpted concrete walls, reflecting pools, and unexpected traces of bright primary colors. I explored much of it for an hour, took a break, then went back in for another spell, almost twice as long, seeing the things I hadn’t seen and retracing my steps to some of the places I’d seen before. Then after a second break I had a last look around. And that’s the form of the piece.

Three distinct sections, each carrying its own version of the ritornello with which the work begins and each cross-referencing elements from the others, trace our movement through this remarkable space. The cemetery itself rises so effortlessly from its setting, the cemetery itself rises so effortlessly from its setting, providing us with dazzlingly different views of a small set of musical materials. Unlike the physical environment that inspired it, the music moves through a series of juxtapositions that, while unanticipated, always feel integral. Commissioned with a grant from the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, Brion was a Finalist for the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in music.

The Two Songs From Silas Marner were composed in 2000-01, one for Dora Ohrenstein and Greg Hesselink, the other for Mary Nessinger and Madeleine Shapiro. The two passages from George Eliot’s much over-assigned and hence overlooked masterpiece were chosen more for their resonance and transformation of imagery (the motion of the loom into the beating of the heart; the piles of gold into the handfuls of golden curls; the overall transformation of material treasure into love for a child) than for their inherent singability. It is a music of a reimagining with which the work begins and with which the work ends, the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second. These two kinds of physical motion create a context within which the voice is free to float, to explore, and finally to find the specific emotional gravity of the loom in the first song, and an erratic, emotive heartbeat in the second.

A similar approach to text prevails in Sindbad, commissioned in 2003 by Meet The Composer for the Peabody Trio, on a short story by Donald Barthelme, though the words in this case are declaimed rather than sung. Works for narrator and ensemble often can seem scored for piccolo in its lowest register becomes emblematic of the work as a whole) that serve to provide us with dazzlingly different views of a small set of musical materials. Like the physical environment that inspired it, the music moves through a series of juxtapositions that, while unanticipated, always feel integral. Commissioned with a grant from the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, Brion was a Finalist for the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in music.
Richard Lalli

Baritone Richard Lalli has served Yale University in important and varied ways as a teacher and artist. Renowned as a recitalist in repertory from Bach to Schubert, from Schoenberg’s Ode to Napoleon to Tin Pan Alley tunes, he has long been a core member of Sequitur and the Mirror Visions Ensemble.

John Shirley-Quirk

Born in Liverpool, England, bass-baritone John Shirley-Quirk was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1975. He created leading rôles in Benjamin Britten’s church parables and in the operas Owen Wingrave and Death in Venice, and took on major opera rôles at London’s Covent Garden, Milan’s La Scala, and New York’s Metropolitan Opera.
Elizabeth Farnum is a specialist in contemporary music in diverse musical styles, performing throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. She has collaborated with many of today’s foremost composers in such venues as Lincoln Center, London’s ICÁ and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, on Broadway and at the Metropolitan opera. Three of her recordings have been nominated for GRAMMY® awards. www.elizabethfarnum.com

Gregory Hesselink has premièred more than one hundred works. He is the principal cellist of the Riverside Symphony, and a member of Sequitur, Newbund, the Locrian Chamber Players, and the New Millennium Ensemble, with whom he won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award.

Harold Meltzer was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1966, and grew up in Long Island. With his wife and two children he lives in the East Village of Manhattan, and teaches at Vassar College. The Barlow Endowment for Music Composition awarded him its 2008 Barlow Prize: a string quartet commission for the Avalon, Lydian, and Pacifica Quartets. His sextet Brion, previously commissioned by the Barlow Endowment, was a Finalist for the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in Music. Other support for his work includes the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In the midst of his musical education – at Amherst College, Cambridge University, and the Yale School of Music – he attended Columbia Law School and practiced law for several years. While still in school he organized the ensemble Sequitur, and he remains its co-Artistic Director. www.haroldmeltzer.com
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Paul Hostetter, Conductor
Two Songs from Silas Marner
Texts by George Eliot (1819-1880)

4 I. At Night Came His Revelry

The livelong day he sat in his loom, his ear filled with its monotony, his eyes bent down on the slow growth of sameness in the brownish web, his muscles moving with such even repetition that their pause seemed almost as much a constraint as the holding of one’s breath. But at night came his revelry: at night he closed his shutters, and made fast his doors, and drew out his good… He loved the guineas best, but he would not change the silver… he loved them all. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them; then he counted them and set them up in regular piles… and thought fondly of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end quite hidden by countless days of weaving.

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… to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold — his own gold — brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! His heart began to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to grow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched out his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls… It was a sleeping child — a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head.

Exiles

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Bring water with you if you come to live here—
Cold tinkling cisterns, or else wells so deep
That one looks down to Ganges or Himalayas.
Yes, and bring mountains with you, white, moon-bearing,
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Profundities and peaks of wet and cold.

Bring also, in a cage of wire or osier,
Birds of a golden colour, who will sing
Of leaves that do now wither, watery fruits
That heavily hang on long melodious boughs
In the blue-silver forests of deep valleys.

I have now been here—how many years? Years unnumbered.
My hands grow clawlike. My eyes are large and starved.
I brought no bird with me, I have no cistern
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Some day, for lack of these, I’ll spin a web
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Face downward, like a spider, blown as lightly
As ghost of leaf. Crows will caw about me.
Morning and evening I shall drink the dew.

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Yet love endures, though starving and alone.
A dove’s wings cling about my heart each night
With surging gentleness, and the blue stone
Set in the tryst-ring has but worn more bright.
The works on this disc are representative of Harold Meltzer’s unique sensibility, profound imagination and inquisitive musical mind, quickened both by the things of the world and by a wide range of music, including the works of Franco Donatoni and the Stravinsky of Agon. *Brion* was praised by the 2009 Pulitzer Prize jury as ‘a graceful, sensual and contemplative experience’, the ‘inexorable emotional power’ of *Two Songs from Silas Marner* impressed *The New York Times*, *The Oxford Times* described *Sindbad* as ‘a startling and deeply interesting modern work’, while *The Boston Globe* declared that ‘*Exiles* goes immediately onto this year’s must-hear-again list.’