



GLOBAL FLUTESCAPE
PREMIERES AND RARE GEMS

Jan Vinci, *flute*

Hugh Sung, *piano*

Mark Vinci, *alto saxophone*

Jennifer Higdon, *flute*

Through the years, every now and then, a classical musician will discover an exceptional piece. When played, it creates a special connection between its musical sound and one's heart. As these compositions are encountered we must embrace them and frequently perform them... for the sake of our listeners and, just as important, for the sake of our own artistic well-being. My hope is that this eclectic program of premieres and rare gems will exude passion, create intrigue and fascinate both audiences and performers.

German composer, organist and educator Heinz Benker (1921-2000) is not well known in the flute world. But his almost-never-played *Der Abreiss - Kalender: Miniaturen Suite for Flöte and Klavier* (1955) is a delightful composite of spritful and melodious portraits depicting the days of the week. The compositional influences of this suite hail from the jazz world and, apparently, from the German composer Paul Hindemith, who believed that divergent styles of the early 20th century should converge from a foundation of tonality. The "Tear-Away Calendar" suite incorporates an array of emotions that one may experience throughout a week — presenting motives with major and minor thirds, which represent moods of joy and exuberance versus sadness and gloom. As days are cyclical in order, so is Benker's suite — as it ends with a recapitulation of the first movement, which represents the optimism of the first day of each week.

During my early college days, Judith Bentley and Harvey Sollberger unveiled a jewel to me that continues to possess a special place in my heart — *MEI* (1962) by Kazuo Fukushima (b.1930). "Mei" means the obscure, pale and intangible. According to ancient Japanese legend the sound of the flute can reach those who have passed on. *MEI* was written to comfort the soul of Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke of

An important figure in the revival of English music in the 20th century, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) often composed music that depicted his personal conflict with traditional religious beliefs and a more visionary spirituality. Although he was devoted to incorporating traditional English music into his own compositions, Vaughan Williams did study in Germany with Bruch and in Paris with Ravel. Discovered after his death, *Suite de Ballet* for flute and piano (ca. 1924) is an example of his tendency to write in a simple lyrical style, with a touch of modality.

French composer Rhené-Baton (1879-1940) conducted the Opéra Comique in Paris, the Padeloup Concerts and the Diaghilev Ballet in London. A composer of chamber, orchestral, and vocal works, his *Passacaille, Opus 35* for flute and piano (1924) is a beautiful romantic idyll with an energetic rhythmic interlude.

At the time of this recording my husband Mark Vinci (b.1960) and I were about to celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2006. Hence, I was so happy when he agreed to accept a commission to write a piece for us! Mark writes this:

"My duo *When I See You* is a musical reflection on the instant attraction and life long bonding that occurred when Jan and I met when I was 17. The first movement reflects different stages of our life together from going on the road to Jan's masters and doctoral studies in Cleveland and New York. No matter what was to befall us, we did it together!! I take off like a shot in the second movement and land on some common ground for Jan to join me — she follows suit and we're off!"

In east Tennessee, I taught Jennifer Higdon (b.1962) flute lessons when she was a high school student and I was back home earning money between two of my college degree programs. In 1990 the now prominent classical composer wrote *Lullaby for soprano, flute and piano*. In this recording of her own two-flute and piano version, my dear friend joins me, playing the first flute part (the original soprano line). Here are Jennifer's notes on the piece:

"In terms of the piece itself...it's a Lullaby written for the birth of Karen and Marty Claussen's first child, Samantha. I was classmates with Karen at BGSU and we're good friends. ...anyway...it's sort of a simple premise to a piece, but in today's world of complications, I like simplicity!"

Sonatina for flute and piano (March 1920) by American naturalized citizen Vittorio Rieti (1898-1994) reveals the composer's success in writing effective programmatic music, a style that depicts specific emotions or certain events or scenes. In fact he wrote ballet music for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which was choreographed by the great Balanchine. Although the movements of the *Sonatina* are very brief, their emotional impact is remarkably powerful.

—Notes by Jan Vinci

a decade, Ms. Vinci has directed and taught master classes at the Skidmore Summer Flute Institute and has presented the Skidmore Flute Festival. She served as President of the New York Flute Club. Ms. Vinci holds a D.M.A. from The Juilliard School, an M.M. from Cleveland Institute of Music and a B.M. from Bowling Green State University. Her primary teachers include Julius Baker, Samuel Baron, Maurice Sharp, Judith Bentley and Martha Aarons. (janvinci.com)



Hugh Sung

Pianist Hugh Sung debuted with The Philadelphia Orchestra at the age of 11 and has performed throughout the United States, England, Canada, Central America, South America, Japan, and Korea, and venues including Carnegie Hall, Weill Hall, Wigmore Hall, The National Gallery of Art, and The Ravinia Festival. His concerto engagements include performances with the Concerto Soloists Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, annual appearances with the Masterworks Festival Orchestras since 1998, and extensive tours with the South Jersey Symphony Orchestra. He has collaborated with The American Quartet, the Diaz Trio, Jeffrey Khaner, Julius Baker, Hilary Hahn, Leila Josefowicz, composers Jennifer Higdon, Robert Maggio, Harold Boatrie, and violinist Aaron Rosand, with whom he has recorded extensively under the Biddulph and Vox labels. He can also be heard under the I Virtuosi, CRI, and Avie labels. As a student at the Curtis Institute of Music, his principal teachers included Eleanor Sokoloff, Jorge Bolet, and Seymour Lipkin, along with Karen Tuttle and Felix Galimir for chamber music. In 1993, Sung joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music. Sung maintains an active website (www.HughSung.com)

Nations. As an educator, Mark Vinci is on the faculty of Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York and has taught clinics and residencies at colleges and high schools throughout the USA, Denmark, Ibiza and, with support from the US Embassy, the Czech Republic. (markvinci.com)



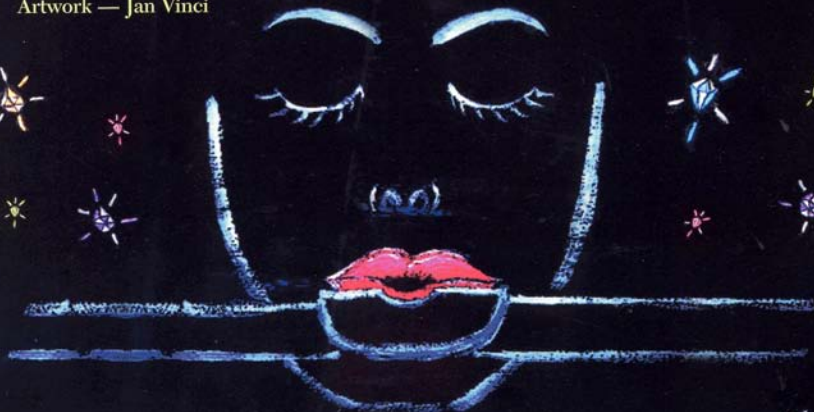
Jennifer Higdon

Jennifer Higdon (b. Brooklyn, NY, December 31, 1962) maintains a full schedule of commissions and her music is known for its technical skill and audience appeal. Hailed by *The Washington Post* as “a savvy, sensitive composer with a keen ear, an innate sense of form and a generous dash of pure esprit,” she is one of America’s most frequently performed composers. Her works have been recorded on over two dozen CDs. In 2004, the Atlanta Symphony released the Grammy-winning *Higdon: Concerto for Orchestra/City Scape*. In fall of 2006, NAXOS released a recording of Higdon’s chamber works (performed by the Cypress String Quartet). At the same time, Cedille released a recording of *Zaka*, performed by eighth blackbird, and Crystal Records released a recording of *DASH*, performed by the Verdehr Trio. Higdon enjoys more than 200 performances a year of her works. Her work *blue cathedral* is one of the most-performed orchestral works by a living composer (100 orchestras have performed the work since its 2000 premiere). She teaches composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. (jenniferhigdon.com)

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