

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### In Gratitude

Susan Nowicki

American Academy of Arts and Letters:

Award in Music

Temple University: Dean Robert Stroker,

Arts & Humanities Grant,

Grant-in-Aid Award, Dean's Grant

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society

Network for New Music and Linda Reichert  
artistic director

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia and

Alan Harler conductor

Temple University Concert Choir and

Paul Rardin conductor

Ensemble Échappé

Clarosa Quartet

Peter Burwasser

Andreas Meyer

### Recordings

Producer: Andreas Meyer, Meyer Media LLC

*Quartet* recorded July 5, 2017, Rock Hall, Temple

University; Recording Engineer: Andreas Meyer;

Assistant Engineer: Rebekah Wineman

*Two Elegies* and *Lute Music* recorded

December 2, 2018, Temple Performing Arts

Center, Temple University; Recording

Engineer: Andreas K. Meyer; Assistant

Engineer: Rebekah Wineman

Recording engineer: Andreas Meyer,

Meyer Media LLC

*Catching Light* recorded March 23, 2018,

Oktaven Studio, Mount Vernon, NY

Recording engineer: Ryan Streber

Photo of Jan Krzywicki by Joanna Morissey

*Catching Light*, *Quartet*, and *Lute Music*

published by Theodore Presser. *Two Elegies*

is available from the composer.

# Catching Light

CHAMBER MUSIC BY JAN KRZYWICKI

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Like many contemporary composers, Jan Krzywicki wears many hats. He is an esteemed professor of music theory at Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance, and, in what is his most public position, he is the conductor of the preeminent new music ensemble in the Philadelphia region, Network for New Music. It was on the occasion of that organization's twenty-fifth anniversary in 2010 that twenty-five prominent American composers were commissioned to compose variations on the Anton Diabelli waltz that fired Beethoven's imagination. Krzywicki was tasked with reviewing and ordering the submissions, and most significantly, composing his own variation to act as a coda. It was his brief work that most dazzled the audience, including his fellow composers, by pulling together the entire set, reflecting material from every other variation. It is constructed with exquisite concision and jewel-like precision as well as emotional stealth; the work is quintessential Krzywicki.

This new collection of his music similarly radiates a virtuosic craft and flowing lyricism that emphasizes the blending of color shading in instrumental and vocal timbres, and the illusion of light in music. Krzywicki's gift for merging tautly conceived timbres is particularly evident in his instrumental chamber music, including *Catching Light* and *Quartet*, as heard here.

As the American Academy of Arts & Letters stated in its 2017 citation of the composer's work, *Catching Light* is "...strikingly colorful, and tightly woven in ways that are at once novel and familiar... a fascinating succession of glittery and mercurial textures that belies a tightly unfolding form and a rhetoric that is both traditional and original." The *Quartet*, meanwhile, is similarly constructed in covering a wider range of emotions in its four movements, leading the Academy to state: "His music bespeaks the heart of a true Romantic."

These same concerns can also be heard in the subtle shifts of harmony and vocal parts in the a cappella music of *Two Elegies*. And lastly, all of these instincts come together in the wonderful *Lute Music*, with its alluring combination of voices, strings and keyboards. Like *Catching Light* and *Quartet*, the music is launched with delicate, rising arpeggios, lending the music a sense of warmth and even optimism. While the music can also be fierce, passionate, and brooding, this is music of a genial and humanistic artistic personality. It is an extremely welcome, and all too rare voice that is a true salve in our anxious times.

—Peter Burwasser

## THE COMPOSER



Jan Krzywicki (b. 1948) is active as a composer, conductor and educator. As a composer he has been commissioned by prestigious performers, and organizations such as the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the Chestnut Brass Company, Network for New Music, and performed across the United States by ensembles such as the Colorado Quartet, Network for New Music, Pennsylvania Ballet, Portland Symphony Orchestra, Alea III, and others. His works have been heard at conferences of the College Music Society, the Society of Composers, and on national public radio. He has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, ASCAP, Meet the Composer, and a Pew Fellowship in the Arts. Krzywicki has been a resident at the Rockefeller Foundation (Bellagio, Italy), at the Bogliasco Foundation (Bogliasco, Italy), and has been a Fellow at the MacDowell, Yaddo, Millay and Virginia Center for the Creative Arts colonies. His work is published by Alphonse Leduc & Cie, Theodore Presser Co., Tenuto Publications, Lyra Music Company, and Heilman Music, and can be heard on Capstone Records, Albany Records, North-South Recordings and De Haske Records. As a conductor he has led chamber and orchestral groups in literature from the middle ages to the present, including a large number of premieres. Since 1990 he has been conductor of the contemporary ensemble Network for New Music. Krzywicki is a professor of music theory at Temple University where he teaches music theory, composition, and conducts the New Music Ensemble.

## THE MUSIC

*Catching Light* for flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano and percussion

*Catching Light* was commissioned for the 30th anniversary season of Network for New Music, an ensemble that I have conducted since shortly after its inception.

I was asked to contribute a work that would, in some way, be about light, for a concert entitled *The Heart of Light and Dark*. From among the great variety of ways that attributes of physical light are described in the English language, I chose three: flickering (burning unsteadily or fitfully), shimmering (shining with a reflected or subdued, tremulous light), and burning. These types of light were not, however, taken literally but rather as stimulating points of departure. Since there is considerable overlap in these types of light, there is also much musical overlap between the movements, all sharing the same DNA, especially so in the first and third (which follows without pause).

The fifteen-minute work was premiered by Network for New Music on April 19, 2015 in Philadelphia at the Curtis Institute of Music, Gould Hall, the composer conducting, and was subsequently revised in 2017. I am very grateful to Linda Reichert, artistic director of Network, for her support over the years.

*Two Elegies* for unaccompanied chorus

Composed 15 years apart, the *Two Elegies* contemplate death from different vantage points. In the e. e. cummings poem *When God Lets My Body Be*, the speaker sees death as the return of his/her body to the natural world, as an accepting afterlife communion with Nature. Composed in memory of my mother, the work was commissioned by Confluence, Allison Olsson director, and premiered in 2013.

In *Come to Me* (1998), a setting of Christina Rossetti's famous poem *Echo*, the speaker yearns to reach beyond death to his/her departed love through memories and dreams. The work was first performed by the Temple University Concert Choir in 1999 under the direction of Alan Harler.

**I. When God Lets My Body Be** (e. e. cummings)

when god lets my body be

From each brave eye shall sprout a tree  
fruit that dangles therefrom

the purpled world will dance upon  
Between my lips which did sing

a rose shall beget the spring  
that maidens whom passion wastes

will lay between their little breasts  
My strong fingers beneath the snow

Into strenuous birds shall go  
my love walking in the grass

their wings will touch with her face  
and all the while shall my heart be

With the bulge and nuzzle of the sea

**II. Echo** (Christina Rosetti)

Come to me in the silence of the night;  
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;  
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright  
As sunlight on a stream;  
Come back in tears,  
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,  
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,  
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;  
Where thirsting longing eyes  
Watch the slow door  
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live  
My very life again though cold in death:  
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give  
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:  
Speak low, lean low  
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

*Quartet for violin, viola, violoncello and piano*

*Quartet for piano and strings* was composed for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season and was premiered on May 15, 2016 by the Clarosa Quartet. The opening Scherzo, a playful yet restlessly serious movement that gains in weight, is followed by a Pastorale that was inspired by the quiet and majesty of Yellowstone Park in winter. The ensuing Toccata, in effect a second scherzo, is a whirlwind of driving, biting motion that proceeds without pause to a Fantasia which reworks materials from the preceding three movements, bringing the work to a reckoning and resolution.

Throughout the work the pianist is called upon to produce various sounds inside the instrument: “stopped” notes (a note muted with a finger that produces a blocked or *pizzicato*-like sound), plucked notes (with finger or plectrum), and notes strummed in a *glissando*-like manner.

*Lute Music* for chorus, string quartet, harp, and piano/celesta

The text and title of this work are taken from a two-stanza poem by Kenneth Rexroth.

In the first stanza (not set in the piece) the ephemeral nature of our existence is noted, while in the second stanza we are invited "... at the feast of birth," to bring the gifts of love to each other, to "celebrate the daily, recurrent nativity of love, The endless epiphany of our fluent selves... while the earth rolls away .... into untraveled spaces of the stars." At the mention of the word "stars," fragments of six Christmas Gregorian chants are heard as a kind of musical firmament above the steady rhythms below—the earth that "rolls away under us."

*Lute Music* was commissioned by The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Alan Harler, music director, for its December 1995 holiday program. The work was revised in 2011 and performed on a Philadelphia Chamber Society concert, a collaboration between the Mendelssohn Club and Network for New Music, conducted by the composer.

**Lute Music** (Kenneth Rexroth)

The earth will be going on a long time  
Before it finally freezes;  
Men will be on it; they will take names,  
Give their deeds reasons.  
We will be here only  
As chemical constituents—  
A small franchise indeed.  
Right now we have lives,  
Corpuscles, ambitions, caresses,  
Like everybody had once—  
All the bright neige d'antan people,  
"Blithe Helen, white lope, and the rest"  
All the uneasy, remembered dead.

Here at the year's end, at the feast  
Of birth, let us bring to each other  
The gifts brought once west through deserts—  
The precious metal of our mingled hair,  
The frankincense of enraptured arms and legs,  
The myrrh of desperate, invincible kisses—  
Let us celebrate the daily  
Recurrent nativity of love,  
The endless epiphany of our fluent selves,  
While the earth rolls away under us  
Into unknown snows and summers  
Into untraveled spaces of the stars.

The Collected Shorter Poems of Kenneth Rexroth. Copyright 1966 by Kenneth Rexroth.  
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THE PERFORMERS

Based in New York City, **Ensemble Échappé** [EÉ] is a versatile group of soloists dedicated to presenting an eclectic spectrum of 20th and 21st century music. Undefined by genre or style, EÉ is a sinfonietta that consists of 20 core members who are distinguished not only as exceptional instrumentalists, but as visionaries, sculpting the future of new music. Conducted by new music champion, Jeffrey Milarsky, the musicians of EÉ are bound together by their desire to explore diverse sonic palettes. EÉ is promoting a dialogue between performers and living composers, while also showcasing the masterworks of the American and European canons.

Two chamber-music couples founded the Philadelphia based **Clarosa Quartet**: violinist Juliette Kang, First Associate Concert Master of the Philadelphia Orchestra and her husband

Tom Kraines, cellist of the Daedalus Quartet, along with Avery Fisher Career Grant winning pianist Natalie Zhu and her husband Che-Hung Chen, violist in the Philadelphia Orchestra. Of its debut concert the Philadelphia Inquirer had this to say: “The Brahms was beautifully pulled together and, by the second movement, truly rocked, with a combination of easy cohesion and unfettered, expressive freedom. The four members are all strong musical personalities.”

**Temple University Concert Choir** has been praised for its “professional musicianship,” “great skill and glowing voices” and for its excellence and versatility. The ensemble has performed at various conventions and conferences, and recorded Bernstein’s MASS with the Philadelphia Orchestra for Deutsche Grammophon, released 2018.

**Paul Rardin** is Chair of Vocal Arts and Elaine Brown Chair of Choral Music at Temple University, where he conducts the Concert Choir, teaches graduate conducting, and oversees the seven-choir program at Temple’s Boyer College of Music and Dance. He is also Artistic Director of Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia and a much sought after guest conductor.

**Susan Nowicki**, pianist, is a faculty member of the Curtis Institute of Music where she coaches for the Vocal Studies Department. She has performed with Network for New Music, Philadelphia Orchestra members, has recorded extensively, and is an instructor/clinician for The Well Balanced Pianist programs ([wellbalancedpianist.com](http://wellbalancedpianist.com)).

**Maryanne Meyer** is an active orchestra harpist, chamber musician, and solo recitalist. She performs regularly as substitute harpist with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Delaware Symphony and is second harpist with the Baltimore Symphony. Committed to pedagogy, Maryanne manages a flourishing private teaching studio.

**Jasper Quartet**, winner of the prestigious CMA Cleveland Quartet Award, is the Professional Quartet in Residence at Temple University’s Center for Gifted Young Musicians. They are known for commissioning and recording new works and for their “outstanding and imaginative programming for children and youth in the United States” with a 2016 Educator Award from the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Association.

#### **Temple University Concert Choir**

SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Natalia Bellini	Shannon Arnold	Samuel Czerski	Eric Braceland
Rachel Bloemker	Julia Bokunewicz	Cory Davis	Kyle Dunn
Gillian Booth	Elana Carrera	Vrushabh Doshi	Forrest Glass
Rachael Choplick	Payton Coleman	Dylan Harrington	Kreg Godfrey
Madelaine Dijs	Katerina Lanfsang	Robert Johnson, Jr.	Shafiq Hicks
Allison Leete	Victoria Nance	Joseph Pace	Steven Hoffman
Alyson Massa	Madison Sterner	Alejandro Ramos	Arthur Newman
Emma Storm	Jing Yi Sun	Alessandro Siravo	Sebastian Santiago-
Megnot Toggia	Syrena Torres	Nicholas Van Meter	Rivas
Jenna Weitman		Jay Wade	Trevor Tran
Merrill Woodruff		Thomas Yoe	Ralph Voit
			Ethan Wolfe