

PRAYERS

My friend Steve Freedman notices, "Though what we pray for is very human, the way we pray is very primate". The two are indissolubly bound together and while we like to think that we are "above" in our lofty aspirations, our passions and intentions are firmly rooted in our evolutionary heritage. Having angelic visions, does not stop us from being primate, having a hairy heart, though, does not stop us from having lofty ideals.

Prayer then, in my mind, is a passionate intention of mind and body towards some kind of future vision. It is a flight and a dream, and an effort of the self-determining spirit. This act of self-determination produces a set of principles or rules that the future will be based upon. In its prophetic role, art is very much concerned with creating aesthetic habitats for the transforming human in us. In this sense, every work of art is a kind of a prayer—a determining gesture of the living spirit, an attempt at discovering and structuring a world.

The title piece *PRAYERS* for two guitars and string orchestra was commissioned by the 2005 Jeunesse musicale international competition in Belgrade. As Picasso expressed it in his direct, inimitable way: "How can you make religious art one day and another kind the next?", there is a schism in the very act of labelling something "religious art"¹. Without circumscribing a particular space or time to being sacred, every place and every time become sacred provided the right inspiration is found. Prayers should be conceived then as a musical intention to mirror and awaken this inspiration.

Pianist Peggy Salkind commissioned *CANTILENA AND FANTASIA*, a work for piano solo, in San Francisco in 1995. Though the piece is based on imitative counterpoint technique of the Renaissance *ricercare* (or *fantasia*) form, the free-flowing melismatic lines are very improvisational in nature and follow a loosely defined Levantine style of melody and harmony. The piece ends on the flashback of the theme from the first movement.

¹ Penrose, Roland, Picasso: Life and Work, London, Gollancz, 1958, p. 323

Four movements from my *SIX ILLUMINATIONS* for piano, originally written for Brazilian pianist Fabio Luz, are represented here. The languages of these pieces are somewhat disparate; they are primarily mode-based and include rhythmic profile derived from Balkan and African folk idioms that are highly stylized in this music. As most of my compositions, this piece is an effort at exploring musical synthesis and integration. Lacking other markers, *Illuminations* could be best described as musical discoveries: microcosms that one chances upon during the course of composing and brings to light.

This is what the composer Hooshyar Khayam says about his piece: *Moonness* is a collection of eight *ghazals* (sonnets) for voice and piano, three of which appear in this album.

These *ghazals* portray the essence of historical music of *Magham* in Iran, with connotations to the pre-existing melodic patterns, and with variety of lyrics from Rumi, Hafiz, and Nizami. *Leilie-o Majnoon* is a composition in *Avaz-e Homayoun*, with lyrics from Nizami Ganjavi (12th-century), with a closed structure in full quatrain, containing four stanzas, each two paired together as one *Beit*. *Moonness* is a non-sensical scattering melody, close to the Persian/Hindi classical vocal genre of *Tarana*, and so it uses a more fluid and flexible form, with one main melody being ornamented differently in each repetition. The piece ends in multi layered vocal recording. *Kord-e Bayat* is a specific *Avaz* in *Shur*, with its contemplative and mystical characteristics. This piece borrows a line from Rumi's (13th-century) love poem: *Do not look down to me/ If I am but Dust/ In the Alley of Love*.

Two *PSALMS* appear here: one composed for pianist/composer Milcho Leviev, and the other, written for guitarist/lutenist Bor Zuljan. Though they appear side by side here, they are in very different forms and styles. The psalm written for guitar/vihuela is a very pastoral, meditative piece based on reiterative pattern around which three melodies interweave creating a transparent contrapuntal texture. Though Psalm for piano solo is in a more obvious jazz idiom, it shares much with the rest of the pieces on this recording. It was written for Milcho Leviev who premiered

it at the Appolonia festival in Bulgaria in 2011. The piece is strongly influenced by Milcho's compositional style, which brought some of the earliest and most original renditions of Balkan folk idiom to jazz.

The title of the piece *Over the Face of the Waters* for piano, four hands is a well-known quote from Genesis (in Hebrew: Al Pnei Ha'Mayim). It is a poetic conceptualisation of the overwhelming power of the creative energy of nature expressed through musical turbulence. The architecture is based on a reiterative ostinato figure in the bass, which I have used here as a structural device of dynamic propulsion and amplification. The piece was premiered at the Guitart festival in Belgrade in 2009.

Vasko Popa, who has always been my favorite Serbian poet, wrote *The Little Box* (Mala Kutija, in Serbian) in 1970. Similar to Russian «babuska» dolls or sets of Chinese boxes, Popa's little boxes grow one out of the other, extending into eternity.

Just as Popa's box created its own personal universe, the language of my composition created a whole series of musical realities: lyrical (*Sing, little box*), advertising-commercial (*The little box works for you*), warring (*The victims of the little box*), peace-loving (*We'll return the little box/ Into the arms/Of her inconspicuously honest properties*), allegorically-cosmic (*Let's see you find the world now*). The cycle was written for trio Aneta Ilic, voice, Stana Krstajic, flute and Natalija Mladenovic, piano. In this version, I am playing the "guitar obligato".

The last piece on this recording, *A LITTLE PRAYER* is a statement of the same kind as the initial *Prayers*, though more modest in scope and instrumentation. It was composed for Nadezda Kolundzija's project of *New Waltzes for Piano* and *Toy Pianos*, which she premiered at the Kennedy Center, New York, in 2006. Viewed from the perspective of what prayer means to me, there was no reason why I couldn't conceive of a waltz as its possible container.

Dusan Bogdanovic, December 2011, Geneva, Switzerland

BIO



Described as "a composer of masterful craft with a genuine clarity and purity of vision" (Guitar Review), DUSAN BOGDANOVIC has developed a personal synthesis of contemporary classical, jazz and ethnic music. As a soloist and in collaboration with other artists, Bogdanovic has toured extensively throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. His performing and recording activities include work with chamber groups of diverse stylistic orientations including The Falla Guitar Trio and jazz collaborations with James Newton, Milcho Leviev, Charlie Haden, Mark Nauseef, Anthony Cox and others. He has over one hundred published compositions ranging from guitar and piano solo works to chamber and orchestral

ensembles (Berben, GSP, Éditions Doberman et al.), as well as close to twenty recordings ranging from Bach Trio Sonatas to contemporary works (Intuition, GSP, Éditions Doberman, M.A. Recordings et al.).

Among his most notable works are a ballet-poeme *Crow*, premiered by the Pacific Dance Company at the Los Angeles Theater Center; *Sevdalinka*, written for the Newman-Oltman Guitar Duo with the Turtle Island Quartet, premiered at Merkin Hall, New York; *Kaleidoscope* concerto for guitar and chamber orchestra, written for William Kanengiser and premiered in Montreal; *Prayers* for two guitars and string orchestra, commissioned by Jeunesse Musicales and premiered in Belgrade; a mix media piece *To Where Does The One Return*, for sixteen ceramic gongs in collaboration with sculptor Stephen Freedman, premiered in Hilo, Hawaii, as well as works written for pianist Fabio Luz and numerous solo guitar compositions written for William Kanengiser, Scott Tennant, Eduardo Isaac, Edin Karamazov and others.

Bogdanovic was born in Yugoslavia in 1955. He completed his studies of composition and orchestration at the Geneva Conservatory with P. Wissmer and in

guitar performance with M. L. São Marcos. Early in his career, he received the only First Prize at the Geneva Competition and gave a highly acclaimed debut recital in Carnegie Hall in 1977. After having taught at the Belgrade Academy and San Francisco Conservatory (1990-2007), he is presently engaged by the Haute Ecole de Musique de Genève. His theoretical work for guitar, at Berben Editions, includes *Polyrhythmic and Polymetric Studies*, as well as a bilingual publication covering three-voice counterpoint and improvisation in the Renaissance style. His latest book *Ex Ovo* is a collection of essays for composers and improvisers published by *Les Éditions Doberman-YPPAN*.

Born in 1951 in Pasadena, California, DONALD CROCKETT is dedicated to composing music inspired by the musicians who perform it. He has received commissions from the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (Composer-in-Residence 1991-97), Pasadena Chamber Orchestra (Composer-in-Residence 1984-86), Kronos Quartet, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Hilliard Ensemble, Stanford String Quartet, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Charlotte Symphony, Music from Angel Fire, the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East (Senior Composer-in-Residence 2002 -), Pacific Serenades and the California EAR Unit, among many others. His music is published by Keiser Classical and Doberman/Yppan, and recorded on the Albany, CRI, ECM, Laurel, Orion and Pro Arte/Fanfare labels.

Also active as a conductor of new music, Donald Crockett has presented many world, national and regional premières. His recordings as a conductor can be found on the Albany, ECM, New World, and CRI labels. He is currently Professor and Chair of the Composition Department and Director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at Thornton, and Senior Composer-in-Residence with the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East.

Trio *DONNE DI BELGRADO*, which includes Aneta Ilić, soprano, Stana Krstajić, flute, and Natalija Mladenović, piano, was created in the year 2000. Their repertoire includes all stylistic genres from baroque to contemporary music. Ever since the beginning of their collaboration, Donne have encouraged and inspired composers to write for their unusual ensemble, thus enriching Serbian as well as the world music heritage with exceptional new works.

With great dedication and love *Donne di Belgrado* have presented pieces written by Serbian composers in their performances in Serbia, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, France and Denmark.

BRJAN HEAD, assistant dean for curriculum, associate professor of practice, and director of undergraduate music theory, classical guitar and composition at USC Thornton School of Music, was voted Outstanding Thornton School Graduate of 1991.

Head was chosen in 1999 as the USC Gamma Sigma Alpha Professor of the Year. He is sought after as an ensemble guitarist performing in numerous chamber and symphonic groups including XTET, Ten-String Music and the New World Symphony. His compositions are published by Alfred Music and Guitar Solo Publications, and have been recorded on Delos, Denon, Digital Revolution, GSP Recordings and Massax Productions. His music has been performed throughout the U.S. in venues including Merkin Hall in New York, the Ambassador Auditorium in Los Angeles and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, as well as abroad in Tokyo, Madrid, Sao Paulo, and Dubai.

He currently teaches on the faculty of his alma mater, the USC Thornton School of Music.

Recognized as one of America's most brilliant guitarists, WILLIAM KANENGISER has developed a unique repertoire for his instrument, ranging from dazzling arrangements of Mozart, Handel, and Bartók to his innovative excursions into the music of Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Praised by the Los Angeles Times for his "dizzying execution" and "exceeding vitality and warmth," Mr. Kanengiser has performed in recital and as guest soloist with orchestras in virtually every major American city, ranging from New York City's Carnegie Hall to San Francisco's Herbst Theater, as well as throughout Canada, Europe, and Asia.

As a founding member of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, William Kanengiser tours extensively throughout North America, Asia, and Europe, and has recorded for the GHA, Delos, and Sony Classical labels. Their Telarc recording LAGQ's Guitar Heros won a Grammy for Best Classical Crossover Album of 2004.

Mr. Kanengiser won First Prize of the 1987 Concert Artists Guild Competition as well as major international competitions in Toronto (1981) and Paris (1983). The recipient of two Solo Recitalist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, he was also chosen as one of Musical America's Outstanding Young Artists. A member of the guitar faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles since 1983, he has given master classes at conservatories and guitar festivals around the world.

HOOSHYAR KHAYAM (b. 1978) is considered as one of the most versatile musicians among the new generation of composer-performers in Iran. He is equally active as a classical pianist, composer and improviser in the realm of world music. His music has been performed by such artists as Hossein Alizadeh, Massoud Shaari, Amir Eslami, Aram Talalyan, Artur Avanesov, Wayne Foster-Smith, and Stephen Prutsman. His works include music for solo piano (Fourth Sonata, 2009), large symphonic ensembles (Piano Concerto, 2003), string orchestra (Concerto for Cello and String Orchestra, 2009) to improvisational genres (All Of You, Hermes Records 2010), vocal works (Delbar 2010), music for film (Those Days, Dir. Pooya Aryanpour 2010) music for theater (Ivanov, Dir. Amir Reza Koohestani, 2011) and arrangements and revisions of traditional music of Iran.

His debut album Tatari (Hermes Records, 2007) won the "Reader's Choice" prize of journal Music and Culture for the "Best National Album of The Year". He has been performed at Lincoln Center, University of Cambridge, University of London, and has held concerts in Moscow, Tbilisi, Kiev, Berlin, New York, Florence, Yerevan, and Tehran.

He is the best prize award winner of "Franz Schubert and Modern Music International Composition Competition 2011" for his trio I Waited for You in Rain. Khayam holds a doctoral degree in composition from the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, and is now working as visiting lecturer at Komitas State Conservatory of Music, Yerevan.

Belgrade-based NADA KOLUNDZIJA is an internationally renowned pianist and performer. A passionate promoter of contemporary music, Ms. Kolundzija has premiered major piano works of twentieth and twenty first century music, and commissioned and inspired the creation of significant new works by Serbian and international composers. In 2008, she initiated and organized the first International Festival of Electronic Polymedia Art, Electro-acoustic and Radio-phonetic Music festival in Belgrade, Art of Sounds, which presented more than forty works of composers from Australia, Canada, Europe, USA and Asia. She completed her graduate studies at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, where she studied with world-renown pianist Zoltan Kocsis.

Other international appearances include SoundaXis Festival (Canada), Festival of Performing Arts in the Celebration for H.M. the King's 60th Birthday (Bangkok, Thailand), Kiev Music Fest, (Kiev, Ukraine), Cervantino Festival (Guanajuato, Mexico), Temisoara Musicala (Temisara, Romania), PLANUM Festival, (Budapest, Hungary), Contrasts (Lviv, Ukraine) as well as China, India, Holland, Germany, Spain, Austria, Italy, Greece, France, and the United States. She is a tenured professor of contemporary piano music at the Belgrade Faculty of Music. And she is also the artistic director of Guarnerius Art Center, whose mission is to promote young artists and enrich the cultural life of Belgrade.

Born in Bulgaria, MILCHO LEVIEV graduated from the Bulgarian State Music Academy with a Masters Degree in composition. In the early '60s he was musical director for the State Drama Theater and the Bulgarian radio/television's big band.

In the '70s, he was a key member of the highly regarded Don Ellis Orchestra. His piano virtuosity and ability to play effortlessly in odd meters – a skill that arose from familiarity with Bulgarian folk music – were major contributions to the fruitful association with Ellis. Milcho worked with Willie Bobo, John Klemmer, Airto Moreira and Roy Haynes, and recorded with I. Subramaniam, Billy Cobham, and as the leader of a bop quartet that included Art Pepper.

In the early '80s, he worked with Manhattan Transfer, wrote arrangements for and recorded with Al Jarreau, and founded the famous jazz quartet Free Flight. One of Milcho Leviev's most impressive associations was formed with Dave Holland. This duo recorded the memorable album *The Oracle-Live* at Suntory Hall in Japan. He continues to work frequently with many all-star jazz musicians in Los Angeles and elsewhere, playing with Ray Pizzi, Ray Brown, Buddy Collette, Oscar Brashear, Jack Sheldon, Mundell Lowe, Dusan Bogdanovic, Billy Cobham et al.

In the '90s, he did numerous solo European tours, and in 1995 received an honorary doctorate and award on merit from the Paris Académie internationale des arts.

KATARINA RADOVANOVIĆ JEREMIĆ was born in Belgrade, Serbia. She graduated piano at the University of Music Arts in Belgrade with prof. Lidija Stanković and accomplished specialized studies for chamber music at the same university. She also attended post-graduate studies for chamber music at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria. Katarina Radovanović Jeremić is a prizewinner of many international and republic competitions including the Special First Prize for piano trio at the International Chamber Music Competition "Petar Konjović" held in Belgrade, 1998. She performed in Serbia, Austria and Croatia as a soloist and as a member of various chamber music ensembles.

Katarina Radovanović Jeremić is currently the Head of Chamber Music Department at the Faculty of philology and Arts in Kragujevac, Serbia.

TARA TIBA (b. 1984) is a rising vocal artist from Iran. She sings in various vocal styles containing traditional Radif, folk, Jazz, and fusion styles. She has collaborated with artists such as Sardar Sarmast (Persian-Jazz fusion) and Omid Asadi (Persian traditional). She has received thorough vocal training from Hengameh Akhavan, and has studied Western music with Amir Eslami and Hooshyar Khayam.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Art and Architecture University of Tehran.

BOR ZULJAN (1987) is active in different musical genres and searches for a synthesis of contemporary, early music, different world music traditions, jazz and improvisation. He is a multi-instrumentalist that besides guitar also plays vihuela, different kinds of lutes, as well as other early and traditional plucked-string instruments. The research for connection between sound, image and word led him to collaborate on different multimedia projects. He has premiered numerous works and performs internationally as a soloist, as well as a member of different ensembles.

After graduating in jazz and classical programs at Ljubljana High School of Music he continued his learning with Aniello Desiderio in Koblenz, Germany, and he recently finished his master studies at the HEM Genève with Jonathan Rubin (lute) and Dusan Bogdanovic (guitar), with whom he also performs in a duo. He is currently engaged as a research assistant at the Geneva Conservatory where he also continues a specialization in medieval music.