

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

James Zakoura

Reach Out Kansas, Inc.

Robert Walzel, Dean, University of Kansas School of Music

University of Kansas General Research Fund

Fred Ormand

EQUILIBRIUM



RECORDINGS

THE SOUL FOX

A SONG CYCLE BY LORI LAITMAN

WITH POETRY BY DAVID MASON



Julia Broxholm, *soprano*

Russell Miller, *piano*



There are many points of intersection in the composers represented on this recording. John Duke, Ned Rorem, Amy Beach, Lori Laitman and Eric Ewazen were all pianists. In fact, both Duke and Beach were acclaimed as concert pianists. To be a pianist was always Duke's ambition, and it surprised him greatly to find that he became a composer of songs. Amy Beach had a promising career as a pianist, a profession that she abandoned when she married Henry Beach. After his death, she returned to concertizing, with great success. For her also, the realm of song was not her primary focus - she viewed the composition of a song as a "special treat" after the exertion of composing a larger work. Duke, Theodore Chanler and Ned Rorem all studied with the renowned pianist and composer Nadia Boulanger. For a time, it seemed that almost every American composer of note spent some time as her student. It is remarkable that she influenced so many, all of whom benefited from her rigorous tutelage, and all of whom were set free to find their own compositional voice, as a result of exacting training. Chanler and Richard Hundley are known primarily for their songs. Chanler was a great admirer of Gabriel Fauré, and marveled "how much he could say with few notes." One can see this quality in some

of Chanler's most affecting short songs. In common with Lori Laitman, Richard Hundley is a gifted melodist. So many of his songs feature beautiful, arching vocal lines, as much a delight to hear as they are to sing. Rorem, Hundley and Laitman share acute literary sensibilities and the way they are drawn to the very best American poetry. Rorem and Laitman have also had success in larger forms, specifically opera.

This recording began as a celebration of the American song that my collaborator Russell Miller and I have loved and performed together for many years. Thanks to a generous commission from James Zakoura and Reach Out Kansas, Inc., it has also become a celebration of new music. When Jim proposed commissioning a new work for us, we immediately knew we would like to have a piece by Lori Laitman, whom we both admire enormously. And when Lori shared with us the wonderful poem "The Soul Fox" by David Mason, we knew this would be the heart of the song cycle. There has never been a more exciting time for American song, and we are so grateful to Jim and his foundation for making it possible to add another wonderful group of songs to the canon.

— Julia Broxholm

THE SOUL FOX (DAVID MASON)

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|------|
| 1 | 1. The Man Who Lied | 2:38 |
| 2 | 2. Sarong Song | 7:20 |
| 3 | 3. Aubade | 1:53 |
| 4 | 4. Night Song | 5:20 |
| 5 | 5. The Soul Fox | 3:11 |

Total: 20:22

FROM 3 BROWNING SONGS, OPUS 44

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|------|
| 6 | Ah, Love but a Day! | 3:22 |
|----------|---------------------|------|

THREE LYRICS OF EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------|------|
| 7 | I God's World | 3:21 |
| 8 | II Wraith | 4:25 |
| 9 | III Afternoon on a Hill | 1:56 |

Total: 9:42

A COLLECTION OF EPITAPHS AND ELEGIES

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------|------|
| 10 | Little Elegy (<i>Elinor Wylie</i>) | John Duke | 1:24 |
| 11 | On a Singing Girl (<i>Elinor Wylie</i>) | Ned Rorem | 1:17 |
| 12 | A Shepherd (<i>Walter de la Mare</i>) | Theodore Chanler | 1:04 |
| 13 | Mistress Hew (<i>Walter de la Mare</i>) | Theodore Chanler | 1:57 |
| 14 | A Midget (<i>Walter de la Mare</i>) | Theodore Chanler | 2:00 |
| 15 | Three Husbands (<i>Walter de la Mare</i>) | Theodore Chanler | 1:09 |
| 16 | Epitaph of a Young Girl (<i>tombstone</i>) | Richard Hundley | 1:58 |
| 17 | Isaac Greentree (<i>S. Palmer Epitaph Collection</i>) | Richard Hundley | 1:33 |
| 18 | The Astronomers (<i>tombstone</i>) | Richard Hundley | 1:59 |
| 19 | Little Elegy (<i>Elinor Wylie</i>) | Ned Rorem | 1:11 |

Total: 15:32

WOMEN'S VOICES

- | | | |
|-----------|--|------|
| 20 | 1. Now let no charitable hope (<i>Elinor Wylie</i>) | 2:04 |
| 21 | 2. A birthday (<i>Christina Georgina Rossetti</i>) | 1:37 |
| 22 | 3. To my dear and loving husband (<i>Anne Bradstreet</i>) | 2:21 |
| 23 | 4. To the ladies (<i>Mary Lee, Lady Chudleigh</i>) | 1:36 |
| 24 | 5. If ever hapless woman had a cause (<i>Mary Herbert</i>) | 3:03 |
| 25 | 6. We never said farewell (<i>Mary Coleridge</i>) | 2:37 |
| 26 | 7. The Stranger (<i>Adrienne Rich</i>) | 3:27 |
| 27 | 8. What Inn is this (<i>Emily Dickinson</i>) | 1:19 |
| 28 | 9. Defiled is my name (<i>Anne Boleyn</i>) | 1:27 |
| 29 | 10. Electrocutation (<i>Lola Ridge</i>) | 2:21 |
| 30 | 11. Smile, Death (<i>Charlotte Mew</i>) | 3:06 |

Total: 24:58

Total running time: 73:56

Tracks 1-5 recorded in Hatch Hall at the Eastman School of Music, December 20, 2013
 Tracks 6-30 recorded in Kilbourn Hall at the Eastman School of Music, July 5, 6, 7, 9, 2012

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THE SOUL FOX

A SONG CYCLE BY LORI LAITMAN WITH POETRY BY DAVID MASON

The Soul Fox was commissioned by Reach Out Kansas, Inc (ROKI) for soprano Julia Broxholm and pianist Russell Miller. After presenting several poetic possibilities for song cycles to Julia and Russell, we all agreed upon these five poems by my frequent collaborator, poet David Mason. I composed the music between March 3 and April 14, 2013.

Despite a long history of working with Dave, setting these particular poems was a unique experience. Dave had recently undergone a huge upheaval in his life and these autobiographical poems, written between April and November of 2011, reflect this. The five poems create a narrative that progresses from the pain of lying and the dissolution of Dave's marriage, to his happiness and subsequent marriage to poet Cally Conan-Davies (Chrissy Mason). Setting these poems for soprano (as opposed to a male voice) creates an extra layer of interest – and gives the singer a fabulous opportunity to truly become another character.

The cycle begins with *The Man Who Lied*. The restless piano accompaniment in 5/8 creates an atmosphere of one who is clearly not at ease. The poet meets his match in *Sarong Song*, and the leitmotif associated “*the woman in the blue sarong*” figures prominently in the rest of the cycle. Lilted and sexy in its musical gestures, the poems’ two voices alternate between the poet and his “siren.” *Aubade* is about the parting of two lovers at dawn. The sparse piano accompaniment reflects the loneliness of the parted lovers, but when reunited, the music incorporates both the sarong song leitmotif as well as a variation of the restless figuration from song 1. *Night Song* opens with the sarong song motif and then introduces a variation of another leitmotif from song 2 — that of the “windy dune.” Here the arpeggiated chords are slowed considerably to portray the atmosphere of a night breeze (punctuated by some dissonance, as the breeze floats in and out of the house). The gestures of the night breeze motif continue in the concluding song, *The Soul Fox*, and the cycle ends lyrically, with notes of hope and contentment.

— Lori Laitman

THE MAN WHO LIED

All his life he was touch and run,
word man turned by an inner eel
that shocked him hourly till he was numb.
What is a heart but something to steal?

Scab man, scar man, scolding himself,
making love but a troubled lover,
forgetting his soul on a kitchen shelf
to seek it daily, yearly, forever.

Giver, talker, crazy friend,
why all the running? When will it end?

SARONG SONG

The woman in the blue sarong
bade me believe in ships.
Come sail with me, the journey's long,
sang her alluring lips

that baited me in a net of words
and hauled me to her bed
at the top of the world where thieving birds
loved me till I bled.

I came from an underworld of snow,
she from a windy dune.
She dared to look for me below
the phases of the moon.

Come walk with me, the journey's joy,
she sang with her blue eyes.
Untie the sarong, my bonny boy,
and bare me to the skies.

AUBADE

For Christine Allinson
Unhoused, I am at home
and travel to my life
though it is not my own.

I turn another leaf,
return to you in love
under the starry roof

that fades in morning light.
The little words we say,
the words we try to write

together and apart,
re-animate the clay,
my heart beside your heart.

NIGHT SONG

The breeze around our bed
cooling the summer night
is looking, looking for you,
except it has no sight,

so it must feel my skin
and probe the sheet for yours
and wonder where you've gone,
and wander on its course.

I keep the door ajar
to let the blindness in,
and dream in its embrace
of you, your touch, your skin.

THE SOUL FOX

for Chrissy, 28 October 2011
My love, the fox is in the yard.
The snow will bear his print a while,
then melt and go, but we who saw
his way of finding out, his night
of seeking, know what we have seen
and are the better for it. Write.
Let the white page bear the mark,
then melt with joy upon the dark.

— David Mason



JULIA BROXHOLM

Soprano Julia Broxholm has a career that spans opera to Broadway, oratorio to vocal chamber music, and recitalist to recording artist. In recent years she has devoted herself to teaching while continuing to perform. As a recitalist she is well known for her performances of vocal literature by

American composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. She has worked with Steven Blier, and collaborates regularly with Russell Miller in art song and popular American song performances. With pianist Martin Katz and clarinetist Fred Ormand, she has recorded the major literature for soprano, clarinet, and piano. *Of Shepherds, Romance and Love* features music of the 19th century, and the more recently released *Transience* includes the song cycles *Ariel* by Ned Rorem, and *To Be Sung Upon the Water* by Dominick Argento as well as Toot Suite, a set of classic songs from the musical theater world. She is well known in this repertoire which includes much of the standard vocal chamber music for soprano with instruments. Composer John Harbison was effusive in his praise of her performance of his *Chorale Cantata*. In the May/June 2008 issue of *American Record Guide*, respected music critic Robert Moore wrote of her performance in *Transience*, "Julia Broxholm offers striking readings and displays impeccable vocal technique, marked by purity of tone, clarity of articulation, and effortless-sounding singing above the staff." A recent project has been a series of premiere performances of *Byna*, *Life Songs of a Southern Appalachian Woman of Cherokee Indian Descent*. Written for soprano, piano, oboe

and cello, *Byna* is the collaboration of North Carolina composer Rudy Davenport and playwright Delilah Elsen. The work received performances throughout the Appalachian mountain region.

Her former students are leading players on stages on Broadway, in Las Vegas, in national touring companies, and in Europe. Noted for her understanding of vocal technique and articulation of text, she is a sought after pedagogue. Her operatic roles have included Alice Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff*, the title role in Floyd's *Susannah*, Susanna in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Norina in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* and Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème*. She has also appeared in numerous musical theater roles, most recently in a production of Stephen Sondheim's *Follies* with Donna McKechnie and original Broadway cast members Marti Rolph, Virginia Sandifur, Kurt Peterson, and Harvey Evans, doing the featured number, "Broadway Baby". In oratorio she has been soloist in many of the major choral works: Handel's *Messiah*, *Saul*, *Solomon*, and *Israel in Egypt*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Bach's

St. John Passion and *St. Matthew Passion*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Fauré's *Requiem* and Poulenc's *Gloria*, as well as numerous smaller works. She was highly praised by the composer for her performance in Dave Brubeck's *La Fiesta de la Posada*. In the area of vocal chamber music she was a founding member of SATB, a vocal quartet specializing in vocal chamber music of the 19th and 20th centuries. Her performances with SATB have taken her from the Cayman Islands International Music Festival to Severance Hall in Cleveland, and Kilbourn Hall at Eastman School of Music. Her recordings include two releases with SATB; *Magic!* and *It's a Grand Night...Four Singing*. While in Michigan Broxholm was a regular artist appearing with Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra, Lansing Symphony Orchestra, and the Flint Symphony in repertoire from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* to programs featuring the music of George Gershwin. Dr. Broxholm received a D.M.A. in vocal performance from the University of Michigan where she was lauded for setting a new standard of excellence for performing musicians in the areas of research and performance.



RUSSELL MILLER

Praised by the *Santa Barbara News-Press* for his “innate sensitivity” and “impeccable understanding”, pianist Russell Miller has performed throughout the United States and abroad as a soloist and chamber musician. Concert tours have taken him to Korea and Hong Kong with tenor Robert White, and to the former Soviet Union with cellist Stephen Kates. With violist Donald McInnes, he has

recorded works of Hindemith and Loeffler on the Kleos label, and Schubert’s *Winterreise* with tenor Robert Swensen. Miller has also appeared in concert with Marilyn Horne, Susan Shafer, Jan Opalach, Julia Broxholm, Todd Graber and the vocal quartet SATB. He also served as rehearsal pianist for the Florentine Opera of Milwaukee in productions of Rossini’s *La cenerentola* and Verdi’s *Aida*

Currently Professor of Vocal Coaching and Repertoire and Chair of the Voice & Opera Department at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, Miller formerly taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music and has given master classes and adjudicated for song competitions at numerous schools throughout the US, notably the University of Kansas. In recent summers, he has coached at the the Vancouver International Song Institute and the Pine Mountain Music Festival. A native of Los Angeles, Miller studied at the University of Southern California with Gwendolyn Koldofsky and Brooks Smith, and later in New York, Ann Arbor and London with Martin Katz, Marshall Williamson, Margo Garrett, Louis Nagel and Graham Johnson.

LORI LAITMAN

Described by *Fanfare Magazine* as “one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers,” Lori Laitman has composed multiple operas and choral works, and over 250 songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets (including those who perished in the Holocaust). Her music is widely performed, internationally and throughout the United States, and has generated substantial critical acclaim. *The Journal of Singing* wrote “It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music.”

Opera Colorado presented the World Premiere of Laitman’s opera *The Scarlet Letter* in May 2016. Laura Claycomb, Dominic Armstrong and Malcolm MacKenzie starred in a production directed by Beth Greenberg and conducted by Ari Peltó. The libretto, based on the Hawthorne classic, is by Colorado’s former Poet Laureate, David Mason. Laitman and Mason also collaborated on *Vedem*, a Holocaust oratorio commissioned by Music of Remembrance, and are developing the opera *Ludlow*, based on Mason’s award-winning verse novel about the 1914 Colorado mining town disaster.

The Three Feathers, Laitman’s children’s opera with librettist Dana Gioia, is based on a Grimm’s fairy tale and was commissioned by the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech. The work premiered in conjunction with VA Tech, Opera Roanoke and the Blacksburg Children’s Chorale in Oct. 2015 in a production directed by Greenberg and conducted by Scott Williamson.

Laitman has received numerous prestigious commissions, including from Opera America, Opera Colorado, Washington Master Chorale, Wolfgang Holzmair and Music of Remembrance. Her 2015 commission from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra was for an orchestral piece to celebrate the BSO’s 100th anniversary. The work, entitled *Unsung*, will premiere in September 2016. Also in September 2016, Laitman and librettist Leah Lax, finalists for the 2018 Pellicciotti Opera Prize, will premiere the first scene of their opera *Uncovered*, based on Lax’s memoir *Uncovered: How I Left Hasidic Life and Finally Came Home*. Her latest commission is from the Howard Hanson Institute for American Music at the Eastman School of Music and the Susan B. Anthony Center for Women’s Leadership, for a chamber work celebrating the 100th anniversary of Women’s Right

to Vote in New York State. The premiere is scheduled for March 5, 2017 in Rochester, NY.

A *magna cum laude* Yale graduate with an MM from Yale's School of Music, Laitman was featured on Thomas Hampson's *Song of America* radio series and website and in *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*. For more information, please visit www.artsongs.com.

DAVID MASON

David Mason's books of poems include *The Buried Houses* (winner of the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize), *The Country I Remember* (winner of the Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award), and *Arrivals*. His verse novel, *Ludlow*, was published in 2007, and named best poetry book of the year by the Contemporary Poetry Review and the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. It was also featured on the *PBS News Hour*. Author of a collection of essays, *The Poetry of Life and the Life of Poetry*, his memoir, *News from the Village*, appeared in 2010. A new collection of essays, *Two Minds of a Western Poet*, followed in 2011. Mason has also co-edited several textbooks and anthologies, including *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*, *Rebel Angels: 25 Poets of the New Formalism*, *Twentieth Century American Poetry*, and *Twentieth Century American Poetics*:

Poets on the Art of Poetry. His poetry, prose and translations have appeared in such periodicals as *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Poetry*, *Agenda*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *The New Criterion*, *The Yale Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The American Scholar*, *The Irish Times*, and *The Southern Review*. Anthologies include *Best American Poetry* and others. He has also written the libretti for composer Lori Laitman's opera of *The Scarlet Letter* and her oratorio, *Vedem*. He recently won the Thatcher Hoffman Smith Creativity in Motion Prize for the development of a new libretto. A former Fulbright Fellow to Greece, he served as Poet Laureate of Colorado and teaches at Colorado College.

