

The Composer

Gina Biver received her BA in Music from Berklee College of Music in 1983. She has performed her original music in a variety of venues from small clubs to thousand-seat shows in New York City and throughout the East Coast.

Working as a free-lance composer since 1991, Gina has scored music for television and film, where she has won Tele and International Television and Video (ITVA) Awards. Her compositions for television have been broadcast across the US and in 13 countries for Smithsonian Institution, US News and World Report, US Postal Service, PBS, The American Red Cross and others. In 2000, she scored a feature-length independent film for director Aydem Erdem.

Ms. Biver currently studies composition with Professor Steve Antosca, and has also studied with composer Garrison Hull. She will complete her Masters Degree in Music Education with a Concentration in Composition from George Mason University in August of 2005.

Artist Acknowledgements

Ms. Biver would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this performance:

Steve, Jade, Nigel and Tessa Biver; Frankie and Angela Lugiano; Drs. Billingham, Smith, Gardner, and Owens; and Steve Antosca.



George Mason Music Department

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COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Department of Music

Graduate Recital

Gina Biver, composition

Sunday, May 15, 2005

2:00 p.m.

Harris Theatre

Program

Carol Broke a Dish

Mr. Killalea, Ms. Kachouee, Mr. Miller, Mr. Augustine, Ms. Haines, Mr. Heagney, Ms. Biver, Ms. Frear, Atmospheric loop by Ilio/Spectrasonics

Sahara

Mr. Forrey, Ms. Kachouee, Mr. Miller, Mr. Augustine, Ms. Haines, Mr. Heagney, Ms. Biver

Purse-Sized Gong

Ms. Kachouee, Mr. Miller, Mr. Augustine, Ms. Haines, Mr. Heagney, Ms. Frear, Ms. Biver

Silence

Mr. Putnam, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Miller, Mr. Oppido, Mr. Kilgore, Mr. Heagney, Ms. Haines, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Biver, Sample by Ilio/Spectrasonics

Be Ground (during closing bows)

Mr. Miller, Ms. Biver, Drum Loop by Ilio/Spectrasonics, Produced by Ms. Biver

Ms. Biver is a student of Prof. Steve Antosca.

Lisa Kachouee is currently attaining a bachelor's degree in clarinet performance from GMU. Prior to transferring to GMU in 2003, Lisa attended Duquesne University where she was awarded an \$18,000 annual talent scholarship. Lisa performed as the principal clarinetist of the DU Symphonic Band, DU Wind Ensemble (bass clarinet), GMU Symphony Orchestra, GMU Wind Ensemble, and as a member of the Mason Modern Music Ensemble.

John Kilgore is a percussion major at GMU and has performed in several groups, including the GMU Symphony Orchestra and Mason Modern Music Ensemble.

Artist/composer **Colin Killalea** has performed and studied with Billy Hart (Shirley Horn, Charles Lloyd), Joe Chambers (Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea) and John D'earth (Quincy Jones) and has been highlighted in "JazzTimes" and "All About Jazz" for his recent work with pianist/composer, Jesse Elder. Colin recently finished collaborations on a recording with avant-garde percussionist and composer, Brian Jones. The album will be released in the spring of 2005 on Slang Sanctuary Records. Winner of numerous scholarships and awards, Mr. Killalea will complete his undergraduate at the New School University Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City this fall.

Kris Miller is a violin major at GMU, has performed in the GMU Symphony Orchestra and Mason Modern Music Ensemble, and maintains a private studio of several students.

Vincent Oppido, a native of Long Island, is in his freshman year at GMU. A percussionist, conductor and composer, Vincent has had his music performed by honor bands, university bands, and at Disney World. He is a student of Ken Harbison.

Kenny Putnam is in his junior year at GMU as a clarinet performance major. He is also a tenor and has performed with the Richmond Symphony, National Philharmonic, Kilmarnock Symphony, and many local and regional concert bands. He is a student of Brian Jones.

Jessica Robinson is a senior at George Mason University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree with a focus in Music and a Minor in Multimedia.

The Performers

Kyle Augustine is a double bass student of Glenn Dewey at George Mason University.

Scott Forrey is a trumpeter, bandleader, improviser, and composer. He has been both a student and on the faculty at Berklee College of Music. In the 80s and 90s he gigged extensively with salsa orchestras, funk groups, and small bop combos. Since the mid-90s he has led his own experimental, improvising ensemble; the current incarnation of this group, Vector Trio, melds electronics, loops, and samples with avant-garde jazz improvisation (www.vectortrio.com).

Kate Frear is a percussion major at George Mason University (GMU) and has performed in several groups, including the GMU Symphony Orchestra and Mason Modern Music Ensemble.

Devin Gardner is in his senior year as an oboe performance major at GMU. He has performed with various groups around the area, including the American Youth Philharmonic, The Kennedy Center SMI Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Gardner has held seats in district, regional and state bands and orchestras, and participated in the Kennedy Center Youth Fellowship program for young artists from 1998-2000.

Martha Haines will be graduating in May from GMU with a B.A. in Music and a minor in Arts Administration and Management. She has performed with many ensembles at GMU, including the Wind Symphony, Symphony Orchestra and the Mason Modern Music Ensemble (M3E). She also serves as the Associate Manager for the National Trumpet Competition that is held every year at GMU. She is student of Dr. Joanne Haroutounian.

Daniel Heagney is a music performance major at GMU, where he studies with professor Kenneth Harbison. He is currently the percussion director at Centreville High School, and maintains a private studio of several students in the area.

The Performers

Kyle Augustine - *Contrabass, Electric Bass*

Gina Biver - *Guitar, Vocals, Sampler, Synthesizer*

Scott Forrey - *Trumpet*

Kate Frear - *Spoken Word, Slinky*

Devin Gardner - *Spoken Word*

Martha Haines - *Piano, Synthesizer, Sampler, Marimba*

Dan Heagney - *Doumbek, Conga, Udu, Drum Kit, Chimes*

Lisa Kachouee - *Clarinet, Spoken Word*

John Kilgore - *Orchestral Bells*

Colin Killalea - *Tenor Saxophone*

Kris Miller - *Violin, Spoken Word*

Vinny Oppido - *Vibraphone*

Kenny Putnam - *Spoken Word*

Jessica Robinson - *Tom Toms*

Notes on the Program

Carol Broke A Dish

“Carol Broke a Dish” deals with the idea of being true to one’s self. It is about one woman’s realization that becoming calmer or more peaceful is not always the path to one’s deeper self – that sometimes becoming angry, or no longer accepting a certain state of affairs is actually the right thing to do. It is a song of transformation, of awakening and of growth.

The electronic sample which loops through the duration of “Carol Broke a Dish” sets the meditative tone of a situation droning on and on. The tenor saxophone’s improvisations over the middle section serve to show an awakening and shift in consciousness. The violin screeches as that section closes and the percussive vocal comes in to repeat the title phrase – whispering, then softly uttering, then loudly and confidently speaking the part – and the transformation is complete.

Sahara

The juxtaposition of jazz trumpet improvisations over North African drumming grooves and sparse, linear piano and string parts reach out to spread an expansive terrain on which to travel. The eighth-note patterns of the clarinet on the second theme weave a rhythm in 3/4 while the percussion rests. Some sand gets kicked up during the transition to the final “A” theme, with a section I can only describe as “spinning.” The synthesizer drones slowly throughout the piece, its sounding chords morphing gradually as the notes are sustained.

The visual I had while writing this piece was a calm, moonlit desert, warm and clear – a wide-open space, an enveloping kind of darkness with just the slightest shimmer of silver. Emotionally, what comes through in “Sahara” is the bittersweet taste of that calm – the delicious sort of ache of being alone.

Purse-Sized Gong

All that needs to be said regarding “Purse-Sized Gong” is that it is about coming of age in the late 1970’s. In it I pay tribute to some of the diverse musical influences of my youth. 1970’s funk, the minimalism of Steve Reich, and the hard rock band Led Zeppelin from whom I borrowed a motif of “Kashmir” (which can be heard in the middle section) all contributed to the feel and fun of this composition. Projected “visual music” software was created by Artmatic.

Silence

“Silence” is about my experience of the loss of my father. In the days and months following his death I felt, or rather heard, an incredible silence coming from his corner of the room. It was as if the tremendous space he filled in my life was equal to the greatness of the silence that filled my ears when he was gone. It was, quite simply, the loudest silence I had ever heard.

The idea that silence could actually be loud seemed a difficult one to convey. I saw a parallel with the philosophical notion that within everything is its opposite and realized that I could show one or the other and still get my meaning across.

With the assumption that leaving large amounts of silence within the score would confuse an audience (Is it over yet?) I decided to use a digital sample of a sound called “Void” to represent pure silence. The first section of “Silence” (with the playful marimba line) portrays the time before his death. The middle section is an uncomfortably long silence – as time seemed to stop when he died. The third section – the most frantic and intense -- shows the ringing loudness in my head.

The lyrics that are repeated over and over by the three vocalists are simple, day-to-day sayings that I heard him utter countless times in my life: asking my mom for tea (Frankie, cup o’ tea?), telling me to kiss my kids for him (Kiss the kids hon’), his wonderful laugh (Hah!), his phone greeting (What ‘ch’up to?), his favorite team (Roll Tide!), and his way of encouraging me (Give ‘em hell, Ween!).

Be Ground (Closing Bows)

My concept for this piece comes from a poem by Rumi, a 13th Century Sufi poet. An excerpt reads: “... very little grows on jagged rock. Be ground. Be crumbled, so wildflowers will come up where you are. . . Try something different. Surrender.” I think this poem is about softening. Rumi writes: “Don’t pretend to know something you haven’t experienced” -- as if ego and “hardness” will not allow any kind of growth. I looked for a loop that reminded me of jagged rock, and found one that sounded to me like a pile-driver breaking through rock or hard earth. The struggle to break, or loosen the soil (surrendering to growth and change) ends by 2:21 in the piece: the pile-driver’s work is done, the violin changes to 8th notes on the up-beat, and the vocals are now ecstatic and freed of digging-work. All is soft, lush, and surrendering.