PentaTone
classics
Phenomenon
The Music of
David Garner
Lisa Delan • Stephanie Friede
Susanne Mentzer • Francisco Araiza
William Stone
Kristin Pankonin - piano
HYBRID MULTICHANNEL
SUPER AUDIO CD

Phenomenon
The Music of David Garner

Spoon River Songs
For mezzo-soprano and piano
Poetry from *The Spoon River Anthology*
by Edgar Lee Masters

1	**Fiddler Jones**	**3. 18**
2	**Charles Webster**	**5. 31**
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Susanne Mentzer, mezzo-soprano

Viñetas Flamencas
(Flamenco Vignettes)
For tenor, wind quintet and piano
Words by Federico García Lorca

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Lisa Delan, soprano

Kristin Pankonin, Piano (1-19)

Recorded at Skywalker Sound,
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Executive Producers:
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Recording Engineer : Dann Thompson
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Piano Tuner: Mark Schecter

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Leslie Ann Jones & Gordon Getty

Blüthner Grand Piano

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Total playing time: 80.03

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Notes by the composer

Spoon River Songs

Spoon River Songs is an ongoing project. The first and third songs were commissioned in 1987 by Dr. Nikki Martin, and premièred in 1988 in CAMI Hall in New York by the Conservatory Cantata Singers, who I accompanied at the keyboard. The middle song was commissioned by Katherine Growdon in 2004. Presently, I am completing four more songs for Susanne Mentzer to add to the cycle.

Edgar Lee Masters' poems, which comprise his *Spoon River Anthology*, were published in 1914. Masters was a physician who became deeply interested in the history of the Midwest, and particularly of central Illinois. There is a huge cemetery beside Illinois' Spoon River, in which Masters would spend large amounts of time poring over the names and epitaphs on the innumerable tombstones. Using a mixture of fact gleaned from research and his own imagination, he wrote the eponymous poems as if each dead person were speaking about his or her life. There exists in the anthology an amazing wealth of poignancy, sorrow, joy, and many other human emotions, all springing from the traditions of early Americana.

These three poems, "Fiddler Jones", "Charles Webster" and "Lucinda Matlock", contain much contrast: Jones has "fiddled away" his life, hardly working on his farm, and instead substituting the joys of music and wandering for hard labor. Lucinda Matlock, on the other hand, rejoices because her life has been filled with so much work. Charles Webster defines himself through the countryside of his home rather than the particulars of his life, although the image that he leaves us with at the end of the poem is perhaps the most personal of the whole set. All three characters exhibit the indomitable "American" spirit, and hold no regrets for their different lives.

I have used many straight-ahead bumptious Bluegrass idioms in my setting of "Fiddler Jones". "Charles Webster" is an expressionistic exploration of an evening walk through the country, and "Lucinda Matlock" contains a sort of Martha Graham-like lightness, with many shifting metrical patterns.

Viñetas Flamencas

Federico García Lorca wrote the six poems titled *Viñetas Flamencas* (= Flamenco vignettes) in the 1920's, and included them in his book, *Poema del Canto Jondo* (= Poem of the Deep Song), in 1931. Canto Jondo was the term used to describe flamenco music, specifically the singing, which reached its peak in the 1880's. By the early 20th century, however, political changes in Spain led many of Spain's foremost writers, poets and musicians to fear that the art-form was disappearing.

García Lorca wrote: "The artistic treasure of an entire race is on the road to oblivion… Old men are taking to the grave priceless treasures of past generations…". He and the composer Manuel de Falla had intended to found a Café Cantante (Flamenco Café), but instead created an annual competition in Seville.

Viñetas Flamencas is the third Spanish song-cycle that I am pleased to have written for Mark Hernandez, and the fourth that he has premièred. Ever since he commissioned me to set García Lorca's *Six Caprices* when he was still a student at the Conservatory, we have enjoyed working together immensely.

In 2000, Mark and Esther Landau of Citywinds asked me to set the *Viñetas* for wind quintet, tenor and piano. Each of the six poems in the work represents a different aspect of the flamenco milieu: Three of the poems pay homage to three flamenco musicians: Silverio Franconetti, Juan Breva and La Parrala. The other three likewise evoke other aspects of the smoky, thick atmosphere of the heart of Andalusian Spain. I have used various flamenco forms for the music, as well as aspects of the *cancione* that Mark makes a specialty. The addition of the piano makes many of the idioms of the flamenco guitar audible within the orchestration. Much of my music contains Latin influences, and this work is a quintessential example of my style of writing.

Viñetas Flamencas will transport the listener back to those turn-of-the-century days in Spain, with the smoke-filled taverns, green glass mirrors, the swaying skirts of the dancers, the *grito terrible* (terrible cries) of the singers, and the orange groves and plains of Andalusia.

Fireflies and Willows

It was a great honor and delight to be asked by Professor Kunio Saura to set the beautiful poems of the Masters Nakajima and Nozaki to music. The intimacy of their poetry lends itself perfectly to the medium of the art-song. The delicate imagery and seeming "un-connectedness" of the poems in each group urged me to find a harmonic and melodic language – common perceptual "threads", as it were, which would bind the images into a single coherent structure.

Another resulting challenge was that the "usual" classical form, in which there is a return to the original thematic material, was unsuitable for these poems, which contain a "one-way" journey from one emotional place to another: any recapitulation would weaken the effect of being "elsewhere" – of being in a different place, physically or emotionally, at the end. Therefore, the form of the songs became "through-composed" – that is, the order of the emotional states of the poems dictated the structure of the music.

For the imagery, I developed a musical language of bird-songs, water, wind, and other elements of nature, intertwined with the Japanese classical scales, which I find particularly beautiful, and other pentatonic harmonies. The rhythms are never very far from those of dance, which is a common characteristic of all my music. Although there is some "impressionistic" text-painting, as with the frogs in Nakajima's *An old pond*, or the "pure crystal waters" in the third haiku by Nozaki, there is also a good deal of "expressionism": that is, depiction of emotions evoked by the images, rather than the images themselves. There is much of this in the first Nakajima song, as well as the second and fifth Nozaki haiku. I am very happy with the results, and very honored to have these pieces performed by such outstanding musicians.

Phenomenal Woman

Phenomenal Woman is a set of seven songs for solo voice and piano, written to poems by Maya Angelou. Soprano Kathleen Sisco commissioned this work from me and also gave the première in 2004. Angelou's poetry, with its built-in fluidity of rhythm and cadence, ever lends itself to musical settings. These seven poems embody the poet's deep compassion and her faith in the indomitable human spirit as expressed in the feminine.

I have departed from my usual highly interrelated form in this set, which is not so much a "cycle" as a group of cabaret songs, each one independent of its fellows. Also, I have greatly varied the style from song to song: jazz, blues, rock and roll, and musical theater are all present. And, as with much of my music, the music stretches the technical abilities of both classical and pop musicians, borrowing equally as it does from both idioms.

David Garner, composer

David Garner

The body of work by David Garner reflects his decades of musical training, historical knowledge, theatrical flair and humour. For over 25 years now, the San Francisco composer has been creating uniquely beautiful works, and interest in his music continues to build.

Recent career highlights include the première of his Five Chokas for the Princess at the SF Asian Art Museum; the première of his guitar composition Raghs at the Ordu International Guitar Festival in Turkey; the première and CD release of Cuadro cuadrangulos by QUADRE; the Costa Rica performance of *Seis caprichos de García Lorca* (as part of the Ibero-American Institute's "Federico García Lorca Project") with tenor Manuel Marin; the New York première of Phenomenal Woman, performed by Frederica von Stade, Lisa Delan, Zhang Cao and Kristin Pankonin; and an additional New York performance of Phenomenal Woman at the Salander-O'Reilly Gallery.

David Garner continues to receive numerous commissions not only from Bay Area soloists and ensembles, but also from international artists: these include VOLTI, Citywinds, QUADRE, Japanese Tanka master Mutsuo Shukuya, Susanne Mentzer, and the Iranian Guitar Duo. His one-act opera, The Money Tree, with libretto by Dan Linden Cohen – of which the première in 2000 was received with critical acclaim – will be produced by the opera department of the University of Utah in the autumn of 2007. Besides his native English, David Garner has written vocal chamber music in Spanish, Catalan, German, Renaissance Italian, modern Greek and Japanese.

Professor Garner has taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music since 1979. He held the Chair of the Department of Musicianship and Music Theory from 1984 until 1999, and received the 1997 George Sarlo Family Foundation Outstanding Professor Award.

David Garner studied piano with Virginia Danforth, Beatrice Beauregard, and Nathan Schwartz, as well as cello with Priscilla Parsons and Roman Dukson.

Francisco Araiza, tenor

Francisco Araiza, born in Mexico, has been one of the leading tenors of his generation. He made an international operatic career starting with the great Mozart and Rossini roles.

He developed later on into the heavier lirico spinto, the french and heavier german repertory.

He was named Kammersänger of the Vienna Staatsoper in 1988 and has been a permanent member of the Opernhaus Zürich since 1977.

Herbert von Karajan chose him for the recording of "Die Zauberflöte" (Magic flute) and invited him to the Salzburg Festival to sing the Mozart Requiem in 1980.

He worked under conductors like Sir Colin Davis, Karl Böhm, Carlo Maria Giulini, Riccardo Muti, Sir Neville Marriner, Claudio Abbado and James Levine. He made over a hundred recordings of which many received awards.

Besides his operatic engagements, Francisco Araiza is also a highly esteemed concert and liedersinger.

He teaches voice at the Music Conservatory of Stuttgart and at the studio of the Zurich Opera.

Lisa Delan

American soprano Lisa Delan has won acclaim as an outstanding interpreter of a vast repertoire. She is recognized for her versatility and breadth of accomplishment in opera, song and recording.

Ms. Delan's interpretive and technical skill in art song brought her to the finals of the 1999 Naumberg International Vocal Competition. Other recognition came from singing the title role in the world premiere of Gordon Getty's Joan and the Bells in 1998, a role she has since reprised in France, Germany, the US and Russia, and in the 2002 recording for PentaTone Classics. Critics have praised her depiction of Joan of Arc as "beautifully sung" (International Record Review), and "refreshingly unpretentious" (Gramophone Magazine).

Lisa Delan has performed on some of the world's leading concert stages including Lincoln Center, the Auditiorio Nacional in Madrid, the Moscow Conservatory, and in special appearance at Windsor Castle. Her festival appearances include the Bad Kissingen Festival in Germany, the Colmar Festival in France and the Rachmaninoff Festival in Novgorod, Russia, the Festival del Sole in Napa Valley, California and at the Tuscan Sun Festival in Cortona, Italy.
As a recital artist, her repertoire encompasses from the Baroque to the contemporary and she is privileged to collaborate with composers whose musical lives are still works in progress: Ms. Delan has performed and recorded the music of William Bolcom, John Corigliano, David Garner, Gordon Getty, Jake Heggie and Luna Pearl Woolf, among others.

Stephanie Friede

Stephanie Friede, born in New York City, made her European debut at the Vienna State Opera as Mimi in *La Boheme*.

Important appearances during the last years include Minnie in Puccini's *La fanciulla del west* in New York, Tokyo, Antwerp, Zurich and Florence, Richard Strauss' *Salome* in Zurich under Valery Gergiev and Dresden under Fabio Luisi, Sieglinde in Wagner's *Die Walküre* in Zurich under Franz Welser-Möst and in Berlin under Christian Thielemann, Cio-cio san in *Madama Butterfly* at the Semperoper Dresden, Shostakovich' *Lady Macbeth* in Geneva and Tokyo and Marietta in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* in Berlin and Barcelona.

Besides her performances at leading opera houses the artist devotes a big part of her time singing concerts and recitals. She performed *Mahler's 8th symphony* under Riccardo Chailly at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, *Shostakovich'14th symphony* with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Janacek's *Glagolitic Mass* with the Halle Orchestra under sir Mark Elder and *Beehoven's 9th symphony* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Masur.

Stephanie Friede also teaches at the Antwerp Conservatory of Music.

Susanne Mentzer

Introduced to opera as a teenaged usher in Santa Fe, New Mexico, American Susanne Mentzer has become one of today's foremost mezzo-sopranos.

She has appeared with great opera companies and orchestras in North America and Europe, as well as the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and on tour to Japan with the Metropolitan Opera.

Her extensive discography includes *Le nozze di Figaro, Idomeneo, Don Giovanni, Il barbiere di Siviglia, Il Turco in Italia* and *Anna Bolena* (together with Joan Sutherland).

In addition to her active performance career Ms. Mentzer has an interest in the development of young singers. She is Professor of Voice at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and continues her distinguished tenure on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School.

William Stone, baritone

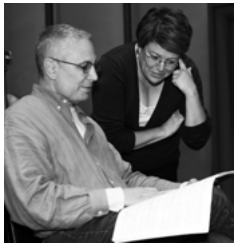
William Stone has sung extensively in the major opera houses of Europe and the US. He worked under conductors like Riccardo Muti, Sir Georg Solti, and Kurt Masur.

His creation of the role of Adam for the Chicago Lyric Opera of Penderecki's "Paradise Lost" was followed by his debut at La Scala in its European premiere and a performance at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II.

With the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa he sang the world premieres of Takemitsu's "My way of life" and Kirchner's "Of things exactly as they are".

His long relationship with Robert Shaw resulted in acclaimed performances of the monumental choral works and over a dozen recordings of which two received a Grammy Award.

William Stone currently serves as a Professor of Voice and Opera with the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University in Philadelphia.



Kristin Pankonin

Pianist Kristin Pankonin performs regularly in San Francisco and the Bay Area and has appeared in recital in New York, Hawaii and many cities in Europe.

She studied at the Music Academy of the West as a scholarship student and received fellowships to study at the Jarvis Conservatory in Napa.

She holds a Master of Music degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations.

Ms.Pankonin currently serves as vocal coach and accompanist at Mills College and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

She has accompanied many master classes, including those of Anna Moffo, Regine Crispin and Thomas Hampson.

From The Spoon River Anthology, by Edgar Lee Masters ©1914

1. Fiddler Jones

The earth keeps some vibration going
There in your heart, and that is you.
And if the people find you can fiddle,
Why fiddle you must for all your life.
What do you see, a harvest of clover?
Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
For beeves hereafter ready for market;
Or else you hear the rustle of skirts
Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.
To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drought;
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
Stepping it off to "Toor-a-loor".
How could I till my forty acres
Not to mention getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a windmill, only these?
And I never started to plow in my life
That someone did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres,
I ended up with a broken fiddle,
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.

2. Charles Webster

The pine woods on the hill,
And the farmhouse miles away,
Showed clear as though behind a lens
Under a sky of peacock blue!
But a blanket of cloud by afternoon
Muffled the earth. And you walked the road
And the clover field, where the only sound
Was the cricket's liquid tremolo.
Then the sun went down between great drifts
Of distant storms. For a rising wind
Swept clean the sky and blew the flames
Of the unprotected stars
And swayed the russet moon,
Hanging between the rim of the hill
And the twinkling boughs of the apple orchard
You walked the shore in thought
Where the throats of the waves were like whip-poor-wills
Singing beneath the water and crying
To the wash of the wind in the cedar trees,
Till you stood, too full for tears, by the cot,
And looking up saw Jupiter,
Tipping the spire of the giant pine,
And looking down saw my vacant chair,
Rocked by the wind on the lonely porch—
Be brave, Beloved!

3. Lucinda Matlock

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house,
I nursed the sick, I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the hills where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River, gathering many a shell,
And many a flower, and medicinal weed
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys!
At ninety six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you!
It takes life to love life

I. Retrato de Silverio Franconetti

Entre italiano
y flamenco,
¿cómo cantaría
aquel Silverio?
La densa miel de Italia,
con el limón nuestro,
iba en el hondo llanto
del siguiriyero.
Su grito fue terrible.
Los viejos
dicen que se erizaban
los cabellos,
y se abría el azogue
de los espejos.
Pasaba por los tonos
sin romperlos.
Y fue un creador
y un jardinero.
Un creador de glorietas
para el silencio.

Ahora su melodía
duerme con los ecos.
Definitiva y pura.
¡Con los últimos ecos!

II. Juan Breva

Juan Breva tenía
cuerpo de gigante

I. Portrait of Silverio Franconetti

Between Italian
and flamenco,
how would he sing,
that Silverio?
The thick honey of Italy,
mixed with our lemon,
traveled upon the deep wail
of this singer of siguiriyas.
His cry was terrible.
Old timers say
that one's hair
would stand on end,
and make the quicksilver
split in the mirrors.
He would go up the scales
without his voice cracking.
And he was a creator
and a gardener.
A creator of arbors
for the silence.

Now his melody
sleeps with the echoes.
Final and pure.
With the ultimate echoes!

II. Juan Breva

Juan Breva possessed
the body of a giant

y voz de niña.
Nada como su trino.
Era la misma
Pena cantando
detrás de una sonrisa.
Evoca los limonares
de Málaga la dormida,
y hay en su llanto dejos
de sal marina.
Como Homero cantó
ciego. Su voz tenía
algo de mar sin luz
y naranja exprimida

III. Café Cantante

Lámparas de cristal
y espejos verdes.

Sobre el tablado oscuro,
la Parrala sostiene
una conversacíon
con la Muerta.
La llama,
no viene,
y la vuelve a llamar.
Las gentes
aspiran los sollozos.
Y en los espejos verdes,
largas colas de seda
se mueven.

and the voice of a little girl.
His trill was like nothing else.
It was that same Pain
being sung
behind a smile.
It evokes the lemon groves
of a sleepy Málaga,
and in his wail there are
aftertastes of sea salt.
Like Homer he sang
Blindly. His voice possessed
A touch of sea without light
And squeezed-dry oranges.

III. Flamenco Cabaret

Lamps of crystal
and green mirrors.

On the darkened stage,
Parrala maintains
a conversation
with Death.
She calls Death,
but Death never comes,
And she calls out again.
The people are
Inhaling her sobs.
And in the green mirrors,
her long, silk train
sways back and forth.

IV. Lamentacíon de la Muerta

Sobre el cielo negro,
culebrinas amarillas.

Vine a este mundo con ojos
y me voy sin ellos.
¡Señor del mayor dolor!
Y luego,
un velón y una manta
en el suelo.

Quise llegar adonde
llegaron los buenos.
¡Y he llegado, Dios mio!…
Pero luego,
un velón y una manta
en el suelo.

Limoncito amarillo,
limonero.
Echad los limoncitos
al viento.
¡Ya lo sabéis!…Porque luego,
luego,
un velón y una manta
en el suelo.

Sobre el cielo negro,
culebrinas amarillas.

IV. Lamentation of Death

Across the black heavens,
yellow, serpentine flashes.

I came into this world with eyes
and I'll leave without them.
Oh, Lord of the greatest sorrow!
And then,
an oil lamp and a blanket
upon the ground.

I tried to go where
the good people go.
and I did, dear God…!
But then,
an oil lamp and a blanket
upon the ground.

Little yellow lemons,
lemon tree.
Cast your little lemons
to the wind.
Now you know…! For then,
Then,
an oil lamp and a blanket
upon the ground.

Across the black heavens,
yellow, serpentine flashes.

V. (Orig. VI) Memento

Cuando yo me muera,
enterradme con mi guitarra
bajo la arena.

Cuando yo me muera,
entre los naranjos
y la hierbabuena.

Cuando yo me muera,
enterradme si queréis
en una veleta.

¡Cuando yo me muera!

VI. (Orig. V) Conjuro

La mano crispada
como una Medusa
ciega el ojo doliente
del candil.

As de bastos.
Tijeras en cruz.

Sobre el humo blanco
del incienso, tiene
algo de topo y

V. Memento

When I die,
bury me with my guitar
beneath the sand.

When I die,
among the orange trees
and mint plants.

When I die,
bury me, if you would,
inside a weather vane.

When I die!

VI. Incantation

The twitching hand,
like some Medusa,
blinds the aching eye
of the oil lamp.

Ace of Wands.
Scissors in a cross.

Upon the white smoke
of the incense, it has
a touch of the mole and

mariposa indecisa.

As de bastos.
Tijeras en cruz.

Aprieta un corazón
invisible, ¿la veis?
Un corazón
reflejado en el viento.

As de bastos.
Tijeras en cruz.

the indecisive butterfly.

Ace of Wands.
Scissors in a cross.

An invisible heart
is distressed, see it?
A heart
reflected on the wind.

Ace of Wands.
Scissors in a cross.

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Texts for Fireflies and Willows,
by David Garner

I. To my daughter for her forthcoming marriage
By Nakajima (Trans. Unknown)

Thinking of this day
to come, the time has passed by--
these twenty-five years
adorning with peach blossoms
the Doll Festival display.

Weeping cherry tree--
delicate petals starting
to fall, scattering
as far as the stonebuilt house
where foreigners are dwelling.

A single firefly
flew away into the woods
at Kibune--flew
away like a flaming streak
of lingering radiance.

The city moonlight--
coming home, thinking about
my married daughter:
whence comes this anxiety
that moves me almost to tears?

II. An Old Pond
By Nakajima (Trans. Unknown)

Thrusting--again thrusting
their way through the dust drifting
thickly down towards
a corner of the pond, shoals
of tadpoles keep swimming on.

Near the brink, I feel
there is something in hiding--
with the fragrance of
lotus leaves wafting to me
during the night by the pond.

After releasing
the frog--as if to show he
had just been playing--
the snake started to slither
so nonchalantly away.

A serpent slowly
slithered down into the pond,
transforming himself
as he swam across, into
ring upon ring of water

III. Five Haiku by Yurika Nozaki
Translations attrib. to James Kirkup

At work under gay
willow wands, drying the first
paper of New Year

Water from handmade
papers washing round the roots
of red plum blossom

Flowing down to far
Eiheiji, pure summer springs
from Mount Hakusan

One after another
autumn grass flowers are born--
yuzen dyeing brush

Look, a swan with one
great flourishing of his wings,
descending to earth

Phenomenal Woman
1. Call Letters: Mrs. V.B.

Ships?
Sure I'll sail them.
Show me the boat,
If it'll float,
I'll sail it

Men?
Yes I'll love them.
If they've got the style,
To make me smile,
I'll love them.

Life?
'Course I'll live it.
Let me have breath,
Just to my death,
And I'll live it.

Failure?
I'm not ashamed to tell it,
I never learned to spell it.
Not Failure.

2. Impeccable Conception

I met a Lady Poet
Who took for inspiration
Colored birds, and whispered words,
A lover's hesitation.

A falling leaf could stir her.
A wilting, dying rose
Would make her write, both day and night,
The most rewarding prose.

She'd find a hidden meaning
In every pair of pants,
Then hurry home to be alone
And write about romance.

3. Lord, in My Heart

Holy haloes
Ring me round
Spirit waves on
Spirit sound
Meshach and
Abednego
Golden chariot
Swinging low
I recite them
in my sleep

Jordan's cold
and briny deep
Bible lessons
Sunday school
Bow before that
Golden Rule
Now I wonder
If I tried
Could I turn my
cheek aside
Marvelling with
afterthought
Let the blow fall
Saying naught
Of my true Christ-
Like control
And the nature
Of my soul
Would I strike with
Rage divine
Till the culprit
Fell supine
Hit out broad all
Fury red
Till my foes are
Fallen dead
Teachers of my
Early youth
Taught forgiveness
Stressed the truth
Here then is my
Christian lack:
If I'm struck then
I'll strike back.

4. The Gamut

Soft you day, be velvet soft,
My true love approaches,
Look you bright, you dusty sun,
Array your golden coaches.

Soft you wind, be soft as silk,
My true love is speaking

Hold you birds, your silver throats,
His golden voice I'm seeking.

Come you death, in haste, do come,
My shroud of black be weaving,
Quiet my heart, be deathly quiet,
My true love is leaving.

5. Request

If this country is a bastard
will the lowdown mother user
who ran off
and left the woman
moaning in her
green delivery
please come back and claim
his love child.
Give a legal name to beg from
for the first
time of its life.

6. No Loser, No Weeper

"I hate to lose something,"
then she bent her head,
"even a dime, I wish I was dead.
I can't explain it. No more to be said.
'Cept I hate to lose something.

"I lost a doll once and cried for a week.
She could open her eyes, and do all but
speak.
I believe she was took, by some doll-
snatching sneak.
I tell you, I hate to lose something.

"A watch of mine once, got up and walked
away.
It had twelve numbers on it and for the
time of day.
I'll never forget it and all I can say
Is I really hate to lose something.

"Now if I felt that way 'bout a watch and
a toy,
What you think I feel 'bout my lover-boy?
I ain't threatening you. Madam, but he is
my evening's
joy.
And I mean I really hate to lose something."

7. Phenomenal Woman

Pretty women wonder where my secret
lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion
model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them,
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing,
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
The palm of my hand,
The need for my care.
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Spoon River Songs

Spoon River Songs könnte man als fortlaufendes, vielleicht sogar als offenes Projekt bezeichnen. 1987 gab Dr. Nikki Martin das erste und das dritte Lied bei mir in Auftrag. Uraufgeführt wurden beide 1988 von den Conservatory Cantata Singers in der New Yorker CAMI Hall, mit mir am Klavier. 2004 bestellte Katherine Growdon das mittlere Lied und jetzt arbeite ich an vier neuen Liedern für Susanne Mentzer, die den Zyklus nochmals erweitern werden.

Edgar Lee Masters' in der *Spoon River Anthology* gesammelten Gedichte wurden 1914 veröffentlicht. Masters war von Beruf Arzt, der sich für die Geschichte des Mittleren Westens und hier insbesondere für den Bundesstaat Illinois interessierte. Am Spoon River liegt ein langgestreckter Friedhof, auf dem Masters viel Zeit verbrachte und sich in die Namen und Inschriften auf zahllosen Grabsteinen vertiefte. In einer Mischung aus Fakten und eigener Phantasie schrieb er Gedichte, bei denen man den Eindruck gewinnt, jeder der Verstorbenen berichte über sein Leben. Und so sind die Verstorbenen auch die Titelhelden. Die Gedichtsammlung ist voll von Ergriffenheit, Schmerz, Freude und weiteren Gefühlen, die typisch für das junge Amerika sind.

Die drei Gedichte „Fiddler Jones", „Charles Webster" und „Lucinda Matlock" sind extrem gegensätzlich: Jones hat sein Leben verplempert, hat auf seiner Farm geschuftet und die Freuden von Musik und Phantasie gegen harte Arbeit eingetauscht. Dagegen blickt Lucinda Matlock auf ein durch Arbeit erfülltes Leben zurück. Charles Webster wiederum definiert sich eher über die Landschaft seiner Heimat als über die Besonderheiten seines Lebens; und doch ist das Bild, das uns am Ende dieses Gedichtes haften bleibt wohl das persönlichste der Sammlung. Alle drei Personen stellen den unbezähmbaren „American Spirit" zur Schau und bedauern ihr Leben nicht.

In meiner Vertonung von „Fiddler Jones" habe ich einige wichtigtuerische Idiome des Bluegrass (einer der Variante der US-amerikanischen Countrymusik, *Anm. d. Ü.*) verwendet. „Charles Webster" ist die expressionistische Erkundung eines Abendspaziergangs auf dem Lande und „Lucinda Matlock" besitzt durch die zahlreichen, sich verschiebenden metrischen Muster eine an Martha Graham erinnernde Leichtigkeit.

Viñetas Flamencas

Federica García Lorca schrieb seine sechs *Viñetas Flamencas* (Flamenco-Charakterskizzen) in den 1920er Jahren. 1931 integrierte er sie in sein Buch *Poema del Canto Jondo*. Mit dem Begriff „Canto Jondo" umschrieb man Flamencomusik allgemein aber insbesondere auch den Gesang, der seinen künstlerischen Höhepunkt in den 1880er Jahren erreichte. Im frühen 20. Jahrhundert jedoch ließen politische Machtwechsel in Spanien viele der besten Schriftsteller, Dichter und Musiker befürchten, dass die Kunstform Flamenco an ihr Ende gekommen sein könnte.

García Lorca schrieb: *„Der künstlerische Schatz einer ganzen Rasse droht in Vergessenheit zu geraten.* [...] *Alte Männer nehmen die unschätzbaren Werte vergangener Generationen mit ins Grab ...*" Mit dem Komponisten Manuel de Falla wollte García Lorca eigentlich ein Café Cantante (Flamenco Café) gründen, stattdessen initiierten die beiden dann aber einen jährlichen Flamenco-Wettbewerb in Sevilla.

Viñetas Flamencas ist der dritte spanischsprachige Liederzyklus, den ich für Mark Hernandez schreiben durfte, und der vierte, den er uraufgeführt hat. Seitdem er – damals noch Student am Konservatorium - bei mir García Lorcas *Six Caprices* in Auftrag gegeben hat, arbeiten wir Hand in Hand.

2000 kontaktierten mich Mark und Esther Landau von Citywinds und beauftragten eine Fassung für Bläserquintett, Tenor und Klavier der *Viñetas*. Jedes der sechs Gedichte steht für eine eigene Facette des Flamenco-Milieus. Drei Gedichte sind eine Hommage an drei Flamenco-Musiker: Silverio Franconetti, Juan Breva und La Parrala. Die anderen drei Gedichte beschwören weitere Aspekte der rauchgeschwängerten, dichten Atmosphäre des andalusischen Spaniens. Ich habe verschiedene Flamenco-Formen für die Musik verwendet und auch Elemente des *cancione*, das Mark so außerordentlich beherrscht. Über das Klavier werden im Satz viele Idiome der Flamenco-Gitarre hörbar gemacht. Vieles in meiner Musik hört auf lateinamerikanische Einflüsse und so würde ich dieses Werk als Musterbeispiel für meinen Kompositionsstil bezeichnen.

Viñetas Flamencas führt den Hörer zurück in die Zeit der Jahrhundertwende in Spanien - mit ihren rauchigen Kneipen, den grünen Glasspiegeln, den wogenden Kleidern der Tänzer, dem *grito terrible* (dem Schluchzen) der Sänger und den Orangenhainen und Feldern Andalusiens.

Glühwürmchen und Weiden

Es war mir eine große Ehre und Freude, als mich Professor Kunio Saura bat, die wunderschönen Gedichte der Meister Nakajima und Nozaki zu vertonen. Die Intimität ihrer Poesie lässt sich hervorragend in das Medium des Kunstliedes übertragen. Die feinfühlige Metaphorik und scheinbare Unverbundenheit der Gedichte in jeder Gruppierung ließ mich nach einer harmonischen und melodischen Sprache suchen, nach einem allgemeinverständlichen „roten Faden", der die Bilder in eine verständliche Struktur einbinden würde. Als weitere Herausforderung entpuppte sich die „gewöhnliche" klassische Form, in der das thematische Ausgangsmaterial am Ende ja wiederkehrt; und diese Form passte schlichtweg nicht zu diesen Gedichten, in denen wie in einer Art Einbahnstraße ein emotionaler Zustand den anderen ablöst: jede Wiederholung würde den Effekt des „Anderswo seins", ganz gleich ob körperlich oder emotional, am Ende abschwächen. Und so wurden die Lieder durchkomponiert, schließlich gaben die wechselnden Gefühlszustände in den Gedichten die musikalische Struktur vor.

Für die Metaphorik entwickelte ich eine eigene musikalische Sprache, bestehend aus Vogelliedern, Wasser, Wind und anderen Elementen der Natur, in die dann (wunderschöne) klassische japanische Skalen und andere pentatonische Harmonien eingeflochten wurden. Die Rhythmen sind fast immerzu tänzerisch, was meine Musik übrigens auch ganz allgemein charakterisiert. Trotz „impressionistischer" Textausdeutungen etwa bei den Fröschen in Nakajimas *An old pond* oder beim „reinen Kristallwasser" im dritten haiku von Nozaki, bleibt auch ein gut Teil „Expressionismus" hörbar: also eher eine Beschreibung jener durch die Bilder hervorgerufenen Gefühle, als die Bilder selbst. Vieles davon ist im ersten Lied von Nakajima enthalten aber auch im zweiten und fünften haiku von Nozaki. Ich bin mit den Ergebnissen meiner Arbeit außerordentlich zufrieden und freue mich über die Interpretation durch so herausragende Musiker.

Phenomenal Woman

Die Sammlung *Phenomenal Woman* besteht aus sieben Liedern für Solo-Stimme und Klavier auf Texte von Maya Angelou. Die Sopranistin Kathleen Sisco hat diese Stücke bei mir beauftragt und im Jahr 2004 auch uraufgeführt. Die Dichtkunst Angelous bietet sich mit ihren fließenden Rhythmen und Kadenzen für eine Vertonung gerade zu an. Diese sieben Gedichte verkörpern die tiefe Leidenschaft der Dichterin und ihren Glauben an den unbezwingbaren menschlichen Geist, wie er sich im Weiblichen ausdrückt.

Bei der Komposition des Werkes habe ich mich von den normalerweise in meinen Werken stark ausgeprägten inneren Verbindungen strikt gelöst und somit eher eine Gruppe denn einen Zyklus von „cabaret songs" geschaffen, mit lauter Werkindividuen. Außerdem verändert sich der Stil von Lied zu Lied: Jazz, Blues, Rock and Roll und Musical – alles ist präsent. Wie in vielen meiner Werke nutzt die Musik die technischen Fähigkeiten der Interpreten aus Klassik und Pop über die Maßen, und bedient sich dabei bei beiden Idiomen gleichermaßen.

David Garner, Komponist

Aus dem Amerikanischen von Franz Steiger

Spoon River Songs

Spoon River Songs est un projet en cours. Les premier et troisième chants ont été commandés en 1987 par Dr. Nikki Martin, et interprétés pour la première fois en 1988 au CAMI Hall, à New York, par les Conservatory Cantata Singers, que j'ai accompagnés au piano. J'ai ensuite composé le deuxième chant sur la commande de Katherine Growdon, en 2004. Actuellement, je suis en train d'achever pour Suzanne Mentzer quatre autres chants qui viendront s'ajouter au cycle.

Les poèmes de Edgar Lee Masters, qui incluent son *Anthologie de Spoon River*, furent publiés en 1914. Masters était un médecin qui s'était pris d'un vif intérêt pour l'histoire du Midwest et tout particulièrement pour celle du centre de l'Illinois. Là, dans le village de Spoon River, se trouvait un immense cimetière dans lequel Masters passait le plus clair de son temps à étudier les noms et épitaphes inscrites sur les innombrables pierres tombales. Mêlant faits glanés au fil de ses recherches et éléments imaginaires, il écrivit ses poèmes éponymes comme si chacune des personnes disparues faisait le récit de sa vie. L'anthologie extrêmement poignante présente une palette d'émotions humaines – tristesse, joie et maintes autres encore - toutes issues des traditions appartenant à l'héritage culturel américain.

Ces trois poèmes, « Fiddler Jones », « Charles Webster » et « Lucinda Matlock », sont fortement contrastés : Jones a musardé toute sa vie, travaillant peu dans sa ferme et préférant au dur labeur les joies de la musique et de l'errance. Lucinda Matlock, quant à elle, se réjouit de son existence très laborieuse. Enfin, Charles Webster, qui se raconte en décrivant la campagne qui l'entoure plutôt que de parler des particularités de sa vie, même si l'image qu'il nous laisse de lui à la fin du poème est peut-être la plus personnelle de toute la série. Les trois personnages font tous montre de l'indomptable esprit « américain » et ne regrettent en rien les vies différentes qu'ils ont vécues.

Dans mon arrangement de « Fiddler Jones », j'ai utilisé de nombreux idiomes franchement prétentieux du Bluegrass. « Charles Webster » est une exploration expressionniste d'une promenade du soir dans la campagne et « Lucinda Matlock » comporte une sorte de légèreté à la Martha Graham, avec différents modèles métriques changeants.

Viñetas Flamencas

Federico García Lorca écrivit six poèmes intitulés *Viñetas Flamencas* (Vignettes flamencas) pendant les années 1920, et il les inclut dans son livre, *Poema del Canto Jondo* (Poème du chant profond) en 1931. Le « Chant profond » : c'est le terme que l'on employait pour décrire la musique de flamenco et notamment le chant, qui atteint son apogée dans les années 1880. Au début du 20ème siècle toutefois, les changements politiques ayant lieu en Espagne firent craindre à un grand nombre des plus grands écrivains, poètes et musiciens que la forme artistique ne disparaisse.

García Lorca écrivit : « Le trésor artistique d'une race entière est sur le chemin de l'oubli… Les vieux emportent dans leur tombe les trésors inestimables des générations passées… ». Avec le compositeur Manuel de Falla, il essaya de fonder un Café Cantante (Café Flamenco), mais à la place, ils créèrent un concours annuel à Séville.

Viñetas Flamencas est le troisième cycle de chants espagnol que j'ai le plaisir d'avoir composé pour Mark Hernandez, et le quatrième qu'il a interprété en première. Depuis le moment où il m'a demandé d'arranger les *Six Caprices* de García Lorca, alors qu'il était encore étudiant au Conservatoire, travailler ensemble est demeuré pour chacun d'entre nous un immense plaisir.

En 2000, Mark et Esther Landau de Citywinds m'ont demandé d'arranger les *Viñetas* pour quintette à vent, ténor et piano. Chacun des six poèmes de l'œuvre représente un aspect différent du milieu du flamenco. Trois d'entre eux rendent hommage à trois musiciens du genre : Silverio Franconetti, Juan Breva et La Parrala. Les trois autres évoquent pareillement d'autres aspects de l'atmosphère lourde et enfumée du cœur de l'Espagne andalouse. Pour la musique, je me suis servi de diverses formes de flamenco ainsi que d'aspects de la *cancione* dont Mark a fait sa spécialité. Le piano permet d'entendre, dans l'orchestration, divers idiomes de la guitare flamenco. Une grande partie de ma musique contient des influences latines, et cette œuvre est un exemple typique de mon style d'écriture.

Viñetas Flamencas ramènera l'auditeur à l'aube du 20ème siècle, en Espagne, avec ses tavernes emplies de fumée, ses miroirs de verre vert, les jupes oscillantes des danseuses, les *grito terrible* (cris terribles) des chanteurs, les orangeraies et les plaines d'Andalousie.

Lucioles et saules

Pour moi, c'est un grand honneur que le Professeur Kunio Saura m'ait demandé de mettre en musique les magnifiques poèmes des maîtres Nakajima et Nozaki. L'intimité de leur poésie se prête parfaitement à la discipline du chant artistique. L'imagerie délicate et le manque apparent de rapport entre les poèmes de chaque groupe m'ont exhorté à trouver un langage harmonique et mélodique – « fils » communs de perception, pour ainsi dire, susceptibles de relier les images au sein d'une seule structure cohérente. Autre défi à relever, la forme classique « usuelle » exigeant un retour au matériel thématique d'origine ne convenait pas à ces poèmes qui dépeignent un « aller simple » d'une destination émotionnelle à une autre : toute récapitulation aurait affaibli l'effet d'être « ailleurs » – ou de se retrouver en fin de compte, physiquement ou émotionnellement, dans un endroit différent. Par conséquent, la forme des chants est devenue « strophique » – c'est-à-dire que l'ordre des états émotionnels des poèmes a dicté la structure de la musique.

Pour l'imagerie, j'ai conçu un langage musical de chants d'oiseaux, d'eau, de vent et autres éléments de la nature, entrelacés de gammes japonaises classiques, que je trouve particulièrement belles, et autres harmonies pentatoniques. Les rythmes ne sont jamais très éloignés de ceux de la danse, ce qui est une caractéristique commune à toute ma musique. Bien qu'il soit question d'une certaine forme de peinture narrative « impressionniste », comme avec les grenouilles du *Vieil étang* de Nakajima, ou les « eaux purement cristallines » du troisième haïku de Nozaki, il est aussi largement question d' « expressionnisme », c'est-à-dire de la description d'émotions évoquées par les images, plutôt que des images elles-mêmes. Il y a beaucoup de cela dans le premier chant de Nakajima, de même que dans les deuxième et cinquième haïkus de Nozaki. Je suis particulièrement heureux des résultats et très honoré d'avoir interprété ces morceaux avec des musiciens aussi exceptionnels.

Femme phénoménale

Phenomenal Woman (Femme phénoménale) est l'arrangement de sept chants pour voix solo et piano, composés sur des poèmes de Maya Angelou. La soprano Kathleen Sisco m'a commandé cette œuvre, qu'elle a également interprétée en première en 2004. La poésie d'Angelou, avec la fluidité intrinsèque de son rythme et de sa cadence, se prête toujours à la mise en musique. Ces sept poèmes incarnent la profonde compassion de la poétesse et sa foi dans l'indomptable esprit humain exprimé au féminin.

Dans cet arrangement qui n'est pas tant un « cycle » qu'un groupe de chansons de cabaret, chacune dépendant de celles qui l'entourent, je me suis écarté de la forme de corrélation dont j'use habituellement. J'ai en outre fortement changé de style d'une chanson à l'autre : jazz, blues, rock&roll, et théâtre musical sont tous présents. Et comme dans la plupart de mes compositions, puisant à part égale dans chacun des deux idiomes, la musique élargit les capacités techniques des musiciens tant pops que classiques.

David Garner, compositeur
Traduction française : Brigitte Zwerver-Berret

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