

MIST

Chamber Music by Janet Maguire

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The Composer

A singular figure in today's new music scene, **Janet Maguire** was the recipient of the 2008 Guggenheim Fellowship as well as a residence at Copland House (2006). Distinguished particularly by her arrangement of the Finale of Giacomo Puccini's Turandot with the exclusive use of the sketches he left for it at his death, and by her highly dramatic contemporary opera in three acts, *Hérésie*, Maguire has worked in a wide variety of musical expressions throughout some 50 orchestral, chamber, solo, vocal, choral and stage works.

Born in Chicago, raised in New Rochelle, New York, Janet Maguire began musical studies at the age of six (piano, French horn, cornet), took a BA degree with a major in piano at Colorado College, then went to Paris to study composition with René Leibowitz

for five years. They co-authored the book *Thinking for Orchestra* (G. Schirmer), the orchestration of Offenbach selections, *Nuits Parisiennes* (RCA, Bote & Bock) and Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Die Drei Pintos*. Several summers at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse and the music of Gyorgy Ligeti, Luigi Nono, Karlheinz Stockhausen influenced her style, and encounters with Iannis Xenakis in Paris considerably widened the horizon of sound for her. She continues to develop independent paths in musical thought, with the help of several musicians specializing in the unusual in music.

Maguire was music critic for the Paris *Herald Tribune* while in Paris; moving to Venice she founded and was elected President of the association Musica in Divenire, organizing concerts of new music, and she also received membership to the European Society for Culture. Her compositions have been heard throughout Italy and Germany, and in France, Spain, Ireland, England, the USA, Austria, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Latvia and Bulgaria. New World Records has issued a CD with seven of her works.

The Music

Mist and Mountain Pass in the Snow (2001) were commissioned as a birthday present for Joseph A. Precker and written on his poems. The work took on a Chinese flavor for its first performance in a concert hosted by CHIME, the Dutch association for Chinese music research, who had invited a few Chinese musicians from China for a week-long conference on Chinese music held in Venice at the Cini Foundation. CHIME asked us to organize a concert for the last day of the conference, with these Chinese musicians and Chinese music, so I wrote this piece for the occasion, borrowing Liu Fang and her Zheng, using a few Chinese percussion instruments, together with our Western instruments and performers. This is a live recording, taken at that performance; the recording engineer is Paolo Carrer.

First performance: September 2001, University Auditorium, Venice.

Mist

Mist obscures the valley
in which my beloved lies.
She came to me as a maiden
and I loved her dazzled eyes.

Now she is gone forever,
a cold stone lies upon her head.
They say “Take a new lover!”
But now, for me, love is dead.

I long once more to hold her
But the earth now holds her tight,
I never again may desert her
She died from my sudden flight

Mountain Pass in the Snow

Mountain pass in the snow
Tonight to sing with other poets I'd hoped
But the storm is strong
The night is cold
I must remain alone,
my songs in wine soaked

To drink, to talk, to gossip
To make of the world a game –
That is how we old poets feel life in our vein
But snow obscures the mountain pass,
We fool none but ourselves,
our youth is long gone
and the mellowed spirit inward delves

—Joseph A. Precker

Suonata (2005) was commissioned by Noriko Kawai and first performed by her at the Royal College of Music in London. The name of the piece was originally Sonata, but someone thought I simply did not know how to write a sonata, so we changed the title of the piece to something akin to its origins, “suonare,” meaning to play. The idea of the piece was taken from the original meaning of the word, “sonata,” sounded. It is made up of sounds which Kawai finds in abundance and in exceptional depth.

The photo of Kawai was taken at the Alicante Festival in Spain by Xavi M. Mirò. The recording engineer was James Buttery, at the Royal College of Music.

First performance: February 2, 2006, Royal College of Music, London

À Trois (2002) was commissioned by the Ex Novo Trio, who first performed it at the Udine Conservatory, then at the Antonio Salieri Auditorium in Legnago, where this recording was made. These musicians are accustomed to playing the most difficult works in the contemporary repertoire, a custom I took advantage of with some almost impossible passages.

First performance: January 30, 2005, Conservatory of Music, Udine

Frills (2002) was commissioned by the Director of the New Music Festival at Lodi, a pianist who was looking for “something new.” I tried to envision him at the piano when writing the piece, a charming, tall handsome young man who takes life very calmly and seriously and is fascinated by the unexpected in music.

Fumées d'Ivresse (1998) for four cellos was the first experience the Venice Cello Ensemble had with today's newest music, and became a challenge to prove their competence to their professor, Angelo Zanin, who plays with them. The Ensemble was formed by Zanin and three of his best pupils from the Venetian Conservatory Benedetto Marcello, and has now been encouraged to expand into eight elements and extend performances. We would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Norbert Le Gallais for hosting this recording at their home.

First performance: October 17, 2008, Palazzo Da Mula, Murano, Venice

Sketch (2008) was composed during the Christmas period 2008. I wrote it for Alessandro Fagioli, a particularly refined and sensitive violinist (Paul Klee Quartet), pointing out the delicate qualities of his playing, his rapid and almost imperceptible figurations, his sustained “piano” and lyricism. He very kindly offered to record it, even before a public performance could take place.

Variations (2005) was written for two members of the Paul Klee String Quartet with whom I have been working for several years. Having already performed my string quartets, and the two quintets, they thoroughly understand my music and I had absolute confidence in them. Andrea’s voluminous sound with his viola prompted me to give him a leading role in the piece — Alessandro’s virtuosity took me off on explorations of the higher register and into an intrigue of sounds. The two are so far apart it was a challenge to find a synthesis between them.

First performance: May 16, 2009, The Construction Company, New York

Tragedy (2006) takes its name from the oil painting by Paul Klee in which an arrow is shown plunging down into the center of a circle — a motion which Klee calls “mortal.” The painting is privately owned. The work begins with citations from Klee’s Creative Confessions and the voyage he describes there: a work of art begins with a dot. This dot begins to move and becomes a line. The line multiplies and turns into polyphony; polyphony moves through chiaroscuro tonalities and becomes a moment called a “grey point,” located between “becoming” and “disappearing;” there is a period when “remaining still notwithstanding all the possibilities of falling” is united with a “free thrust;” although these two seem to be opposites, they nevertheless find a “synthesis” between external vision and interior contemplation, a synthesis that travels toward a linear event, which, in turn, is interrupted by “spatial elements.” In the end, the voyage leads to the “mortal” inner circle. The musicians play in diminishing circles, finishing in a void.

This is a live recording made during a concert in the Palazzo Albrizzi, Venice.

First performance: August 26, 2006, at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice

Ebb and Flow (1998) resulted from the challenge to cover the space occupied by two grand pianos in a sizeable auditorium. The idea of the two instruments copying each other came naturally, and the independent contrasting determination of each became necessary.

First performance: 1999, Musica Nova Festival in Sofia (Bulgaria)

The Performers



Born in Kunming (China) in 1974, **Liu Fang** began playing the pipa (Chinese lute) at the age of six and performed as a child prodigy for the Queen of England during a royal visit to China. Liu Fang received a number of provincial and national prizes, and graduated in 1993 from the Shanghai Conservatory where she also learned to play the guzheng. In 1996 Liu Fang moved to Montreal and began an impressive international career: concerts all over the world, solo recitals at prestigious venues and festivals such as the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris,

the Philharmonic Hall of Liège, Belgium (2006), BBC concerts in London (2003, 2007), the Bath International Music Festival (2004) and the York Early Music Center (2008), the TFF Rudolfstadt 2006 and the WOMAD Festival in the UK (2004) and Spain (2006), Festival des “musiques du monde des suds” à Arles (France), etc. She has produced nine CDs (solo and collaborations) and often appears on radio and TV. Liu Fang was awarded the Millennium Prize for Future Generations by the Canada Council for the Arts in 2001 and the prestigious French Academie Charles Cros Award (the French “Grammy”) in 2006.



Noriko Kawai studied at the Royal College of Music, London and the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. She is currently Professor of Piano at the RCM and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Kawai has given many recitals and broadcasts throughout the world and is well known for the extraordinary range of her repertoire from Renaissance composers to new music, and innovative programmes juxtaposing standard and contemporary works.

During recent seasons she has performed at festivals in Aldeburgh, Bath, Huddersfield, Macerata, Paris, Strasbourg, Brussels, Berlin, Valencia, Alicante, Oslo and Bludenz. She has given concerts with the Leopold String Trio, the Arditti Quartet and Quatuor Diotima, and duo recitals with violinist Irvine Arditti and cellist Rohan de Saram.

For the NMC label Kawai has recorded works by Gerald Barry and James Dillon's *The Book of Elements* Volumes I-V. The latter received unanimous critical acclaim, including 'Editor's Choice' in *Gramophone* (September 2004). Her earlier Skryabin recital CD from Live Notes, Japan, was also hailed as a major artistic achievement ("...rivalling the greats of the so-called Golden Age...one of the great Skryabin recitals on disc."). Her most recent recording is of chamber music by Dillon and features works for violin and piano and piano quintet, with Irvine Arditti and the Arditti Quartet.

Kawai gave the world première of Dillon's Piano Concerto with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ilan Volkov at the BBC Proms, and subsequent performances at the City Halls Glasgow and Musica Strasbourg. She also performed Lachenmann's piano concerto, "Ausklang," in 'Transcendent — the Music of Helmut Lachenmann' presented by the Royal College of Music and the London Sinfonietta.

Conductor **Giovanni Mancuso** has developed a busy concert career as a pianist and conductor. He has recorded for the Norwegian Broadcasting Company and for RAI. As a composer he has won competitions including the Grieg Memorial in Oslo, and the Castagneto Carducci in Livorno, among others. He is founder and leader of the ensemble Laboratorio Novamusic, based in Venice, which has given the world premieres of works

by Fabio Nieder, Olga Neuwirth, Luca Mosca and Betty Olivero. Laboratorio Novamusic was the featured ensemble in the 2000 Biennale Musica festival in Venice.



The **Trio** is part of the **Ex Novo Ensemble**, one of the finest ensembles in Europe specialising in today's new music. Formed in 1979 together with Claudio Ambrosini, the outstanding Venetian composer, the Ensemble has distinguished itself for its particular "sound" as well as for its virtuosity, performing in all the major

European festivals, and in New York and Chicago; they have also been heard on the principal European radio stations. Recordings have appeared on the labels Arts, ASV, Black Box, Dynamic, Naxos, Stradivarius, Ricordi and others.

The Trio itself has enjoyed considerable acclaim throughout the Veneto Region in Italy, where it is often requested for intimate concerts in the numerous small, historic halls which abound in the area, such as the Antonio Salieri hall in Legnago, the birthplace of Salieri, where this recording was made.



Alessia Toffanin, after graduating from the Padua Conservatory, studied with Vincenzo Pertile and Eugenio Bagnoli for chamber music primarily, and she has since collaborated with many ensembles throughout Italy and in Spain, France, Belgium, Ireland, England, Switzerland and the Czech Republic in concerts and festivals, winning many awards.

She enjoys dance and often plays for the "étoiles" in dance programs; she plays regularly with the Interensemble of Padua; she often plays in duo with Alessandro Fagioli, violin, and in recital with many singers. She has a marked talent for the interpretation of today's new music. She took the diploma II for chamber music at the Rovigo Conservatory; has recorded for the RAI, national Italian radio, the Croatian radio, the Spanish National Radio and for the Cramps, Rivoalta and Taukay labels. She teaches at the Milan Conservatory.



The **Venice Cello Ensemble** was formed recently by Angelo Zanin, Professor at the Venetian Conservatory Benedetto Marcello, with his best students. He had played with the cello ensemble Villa Lobos, with some of the finest cellists in Italy, and wanted to recreate the spirit of friendship, professionalism, devotion and pure pleasure, which existed in that group with his students. Their repertory so far includes music written specifically for them and works by Carlo Boccadoro, Lorenzo Ferrero, Giorgio Ferrari, Joaquin Rodrigo and Hans Werner Henze. They also play in a group of eight cellists. In addition, Zanin is cellist of the Quartetto d'Archi di Venezia.



Formed in Venice in 1996, the **Paul Klee String Quartet** takes its roots in the well known repertory of the 21st century, while maintaining an active interest in the new music of today. A few of their more significant appearances include: concerts at the International Festival of Santander, at the International Festival of Alicante and at the National Auditorium, Madrid, in Spain; concerts at the Galway Arts Festival and at the National Concert Hall Dublin, in Ireland; concerts in La Fenice Theatre Venice and the Peggy Guggenheim

Collection Venice, for the Regio Theatre in Parma, the Cantiere d'Arte of Montepulciano, the Nuovi Spazi Musicali season and the Romaeuropa Festival, Rome, in Italy; as well as performances in Istanbul, Lisbon, Hamburg, Salzburg, Ljubljana and for Music Under Construction, New York.

The Quartet has collaborated with several internationally famous musicians, among them Jean-Pierre Armengaud, Michel Portal, Tan Dun, Liu Fang, and Francis Silkstones. In the year 2004 the ensemble was Quartet in Residence at the Abbaye Royale Cultural Center in Fontevraud, France. In 2005 it was awarded a commission from the Isabella Scelsi Foundation in Rome for their promotion of Giacinto Scelsi's string quartets. The 2006 season ended with a noteworthy concert, organized by the Cultural Attaché of the French Embassy and the French Consulate, of works by Olivier Messaien, Henri Dutilleux and Iannis Xenakis, held in the main hall of La Fenice Opera House, Venice. At present the Quartet enjoys a residence in France with Evry University, Paris.

The Quartet has recorded on the Stradivarius, Niccolo and New World Records labels. Their recording of the entire quartet works by Philip Glass has recently come out on the Blue Serge label.



Guido Facchin, Venetian, graduated from the Venice Conservatory, became lead percussionist with La Fenice Theater's orchestra, then won a competition to become professor of Percussion at the Vicenza Conservatory, where he created the well known Tammittam Percussion Ensemble, with which he traveled to several countries and throughout Italy. Facchin is author of the monumental and exhaustive book, *Le Percussioni*, considered the most thorough and in depth volume yet written on percussion, instruments, their origins and history, notation and practical methods.

Cinzia Honorat took a doctorate at Johannesburg University, winning several prizes, then worked as solo percussionist and timpanist with South African orchestras. Moving to



Italy, she played with the Sicilian Symphony in Palermo as timpanist, then several other Italian orchestras. She is a member of the Tammittam Percussion Ensemble, with whom she has made recordings and toured. She is now teacher of percussion at the Trieste Conservatory.

Annunziata Dellisanti graduated from the Venice Conservatory, where she now is professor of percussion. She is founding member of the Ex Novo Ensemble, with whom she has traveled extensively. In 2007 she took a doctorate at Venice University in musicology, with a thesis on hand drums as feminine instruments. She also

has performed widely in solo concerts, ensembles (Tammittam, Ex Novo, etc) and various instrumental combinations.