

ANGELICA – Program Notes

In search of a common thread for this program, my strongest sense of unification is that many of the twentieth-century pieces evolve from spiritual inspirations with the goal of transcending earthly confines. After solidifying my musical interpretations, I believe that four of the pieces contain messages beyond the notes, rhythms and melodies that comprise music. The spiritual aspects of these pieces made me feel as a type of “messenger” engaged in a non-verbal realm of communication. The music and pure sound, unencumbered by the burden of thought, are the vehicles through which one passes or connects to the metaphysical world. **Angelica** is derived from the Greek word “*aggelos*” which means messenger. Universally, angels are distinguished as mediators and messengers between the human and the divine. My hope is that these pieces will reveal their message of transcendence to every open mind willing to make the journey through sound.

Peter Ware’s **Elegy** opens poetically as a mournful remembrance for a departed soul. Beginning with slow chords, it proceeds into a triple meter *Andante*. The melodic line imparts a sacred quality similar to Gregorian chant. Accompanying notes and chords are heard in counterpoint, in quiet response to the melody. The **Totentanz** is a dance of death, representing bodily muscle spasms at the moment of death. Fifteenth and sixteenth-century artists such as Holbein and Dürer depicted death as a gruesome fiddler, with medieval dancers costumed as skeletons. The *Totentanz* has a perky character, not without an element of jest. It opens with a four-note motive (or single affection) which is spun out in a Baroque fashion to pervade the entire musical fabric. Use of motoric rhythm sustains a sense of momentum, until the ending where it winds down majestically.

Three for Guitar by Bruce Bielawa, is a dreamscape of sound in which fragments of music emerge as images in a dream. In a dream, disparate elements are juxtaposed, consisting of part memory and part subconscious fears or desires with frequent shifts of location and scenery. Images are seen and heard, and perceived with meanings felt through emotion rather than reason. An introduction opens the first movement and leads to a wave-like figuration. A delicate triplet section follows. The opening motive returns, but leads this time to an aggressive passage which comes to rest in a tranquil closing. The second movement opens in a declamatory, recitative style. An aria passage opens with an arpeggio figure which sets the mood for a beautiful, long-breathed melody. The declamatory material returns and ends with an allusion to the arpeggio figure. The third movement takes form as a dissonant dialogue between high and low notes the guitar. Syncopations characterize a section marked “funk”, a nightmarish revelry in rhythmic aggression. Towards the end, the emotional spectrum shifts to include the lyrical, grandiose and melancholy.

Daniel Nightingale’s **a la luz de la luna llena** translates as “in the light of the full moon”. It is the musical description of a walk along the shores of the Delaware River on a moonlit night. Evocative tonal imagery creates a magic that transcends that time and place. Composed in a contemporary Spanish idiom, a slow introduction proceeds “darkly” in an improvisatory style. High and low registers of the guitar are explored, while snap pizzicati add a dramatic effect. A fantasia-like form follows, recapturing the mystery and wonder.

Another New Beginning II by Greg Steinke, draws inspiration from a poem by K’os Naahaabii in which the poet having survived a night of misery is able to rise above in the freshness of morning air and soar with the nighthawk. The composer also draws upon the horrific events in the lives of the Jews as depicted in *Schindler’s List*. Evoking images of the first stanza of the poem, the first section is comprised of timbral gestures, each one set apart as independent thought, but having grown out of the previous. A second lyrical section captures images of the third stanza’s transcendence. Next heard is an evocation of gun shots and people scurrying, portrayed musically through novel effects on the guitar. The lyrical section returns in a triumphantly soaring conclusion.

Added to this program of evocative pieces are three pieces, including Ferdinando Sor’s **Variations on a Theme by Mozart**. A dramatic introduction precedes the statement of Mozart’s theme. The theme itself, taken from *The Magic Flute*, bespeaks the beauty of Mozart in its natural simplicity and symmetry. Complemented by Sor’s flare and idiomatic writing for the guitar, these variations sparkle, standing as a favorite in the repertoire.

Doug Dawson’s **Baltimore Sonata** is a contemporary work which combines traditional classical language and form with jazz harmonies and melodies. The first and third movements are lively with an unflinching rhythmic energy. Interspersed into this highly original marriage of genres are some common jazz riffs, heard most abundantly in the slower second movements. The effect is a wonderful tongue-in-cheek nod to jazz, and the relaxed feel of swing.

Pavanas and **Canarios** are popular pieces by Spanish composer Gaspar Sanz that need little in the way of description. The slower *Pavanas* sets up a contrast to the lively dance of *Canarios*.

- Lynn Harting-Ware

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Greg Steinke (b. 1942, Fremont, Michigan) holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin Conservatory, a Master of Music degree from Michigan State University, a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Iowa, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Michigan State University. He served nine years as National Chairman of the Society of Composers, Inc. and is active as a composer and oboe soloist specializing in contemporary music.

Bruce Bielawa (b. 1967, San Francisco, California) grew up in a family of musicians in San Francisco, performing contemporary music from an early age on the violin and piano under his father's direction, composer Herbert Bielawa. He received degrees in composition from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the Yale School of Music and holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan.

Daniel Nightingale (b. 1950, Aurora, Illinois) currently lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His compositions for guitar are strongly idiomatic and evocative. **Doug Dawson** (b. 1947, New York City, New York) obtained degrees from the American University in Washington, D.C. An Associate Professor of Music at American University between 1973 and 1982, he is now a free-lance composer living in Maryland.

Peter Ware (b. 1951, Richmond, Virginia) holds degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University and Yale University. Music was always an integral part of his life, singing in the church choir and studying piano with Florence Robertson in Beethoven's lineage. Composition teachers at Yale included Krzysztof Penderecki and Toru Takemitsu. He has evolved with a unique voice, both distinctive and attractive. His merit has been recognized through commissions and grants from the Ontario Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts and Canada Council.

Lynn Harting-Ware has premiered and commissioned numerous compositions. Her dedication and musicality inspire composers, drawing them in to the intimacies of the guitar. Her dramatic musical flair, beautiful tone, and variety of timbre completely absorb her audience. She received a Master of Music Degree from Kent State University and Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of Cincinnati/College Conservatory of Music. Her desire and commitment to establish a twentieth-century guitar repertory leads her ambition in publishing an annual catalog of contemporary guitar music for Acoma-Nambe Editions. Her compact disc recordings include **Forest Scenes** (GXD-5733), **The Many Moods of the Guitar** (GXD 5732) and **Impossible Dream** (GXD 5733). Ms. Harting-Ware performs exclusively on D'Addario strings.

Another New Beginning

The sun rose with magic
This morning –
Fresh and clear, like other
Mornings after
It has rained during the night
Cleansing the dry-damp air
With rain and soft warm dry breezes

The night had been long
Full of depressing thoughts
And disappointing interactions
With people cursing the earth,
And each other.

The Nighthawk soars outside
My window in the morning air
Bright with magic
And I soar with him.

- K'os Naahaabii (Don Jordon)

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