



DAVID DEVASTO | JOHN G. BILOTTA | PAULA DIEHL

CRIMSON & LACE

MODERN WORKS FOR VOICE

SCOTT UDDENBERG BARITONE

SARITA CANNON SOPRANO

BRADFORD GLEIM BARITONE

CRIMSON & LACE

On CRIMSON & LACE, Navona Records' compilation of modern works for voice and chamber ensemble, composers David DeVasto, John G. Bilotta, and Paula Diehl present works that depict the struggles as well as the rewards of human experience, such as heartache, death, love, hope, uncertainty, tragedy, and the resilience of the human spirit.

Winter Seven for baritone, choir, flute, viola, and piano by David DeVasto presents seven images of winter and the “wintry,” cold, even brutal aspects of human experience. From natural phenomena to the Black Plague and the Civil War, this seven-movement work depicts a cycle of winter itself, from the onset of chill to the first glimpses of spring, illustrating a struggle toward some intimation of acceptance and hope.

John G. Bilotta's *The Song of the Hermit Thrush* for soprano, flute, oboe, violin, viola, and violoncello uses text from a section of Walt Whitman's poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.” The excerpt is a celebration, welcoming “the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death.”

Paula Diehl's works *Anyone* and *Wedding Day* use the composer's system of composition called separation, which uses overlapping 4ths as the working intervals, gradually separating them in phases until total separation is achieved. In the latter piece, the narrator discusses the uncertainty and fear reflected in the bride on her wedding day. *Anyone* is inspired by the quote: “Light frames what is, but the Dark holds in place what is not” – a reflection of the uncertainty and obscurity of life.

WINTER SEVEN DAVID DeVASTO

Winter Seven presents seven images of literal winter and the more “wintry,” cold, even brutal aspects of human experience. The images range from such natural phenomena as frosted leaves, running wolves, and budding crocuses, to natural disasters (the Black Death) and human violence (the Civil War), as the songs struggle toward some intimation of acceptance and hope.

Though the songs are independent of one another, two formal structures bind them together. Stylistically, they are arranged in a sort of palindromic structure: Songs 1 & 7 share a similar mood, arrangement, and pacing, as do Songs 2 & 6 and 3 & 5. The cycle also suggests a movement through winter itself, with Song 1 showing the transition from late autumn to early winter, Song 4 the solstice, and Song 7 the first hint of spring. Though the movement is generally one of increasing darkness relieved only toward the end, Song 4, set in the deepest part of winter, is a serene hymn of mystical transcendence.

One further aspect of the work is its blend of ancient and modern themes (urban bloodshed, ancient plagues) supported by appropriate verbal and musical styles. The language is sometimes contemporary, sometimes archaic, while the music suggests different eras through its instrumentation, musical quotation, and interval combinations. The work represents a collaboration between the composer, lyricist, and students and faculty of the Elmhurst College Music Department, and was made possible by a generous grant from the College.

- Lance Wilcox
www.lancewilcox.net

THE SONG OF THE HERMIT THRUSH

JOHN G. BILOTTA

The Song of the Hermit Thrush is a setting of “Death Carol” from Section 14 of Walt Whitman’s “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d.” The work was commissioned by videographer Nancy R. Bogen. It is written for soprano, flute, oboe, violin, viola and violoncello. The work was premiered on February 22, 2014 in Palo Alto CA, at the annual NACUSAsf (The National Association of Composer, USA - San Francisco) Composers and Friends Concert. The piece was sung by Sarita Cannon accompanied by the Divisa Ensemble (Tomiko Tsai, flute; Adrienne Malley, oboe; Eugenia Wie, violin; Stephanie Ng, viola; Sara Styles, violoncello).

- John G. Bilotta

ANYONE PAULA DIEHL

In early 2011, I started writing music in a rather different style, one in which I decided to include words, my own words even, that would go with this new type of musical thinking.

I wanted a title for a song I had started. I was pleased with the music and even with words, but after a while, the need for a title nagged at me. At this time I was also involved with a drama group in Philadelphia. At a meeting, a playwright asked a few of us to describe the life of the “undead” for a play.

I found one definition on Google (of all places), which threw me. It started with, “The ‘day’ holds no hope for the undead” . . . but these next words won me over: “Light frames what is, but the Dark holds in place what is not.” These words first brought to me the title, “A Mother,” but it felt limited, and finally I changed it to “Anyone.” It seemed perfectly reasonable to me that ‘anyone, a man or a woman, could qualify as “undead.”’

- Paula Diehl

WEDDING DAY PAULA DIEHL

April 16, 2015: I looked again at the score I'll be writing about here: *Wedding Day*. The date it gave for writing the words was the same as that for writing the music, 2011. It didn't sound right to me. A short while later, I found another copy of the score. Again, above 2011, was written a year, this time "1995?" That sounded more likely, though I wasn't satisfied. Finally, I found my pile containing only poems, found "Wedding Day" almost at the top. Written in 1993, it said. Issue resolved.

Another issue arose. The word suggest they are spoken either by a man or a woman, each of whom know the bride well enough to be related to her. However, a young bride is not going to talk about herself using such words as found here, not aloud, not even in silence. My preference for the male voice helped the choice to jell.

Here, the early use of the Indirect style of Separation music was deemed perfect for "an earlier time" in the music. The Indirect working intervals make the pitches of the Fourths sound as if they are being spoken from the past, but for the speaker, they are very much in the present.

The Direct style of Separation music enters again at measure 22. The music continues to move forward, still in Direct style, into Phase III at measure 42. By measure 57, the Indirect style of Separation returns. It sounds until the end, at measure 79.

- Paula Diehl

DAVID DeVASTO

David DeVasto is a composer and pianist, having presented work in the United States and Europe, including The IAEF International Summer Arts Institute, The Society of Composers, The Council for Undergraduate Research, The Christian Fellowship of Art Music Composers, Electronic Music Midwest, The Iowa Composers Forum, Nevada Encounters of New Music, The Electro-Acoustic Juke Joint, and The Midwest Composers Symposium. In addition to his featured work on Navona Records, DeVasto also appears on several recordings as a pianist, including Tim O'Dell's *Dreams of Pangea*, Tom Ott's *Living Language*, and his independent release, *Reflection*. DeVasto teaches music theory, composition, orchestration, and piano at Elmhurst College. Prior to Elmhurst, he served on the music faculties at McKendree University and Lindenwood University. He completed his Ph.D. in Music at The University of Iowa in 2009, having studied with David Gompper.

devasto.net



JOHN G. BILOTTA

John G. Bilotta (b. 1948) was born in Waterbury CT, but has spent most his life in the San Francisco Bay Area where he studied composition with Frederick Saunders. He is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and studied at the San Francisco Music & Arts Institute. Bilotta's works have been performed by soloists and ensembles around the world including Rarescale, Earplay, the Talea Ensemble, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, Chamber Mix, Musica Nova, the Avenue Winds, the Presidio Ensemble, the Boston String Quartet, the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Kiev Philharmonic, the Oakland Civic Orchestra, San Francisco Cabaret Opera, Bluegrass Opera, Boston Metro Opera, Thompson Street Opera, New Fangled Opera, and VocalWorks. His first opera *Aria da Capo* was a finalist at the New York City Opera, and his second opera *Quantum Mechanic* won the 2007 Opera-in-a-Month competition and the 2010 Americana Festival Award. Bilotta's music is available on Capstone Records, New Music North, Beauport Classical Recordings, ERMMedia, Bouddi Music/Australia, and Navona Records, and is distributed by Naxos. Bilotta serves on the Board of Directors for Goat Hall Productions and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc.

johnbilotta.com



PAULA DIEHL

Paula Jespersen Diehl came to New Jersey from China as an infant with her Danish parents and older brother. From her time of awareness, she heard music in the home. She and each of her three brothers studied a musical instrument; her mother listened to opera and played Danish songs on the piano for the children to sing, and her father and an uncle sang Danish songs. Diehl soon hated piano lessons with a passion and begged her mother incessantly to let her stop, which she finally did. An about-face occurred twenty years later. It started with the purchase of an old piano, playing on it simple Stephen Foster songs, other simple American songs, and simple Bach works, and ended with a decision to return to college to study music.

During semesters at American University in Washington DC, while she was taking courses needed to enter a master's program, Diehl and two peers fervently discussed the need to have a new composition system. In 1978, Diehl came up with one. She named it "Separation."

Separation was barely acknowledged by the Temple University music professors with whom Diehl studied for her master's. In spite of this, between homework and travel into the city of Philadelphia, she started writing pieces of music according to the strict regulations the system imposed. Before graduating in 1982 with an M.M., she formed the group SOUNDS, a 4 to 6 member ensemble, to perform pre-structured improvisations according to the Separation system.

In 1985 Diehl entered the field of dance, writing music to represent her choreographic ideas as well as choreographing dance to represent her musical ideas. By 1992, having said more or less what she wanted to in dance, she left the field but continued writing music on a regular basis. Diehl has had several works recorded, varying from choral pieces, string quartets, orchestral works, and chamber ensemble pieces. Her works have been featured on the Navona compilations PARADIGMS (2012) and ELEMENTS RISING (2015).



WINTER SEVEN
DAVID DeVASTO

Winter Seven
by **LANCE WILCOX**

I. The Green
II. Sudden

I. The Green

The sun, what did he think
When he rose today
To find white etching
On the curled leaves?
Did he mourn for swallows
That had flown away?

The green is gone from everything.

The glorious dance hall
Is shuttered and dark.
The tables are empty,
The candles are cold,
The horns and the strings
Locked up in their cases.
Gone are the dancers
In crimson and lace.

The green is gone from everything.

Drowsing snowflakes
Tangle in the twigs,
Looking for a place
To sleep out their lives.

II. Sudden

Did anyone see it!
Oh! The blood!
Someone call!
Put pressure there!

The streetlights soar
Like crazy moons
Above the spreading stain.
The neon writhes
Like snakes of fire
Hissing in the rain.

Has anyone called?
Keep them back!
Keep them away!
I can't make it stop!

But life escapes
Beneath his hand.
No force can hold it there.
And as it fades
A siren's wail
Comes crying down the air.

They're almost here!
Stay with me!
Just keep breathing!

Hang onto my voice!
Stay with me!
Stay with me!

WINTER SEVEN
DAVID DeVASTO

Winter Seven

by **LANCE WILCOX**

III. Issa's Lament

IV. Solstice

V. Shiloh

III. Issa's Lament

Forgive the words, those errant moths;
If they knew of pain, they would pity.

The words flew up, the sunlight paled.
The stones wavered and went hollow.

Brothers, sisters, don't ask why.
Is there any love you have left untold?

A world of dew is a world of dew,
And yet, and yet . . .

IV. Solstice

On a beautiful bitter windless night,
The snow is sparkling blue and bright.
The gray wolves run in the lunar light
On lakes of marble shining white.

On a beautiful bitter night so clear,
As you stand on Earth you can almost hear
Venus arcing in her crystal sphere
As the shimmering Northern Lights appear.

Through nights of great solemnity
Each gem-encrusted galaxy
Performs a healing liturgy
For Earth in her long agony.

May the ancient light of the nebulae
Fall like rain on your newborn eyes.
May the ancient grace of the Pleiades
Calm your heart and grant you ease.

V. Shiloh

Lanterns move through blowing rain,
Guided by the howls of pain.
Dying soldiers torn and rent
Lie beside the surgeon's tent.
Barely boys, they seem to him
Like choirs of ruined cherubim.

When the cannon leave the field
And the wounded land is healed,
Deer will nibble at the buds
Nourished by the children's blood,
And the nation hear the hymns
Sung by weeping cherubim.

No more speeches! No more drums!
Leave the flags beside the guns!
O'er the surgeon's bloody tent
Voices call us to repent
For ev'ry mound of severed limbs
From the dying cherubim.

WINTER SEVEN
DAVID DeVASTO

Winter Seven

by **LANCE WILCOX**

VI. London, 1665

VII. The Crocus

VI. London, 1665

Rats in the street!
Broad daylight, mind you!
Dead in the markets!
Dying in the mud!

Down by the docklands
Sailors run mad,
Festering buboes
Break up their joints.

The black tokens
On the babies' legs!
The mothers' cries
Shatter the streets!

Carts in the alley—
Bring out your dead!
The burial pits
Bubble with lime!

What medicine—
What amulet—
Or is this the Fire
To finish the Flood?

VII. The Crocus

Your hand is aching
From clutching the sword.
Your arm aches in the shield.
You've drawn enough blood,
And the wounds you've received
Begin to stiffen and chill.

It is time to be gentle at last.

Let an old warrior lead you
To a good chair by the fire.
Let him heat a basin of water
And gently bathe your wounds.
Your enemy will join you there,
In gauze where the iron fell.

It is time to be gentle at last.

Snow falls again and it's quiet.
Nature heals herself in death.
Cast every sword in the river!
Disarm. Drink your wine. And rest.
Beneath the snow the crocus wakes.
The promise is being kept.

It is time to be gentle at last.

**THE SONG OF THE HERMIT
THRUSH JOHN G. BILOTTA**

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd
(Death Carol: Section 14, Lines 28-55)
by **WALT WHITMAN**

Come, lovely and soothing Death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate Death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious;
And for love, sweet love—But praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death.

Dark Mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee—I glorify thee above all;
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong Deliveress!
When it is so—when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee—adornments and feastings for thee;
And the sights of the open landscape, and the high-spread sky, are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night, in silence, under many a star;
The ocean shore, and the husky whispering wave, whose voice I know;
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd Death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song!
Over the rising and sinking waves—over the myriad fields, and the prairies wide;
Over the dense-pack'd cities all, and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O Death!

ANYONE
PAULA DIEHL

Anyone
texts by **PAULA DIEHL**

Going out alone, yes, alone upon the way
Going out on heights which are beyond the light
Going out so very far that no one
can recall the time in which the sorrow was
Thus, go alone, again, again, and then again
until the light reclaims the bitterness which was upon the day.
Which fell and fell, and fell again, because no other way
Allowed the time to intervene between the broken ends
Which scored the way.

WEDDING DAY
PAULA DIEHL

Wedding Day
texts by **PAULA DIEHL**

Aloof, not really wanted. Far away from home
Afraid, looking not quite front saying not so much
Straining forward feeling it in vain
Standing also upnight looking for a single loaded
word to give the vows some room to live
The words flew forth to fall along the path
They took with them the veil which covered up the densely crowded inner room
as walls collapsed as feelings floated heavily along the waiting track
the seal was pressed which carried forth the cloven air.

WINTER SEVEN David DeVasto

David DeVasto, conductor | Scott Uddenberg, baritone; Jennie Brown, flute; Ben Weber, viola;
Soyoung Kee, piano; Elmhurst College Chamber Singers (Directed by Susan Moninger)

- 1 I. The Green 3:28**
- 2 II. Sudden 1:42**
- 3 III. Issa's Lament 4:16**
- 4 IV. Solstice 3:53**
- 5 V. Shiloh 3:30**
- 6 VI. London, 1665 1:52**
- 7 VII. The Crocus 6:34**

8 THE SONG OF THE HERMIT THRUSH John G. Bilotta 8:21

Sarita Cannon, soprano;
Divisa Ensemble | Tomiko Tsai, flute; Adrienne Malley, oboe;
Eugenia Wie, violin; Stephanie Ng, viola; Sara Styles, violoncello

9 ANYONE Paula Diehl 4:15

Bradford Gleim, baritone; Chiharu Naruse, piano

10 WEDDING DAY Paula Diehl 4:18

Bradford Gleim, baritone; Chiharu Naruse, piano

ELMHURST COLLEGE CHAMBER SINGERS

DIRECTED BY SUSAN MONINGER

CHAMBER SINGERS

ACCOMPANIST Mary Gibson

SOPRANO

Erin Rogers
Victoria Schuler
Petra Wasilkoff
Gina Carlson
Alison Hibsche
Breena Lanphier
Melissa O'Neill

ALTO

Ella Bracero
Nicole Insko
Teresa Novak
Hanna Stewart
Emily Durham
Jenna Hesseln
Sara Koga
Hope Moore

TENOR

Tim Kirby
Jonathan Tatar
Jason Thompson
Seth Durbin
Brandon Pisano
Stephan Carlson

BARITONE

Gianfranco Calafiore
Joshua Kou
Mack Logan
Josh McGehee
Scott Stolarz

BASS

Tyler Brodeur
Andrew Courington
Russell Erickson
Alex Stombres

Tracks 1-7 recorded April 14 and 21, 2014 in Hammerschmidt Chapel at Elmhurst College, Elmhurst Illinois and was mixed in The Gretsch Recording Studio at Elmhurst College IL

Session Producer **David DeVasto**

Sound Engineer **John Towner**

Track 8 recorded February 16, 2014 at the Center for New Music in San Francisco CA

Recording Engineer **Shanna Sordahl**

Multitrack/Sound Editing Engineer **Mark Lemaire**

Tracks 9 & 10 recorded November 20, 2014
at Futura Productions in Roslindale MA

Session Producer **Andy Happel**

Session Engineer **John Weston**

Executive Producer **Bob Lord**

Audio Director **Jeff LeRoy**

Editing Mixing Mastering **Shaun Michaud**

Art & Production Director **Brett Picknell**

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