



THE BOWED PIANO ENSEMBLE  
& FIRE

# AFTERNOON OF A FIRE

(2012)

At noon on June 23, 2012, the second-most destructive wildfire in Colorado history ignited in the dry pine forest in Waldo Canyon, a popular hiking area in the Ute Pass area a few miles west of Colorado Springs, home of Colorado College and The Bowed Piano Ensemble. Two people died in the fire, which was still burning in August, and more than three hundred houses were destroyed. The College and other institutions in the city opened their doors, offering shelter to citizens evacuated from their homes. On July 4th the Colorado Springs Philharmonic Orchestra teamed with other institutions to present a benefit concert, raising about \$300,000 for community relief efforts. News stories in September indicated that fire investigators had concluded that the fire was human-caused. In the autumn of 2012 I composed *Afternoon of a Fire*, my effort to commemorate the tragic event and the heroic work of at least 8,000 fire fighters from several states and local volunteers serving the needs of dispossessed residents. In this work I felt it would also be important culturally and historically to evoke the memory of the Ute Indians, who were indigenous to the Ute Pass and Manitou Springs area long before white Europeans settled the region and established Colorado Springs. To this end, I created a structure to include improvised solos on three different Native American flutes by Ms. Ruano.

# NEW YORK DRONES

(2006)

The Ensemble premiered this piece on October 26 and 28, 2006 at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center and the Allen Room, Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, in New York. The work is dedicated to the great American composer Steve Reich in honor of his 70th birthday that month. Without his brilliant and sustained vision, our contemporary musical language would be much poorer.

I personally owe Steve a great debt of gratitude; as a young and inexperienced composer, I went to Ghana in 1970 to study polyrhythmic drumming and by chance met Steve, who was there for the same reason and whom I knew of and admired for his early compositions *Come Out and Violin Phase*. He took me under his wing and gave me a listening and score-reading tour of his current work. Later I collaborated with Terry Riley, one of Steve's important influences, and the music of these two composers, along with jazz, became my most significant inspiration as I began to develop my own musical ideas.

In this piece I have interpreted the concept of drones quite liberally to encompass not only long-sustained tones but also repeating rhythms on one pitch or repeating melodic and harmonic patterns in a single mode. Perhaps paradoxically, the work is also marked by more changes in tempo than might be expected in its relatively short span.

# VOCALISE ON "IN A SILENT WAY"

(2001)

*Vocalise* is a setting, without text, of a melody composed by Joe Zawinul, the late, great Austrian jazz pianist and a significant voice in the bands of Miles Davis and Cannonball Adderley, as well as in the group he co-founded with saxophonist Wayne Shorter, Weather Report. In the opening section, which has no discernable pulse or meter, the soprano limns the three-phrase melody with accompaniment by drones and other sustained tones in the piano, then becomes accompanimental herself as the piano restates the theme. The melody is then heard a third time, again in the soprano line, but with a lilting piano backdrop in a meter of twelve and incorporating plucked and hammered strings.

# AURORA FICTA

(2008)

*"The False Dawn speaks of truth,  
But its light lasts only one or two breaths."*

*--Jami, 1414-1492 (Persia)*

We premiered this tone poem in 2009 while we were Ensemble in Residence at SUNY Fredonia's New Sound Festival. The work is meant to evoke the astronomical phenomenon known to the ancients as "false dawn," and known today as Zodiacal light, described by NASA astronomy writer Tammy Plotner as "a dimly glowing triangle rising up from the horizon ...[created] where sunlight reflects off dust particles in the Solar System." My aim here is to evoke through sound the romance, color and mystery of the False Dawn celebrated by Persian poets of the Middle Ages, most famously in the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam (c. 1120), as in the 200th quatrain:

*When false dawn streaks the east with cold, gray line,  
Pour in your cups the pure blood of the vine;  
The truth, they say, tastes bitter in the mouth,  
This is a token that the "Truth" is wine.*

*- Translated by E. H. Whinfield*

# "LA GUITARRA"

from the song cycle *Paisajes Audibles/Audible Landscapes* (2002)

*Paisajes Audibles/Sounding Landscapes* was my first major composition to integrate the human voice with bowed piano. The work was commissioned by Other Minds Festival and Meet the Composer Commissioning Music/USA. Ms. Hansen and the Ensemble premiered the work at the 2002 Visual Music Festival in Lanzarote, Canary Islands.

*The weeping of the guitar begins.  
The goblets of dawn are smashed.  
The weeping of the guitar begins.  
Useless to silence it.  
Impossible to silence it.  
It weeps monotonously  
as water weeps  
as the wind weeps  
over snowfields.  
Impossible  
to silence it.  
It weeps for distant  
things.  
Hot southern sands  
yearning for white camellias.  
Weeps arrow without target  
evening without morning  
and the first dead bird  
on the branch.  
Oh, guitar! Heart mortally wounded  
by five swords.*

*- Spanish lyric from *Poema del Cante Jondo* by Federico García Lorca, English translation by Cola Franzen.*

©Herederos de Federico García Lorca. Used by permission.

Tallinn Town Hall (Victoria Hansen photo)



# BALTIC SKETCHES

Hocket I (for Lepo)

Four-Note Aria (homage à Tom Johnson (for Tuuli)

Hocket II (for Timo)

Lament (for Madis)

Dance (for Reyn)

(1997)

Estonia is the northern-most of the three Baltic States, very close to Finland and adjacent to Russia, with a similar climate. The winters are snowy and can be very cold, hence my reference to "Ice" as well as "Fire" in the title of this recording. This work, composed for and premiered by a select group of advanced music students at the Estonian Music Academy, is a set of five miniatures for bowed piano. I did not attempt to cast these movements as depictions or descriptions of anything "Baltic," but rather as a kind of "musical offering" to my friends, old and new, in Estonia and its near neighbor Lithuania, where the composition was premiered in 1997. To put it another way, the movements are not "post cards" but "greeting cards."

Notes by Stephen Scott

# STEPHEN SCOTT

Stephen Scott was born in 1944 to parents trained in the sciences; he is a professor of music at Colorado College. He has served on the faculty of The Evergreen State College and as visiting composer at Eastman School of Music, Aspen Music School, New England Conservatory, Princeton University, University of Southern California, Cal Arts, and at festivals and conservatories in Germany, Estonia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Ireland, Norway, England, Canary Islands, and Australia. In 2004 he was a resident scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center on Lake Como, Italy. Scott's awards include commissions from Meet the Composer/USA and the Barlow Endowment, a grant from the Peter S. Reed Foundation, the New England Conservatory/Rockefeller Foundation Chamber Music Prize, and a National Endowment for the Arts Composer's Fellowship. In 2008 he was named USA Simon Fellow. His previous recordings are on the New Albion and Albany labels. Film and television credits include *Traffic* (DVD version), *Egg: the Arts Show* (PBS), and the NBC primetime special *Revenge of the Whale*. His music for The Bowed Piano Ensemble is the subject of *Beyond the Keyboard*, a documentary by London filmmaker Peter Savage.

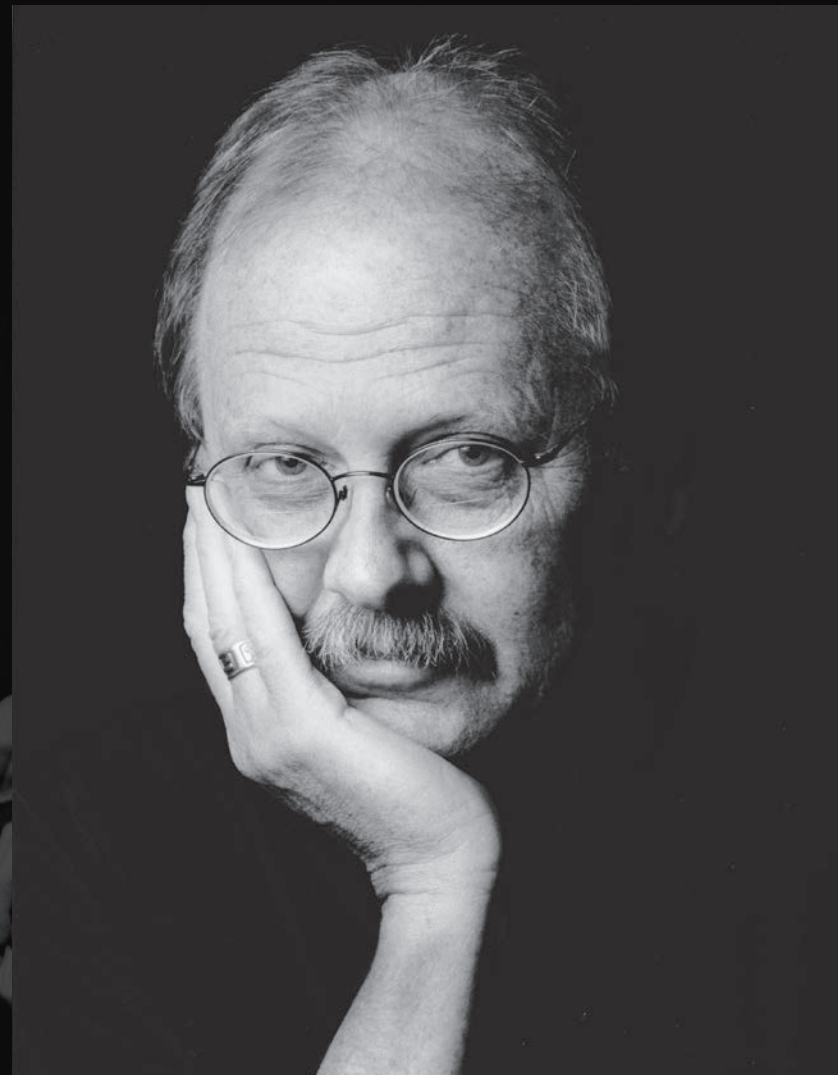


Photo: Melanie Tutt

# THE BOWED PIANO ENSEMBLE



(2013 Ensemble) Photo: Trevor Johnson

The Bowed Piano Ensemble, founded by composer Stephen Scott at Colorado College in 1977, has evolved into a small experimental-music orchestra whose ten players conjure, from one open grand piano, long, singing lines, sustained drones, chugging accordion-like figures, crisp staccato tones reminiscent of clarinets, deep drum tones and more, often simultaneously, to create a rich, contrapuntal new-chamber-music tapestry. Since its inception, the Ensemble has toured extensively throughout Europe, the Atlantic Islands, North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Their unorthodox musical tools and techniques have surprised and enchanted audiences at world-renowned venues including Sydney Opera House, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Town Hall New York, Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, the medieval Town Hall in Tallinn, Estonia, the Slovak National Radio Studio, Hamilton, Bermuda, and Jameos del Agua, a volcanic lava-tube-become-concert-hall in Lanzarote, Canary Islands. During their travels, the group has performed on many live radio and television broadcasts.

This remarkable undergraduate student troupe has played by invitation at many professional music festivals, such as the Berliner Festspiele, Canberra International Music Festival, Visual Music Festival (Lanzarote), Musica Nova Festival (Brisbane), pplANISSIMO Festival (Sofia, Bulgaria), Stavanger Jazz Festival (Norway) Nüüd Festival (Tallinn), and Spoleto Festival USA (Charleston SC). Their five previous recordings (two with soprano Victoria Hansen) are on the New Albion and Albany labels.

# VICTORIA HANSEN

Victoria Hansen, soprano, frequently performs theatrical works and New Music compositions, specializing in the compositions of Stephen Scott for The Bowed Piano Ensemble. She has toured extensively with the ensemble throughout the USA, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia including recent concerts at the Canberra International Music Festival, the Spoleto Festival USA and the Allen Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Other festivals have included: The Other Minds Festival (San Francisco), New Music Santa Fe series, MaerzMusik (Berlin), ppIANISSIMO FESTIVAL (Sofia) and the Festival Musica Visual (Lanzarote, Canary Islands). Scott has composed two song cycle fantasies for Ms. Hansen with Bowed Piano Ensemble, *Paisajes Audibles/Sounding Landscapes* (released by Albany Records) and *The Deep Spaces* (released by New Albion). Hansen joined the voice faculty of Colorado College in 2000 where, in addition to teaching voice, she initiated and directed a music theatre and opera performance program for vocal students.



Photo: Patti White



# DONORS

Anne Andrews  
Patricia Aronstein  
Nancy and Ray Asbury  
Joseph Auner  
Dee Baker  
Erin Bauer  
Elizabeth Bersche  
Deborah Boss  
Erin Brennan  
Bernard Brink  
Rich Brotherton  
Robert Burns  
Colorado College  
John Cook  
Robert Cooley  
Lander Purvis Cooney  
David Cummings  
Lisa Davenport  
Laura Davis  
Jean Dwinnell  
Chris Eisinger\*  
Carol Fields\*  
Joshua Finch\*  
Jim Fox  
Judith Gafner  
Keith Gardner  
Joseph Goetz  
Michael and Susan Grace\*  
Elissa Greene\*  
Cynthia Hanson  
Neil Hesse  
Susan Hill  
Lynn Holladay

Tabitha Hrynich  
William Hulings  
Talitha Jones  
\*Frederick Lewis Tilley Keller  
Jeff and Bonnie Kent  
Elizabeth King  
Miguel Knochel  
\*Nancy Landes  
Tom Lazarus  
Jonathan Lee  
Lee and Pam Lehmkuhl  
Neil and Ruth Lehmkuhl  
Jean and Bruce Lemmon  
Ron Levy  
\*Theodore and Kathy Lindeman  
Paul Liu  
Robert Lord  
Meghann Maurer  
David McAfner  
Amy McClellan  
Charlotte Mendoza  
Jennifer Mendoza  
Lila Mori  
Elisha Nottingham  
Thomas Osborne  
Nathan "Bill" Pearson  
Adrian and Elaine Perachio  
Jennifer Pierce  
Susan Polack  
Eve Pollack  
\*Richard Pope  
Brian Rice  
Connor Rice

Erik Richardson  
Christina Roark  
Tamara Roberts  
Saraiya Ruano  
Rick and Lucy Shick  
Amy Scott and Alexander Heilner  
\*Benjamin and Halden Scott  
\*Peter and Jeanette Scott  
Angela Sebor  
James Sizemore  
John Stephenson  
Elyse Weakley  
Kevin Weitemier  
Laura Whalin  
Miles White  
Courtney Winn  
Sienna Wood

\*denotes donations made to both campaigns

- 1 **AFTERNOON OF A FIRE (2012)** ..... 8:05  
Saraiya Ruano native american flutes
- 2 **NEW YORK DRONES (2006)** ..... 9:28
- 3 **VOCALISE ON "IN A SILENT WAY" (2001)** ..... 7:11  
Victoria Hansen soprano
- 4 **AURORA FICTA (2008)** ..... 13:07
- 5 **"LA GUITARRA" (2002)** ..... 5:49  
Victoria Hansen soprano
- BALTIC SKETCHES (1997)**
- 6 **HOCKET I (for Lepo)** ..... 1:13
- 7 **FOUR-NOTE ARIA (HOMAGE À TOM JOHNSON (for Tuuli)** ..... 0:55
- 8 **HOCKET II (for Timo)** ..... 1:48
- 9 **LAMENT (for Madis)** ..... 1:36
- 10 **DANCE (for Reyn)** ..... 2:25

Stephen Scott Composer, Founder, Director

All music published by Adigital Music, Inc., except *Vocalise on "In a Silent Way"* co-published by Zawinul Music and Adigital Music, Inc. BMI

[www.bowedpianoensemble.com](http://www.bowedpianoensemble.com)

[www.navonarecords.com/iceandfire](http://www.navonarecords.com/iceandfire)

All tracks recorded April 6th, 2013 at Packard Hall, Colorado College, Colorado Springs

Session Producer **Andy Happel**  
Session Engineer **JD Feighner**

### THE BOWED PIANO ENSEMBLE

Stephen Scott, Composer, Founder, Director  
Neil Hesse, Ensemble Manager  
Zachary Bellows, Connor Rice, Andrew Pope,  
Saraiya Ruano, Hadar Zeigerson, Drew Campbell,  
Sylvie Scowcroft, Trisha Andrews  
Victoria Hansen, soprano

Executive Producer **Bob Lord**  
Product Manager **Jeff LeRoy**  
Editing & Mixing **Andy Happel**  
Mastering **Shaun Michaud**  
Art & Production Director **Brett Picknell**  
Graphic Designer **Ryan Harrison**  
A&R **Renée Dupuis**  
PR Coordinator **Ariel Oxaal**

info@navonarecords.com  
www.navonarecords.com  
223 Lafayette Road  
North Hampton NH 03862

Navona Records is a  
PARMA Recordings company

