

## **John Holland *A Natural Life* for Piano Solo with Recorded Nature Sounds and Projected Images within a Frame (2005)**

The musical score is divided into two books, and is derived from the names of various naturalists that have had a significant impact on human culture throughout history. Musical expressions are shaped by the player according to biographical references of the naturalists, and in subtle response to recorded nature sounds.

The selected naturalists are *Pliny the Elder*, *Carolus Linnaeus*, *John Chapman* (Johnny Appleseed), *John J. Audubon*, *Charles Darwin*, *Henry Thoreau*, *John Muir*, *Theodore Roosevelt*, *Edward (Doc) Ricketts*, *Rachel Carson*, *Edward Wilson*, *Jane Goodall*.

The recorded sounds and projected images of animals, insects, birds, marine life, fungi, plants, trees, and microorganisms have been sampled from around the world, and are collectively representative of the Five Kingdoms of life (Prokaryotes [Archea], Eukaryotes, Fungi, Plants, Animals).

## **5 French Tangos for Violin and Piano (Traditional)**

The *Five Tangos* were selected for their rich flavor, warmth, and elegant style from a set of French tangos arranged for violin and piano by Martin Norgaard. (*El Choco*, *Ma Rose*, *Simple*, *Partir*, *Para Siempre*)

## **John Holland *Lament for a Dead Companion* for Piano, Viola (offstage), and Seductress (2006)**

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is, perhaps, the oldest written story on Earth. It originates from Ancient Sumeria, and was written on 12 clay tablets in cunieforn script somewhere between 4750 and 4500 BP. It is about the adventures of the historical King of Uruk.

In the story, the Goddess Ishtar wants to marry Gilgamesh, but is rejected by him because of Ishtar's long history of killing her husbands once she has achieved what she wants. In an act of vengeance against Gilgamesh for rejecting her, Ishtar provokes her father, a powerful God, to punish Gilgamesh by killing his closest friend, Enkidu.

The piano music is derived from the section of text that describes the mourning of Gilgamesh over the death of his friend Enkidu. The viola music is a lament in the form of a chaconne, in which a repeated theme cycles through a series of harmonic modulations. The seductress on stage represents the Goddess Ishtar. 'Like a shadow, *The Seductress* (Ishtar) hovers around the pianist, attempting to distract the player.'

*Lament for a Dead Companion* was created with Dawn Kramer in mind in the role of the seductress.

## **Early American Hymns and Songs for Violin and Piano (Harmonium)**

The first two hymns *Chester* and *Jargon* were composed by William Billings, a celebrated musician of the American Revolution era. Both were published in the *Singer-Master's Assistant* in 1778. *Chester* is a harmonious acclaim of American independence, while *Jargon* is especially interesting for its dissonant harmonies.

The early hymn *Wondrous Love* is a simple testament to spiritual surrender. *Bury me Beneath the Willow* is a melancholy tale of unrequited love. The *Streets of Laredo* is a cowboy song whose young hero is shot at a gambling house, then asks to be given a proper burial and forgiven for any wrongs he may have committed. *The Banks of the Ohio* is a tragic story of a jilted man who stabs his sweetheart to death because she plans to marry another, and then experiences remorse.

The Hymns and Songs were selected and adapted for violin and piano by John Holland and Marla Rathbun. The songs were originally arranged for voice and piano by Richard Walters and Brian Stanley.

## **Charles Ives Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano (1902-1909)**

In this Sonata (the second of four sonatas for violin and piano) Ives, as he often does in his music, insets a sprinkling of Americana references, including country fiddling, a patriotic tune, a sea chanty, and camp-meeting hymns. In the last movement Ives creates a set of variations based one of the hymns, following a slow introduction mindful of transcendental New England.

John Holland

**John Holland** is a composer, performer, author and digital recording artist. He is a Professor in the Studio for Interrelated Media, and head of the Electronic and Digital Music Studio at Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. He has produced a number of recordings of electronic and digital music, and has published scores for most solo instruments (with and without electronic enhancement), chamber music, orchestra, concertos, opera. His work emphasizes the integration of science and art, incorporating structures and ideas that reference a variety of natural phenomena. John Schaefer, host of *New Sounds* on WNYC Radio in New York cited Holland's *Natural Phenomena* as "one of the notable CD's of 2005." Most recently Holland's music has been performed in Jordan Hall (New England Conservatory), Pickman Hall (Longy School of Music), Bartos Theatre (Media Lab, MIT), University Gallery (Tufts University), IBM (Yorktown), Axiom Gallery, Zeitgeist (Cambridge).

**Marla Rathbun** performs contemporary music in recitals with Maria Rivera, pianist. She is violinist with the Rathbun/Newton/Alpher Piano Trio, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the Hanover Chamber Orchestra, the Aurora Quintet and also free-lances in the greater New York area. She was first violin with the Taghkanic String Quartet, and has been Principal Second with the Connecticut Grand Opera for 20 years. She teaches a large private studio, including coaching of small ensembles, in Poughkeepsie, NY.

**Maria Rivera** has recently performed in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Merkin, Steinway, and Alice Tully Halls at Lincoln Center. She began her study of the piano at the age of five. She won numerous competitions, and by the age of thirteen had given her first solo performance with orchestra. She studied four years in Naples, Italy, with Nunzio Zappulla, professor at the Naples Conservatory of Music; and attended the Eastman School of Music, where she received her Bachelor of Music. She completed a Masters degree at The Juilliard School, and was invited to perform at an international music festival in Kyoto, Japan. She currently has a thriving private studio.

**Dawn Kramer** is a founder of Dance Collective which she co-directed for 30 years, creating and performing in at least seventy works. Her work has been performed at Jacob's Pillow, Dance Theatre Workshop in NYC, and in Holland, Belgium, Germany, and France as well as throughout New England. *The Boston Globe* and *The Boston Herald* have listed Kramer's work in the "Top Ten" dance events of the year in 2003, 1998, 1995, and 1988. Dawn has also had the pleasure of performing in Meredith Monk's *Celebration Service* and in *From the Horse's Mouth* at Jacob's Pillow and at Brandeis. Dawn is an Associate Professor in SIM at Massart.