

The Colorado College Music Department presents

## *Music Without Borders*

**The Music of Ofer Ben-Amots and Jennifer Margaret Barker**

*performed by*

### **Transcontinental**

Ensemble in Residence at the University of Delaware



**Wednesday, November 3, 2021, 7:30 PM**  
**University of Northern Colorado ~ Campus Commons Performance Hall**

**Thursday, November 4, 2021, 7:30 PM**  
**Colorado College ~ Packard Performance Hall**  
**Live-streamed on YouTube and Facebook**



## Program

\*\*\* Brief Introduction by the composer

**Montage Music** (2017)  
(In memory of Bebe Krimmer)

Ofer Ben-Amots

*Departure*  
*Velocity of Rotation*  
*Bebe's Blues*  
*Return (Epilogue)*

Christopher Nichols, *clarinet\**  
Guillaume Combet, *violin*  
Michal Schmidt, *violoncello*  
Marie-Christine Delbeau, *piano*

Artwork by Bebe Krimmer, Courtesy of Greg DePrince

~ *Short Pause* ~

\*\*\* Brief Introduction by the composer

**Harmonious Dreams** (2019)  
*Beautiful Valley*  
*The Story of His Love*  
*Heaven, Heaven*  
*Cheyenne Prayer for Peace*

Jennifer Margaret Barker

Grant Youngblood, *baritone*  
Christopher Nichols, *clarinet\**  
Michal Schmidt, *violoncello*  
Marie-Christine Delbeau, *piano*

\*Christopher Nichols' appearance is supported in part by Buffet Crampon USA.



This concert program addresses the commonality of the human experience across disparate cultures by marrying two immigrant composers with the culturally diverse music ensemble, Transcontinental. Evolving from a 2015 performance of Ofer Ben-Amots' *The Odessa Trio*, the Transcontinental ensemble has presented many international and national collaborative performances including, most notably, performances at the 2018 Victoria International Arts Festival in Malta, the 2018 National Schools of Music and Pi Kappa Lambda Centennial Anniversary joint National Convention in Washington, DC, the 2019 Society of Composers, Inc. National Conference in Albuquerque, NM and the 2021 National Flute Association Convention.



### **Program Notes**

**Montage Music** was written in memory of Santa Fe artist, Bebe Krimmer, and was inspired by several of her artworks as well as by her radiant and charismatic personality. The work opens with a slow meditative and soulful prologue, titled *Departure*, and portrays Bebe's name musically through a constant pendulum between the notes B-E-B-E. The second movement is based directly on a large and spectacular artwork titled *Velocity of Rotation*. Krimmer's *Velocity of Rotation* evokes a fantastically colorful Milky Way, a Galaxy traveling through deep and endless black spaciousness. In this movement, I tried to recreate a time-space motion of high velocity, often interjected by exotic landscapes and cosmic encounters. When Greg DePrince commissioned me to write this composition for the Montage Music Society, he mentioned Bebe's great fondness for jazz. Thus, I chose to write the third movement in an old-time Dixieland jazz style. The movement, which is titled *Bebe's Blues* opens with a slow and mournful New Orleans funeral march. However, it quickly moves into a faster bluesy mode, ending with a cheerful Second-line dance. In the fourth and last movement, the music returns to the opening cryptogram, musicalizing Bebe's name again, thus bringing the composition full circle.

**Harmonious Dreams** - In a time of worldwide unrest and migration, my thoughts turned to the dreams of peoples who, whether willing or not, became a part of the nation of America: those who sought religious freedom; those who sought a better life; those brought against their will; and those native to the land. Although from disparate walks of life, all of these people shared the same dreams of Hope, Faith, Love and Peace. In order to represent each of these peoples, I looked to the words that they not only held most dear, but that they also shared and archived through generations in communal song: hymns, spirituals and prayers. For those who sought religious freedom I chose text from the traditional Shaker hymn, *Beautiful Valley*. For those who sought a better life, I chose James Rowe's Redemption hymn text, *The Story of His Love*. For those brought against their will, I combined text from two spirituals, *Going to Sing All Along the Way* and *Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven*. Finally, for those native to the land, I chose the *Cheyenne Prayer for Peace*.

In 2018 Barker was the winner of the national Pi Kappa Lambda Chamber Work Commission Competition. This song cycle is the result of that commission. It was premiered at the Centennial Anniversary Convention of Pi Kappa Lambda (1918-2018) in Washington, DC, on November 17, 2018.

## Texts

The presentation below shows only the specific lines of text that were utilized, and the order in which they were set. Omitted words in a line of text have been placed in parenthesis. Additional lines of text in the original are omitted.

### **Beautiful Valley**

I am seeking a beautiful valley,  
And as I am slowly descending,  
Its beauties unfold to my view.  
While oft in my old native city,  
I dreamed of this land far away,  
I thought it a desolate region,  
And dreaded the rough thorny way.

'Tis true the descent has been rainfull;  
With watching and toil and great care,  
I've been prospered this far on my journey,  
And now grow content with my fare;  
I find that each step I have taken,  
(But) gives new experience and strength;  
My courage is strong and unshaken;  
I'll gain the blest valley at length.

### **The Story of His Love**

There's a sweet old story which I long to hear  
When the night is long and dreary;  
There's a sweet old story that I love to read  
When my spirit dreads the morrow;  
There's a sweet old story that I love to tell

'Tis the old, old story of His love,  
'Tis the sweet, old message from above;

When my spirit dreads the morrow;  
Or when comfort I would borrow.  
To the heart by grief o'er-taken,  
And to those by hope forsaken.

'Tis the old, old story of His love,  
'Tis the sweet, old message from above;  
For no other I can find that can calm a troubled  
mind.  
Like the sweet old story of His love!

'Tis the old, old story of His love,  
'Tis the sweet, old message from above;

There's a sweet old story which I *love* to hear...

### **Heaven, Heaven**

(combined text from *Going to Sing All Along the Way* and *Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven*)

Heaven, heaven,  
Everybody talking 'bout heaven

O, I'm going to sing, going to sing,  
Going to sing all along the way;  
O, I'm going to sing, going to sing,  
Going to sing all along the way.

- *Going to Sing All Along the Way*

I've got a harp, you've got a harp,  
All of God's children got a harp;  
When I get to heaven, gonna play on my harp,  
Gonna play all over God's heaven.

I've got a song, you've got a song,  
All of God's children got a song;  
When I get to heaven, gonna sing my new song,  
Gonna sing all over God's heaven.

- *Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven*

O, I'm going to sing, going to sing,  
Going to sing all along the way;  
O, I'm going to sing, going to sing,  
Going to sing all along the way.

- *Going to Sing All Along the Way*

### **Cheyenne Prayer for Peace**

For as long as the moon shall rise,  
For as long as the rivers shall flow,  
For as long as the sun shall shine,  
(For as long) as the grass shall grow,  
Let us know peace.

## About the Performers

**Guillaume Combet** is an Associate Professor at the University of Delaware School of Music. He is an internationally acclaimed violinist and has been heralded in his most recent recording for his “perfect technique, fidelity to the music, and impeccable articulation.” Recorded in London at the Menuhin Hall and released by SOMM Recordings in 2021, the Carlock Combet Duo’s *Romantic Violin Sonatas* received a 5-star review by the French magazine *Classica*. Their debut disc of French violin sonatas was released in 2017, also by SOMM Recordings, to great critical acclaim. Music Web International accorded the disc Recording of the Month at the time of the release, and in December of 2017, Best Recordings for the year.

In addition, Mr. Combet has devoted himself to orchestral playing and chamber music. He has performed with numerous orchestras and chamber ensembles in Paris, Chicago and Philadelphia: Orchestre de l’Opéra de Paris Bastille, Les Virtuoses de France, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Civic Orchestra as concertmaster under Barenboim and Boulez, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, Network for New Music, Opera Philadelphia, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Philly Pops, Academy of Vocal Arts, Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra, New Music Delaware, and Pennsylvania Ballet. As a sought-after chamber musician, he has performed throughout the country including the Luckman Fine Arts Complex in Los Angeles, Chicago Cultural Center on the WFMT Dame Myra Hess Concert Series, University of Chicago, Temple University, Philadelphia Ethical Society, and WRTI. Mr. Combet graduated with a Premier Prix (First Prize) in Violin and Chamber Music from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and received his Advanced Certificate in Violin Performance from The Juilliard School.

Israeli musician **Michal Schmidt** has been described as “...a splendid musician, inspired and inspiring.... she has a highly inquisitive and intellectual approach to music coupled with superb technique and magnificent sound.” Active as cellist and pianist, Ms. Schmidt studied at the Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University in Israel, the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Curtis Institute of Music, the University of the Arts and Temple University (DMA / Cello Performance). Dr. Schmidt has been active in numerous performing groups including the orchestra of the Opera Company of Philadelphia, Trio Camille, Four-Horizons, Tiadam Trio (Israel), Network for New Music, Trio MiReSol, Piano4. In 2014 she was the principal cellist for the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra for a U.S. tour with soloist Branford Marsalis. In addition, she is a recitalist, accompanist, teacher, and chamber music coach. Dr. Schmidt has taught at Dickinson College, Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore Colleges, University of Pennsylvania, West Chester University and Rowan University. She is a member of the faculty at the Maine Chamber Music Seminar at Snow Pond Festival, in Maine.

In 2007 Dr. Schmidt established a series of annual concerts “TRIBUTE”, which is dedicated for the most part to presenting contemporary works of composers she has worked with personally. Michal’s recently released recording “SOLA,” and “Bach .... Double”, her latest recording, feature her playing both piano and cello.

Pianist **Marie-Christine Delbeau** performs in concert throughout the United States and abroad. Italy’s *Il Messaggero* enthusiastic review states, “...it was particularly compelling to follow the development of the music as guided by this great American soloist, so in tune with the music she so intimately interprets.” An avid chamber musician, she has performed as soloist and collaborative pianist at Washington’s Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall and Weill-Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City, Boston’s Jordan Hall and Philadelphia’s Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center. She has also

performed at the Tonhalle in Zurich, Switzerland and in concerts at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, France. Marie-Christine Delbeau has performed on numerous occasions in chamber music recitals with principal members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. She has also collaborated with colleagues in performances of contemporary music at the Society of Composers, Inc. National Conference in Albuquerque, NM, the National Flute Convention in Minneapolis, MN, the Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society Conference in Washington, DC, the NACWPI International Conference in Vancouver/BC, Canada and in several chamber music recital performances for the Victoria International Arts Festival in Gozo, Malta.

Marie-Christine Delbeau is Professor of Piano at the University of Delaware. She regularly presents piano master classes and serves as an adjudicator for piano competitions.

Critically acclaimed clarinetist **Christopher Nichols** enjoys a dynamic career with performances as a soloist and in ensembles across the United States and abroad. As a professional instrumental soloist, he received praise from the American Prize: "...lovely long line, evocative playing, flexible...tone is rich and round, welcoming, clean and elegant...fine performances from a skilled artist."

Dr. Nichols joined the faculty of the University of Delaware School of Music in 2013 where he is Associate Professor of Clarinet. As an artist clinician, he regularly appears at universities throughout the United States. Dr. Nichols has released solo and chamber music recordings on internationally distributed labels including Navona Records, Viduus Records and Albany Records, which have won praise in publications such as *Gramophone*, *The Clarinet*, *Fanfare*, *NACWPI Journal*, *De Klarinet*, and *Pizzicato*. As a Légère Reeds Endorsing Artist, Silverstein Pro Team Artist, and a Buffet Crampon USA Artist Clinician, Dr. Nichols performs exclusively on Légère Signature Series reeds, Silverstein ligatures and Buffet clarinets. Additionally, he is an RCW Artist and plays on RCW clarinet barrels.

Baritone, **Grant Youngblood** has performed with many major opera companies including The Metropolitan Opera (*Capriccio*), San Francisco Opera (Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*), New York City Opera (Scarpia in *Tosca*, title role of *Don Giovanni*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Escamillo in *Carmen*); Virginia Opera (the title role of *Rigoletto*, Conte di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*); Florida Grand Opera (Silvio in *Pagliacci*, title role of *Rigoletto*, Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West*); Austin Lyric Opera (Germont in *La Traviata*); Washington National Opera (Dappertutto in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*); Glimmerglass Opera (Thoäs in *Iphigénie en Tauride*); and Central City Opera (John Proctor in *The Crucible*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Horace Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Olin Blitch in *Susannah*); Opera Theater of St. Louis and Madison Opera.

Recent engagements for Mr. Youngblood include performances of his signature role of Germont in *La Traviata* for Cleveland Opera Theater; as Michele in *Il Tabarro* for Opera Delaware; return engagements at Dayton Opera for *Rigoletto*, Amonasro in *Aida*, and Iago in *Otello*; both Baltimore Concert Opera and Opera Delaware for the title role of *Macbeth*; and the Harrisburg Symphony for Scarpia in *Tosca*. Concert engagements have included appearances with the Dallas Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, the Florida Philharmonic, the Chautauqua Symphony, the Louisville Orchestra, the Naples Philharmonic, the Jacksonville Symphony, the Spokane Symphony Orchestra, and the Bucharest Philharmonic, among others.

## About the Composers

Described as “*a composer of profound sensibility*”, Scottish-American **Jennifer Margaret Barker** has received performances of her compositions on six continents. Hailed by critics as “*extraordinarily moving*”, “*soul-stirring*”, “*at once gripping and timeless*”, “*anything but passive*”, “*blazingly alive, with lovely, aching melodies*”, “*haunting*”, “*beautiful...warm*”, and “*illuminated by dreamy images*”, her compositions have been performed by orchestras, choirs, chamber ensembles and solo artists such as The Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra with the St. Louis Children's Chorus, The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra with the New Jersey Youth Choirs, and The Virginia Symphony with The Virginia Children's Chorus, The Fort Collins Symphony, Vocal de Cámara Platense, Orchestra 2001, Relâche, Network for New Music, Society for New Music, Mélomanie, Tiger Lily Music, Marimolin, and Vocali3e, as well as an extensive list of international concert artists, including renowned British pianist, Martin Jones.

Recent international festivals in which her music has been featured include Malta's Victoria International Arts Festival, Brazil's Festival Internacional Compositores de Hoje, and America's Festival Mozaic. Her compositions have been featured on documentaries and promotional videos; exhibited as music-video art in galleries; utilized as underscoring to theatrical productions; and broadcast on American public radio (including 'Performance Today'), Canadian radio, Hong Kong radio, Swedish radio and the BBC. Published by Boosey & Hawkes, Theodore Presser, Southern Percussion and McKenna-Keddie, Barker's compositions have been released on the Naxos, Albany, New World Records, Composers Recordings Inc., Meyer Media, and PnOVA labels. Dr. Barker is Professor of Composition at the University of Delaware.

Born in Haifa, Israel, in 1955, **Ofer Ben-Amots** gave his first piano concert at age nine and at age sixteen was awarded first prize in the Chet Piano Competition. Later, he continued his composition studies in Tel Aviv, Geneva, Switzerland, and the Academy of Music in Detmold, Germany, where he graduated with degrees in composition, music theory, and piano. Upon his arrival in the United States in 1987, Ben-Amots studied with George Crumb at the University of Pennsylvania where he received his Ph.D. in music composition. Currently Chair of the Music Department at Colorado College, Dr. Ben-Amots teaches composition and theory. Ofer Ben-Amots' compositions are performed regularly in concert halls and festivals Worldwide. His music has been performed by such orchestras as the Zürich Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Austrian Radio Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Colorado Orchestra, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, and Portland Chamber Orchestra, among others. His compositions have been recorded by the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Barcelona Royal Philharmonic, Odessa Philharmonic, BBC Singers, and the renowned Czech choirs Permonik and Jitro. He is the winner of the 1994 Vienna International Competition for Composers, 1988 Kavannagh Prize, the Gold Award at South Africa's 1993 Roodepoort International Competition for Choral Composition. His *Avis Urbanus* for amplified flute was awarded First Prize at the 1991 Kobe International Competition for Flute Composition in Japan. In 1999, Ben-Amots was awarded the Aaron Copland Award and the Music Composition Artist Fellowship by the Colorado Council on the Arts. Ofer Ben-Amots' works have been repeatedly recognized for their emotional and highly personal expression. The interweaving of folk elements with contemporary textures, along with his unique imaginative orchestration, creates the haunting dynamic tension that permeates and defines Ben-Amots' musical language.