

# *BENDING LIGHT*

Sonic Prisms for Solo Flute

Nina Assimakopoulos

Liner Notes:

## 1. rapid ♦ fire, Jennifer Higdon

rapid ♦ fire was written to portray the violence of the cities; more specifically, the innocent young who are cut down in their homes and on the streets. It is an expression of rage, of pain, and of disbelief; it is fear and terror; it is an inner-city cry. rapid ♦ fire was commissioned by flutist Peter Brown. It is dedicated to his memory.

—Jennifer Higdon



## 2. Tsuru-no-Sugomori, Wil Offermans

Tsuru-no-Sugomori ("cranes building a nest") is one of the best-known pieces from the shakuhachi solo repertoire (honkyoku), which is available in more than ten different versions representing the various traditions of individual Zen Buddhistic temples. The title refers to the programmatic contents of the piece, depicting the life of the cranes which have been revered in Japan from time immemorial as symbols of a long and happy life: A couple builds a nest, lays eggs, hatches out little cranes and raises them until they are independent; finally, the couple dies. Beyond this partly naturalistic description, which also mimics the cranes' cawing and the beat of their wings, this piece can also be interpreted as the total manifestation of the Buddhistic concept of compassionate love expressed by the care the cranes give their children.

This transcription of Tsuru-no-sugomori is based on an interpretation by the shakuhachi master Katsuya Yokoyama. His superb performance clearly demonstrates the possibilities of the shakuhachi. With its flexible sound (e.g. in dynamic, timbre, intonation and wind-'noise'), the intense use of the breath and its deep-rooted history the shakuhachi has been attracting the interest of many flutists around the world. Some of the sounds in this traditional flute music may be regarded by Western flutists as 'modern' or 'new'. However, the shakuhachi player seems to concentrate on the breathing, accepting the sound itself as a natural consequence. Typically, the shakuhachi player doesn't use any tonguing, but instead starts a sound from the breath and sometimes in combination with the finger (the so-called finger-tonguing!). Especially characteristic are the numerous vibrato techniques (including pitch-bending, glissandi and portamenti).

Beside the Western style vibrato, called 'ikiyuri', a vibrato can be performed by shaking the head. Swinging the head to the left and right (like shaking 'no') is called 'yokoyuri'. Shaking the head up and down (like shaking 'yes') is called 'tateyuri'. Shaking the head in circles creates the 'mawashiyuri' vibrato. When the instrument itself is quickly moved up and down we get a 'takeyuri' vibrato. Bending the pitch down by covering the embouchure-hole with the lower-lip (up to a minor third!) creates the characteristic 'meri'. Bending the pitch up by uncovering the embouchure-hole, is called 'kari'- Zimerman Frankfurt.

<https://www.wiloffermans.com/>

### 3. Blue Lament, Chris Jones

Blue Lament was commissioned by flutist Nina Assimakopoulos who worked in collaboration with composer Chris Jones to expand the first sketch of the piece to include whistling, singing, and extended playing techniques.

Of Blue Lament Chris Jones writes "The ideas for this work came out of a late fall hike at Coopers Rock in West Virginia. It was a solo hike, and I was focused on the sounds around me—fallen leaves underfoot, an occasional scurry through the brush, a few birds. There's no narrative here, It was just that moment in time I think left an impression. I put some ideas down on paper after that in a way that I thought captured that sense of stillness as well as the tumultuous change happening nature."

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#### 4. **Winter Spirits, Katherine Hoover**

There is a picture by the marvelous artist Maria Buchfink of a Native American flute player; from his flute rises a cloud of kachinas and totem spirits. This piece has also risen from his notes, and is indeed influenced by Native American music. The idea of the flute invoking beneficial spirits, be they kachinas or any other, is a very natural one. Such spirits are an accepted and valued part of life in most of the world, and the flute has been used to honor and invite their presence for countless ages. <https://www.papagenapress.com/>

#### 5. **Charanga, Michael Colquhoun**

Salsa is a popular Hispanic American urban dance music with deep African and Cuban roots. Charanga is a style of Salsa which was popular from the 1920's through the 1970's. What made Charanga unique was that along with the usual percussion section (congas, bongos/cowbell, timbales, maracas/guero and clave) there was a string section and a flute lead. When the music was cocinando (or "cooking"), the percussion, piano, bass and strings would play a powerfully swinging, polyrhythmic patten over which the Charanga flutist was free to improvise complex and intricate riffs. These days, while Salsa is popular as ever, the Charanga as a separate entity is rare. The flute, however, continues to be an important solo instrument. This piece is a cubist portrait of Charanga and is dedicated to all the great Latin Charanga flutists.

Composer/flutist Michael Colquhoun was active as a solo recitalist, as a teacher and composer, and as Adjunct Professor of Music at Canisius College.

## 6. Virtuoso Flamenco Studies, Nr. 1, Krystof Zgraja

Three Virtuoso Flamenco Studies for solo flute by Krystof Zgraja is a collection of pieces that can be used for performance as well as practice of the flamenco style. It is categorized as advanced and should be considered by flutists at a collegiate or higher level of playing.

Born in Gliwice, Poland in 1950, Zgraja first began violin lessons with his father, an oboist, at the age of four. After taking an interest in wind instruments, he began flute lessons with Franz Hojka at the age of 10 in 1960.

## 7. I Will Not Be Sad in this World, Eve Beglarian *arr. for C flute by Nina Assimakopoulos*

Originally written for alto (or bass) flute, *I will not be sad in this world* is based on the Armenian troubadour Sayat Nova's song Ashkharumes Akh Chim Kashil. The piece is often played on the duduk. *I will not be sad in this world* is part of Eve Beglarian's ongoing project, *A Book of Days*. This version was arranged for C flute by Nina Assimakopoulos including alternate fingerings and a glissando headjoint for timbre and pitch bends.

<https://evbvd.com/blog/pub/notsad/>

## 8. Cymbalic for Beat Box Flute, Brandy Hudelson

Cymbalic is the first etude in Brandy Hudelson's book *The Art of Beatboxing*. The book is meant to be a gateway for flutists interested in learning more about contemporary beatbox performance. It includes information, exercises, and studies to help improve flute technique, beatbox skills, and serve as a point of departure for individual, creative exploration.

<https://www.adjectivenewmusic.com/hudelson.html>

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