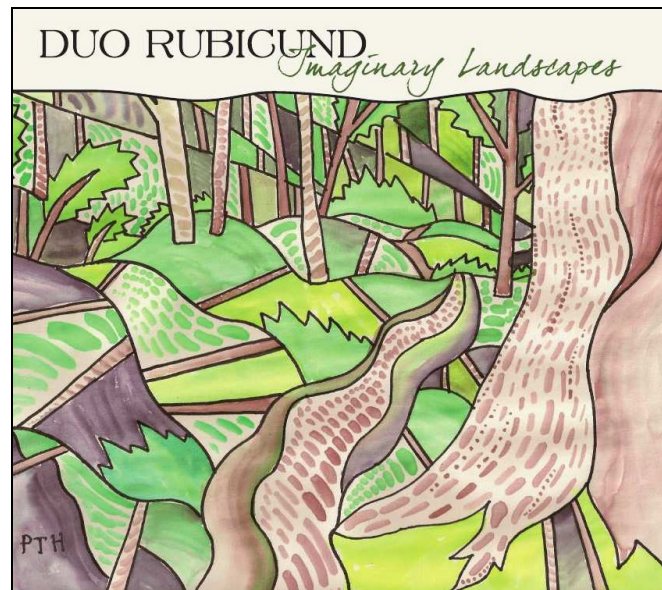


Program Notes for Imaginary Landscapes



Hidden Tango by Jerry Owen: Mauricio Lasansky's print *Spring* (1947) is the inspiration for this piece, written in 1999 and commissioned by Red Cedar Chamber Music in connection with the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, where the painting is housed. The painting, with its bold sweeping lines and dramatic bright to dark color contrasts, embodies the grace and passion of the national dance of Argentina (Lasansky's homeland), the tango. Like the piece, full of the spirit and movement of the dance, it is an abstraction of the tango, hidden from view. Read more about the composer at www.jerryowen.com.

Once Upon A... by Gary Schocker: Full of melody, drama and humor, Schocker's compositions are renowned for theatricality and immediate appeal. "Once Upon A..." seems to follow the story of Rapunzel -- not the watered-down version told to children today, but the original story found in Grimm's Fairy Tales. The title of the second movement makes reference to the prince leaping from the tower in despair and blinding himself on the thorny bushes below, upon hearing that he will never see his love again, Rapunzel's ripening belly having given their secret meetings away to the overprotective enchantress. The first flowing melody of the piece in the first movement, "Once Upon A..." opens a storybook and takes the listener to a faraway place and time. "Thorns had Pierced his Eyes" utilizes a two-against-three rhythm to dramatic effect, with the triplet figure in the guitar pitted against the duple rhythms of the flute melodies. Is Rapunzel's "...Ever After" a happy one? The contrast between lyrical melodies and violent gestures in the final movement (as well as the title itself!) suggests that perhaps it is not that simple. See what you think! Learn more about the composer at www.garyschocker.com.

Dances in the Madhouse by David Leisner: Leisner writes, *The inspiration for this piece was the lithograph 'Dance in the Madhouse' by early-20th century American George Bellows. In it, four groups of asylum inmates are highlighted, and I decided to write a dance for each of them. "Tango Solitaire" is for the woman dancing a stylish dance, alone. "Waltz for the Old Folks" is for a happy couple who seem to be perfectly comfortable with their insanity. A forlorn, despairing couple of women, sitting on the sidelines, prompted "Ballad for the Lonely." And "Samba!" is for the middle-aged couple dancing a wild, dizzy dance.* Although it was originally designated for violin and guitar, this piece is a favorite in the flute and guitar repertoire, and can also be heard in the fully orchestrated version. In our recording, instead of using piccolo where the violin would play harmonics in the "Ballad", Erica plays the pitches on the flute as harmonics (notes fingered in a lower register and overblown) for an eerie effect. Read more about David Leisner at www.davidleisner.com.

Stolen Moments by Meredith Connie: These pieces are directly related to the title, which has a double meaning. First of all, it's a busy old life, and taking the time to compose can feel like 'stealing' from other areas of work. Secondly, it refers to taking as inspiration small three or four note motives from other works and using them as a springboard to create new themes and a general mood. The three note motive for #1 is taken from a piano work by Granados, Zambra, from his Danzas Espanolas. The four note motive for #2 is derived from the third movement of the Black Decameron by Leo Brouwer, one of the most distinctive composer/guitarists of the twentieth century.

Deep Voices by Dusan Bogdanovic: Bogdanovic always uses rhythmic interplay in challenging ways in his work, which reflect his Serbian heritage, background in jazz and interest in world music. He typically butts small rhythmic units up against each other, in a technique often described as 'additive rhythms' where you might get small units of 2's and 3's put together, which create larger changing meters of 5 or 7 or 8 – but these rhythmic building blocks always create a strong and driving sense of groove. We can see that in the title 'Allegro funky' for the second movement. He specifically drew on Mbira music (from Africa) for this work, but it also reflects the central European aesthetic of close dissonant harmonies and driving rhythms in odd-numbered time signatures. Originally written for Bassoon and guitar, he also arranged it as you hear it on this recording, for Flute and Guitar. You can find out more about Bogdanovic from his website at www.dusanbogdanovic.com.

Fireflies by Andrew Earle Simpson: We chose four movements from a larger work for our recording, and each of these movements uses folk themes – some pre-existing songs and some closely mimic a particular style of music. One of our favorite things about this work is that he includes performance instructions to set the tone for each movement, which are included below immediately after the title.

In the Sunflower Patch: "life, vigor, summer, and happiness to the brim." He describes this as "An upbeat original tune in A major, owing a good deal to the tradition of American fiddle tunes."

Intake Manifold: "metallic, cool, tough... trucks, chrome, oily garage floors, cigarettes...work." He describes this as a study of the hard working life of Americans, and also tells the guitarist to play in a big city blues-rock feel.

Stars in My Crown: "full of longing, full of anguish... amid mist and smoke rising from the green mountains and the trees after rain." This movement uses a slow, melancholy original tune which sets the line, "Will there be any stars in my crown?" from a well-known revival hymn.

Hallelujah, I'm a Bum! "rambunctious, unruly and irreverent - with beer!" This movement is based on a pre-existing comic song, which sources say originated in the Spanish-American War, and is a parody of a revival hymn, "Revive us Again", though the mood is very different. The refrain of the song is:

"Hallelujah, I'm a Bum!
Hallelujah, Bum again!
Hallelujah, give us a handout,
And revive us again!"

Find out more about Andrew Earle Simpson at andrewsimpson.com.