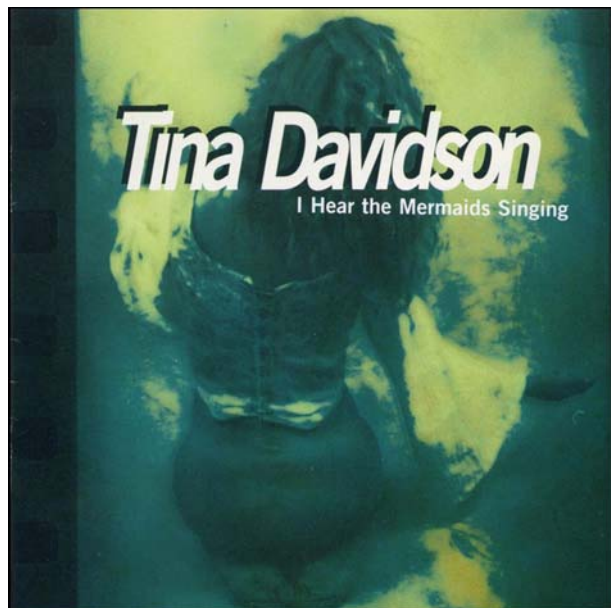


NWCR681

Tina Davidson

I Hear the Mermaids Singing



1. *Transparent Victims* (1987) (7:04)
Marshall Taylor, saxophones
2. *Fire on the Mountain* (1993) (11:02)
Anthony Orlando, marimba; Don Liuzzi, vibraphone; Charles Abramovic, piano
3. *I Hear the Mermaids Singing* (1990) (8:44)
Kathleen Carroll, viola; Lori Barnet, cello; Charles Abramovic, piano
4. *Lullaby* (1987) (5:56)
Marshall Taylor, saxophone; Carol Brown, flute; Lloyd Shorter, English horn; Charles Holdeman, bassoon; Charles Abramovic, piano
5. *Bleached Thread, Sister Thread* (1991) (16:01)
Mendelssohn String Quartet: Ida Levin, violin; Nicholas Mann, violin; Katherine Murdock, viola; Marcy Rosen, cello
6. *Blue Dawn (The Promised Fruit)* (1990) (14:43)
Carol Brown, flute, piccolo; Lloyd Shorter, English horn; Charles Holdeman, bassoon; Charles Abramovic, piano

Total playing time: 63:49

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Notes

My music is about self-discovery. I can't imagine that this will ever change. In the last ten years I've been looking for a kind of peace that only comes after the fire—a clearness of space, an openness to the world around me. In my works there is a sense of this journey—a movement through continually changing scenery to a new place that I only catch a glimpse of in dreams, and yet know is my birthright. I express it in energy, which is long and deep. My sense is that each ending is a new beginning, and so my music spins on, unfolding. Rhythmic and harmonic impulses continually press to another level, until it seems there is no further to go. It is at this moment that the piece bursts open and is transformed, ending in a sea of iridescent harmonies.

I keep wanting to get at the root of my life, the place which is circular and transforming, not only as a musical form, but as the form I observe around me. As I press through memories and the difficulties of the past and present, I arrive into a new time which is more than beauty or joy; it is that gasp of the breath and the delicious shiver of the moment. I find it and re-find it; I keep writing about it, dreaming it. This is the process; continual renewal in movement, and breath of space.

Transparent Victims was written in 1987 for the talents of Marshall Taylor. Scored for multiple saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone) the work is dedicated to those children who, deprived of their voices and awareness, wait in silence.

the god of my childhood wears black robes,
has horns on his head and carries an ax in his hand,
how in the

world was I still able to slip past him? all
my life I have been creeping stealthily through
my landscape, under my arm the little bit
of life I keep thinking I have stolen

—Mariella Mehr, *Steinzeit (Stone Age)*

Fire on the Mountain, for vibraphone, marimba and piano, was commissioned in 1993 by the Philadelphia ensemble, Network for New Music. Shortly before I began to write, I dreamed I was taking a photograph of a large white horse who was lounging outside on a couch. When I looked through the camera all I could see was white, and it took me some time to realize that I was too close to the horse. As I stepped back I looked up into the distance; the clouds suddenly parted and the setting sun shone on the peaks of the mountains like hot embers of a smoldering fire. This piece is about love and fire, the looking up and seeing it on the mountain, glowing and hot, and knowing this is where I need to go—into the heat of the fire, which is myself. It is about bringing the passion of life home; the urge to renew oneself, and to integrate and combine with others—to bring the sacred and profane, the intangible and the tangible together in a wonder and a beauty.

I Hear the Mermaid Singing, for viola, cello and piano, was commissioned and premiered by Fidelio Trio in 1990. Mermaids are a symbol of intuitive female wisdom, connection and sexual wholeness. These are not the mermaids of literature who lure sailors to an erotic death, but the mermaids of our own deep sexual nature, who are at ease with the water, the dark depths, the unknown and the fathomless.

They are natural, untamed, and their eerie songs echo in both tenderness and playfulness.

Lullaby, (1987) scored for solo instrument (or voice) and open instrumentation, is part of a larger work called *Descending Figure with Lullaby*. It is simply the song I imagine we all sing to our children, amid the distant noise of the outside world, cradling and surrounding them with a protective love.

Bleached Thread, Sister Thread, (1991), commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, was written for the Mendelssohn String Quartet. My ideas for this work began with a poem by my sister, Eva Davidson, which is about relationships spun with fine yet ordinary durable thread. These are old relationships, wracked by time and painful distances. My piece continues from her poem into a new time, this time, where the ties of the past support the present, and reveal a dark rich fabric full of color and boundless energy. It is life and relationships renewed. *Bleached Thread, Sister Thread* starts out of nothing; whispering and rubbing wood against strings, it slowly becomes sounds and then harmony. Passing through musical scenery, sometimes almost wildly, the piece grows in strength and vitality, cooling off only to heat up again. Finally the piece lifts off, detaches itself from the earth and ascends in a glowing circular fashion. A residue remains, almost an after image.

Blue Dawn (The Promised Fruit), commissioned by the Sylmar Ensemble in 1990, is both a departure and an arrival. Blue is the color the Navajos associate with the fructifying power of the earth, the water and the sky. Dawn is a moment of happiness and promise. And Eve gives Adam, not the apple of death, but the apple which brings them out of the dreamtime of the Garden. The forbidden fruit, for me, is the promised fruit—the promise of life.

— Tina Davidson

Tina Davidson was born in Stockholm in 1952 and grew up in central New York and Pennsylvania. She graduated in piano and composition from Bennington College, Vermont, where she studied with Henry Brant, Louis Calabro, Vivian Fine, and Lionel Nowak. She has been composer-in-residence for the Orchestra Society of Philadelphia, director of the Philadelphia New Orchestral Project, Associate Director of Relache, the Ensemble for Contemporary Music, and president of the New Music Alliance.

Davidson has been commissioned by groups such as Kronos Quartet, Sylmar Ensemble, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Greater Twin Cities Youth Orchestra, Orchestra Society of Philadelphia and the Mendelssohn String Quartet. Her music has been performed throughout the United States and parts of Europe by many orchestras and ensembles, including the Florida Symphony, St. Paul Civic Orchestra, Harrisburg Symphony, Erie Philharmonic, Fidelio, Zeirgeist, Relache, and Double Edge.

She has been awarded many prestigious commissions, state and national fellowships, including the Pew Fellowship, the largest such grant in the country for which an artist can apply. She is currently composer-in-residence with Opera Delaware, Newark Symphony Orchestra and the YWCA, as part of the Meet The Composer “New Residencies” Program.

Tina Davidson's work and musical vision is perhaps best stated by Peter Dobrin of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: her music “is rhythmically driving, with fascinatingly simple yet lovely harmonic changes. The composer makes music satisfying by carefully managing tension and release... it’s being able to bring a sense of beauty and emotion to a strict organizational structure, a rarity in any age.”

Davidson's quartet, *Cassandra Sings*, is performed by the Cassatt String Quartet on CRI (CD 671). In 1992 she wrote a widely circulated article on women in music for *Ms. Magazine*. She lives in Philadelphia with her eleven year old daughter.

Marshall Taylor, saxophone, plays classical music, jazz and new music, and composes and improvises music for modern dance. His scores for Zero Moving Dance have been called “achingly lovely.” He has played and recorded with Relache, the Ensemble for Contemporary Music (with which he toured Europe and Japan), Network for New Music, Parnassus, the Group for Contemporary Music, League/ISCM of New York, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony. He lives in Philadelphia where he is on the faculties of Temple University and LaSalle University. His recording, with pianist Charles Abramovic, of Milton Babbitt's *Whirled Series* is due out shortly on Koch International Classics.

Charles Abramovic, piano, has won critical acclaim for his international performances as a soloist, chamber musician and collaborator with leading instrumentalist and singers. As a solo recitalist he has performed in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Miami, San Francisco as well as in France and Yugoslavia. He has performed at major international festivals in Berlin, Dubrovnik, Bermuda, Vancouver, Oslo, Italy, and Newport, RI. Actively involved with contemporary music, he has recorded works of Milton Babbitt, Joseph Schwanter, Gerald Levinson, and others for CRI, Bridge and Koch International Classics.

Anthony Orlando, marimba, studied with Michael Bookspan and Fred Hinger. Mr. Orlando became a permanent member of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1972. Before this he was principal percussion and/or timpanist with the Grand Teton Music Festival, Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra, Lyric Opera Orchestra and the Greater Trenton Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Orlando is active as a clinician and recitalist, and performs recitals featuring ragtime xylophone and avant-garde music for marimba and solo percussion.

Don Liuzzi, vibraphone, earned his bachelor of music from the University of Michigan and his master of music from Temple University. Before joining the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1989, Mr. Liuzzi was a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony percussion section, and taught at the Duquesne University. He was a guest soloist on PBS' *Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*. He also was with the Flint Symphony Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theater Orchestra, and the Colorado Philharmonic. He has performed with the Spoleto Festival Orchestra and the Berkshire Music Center Fellowship Orchestra.

Lori Barnet, cello, has served as the principal cellist of the National Chamber Orchestra since its inception in 1985, and is also principal cellist for the Washington Chamber Symphony and the Alexandria Symphony. During the summers she performs with the Wolf Trap Orchestra. A committed performer of twentieth-century music, Miss Barnet is the cellist with the Contemporary Music Forum, in residence at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, and with Orchestra 2001 in Philadelphia. She has recorded works with Orion and CRI.

Kathleen Carroll, viola, has been affiliated with the Pennsylvania Ballet, the Opera Company of Philadelphia and is currently assistant principal viola with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic. As a core member of the Relache Ensemble for Contemporary Music, she has toured extensively throughout the U.S., South America and Europe. She currently performs with Contrasts, Chamber Artists of

Philadelphia, of which she is a founding member and co-artistic director.

The Mendelssohn String Quartet has established a reputation as one of the most imaginative, vital and exciting quartets of its generation. The Quartet is in residence at New York's Merkin Hall where they have annually presented a series of concerts since their formation in 1979. The Quartet also serves as quartet-in-residence at the University of Delaware and as the Blodgett artists-in-residence at Harvard University. The Quartet tours annually throughout North America and performs frequently in Europe, having toured the Netherlands, England, Italy, and Switzerland, and were the only American ensemble invited to appear at the First International Dialogues Festival in Kiev, Ukraine. The Mendelssohn String Quartet appears at such distinguished venues as Carnegie Hall, Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center and Library of Congress; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Wigmore Hall in London. They have a strong commitment to contemporary music and have given world premieres of works commissioned by and for them.

Carol Brown, flute, has performed with the Delaware Symphony as principal flute since 1985. She also holds the position of principal flute with the Harrisburg Symphony, and

freelances with several Delaware and Philadelphia area organizations. She received her master's degree in performance from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a bachelor of arts in music with honors from the University of Iowa.

Lloyd Shorter, English horn, has received awards and grants from the State of Delaware for teaching and solo performance. In addition to performances with the Del'Arte Woodwind Quintet, Mendelssohn String Quartet, and the Delaware Symphony, he performs and records with Relache. He has performed or recorded with Philip Glass, Michael Nyman, and Paul Winter, and has worked with numerous composers from South America, Europe and the U.S.

Charles Holdeman, bassoon, is both a performer and a composer. He was a core member of the Relache and the Delaware Symphony until recently. Currently he lives in Seattle, working as an artist-in-residence for the VA Hospitals, and as a teacher and composer, including a Meet the Composer Education Residency at the Shue Middle School. Holdeman is one of the few Americans to learn the technique of the French System bassoon, made by Buffet, which he uses in this recording.

Production Notes

Produced by Tina Davidson and Marshall Taylor Executive Producer: Joseph R. Dalton

Mastered by Robert Wolff at Sony Music Studios, New York.

Bleached Thread, Sister Threat was recorded at Baby Monster

Transparent Victims was recorded at Salmagundi Studios, Northfield, MN and engineered by Steve Mckinstry. Originally for Innova Recordings (American Composers Forum)

All other works were recorded at Acoustical Concepts, John Vanore, recording engineer

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