

NWCR821

# Crosswinds

Margaret Brouwer



<i>Crosswinds</i> (1995) .....	(13:55)
1. Blue Ridges, Dappled Sunlight, Mountain Waltz .....	(4:39)
2. Dusk .....	(5:06)

3. Oldtime Fiddles: High Low, Lower .....	(4:10)
The Cassatt String Quartet: Muneko Otani, violin; Jennifer Leshnowar, violin; Kelley Mikkelsen, cello; Michiko Oshima, viola.	

<i>Prelude and Vivace</i> (1996) .....	(11:10)
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4. Prelude .....	(4:56)
5. Vivace Ritmico .....	(6:14)
Daniel Silver, clarinet; Cleveland Institute of Music New Music Ensemble; Timothy Weiss, conductor.	

<i>Diary of an Alien</i> (1994) .....	(15:31)
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6. A Call for Action .....	(1:59)
7. Drifting .....	(3:23)
8. No Rotary Phone .....	(5:50)
9. Somewhere the Bells .....	(4:19)
Alice Weinreb, flute.	

<i>Sonata for Horn and Piano</i> (1996) .....	(14:37)
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10. Hymn .....	(7:34)
11. Riding to Higher Clouds .....	(7:03)
Kristin Thelander, horn; Réne Lecuona, piano.	

Total playing time 55:19

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## Notes

When I was a resident of Virginia, I became interested in the region's traditional folk music, sometimes called old-time music, and in using it as the germ material for this string quartet. Without quoting actual folk tunes, the quartet grows from my basic impressions of and fascination with their flavor. Typical string playing techniques, characteristic pentatonic scales, and spontaneous rhythms are transformed into my own personal expression.

A further inspiration came one day, while admiring the work of American impressionist painter John H. Twachtman. I was struck by the idea of using a background of short daubs of sound in the first movement, "Blue Ridges, Dappled Sunlight, Mountain Waltz," similar to the tiny daubs of color that cover his paintings. Through this background, the "picture" of a melancholy waltz (fashioned in the "old-time" style) could emerge just as the images emerge from the dots in the painting. The beautiful Shenandoah Valley landscape became for me the background—the woods with sunlight streaking through the trees and onto the hundreds of leaves covering the ground, the layered meadows, all surrounded by blue ridges—but overlaid with a melancholy mood. As the waltz ends, the obscuring wash of tiny dots of sound continues, with motives from the waltz still remaining. Through this a gradual transformation occurs. The slow movement, "Dusk," portrays my reaction to the beauty of the landscape as evening falls. The last movement, "Oldtime Fiddles: High, Low, Lower," attempts to capture the flavor and fun of old time fast music, presenting it in various forms of variation, while once again

transforming the ideas into my own style of expression. *Crosswinds* was commissioned by New York's Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse and premiered by the Chester String Quartet.

*Prelude and Vivace* (1996) is a chamber version of the Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, which was composed in 1994 for Richard Stoltzman. In the "Prelude," the solo clarinet floats above or below, or winds around and through orchestral sonorities that are sometimes warm, singing, and sparkling, and sometimes languid, hazy clouds of sound. An ascending motif begins in the clarinet and occurs frequently throughout, drifting upward at the final cadence.

The peace and tranquility of the Prelude changes drastically when all caution lets loose in the light-hearted, exuberant and quite raucous "Vivace Ritmico." Elements of jazz and the mood of a lively party combine with repetitive rhythmic patterns, changing meters, playful exchanges, and comic sound. A traditional cadenza for the clarinet culminates with a short exchange between the clarinet and a siren in the percussion section before the movement rushes forward to a conclusion.

*Diary of an Alien* (1994) is a collection of thoughts, impressions, and reactions in musical form. The performer can choose which movements to perform, like leafing through a diary and choosing the excerpts to read. The many meanings of the word "alien" convey an ambiguity that is intriguing. This could be the diary of an alien from society, from another world, from another planet, the diary of someone who is

alienated from modern day life... "A Call For Action" is assertive and non-reflective, portraying the title in musical language. Drifting through space, through thoughts, through time, through... "Drifting" experiments with multiphonics (humming into the flute while playing), and playing the head joint of the flute. "No Rotary Phone" is a satirical musical monologue in which the performer plays two parts, a person making a telephone call and an answering electronic voice. Beginning with "dialed" touch-tone phone number pitches, the movement goes through a typical phone mail routine. I could not resist taking the opportunity to poke fun at some public radio stations' incessant airing of Pachelbel's *Canon* when the caller is connected to a radio station while "on hold." The caller tries, earnestly at first, to listen to the Pachelbel, but becomes bored and distracted as well as increasingly frustrated by the imposed demands of this so practical and yet so dehumanizing one-way conversation. "Somewhere the Bells..." While standing on a mountain side, bells are heard echoing from far away in another valley, like a memory from another time, another place, another life... Electronic echo alters the sound of the flute, overlapping pitches to form multiple sonorities.

At the turn of a new century, and after a century of atonality, I am eager to find paths in new harmonic directions. Sonata for Horn and Piano (1996) is representative of recent explorations of mine toward a personal expression prompted by the deaths of two loved ones within a year's time. "Hymn," straightforward and melodic, expresses grief and faith. "Riding to Higher Clouds" deals with the complex struggle between the conflicting emotions of loss, hope, memories, and understanding. This work was commissioned by The Horn Consortium Commissioning Group.

— Margaret Brouwer

**Margaret Brouwer** was born in 1940 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Also a trained violinist, she holds a doctorate in composition from Indiana University. From 1992 to 1997, she was composer-in-residence for the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. She is currently head of the composition department at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Brouwer's published works, dating from the 1980s and '90s, show a concern with the proportions between consonance and dissonance, and between different gradations of tonal vs. atonal writing. Brouwer's approach varies from piece to piece according to what is called for by a given context. In general, her music is characterized by an immediacy of expression and a certain "natural" feel: no abstract theoretical considerations seem to stand between the composer and the music. Brouwer's sources of inspiration may often be found, instead, in concrete life situations. Landscapes, works of art, the impressions left by books read, or personal events such as the death of a loved one, are all to be drawn upon—and Brouwer's reactions to these stimuli are those of a musical mind striving for great clarity and simplicity.

Since the experiences evoked are ones shared by many of Brouwer's listeners, there is a certain common ground between composer and audience. This makes it possible for her music to express her individuality but at the same time communicate with the outside world. Margaret Brouwer's style fuses elements from several different twentieth-century idioms to express her personal message.

Margaret Brouwer has received numerous awards and commissions including grants from the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] and the Ford Foundation. Her music has been performed by such outstanding musicians as clarinetist Richard Stoltzman and the members of the

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She has written nine orchestral compositions (including a symphony and *Pluto*, a sequel to Holst's *Planets*), and numerous chamber and vocal works. Three of these (*Skyriding*, *SCHerZOid*, and *Two Pieces for Viola*) have been recorded on the Centaur label; a fourth work, *Timespan*, is included in a release by the New Mexico Brass Quintet on Crystal Records. Her Clarinet Concerto may be heard on the MMC label as performed by Richard Stoltzman and the Seattle Symphony under Gerard Schwartz.

— Peter Laki

The **Cassatt String Quartet** has been hailed as one of America's outstanding young ensembles, earning critical raves throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East. With both the Juilliard and the Tokyo Quartets as mentors, the group won fellowships at Tanglewood and Yale, subsequently capturing top prizes at the Fischhoff, Coleman and Banff Competitions and receiving the 1995 Chamber Music America / ASCAP First Prize Award for Adventurous Programming. They currently serve as the Slee quartet-in-residence at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and also hold residencies at Syracuse and East Carolina Universities, New York City's Bang on a Can Festival, the Swannanoa Festival in North Carolina and the Seal Bay Festival in Maine. The Cassatt frequently commissions new works from outstanding contemporary composers while also performing a wide range of the standard repertory. The quartet's other CRI recordings include their full length disc *Cassatt* (CD 671) and *Music of Ursula Mamlok* (CD 806). It is from the pioneering American impressionist painter Mary Cassatt that the Quartet takes its name.

**Daniel Silver**, clarinet, has an international career which encompasses a broad range of musical activities, including recitals, solo appearances, chamber music, and orchestral playing. He has been the principal clarinet of the Washington Chamber Symphony, the Baltimore Opera Orchestra, and the National Gallery Orchestra. In addition, Silver is a regular member of the Contemporary Music Forum of Washington, D.C., in residence at the Corcoran Gallery. He has performed and toured with the Baltimore Symphony and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, including performances at Carnegie Hall with David Zinman and Lorin Maazel, conductors. His festival credits include Tanglewood and Aspen, and he now spends his summers at the Interlochen Arts Camp, where he has been on the faculty since 1991. Recent engagements include concerto appearances in Baltimore and Roanoke, where he played the full concerto version of Margaret Brouwer's *Prelude and Vivace* with the Roanoke Symphony. He served on the faculties of Towson University and the Baltimore School for the Arts, and is presently on the faculty of the University of Colorado in Boulder.

**Timothy Weiss**, conductor, is an associate professor of wind conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. An active guest conductor, Weiss has performed with orchestras of the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and the San Angelo Symphony. His performances often showcase the work of living composers, including John Luther Adams, Margaret Brouwer, George Crumb, Michael Gandolfi, Morton Subotnik, James Tenney, Param Vir, Kevin Volans, and Judith Weir. He has conducted and recorded numerous premieres in collaboration with composers, soloists, and choreographers. Prior to his appointment at the Oberlin Conservatory, Weiss conducted and taught music theory at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

**Alice Kogan Weinreb**, flute, is a member of the National

Symphony Orchestra. She is solo flute with the National Musical Arts chamber ensemble, in residence at the National Academy of Sciences, and has recorded with the Chamber Soloists of Washington. She is a founding member of the Capitol Woodwind Quintet and the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra and serves on the faculty of the Catholic University of America. Ms. Weinreb studied in France under a Fulbright Fellowship and was awarded first prize in flute at the *Ecole Normale de Musique* in Paris.

**Kristin Thelander**, horn, is professor of music at the University of Iowa, where, in addition to teaching horn, she performs with the Iowa Brass Quintet and the Iowa Woodwind Quintet. During the summer season she performs with the Britt Festival Orchestra in Jacksonville, Oregon. Previously she was on the music faculty at the University of New Mexico, and she was a member of the New Mexico Symphony, the Santa Fe Symphony, and the Four Corners Opera Festival in Durango, Colorado. Dr. Thelander holds degrees from St. Olaf College, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Wisconsin. She was the first prize winner in the 1981 American Horn Competition, and she has

performed throughout the United States, Europe, Mexico, South Korea, and the People's Republic of China. She has recorded two CDs for Crystal Records, one with the New Mexico Brass Quintet and one as a natural horn soloist in collaboration with fortepianist, Carollei (Post) Breckenridge.

**Réne Lecuona**, piano, is an associate professor of piano at the University of Iowa, where she has an active performing and teaching schedule. She has performed solo and chamber music recitals throughout the United States, South America, and in the Caribbean. She made her Carnegie Hall debut as a chamber musician in 1993, and has appeared as concerto soloist with orchestras in New York and Iowa. As an artistic ambassador for the United States, she gave concerts in Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Trinidad, Tobago, Mexico, and Brazil. Lecuona is an advocate of twentieth-century music, and she has appeared as both pianist and chamber musician in concerts for the prestigious Center for New Music at the University of Iowa. She is featured on several compact discs, including a recording with double bassist Diana Gannett of chamber music by Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

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## Production Notes

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