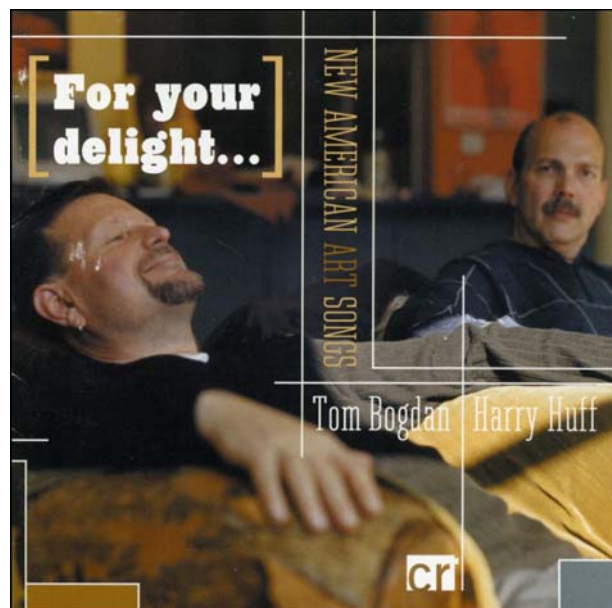


NWCR901

For Your Delight

New American Art Songs Tom Bogdan and Harry Huff



1. *For Your Delight*, Richard Hundley, texts by Robert Louis Stevenson (2:59)
2. *Oh, You Whom I Often And Silently Come*, Ned Rorem, texts by Walt Whitman (0:27)
3. *Maiden Snow*, Richard Hundley, texts by Kenneth Patchen (2:16)
4. *Lyric 4*, Chris DeBlasio, texts by Perry Brass (1:52)
5. *Holy Thursday*, Daron Hagen, texts by Paul Muldoun (2:34)
6. *Johnny*, Paul Boesing, texts by W.H. Auden (3:32)
7. *The Heart Does Not Care*, Chris DeBlasio, texts by Perry Brass (1:49)
8. *I Miss Him*, Scott Murphy, texts by Edna St. Vincent Millay (2:45)
9. *Will There Really Be A Morning*, Ricky Ian Gordon, texts by Emily Dickinson (4:32)
10. *Amor Da Guerra*, Robert Moran, texts by Piovene (3:33)
11. *As I Walked Out One Evening*, Paul Boesing, texts by W.H. Auden (4:43)
12. *Daybreak In Alabama*, Donald Ashwander, texts by Langston Hughes (2:36)
13. *Deer In Mists And Almonds*, Tom Cipullo, texts by Alice Worth Gray (4:50)
14. *Possums*, Donald Ashwander, texts by Eugene Walter (3:16)
15. *Litany*, John Musto, texts by Langston Hughes ... (3:00)
16. *Gotham Blues*, Meredith Monk, texts by James Purdy (4:15)
17. *Night Song*, Meredith Monk, texts by James Purdy (1:11)
18. *Gotham Lullaby*, Meredith Monk, texts by James Purdy (4:19)
19. *A Horse With Wings*, Ricky Ian Gordon, texts by James Purdy (2:55)
20. *Come Ready And See Me*, Richard Hundley, texts by James Purdy (2:24)

(Total playing time 1:00:33)
© & © 2002 Composers Recordings, Inc.
© 2007 Anthology of Recorded Music, Inc.

Notes

Crossing Over: The New American Art Song

As a performer, I think composers are the cat's meow. With pitches and rhythm (and often words), they create an incredible world that a performer can enter and respond to; listeners to this music can open doors to worlds in their own imaginations that never existed before. I am grateful to composers for making my performing and listening life rich and fun.

My relationship with music that can crossover began in the mid 1980s when pianist Harry Huff and I started doing cabaret shows together. I was lucky to have met Harry in 1982 at the Aspen Music Festival, where we performed in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*, directed by Martha Schlamme. Harry is one of those rare pianists who can play many styles of music and have it sound like it wants to be heard. Because of these attributes and an incredible musical empathy, we began doing electric cabaret shows where we performed everything from medieval music to doo-wop. These shows became a place where I could explore and sing any music that I loved and wouldn't normally be hired to do.

A strong consideration of each show was to present music

being written now, by composers whose music was as accessible as the classical and popular music on the programs. I had been singing songs by Ned Rorem and Richard Hundley already; Harry introduced me to Chris DeBlasio and the list grew to include music by Ricky Ian Gordon, Donald Ashwander, Meredith Monk, and others. I realized that the music of these composers was especially satisfying to perform and easy on the ears of a wide audience.

I like to think of the term crossover as referring to a kind of music that some composers write, rather than to certain performers who sing in several musical genres or styles. This music often defies being placed in a particular music category by critics and listeners alike. It crosses over the boundaries of classical and more popular forms and reaches a larger audience. Songs of this genre are often lyrical, emotional, communicative, passionate, and dramatic, which make them easily accessible. The composers are frequently classically trained or have a strong classical background, and they often create more sophisticated piano accompaniments than those for most musical theater or pop songs.

Although now I think of these as New American Art Songs, there really is nothing new about this unique American genre of song. Before the 1950s, there were many classical composers who wrote songs of this ilk. Their songs were sung regularly on recitals, and in the homes of the many amateur musicians who had pianos and sang as entertainment before the onset of television. These composers had a special sensitivity to setting lyrics that could be felt by both performer and listener, and so become familiar to a large and varied audience. I think of very popular composers like Stephen Foster, George Gershwin, and later, Kurt Weill. There are many others — like John Duke, Oley Speaks, Theodore Chandler, and Ernest Charles—whose music is rarely performed nowadays but who at one time must have been immensely popular. I have found their music in abundance at garage and estate sales and in music libraries.

Atonality, twelve-tone serialism and complex rhythmic structures were new compositional ideas around the time of the First World War. By the 1950s this modernist compositional style was in favor and became the standard of what was written and taught in conservatories and universities. Many classical composers considered lyricism and tonality *passé*. When I was younger, I performed in the premieres of many pieces that were very difficult to learn and didn't have much emotional payback for me as a performer. This is not to say that I didn't like atonal, twelve-tone or serial music. There are composers who have written incredible pieces in this style, starting with Schoenberg, Webern and Berg. I've performed in several works like this that have thrilled me: Stephen Oliver's *Mario and the Magician* and Dallapiccola's *The Prisoner* are two operas that were amongst the most difficult I have ever had to perform. They both are incredibly emotional and passionate works that successfully transcend compositional form.

I am happy to see that many composers who were taught in the modern style still find that their individual voices embrace tonality and melody while using this more abstract musical language to enrich their compositional palettes. The music of several of these composers is represented on this recording. Although each has a very individual style and distinct voice, their music is equally compelling to me. I hope it is enjoyable to you, the listener.

The Composers

It was very difficult to choose which songs to include. The composers are just a handful of many who write the new hybrid art songs that I have sung for years and am still discovering. (For example, I heard the premiere of *I Miss Him*, only last May at Bennington College where I teach. It was composed by **Scott Murphy**, a young student who graduated in June and is now in the special music theater program at New York University.)

The early songs of **Ned Rorem** are some of the first pieces of this crossover genre that I encountered as a performer. As a member of the Gregg Smith Singers, I first met Ned and had the privilege of working with him in 1973 when I was preparing the tenor solos in his *Missa Brevis*, which we premiered and recorded the following year. In the early 80s my voice teacher, Adele Addison, who is a long-time friend of Ned's and a notable performer of his music, suggested that I ask if he would work with me on a group of his songs that I was preparing for a recital. This was the beginning of a special relationship with him and many other composers, who not only gave me first-hand insight about their music but also rarely, if ever, asked to be compensated for their invaluable time and assistance. Rorem's very short piece "Oh, You

Whom I Often and Silently Come" is an exquisite setting of Walt Whitman's poem and gushes forth like a spontaneous utterance flowing from the lips of an ardent admirer.

"For Your Delight," the title work on this collection, was written by **Richard Hundley** and sets texts by Robert Louis Stevenson. I wasn't yet familiar with his music when I met him at a cocktail party in the early 1970s. After hearing someone sing his "Come Ready and See Me" in 1983, I called to ask about his songs. When I visited Richard at his studio in Greenwich Village, his generosity caused me to leave with copies of many of his songs in original manuscript form. We read through his music often and have performed a group of his songs together on a New York recital. I have also had the pleasure of sharing his songs with many of my colleagues who now regularly sing them on their recitals. Two other Hundley songs are included on this recording: "Come Ready and See Me," with texts by James Purdy, and "Maiden and Snow," with texts by Kenneth Patchen.

Working with most composers on a new piece or having a piece written specifically for me has been a great privilege, one high on the list of pleasures in my life as a performing artist. Consistently favorite experiences with composers have been the several times I was asked to participate in the composer/librettist workshops that are sponsored by New York Dramatists in New York City. A team of five composers, five playwrights and five performers get together for two weeks and write, discuss, and perform a total of 25 new pieces. I have had some beautiful new pieces written specifically for me in a two-day time span by some very fine composers and librettists at these workshops.

Perhaps the most memorable result of these workshops is the piece "Leaving," by **Ricky Ian Gordon** and Barry Jay Kaplan. Ricky and I were already friends; I loved his music and had performed his songs in the Crossover Cabarets that Harry Huff and I were doing. One particular assignment at the workshop was for each performer to choose a team of a composer and a librettist and to ask them to write a song about a subject of the performer's choice with his specific qualifications. I selected Ricky and Barry as my team and asked them to write something with a gay theme that I could identify with and perform. The incredible "Leaving," about the break-up of a love relationship, was composed in two days and so well received that I have performed it many times. Since that song was recorded for the cast album of *L'Amour Bleu*, for this project I chose Ricky's "Will There Really Be A Morning," with texts by Emily Dickinson, and "A Horse With Wings." These two well-known songs are but a sampling of his prolific output.

Harry Huff introduced me to **Chris DeBlasio** and his music soon after we began doing cabaret shows together. I was fortunate enough to work with Chris a lot before his untimely death of AIDS in 1993. A very memorable collaboration with Chris was learning his beautiful song cycle set to Elizabeth Bishop poems, *In Endless Assent*. We made a documentary recording at my friend Ken Bichel's studio before performing it. That recording is a treasure and, I like to think, a definitive recording. Since Chris's passing, Harry, who is musical executor of Chris' estate, keeps surprising me with songs that he thinks I would enjoy singing. He's never been wrong, as attested by the two songs "The Heart Does Not Care" and "Lyric 4," with texts by Percy Brass.

Richard Hundley brought **Tom Cipullo** and me together. Tom, a member of a group of composers called Friends And Enemies Of New Music, is a rhapsodic and passionate composer who has a very distinct voice and he is a very warm

and generous human being. I decided to sing the lovely “Deer In Mists And Almonds” on this CD. As part of a performance with him at the Lincoln Center Library series he chose the two songs by **John Musto** and **Daron Hagen**. I didn’t know their music at the time but knew that I would sing those songs again one day. I haven’t met those two composers yet but wish to say thank you for “Litany” and “Holy Thursday.”

My first performance of **Robert Moran’s** music was with the Phyllis Lamhut Dance Company. We enjoyed working together and became friends. He has had an illustrious career as a composer and told me of *Three Baroque Songs* that he wrote for baritone, which had never been performed. I fell in love with them immediately and asked him to transpose them for tenor. The beautiful “Amor Da Guerra...” on this recording is one of them. Harry and I premiered those songs and sang several others on one of John Schaeffer’s: *New Sounds, Live From Lincoln Center* concerts that featured Moran’s music. He has generously written several pieces for me and I have had the privilege of performing a lot of his music over the years.

Meredith Monk’s music is very special to me. It has opened my perceptions, my ears, and my imagination to a world way beyond my formal musical training. I didn’t know Meredith’s music when Scott Heumann of the Houston Grand Opera, who knew of my Crossover Cabarets, called me and asked if I would like to audition for her opera *Atlas*, which they had commissioned. Meredith was looking for a cast that was versatile in many styles and disciplines, not just traditional opera. That audition in 1990 started a musical collaboration and a friendship that is very important to me. I can never thank her enough for writing *New York Requiem* especially for Harry and me. She also created the opportunity for us to perform it on tour in Europe and the USA. (As a result of her training me to teach her music to other ensemble I have been awarded a Fulbright Grant to go to Budapest for four months to work with a Hungarian ensemble, who will learn and perform her *A Celebration Service* in the Spring of 2003.) For this collection, I chose to sing Meredith’s “Gotham Blues,” “Night Song” and “Gotham Lullaby.”

I also have to thank Meredith for introducing me to her dear friend **Donald Ashwander**, who was the pianist and composer for The Paper Bag Players. He was well known for the music he created for that group and his piano rags, but he also wrote many art songs that hadn’t been performed in a while. A native of Alabama, Donald had lived in New York City for a long time but never lost his gracious Southern charm. I adored spending time with Donald as much as I adored his uniquely American music, and have performed it many times. When Donald died in 1994, Meredith, Harry, and I, along with an extraordinary group of his performer friends, staged *Particular People*, a performance of his music at La MaMa, as a tribute. “Daybreak In Alabama,” with texts by Langston Hughes, and “Possums,” with texts by Eugene Walter, are two songs of his heard on this recording.

Paul Boesing contacted me from Minneapolis on the recommendation of Ben Krywosz, who facilitated the Composer Librettist workshops in New York. He was setting a group of W.H. Auden texts that were about love and he wanted someone to sing them from a gay viewpoint because Auden was a homosexual. (Ben told him about my *L’Amour Bleu*, which had gay themes.) I must admit I wasn’t expecting to like his songs but I was game because of Auden’s texts and my respect for Ben. By the time I premiered a cycle of 10 songs in Minneapolis, I had enjoyed the songs so much that I begged him to write more settings of Auden texts so we could

make a full evening’s music theater piece of them. He and I, along with visual artist Jim Hodges and choreographer Terry Creach, created *Tell Me The Truth About Love*, a piece loosely based on Auden’s relationship with his life-love Chester Kallman. It was produced by the Danspace Project at St. Mark’s Church in New York and also presented at Bennington College. The two songs on this recording, “Johnny” and “As I Walked Out One Evening,” are from the show.

It has been a great joy to sing these songs and to work with most of their creators. Harry Huff and I hope that you get as much pleasure from listening to them as we had in recording them. We’re proud to present these songs for your delight.

— Tom Bogdan

Performers

Tom Bogdan has received critical acclaim for performances in opera, oratorio, concert, recital, and cabaret. His repertoire demonstrates a mastery of a wide range of styles from the music of antiquity to the avant-garde and certain kinds of pop. A champion of new music, he has sung in the premieres of over 50 pieces, including Ned Rorem’s *Missa Brevis*, Lukas Foss’s *American Cantata*, Ricky Ian Gordon’s *The Family Piece*, and Meredith Monk’s *New York Requiem*, which she wrote especially for him. Bogdan also performed in the premiere of Monk’s opera *Atlas* at the Houston Grand Opera and on tours throughout the U.S. and Europe. Other operatic premieres include William Harper’s *El Greco*, John Caskin’s *The Golum*, Stephen Oliver’s *Mario And The Magician*, and Richard Wilson’s *Aethelred The Unready* with the American Symphony Orchestra. As a member of The Meredith Monk Ensemble he has performed in the premieres of several new works, including *American Archeology*, *A Celebration Service* and *The Politics Of Quiet*, for which he received a BESSIE Award.

An avid interpreter of the baroque repertoire, Bogdan has distinguished himself in the role of the Evangelist in Bach’s *Passions*. His most memorable performances include the roles of Peter Quint and the Madwoman in New York City productions of Britten’s *The Turn Of The Screw* and *Curlew River*, the title role in Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* with Robert Craft conducting, and roles in all three of Monteverdi’s operas, performed as a cycle, under the direction of Stephen Wadsworth. His many recordings include his own *L’Amour Bleu* (Poppy Records), Meredith Monk’s *Atlas* (ECM Records) and *The Monk and the Abyss* (Catalyst Records), Tod Machover’s *Valis* (Bridge Records), Stravinsky’s *Cantata* conducted by Robert Craft MusicMaster/Classics), Gershwin’s *Blue Monday* (Vox-Turnabout), Blitzstein’s *The Harpies* (Premiere Recordings), and Ned Rorem’s *Missa Brevis* conducted by Gregg Smith (Vox Records). He has performed with opera companies, choruses, oratorio societies and with symphony orchestras throughout the United States and at music festivals such as Aspen, Avignon, Caramoor, Copenhagen, Helsinki International, Mostly Mozart, and the Voices Festival in Innsbruck, Austria.

Bogdan’s own show, *L’Amour Bleu*, a gay celebration of love, was presented by the Danspace Project for three seasons at St. Mark’s Church in New York City. The recording of *L’Amour Bleu* was nominated for a GLAMA award. The Danspace project also presented his collaboration with composer Paul Boesing, artist Jim Hodges and choreographer Terry Creach, *Tell Me The Truth About Love*, based on texts by W.H. Auden. Deborah Jowitt’s glowing review in the *Village Voice* says this about Bogdan’s performance: “... Bogdan, who appears regularly with Meredith Monk, is more than a fine tenor. He shapes a song with body, soul and subtle intellect.”

His newest music-theater work, *Crossing Over*, was presented in January 2002, at La MaMa in New York City.

Bogdan is a pioneer in performing crossover music and particularly enjoys his eclectic cabaret shows where he sings music from antiquity to pop. Of one of these cabaret performances, Stephen Holden wrote in the *New York Times*: "... In Mr. Bogdan's musical world, the terrain shared by Baroque music and certain kinds of contemporary pop is a sweeping melodic line that calls forth and operatic emotionality... endowed with a pure tenor, that shades into an even more ethereal countertenor, he turns pop songs into almost Baroque style arias." Bogdan credits his vocal training and musical mentoring to Adele Addison. He is on the faculty of Bennington College.

Pianist **Harry Huff** has enjoyed a unique career as a keyboard artist, collaborating with such celebrated singers as Jessye Norman, Eleanor Steber, Håkan Hagegård, Judy Collins and Art Garfunkel; trumpeter Al Hirt, soprano saxophonist Anders Paulsson and electric violinist Christina Sunnerstam; and choreographers Bill T. Jones, Lar Lubavitch and Meredith Monk. His stylistic ease with the music of New York café society led to a two-year stint as pianist in the Oak Room of the Plaza Hotel, and to projects with Joan Rivers and Barbra Streisand.

In the early 1980s Huff performed with the late Brecht/Weill interpreter Martha Schlamme, appearing regularly in her concert cabaret *A Woman Without a Man Is...* at Jason's, and with her and actor Alvin Epstein in the 1985 revival of *A Kurt Weill Cabaret* at the Harold Clurman Theater. His collaboration with Swedish soprano saxophonist Anders Paulsson led to the 1988 recording *In A Sentimental Mood* (music of Duke Ellington) on the LCM label in Stockholm.

He recently composed and performed 34 piano sketches for the audio book *Piece by Piece*, a collection of the humorous writings of Calvin Trillin.

Huff's many collaborations with soprano Jessye Norman have included the Phillips Classics recordings *In The Spirit*, the PBS special *Jessye Norman: Home for the Holidays*, and appearances on NBC's Today and David Letterman shows. In 1988 he joined Miss Norman, dancer Bill T. Jones and accordionist William Schimmel for the original theatrical presentation *How! Do! We ! Do!*, which received its world premiere at City Center. In the mid-90s he was a member of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble, performing in the European tours of *Custom-Made*, and serving as musical director for the world premiere of *The Politics of Quiet* at the 1996 Avignon Festival, later produced at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He also recorded Monk's *New York Requiem* with her on the ECM New Series recording *Volcano Springs*. He was heard in the American premiere of Phillip Glass's *Voices for Organ and Didgeridoo*, with Australian aboriginal didjeridu virtuoso Mark Atkins in Alice Tully Hall at the 2001 Lincoln Center Festival.

Huff's frequent cabaret work has included many productions with Tom Bogdan, including *L'Amour Bleu* (a musical masque on gay themes) and *Tell Me The Truth About Love* (based on the life and work of poet W.H. Auden), both at St. Mark's Danspace, and most recently, *Crossing-Over* (a meditation on the events of September 11th) at The Club at La MaMa. He also performs with chanteuse Badoni De Cesare in her show *Wanna Fall in Love?* and the film noir spoof *Kiss Me, Kill Me*.

Production Notes

Recorded by Eve Seltzer, August 21–22, 2002 at Passport Recording, New York City.

Edited and mixed by Scott Leher at Passport Recording.

Produced by Tom Bogdan.

Thanks to Bennington College for support through a faculty grant for recording, Tim Hailan for the beautiful photos, John Shultz and CRI for making this CD possible, Bruce Saylor for bringing Harry and me to the attention of CRI, Scott and Eve for the sound, and Aaron and Mic for the look. Special thanks to all the composers for their wonderful music, and thanks to the lyricists who inspired the songs.

Publishing:

For Your Delight and *Maiden Snow*, Richard Hundley

Come Ready And See Me, Boosey and Hawkes

Oh, You Whom I Silently Come, Henmar Press

The Heart Does Not Care and *Lyric 4*, Harry Huff and Chris DeBlaiso

Holy Thursday, Carl Fisher

Johnny and *As I Walked Out One Evening*, Paul Boesing

I Miss Him, Scott Murphy

Will There Really Be a Morning and *A Horse With Wings*, Williamson Music

Amor Da Guerra, Robert Moran

Daybreak In Alabama and *Possums*, Judy Moore for Donald Ashwander

Deer In Mist With Almonds, Tom Cipullo

Litany, Southern Music Publishing

Gotham Blues, *Night Song* and *Gotham Lullaby*, Meredith Monk Music

Executive Director for CRI: John G. Schultz

This project was funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.