



AMERICAN CLASSICS



**Margaret
BROUWER**

Reactions

Songs and Chamber Music

Rhapsodic Sonata

Declaration • The Lake

I Cry – Summer 2020

All Lines Are Still Busy

Sarah Beaty, Mezzo-soprano

Brian Skoog, Tenor

Mari Sato, Narrator, Violin

Eliesha Nelson, Viola

Shuai Wang, Piano



Margaret
BROUWER
(b. 1940)

- Rhapsodic Sonata** (2011, rev. 2016) **20:19**
- 1 I. **Cáritas** **10:31**
 - 2 II. **...fair as the moon, bright as the sun...** **4:47**
 - 3 III. **Blithesome Spirit** **4:54**
- Eliesha Nelson, Viola • Shuai Wang, Piano
- Declaration** (2005) **13:45**
- 4 I. **Thorn** **4:29**
(Text: Ann Woodward, b. 1939)
 - 5 II. **Scattering in Fear** **2:30**
(Text: Margaret Brouwer)
 - 6 III. **...all men and women are...** **1:12**
(Text: Thomas Jefferson, 1743–1826,
from *The Declaration of Independence*)
 - 7 IV. **Whom do you call angel now?** **5:30**
(Text: David Adams, b. 1955)
- Sarah Beaty, Mezzo-soprano • Mari Sato, Violin • Shuai Wang, Piano
- 8 I **Cry – Summer 2020** (2020) **3:57**
Mari Sato, Violin • Shuai Wang, Piano
- 9 **The Lake** (2019) **11:09**
Brian Skoog, Tenor • Shuai Wang, Piano
- 10 **All Lines Are Still Busy** (2019) **6:19**
(Text: Margaret Brouwer)

Mari Sato, Narrator, Violin

Recorded: 4–5 January 2021 at Kulas Hall, Cleveland Institute of Music, Ohio, USA
and 7 February 2021 at Knobworld Studio, Los Angeles, USA (vocal recordings for 4–7)

Producer: Margaret Brouwer

Engineers: Michael Bishop and Robert Friedrich (engineer for vocal recordings 4–7): Lewis Pesacov)

Editor: Thomas C. Moore

Margaret Brouwer (b. 1940)

Rhapsodic Sonata • Declaration • I Cry – Summer 2020 • The Lake • All Lines Are Still Busy

The works on this recording are musical representations of reactions to various events. *Rhapsodic Sonata* is a reaction to being in love. It glows with light-hearted happiness. The four songs in *Declaration* cover several years of my reactions to war, violence, genocide and the lack of equality for all people. *I Cry – Summer 2020* was composed in anguished reaction during the summer of 2020 to everything that was wrong – a pandemic causing isolation, national divisions caused by lies, distrust and refusal to compromise, senseless killings and children separated from parents. *The Lake* is my reaction to the beauty and inspirational peace that being near a body of water brings to me. But the song progresses to my heartbroken reaction to the toxic pollution that threatens so many lakes. *All Lines Are Still Busy* is a satirical musical reaction to the annoying problem of being put on hold or being given a selection of numbers representing different extensions to choose from – none of which are usually what one needs. The violinist speaks as well as plays.

Rhapsodic Sonata for viola and piano portrays a person who is on an internal journey. In the first movement the viola begins with a mood of questioning and anger, contrasting with the atmosphere of blurred color and more tranquil melodic fragments in the piano. The *passionato* temper of the soloist gradually dissolves, with only occasional references to the opening tensions. Near the end of the movement there is a quote from the early Gregorian chant *Ubi caritas*, “Lest we in mind be divided, let us beware. Let cease malicious quarrels, let strife give way.” This is followed by a related melody, first in the piano and then the viola. The second movement, *...fair as the moon, bright as the sun...* is simply a love song. Opening with soft, breathless, quick motion in the piano, “like a light breeze through white clouds”, it quickly gives way to a melody in the viola that exudes warmth and pleasure. The same chant, *Ubi caritas*, is referred to near the end of the movement in the piano. The last movement, *Blithesome Spirit*, in a carefree vein, becomes buoyantly playful and mischievous.

Declaration for soprano or mezzo- soprano, violin and piano is a set of songs addressing violence and war and the equality of all people. The poem for the first song, by Ann Woodward, expresses outrage at people who do not believe the killing they see on television is real, and who do not understand that all people are the same. Where the music in the first song is simple and sad, the music in the second song, *Scattering in Fear*, portrays the terror of children and families running, stumbling and dashing in panic from the genocide that is happening to them. The third song, *...all men and women are...*, continues the theme of equality (men *and* women) by quoting a short segment from the *Declaration of Independence*. The last song is a song of mourning. It was taken from a set of poems by David Adams called *September Songs*, which he wrote after the September 11 attacks in 2001.

Declaration

I. Thorn

by Ann Woodward (b. 1939)

I will not watch a war on TV news
where violence and death are made mundane,
where real and fiction look alike, where views
can be white-washed, where numb replaces pain,
or treat wars like a game, the winning side
cheered on as if the persons lost were pawns
removed from play – their families know they died,
it doesn't matter theirs or ours, no dawns
will light their days – for eons men have fought
to dominate, to have their way, for lands,

for wealth, sometime to save the world, so blame
war on insanity and greed, on thought
by man so sure he's right, on arrogance,
not seeing we and other are the same.

II. *Scattering in Fear*

by Margaret Brouwer

Hundreds of yards beyond you
Scattering in fear,
Bounding from your guns –
In panic, the children
Crouch and leap ahead,
Jump and dash for cover
off the rocks and ledges.

You and the others surge upon them,
Now shooting, you have bloodied their bones.
They lie scattered in the valley,
There's sixty, or ninety, or maybe two hundred
Dying fam'lies there.

When you go home
And return to your city place,
to your mother and your children,
where the peace of loving kindness
Always flows so bright

Remember children, babes and mothers
you slaughtered that day.

Silence yourself –
Silence yourself –
and remember them.

III. *...all men and women are...*

by Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)
(from *The Unanimous Declaration of the
Thirteen United States of America*)

We hold these truths to be self evident,
that all men are created equal,
that they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are Life, Liberty
and the pursuit of Happiness.

IV. *Whom do you call angel now?*

from *September Songs, An Angel's Song*

by David Adams (b. 1955)

Whom do you call angel now?
If I am as old as stars,
If I am the speech of God,
Find my shadow in the apple boughs.
Find my green wings in the mountains,
My white tears broken in the seas.

For even as you die,
No stalk bends without its angel.
I have heard wailing centuries.
I am waiting in their silences like snow
To dream the music of a single tongue –
One pure leaf in a voiceless wind.

Whom do you call angel now?
Who will teach you how to love?

Composed in summer 2020 in the midst of the lengthy Covid-19 pandemic, *I Cry – Summer 2020* for violin and piano is a reaction firstly to the gnawing burden of isolation, self-imposed loss of mobility, and a restricted way of life that showed no signs of abating. Along with this, my country was in trouble. I cried for the people who were hurting, who were dead, who were killed for no reason, who were diminished because they were different in some way, and for those who were narrow and afraid to broaden their vision of life.

The Lake for tenor and piano is like a monologue spoken by a man taking a morning walk on a beach. The birds are singing and the sun sparkles on the waves. He sings of the beauty of the lake and his sense of peace and happiness at being there. He notices something floating on the lake further down the beach and, intrigued, walks toward it. As he gets close, he sees that a large area of the lake is covered with odorous, toxic algae. His happy mood changes to shock and disbelief, and then to sadness.

The Lake

by Margaret Brouwer

This morning is beautiful
The sun is rising over the lake.
I walk along the shore,
The sun glints on the water,
glints and sparkles on the spray.

The birds are singing.
Those little black birds dip down, dip down, swoop up,
then they dive into the water to catch a fish.

This morning is beautiful.
The air is fresh and crisp.
I am happy that I am here by the lake.
I did not know it was so beautiful here.
I am restful here.

What's that?
What's that on the water up ahead?
Something green and shiny – floating in the water.
Huh. It's quite large.
I am getting closer and soon can see it clearly.

No –
I won't look at that!
I won't see it...
It's nothing important.
I will look the other way, and walk past quickly.

But – but – it is quite expansive.
I will hurry along.

Don't look!
Look the other way.
That smell. What is that unpleasant odor?
Oh. It's just a dead fish on the beach.
And another, and another dead fish on the beach,
And dead fish floating in the water here.

Green!
The lake is green here.
A disturbing phosphorescent green here!
Glowing green swirls in the water.

Ah! What can be done!
I loathe seeing this algae on the lake!
Who should help the lake?
It is complicated.

The farm run-off, the sewers, dumping in the lake.
The expense of changes.
Bad habits to change.

Gone the sparkling spray here.
Gone the little black birds.
All gone, all gone in this part of the lake.
The fishermen, the swimming children,
the safe drinking water – here all gone.

All pushed away by shallow needs and wants and greed. All pushed away by negligence.
Sparkling waves are gone here.
The clear blue lake is filled with sludge here.
Why are we so careless?

I must walk back to the good beach.
I cannot stand it here.
Hurry – go back now.
Walk to the beach that is still pristine, still unspoiled.

Go back.

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All Lines Are Still Busy for violin is a satirical musical monologue in which the performer speaks as well as plays, portraying two people: a person making a telephone call and an electronic voice answering. Beginning with touch-tone phone number pitches, the piece goes through a typical business phone routine. When the caller is connected to a radio station while “on hold,” this composer could not resist taking the opportunity to poke fun at public radio stations’ incessant airing of Pachelbel’s *Canon*. 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.

Margaret Brouwer

Sarah Beaty



Photo: Joshua Lipton

Mezzo-soprano Sarah Beaty has been described as ‘the model of bel canto clarity and brilliance’ in *ClevelandClassical.com*. Despite her affinity for *bel canto* and medieval music, her true passion is contemporary opera. As a soloist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, she has sung under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Zubin Mehta, and performed in their landmark new productions of Meredith Monk’s *Atlas* and John Cage’s *Europerras* and is an inaugural company member of The Industry, Yuval Sharon’s experimental opera company in Los Angeles. In 2021 she made her Long Beach Opera debut in Philip Glass’ *Les Enfants Terribles*. She is a voice teacher and fervently shares her love of new music with her students; she has been championing the music of American composer Margaret Brouwer for over ten years. She is a founding member of her chamber ensemble, Blue Streak.

www.sarahbeaty.com

Brian Skoog



Brian Skoog is an American tenor known for his 'strong voice' (*Cleveland Classical*) and 'fine lyric tenor' (*Toledo Blade*). In 2020, he completed a virtual residency with Pensacola Opera. Recent seasons include operatic roles with Central City Opera, The Cleveland Opera, Dayton Opera, Nashville Opera, Toledo Opera, and Utah Festival Opera. Concert highlights include performances of Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. Skoog has appeared as a soloist with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, Heights Chamber Orchestra, Stambaugh Festival Orchestra, and the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, as well as with chamber ensembles across the United States. He completed his graduate work at the Cleveland Institute of Music and received his Bachelor of Music from the University of Alabama.

www.brianskoog.com

Mari Sato

Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco



Violinist Mari Sato has enjoyed a rich and varied career as a chamber musician based in Cleveland. For 24 years she was the second violinist of the award-winning Cavani String Quartet, during which time she gave concerts on major series at venues including Carnegie Hall, Corcoran Gallery of Art, and Festival de L'Epau in France. Formerly on the faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music (1995–2018), Mari Sato and her colleagues coached many outstanding young musicians including members of the Jupiter, Daedalus, Aeolus, Miró, Fry Street and Afiara quartets, as well as members of the Cleveland, St. Paul, Minnesota, Chicago, Detroit, and New York Philharmonic orchestras. Since 2018, she has worked with students at the Oberlin Conservatory and the MYCO chamber music program in North Carolina. She continues to play chamber music with her colleagues in CityMusic Cleveland, Heights Arts, and the Blue Streak Ensemble.

Eliesha Nelson



Photo: Cristina Romanello

GRAMMY-nominated Eliesha Nelson was born and raised in the interior of Alaska. She has served as acting principal viola of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra and the Florida Grand Opera Orchestra and is a member of The Cleveland Orchestra. She has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Ohio Chamber Orchestra and the San Antonio Symphony. One of her passions is chamber music, which she taught for several years at ENCORE School for Strings. She also taught viola at the Cleveland School of the Arts Lower Campus, and currently at the High School as part of the Cleveland Orchestra Music Mentors program. Her first album, *Quincy Porter Viola Works*, was released in 2009 and was nominated in four GRAMMY categories, winning 'Best Engineered Album, Classical'. She has made two more recordings since under the Sono Luminus label. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Cleveland Institute of Music and an artist diploma from the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Shuai Wang



Shuai Wang is an accomplished soloist and a chamber musician who has performed with The Cleveland Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. She has given numerous solo and chamber concerts throughout the United States, China and Europe and performed in prestigious venues such as Lincoln Center, Merkin Hall, Kennedy Center, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Symphony Space, and Cleveland Museum of Art. She performed as a soloist with the CIM Orchestra and the Canton Symphony Orchestra. She is an experienced orchestral keyboardist, having performed concerts with Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Canton Symphony, Firelands Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra Blossom Orchestra.

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Mari Sato, Narrator 10,

Violin 4-8 10

Eliesha Nelson, Viola 1-3

Shuai Wang, Piano 1-9

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In Memoriam Michael Bishop

A detailed track list and full recording details can be found
inside the booklet. The sung texts are included in the booklet,
and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/559904.htm

Booklet notes: Margaret Brouwer

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AMERICAN CLASSICS

Margaret Brouwer’s music has for decades been admired for “inhabiting its own peculiarly bewitching harmonic world” (*The New York Times*). These recently composed pieces reflect her musical representations of particular events: *Rhapsodic Sonata* charts an internal journey of love, whereas *Declaration* is a set of songs that addresses ideas of violence and war. Composed at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, *I Cry – Summer 2020* outlines a process of isolation and restriction. *All Lines Are Still Busy* is a satirical monologue that should intrigue anyone who has been placed “on hold” during a telephone call.

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Playing
Time:
56:00