

FERAL ICONS FOR VIOLA



PETER VUKMIROVIC STEVENS

MARA GEARMAN - VIOLA

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FINE MUSIC

PROGRAM NOTES

Peter Vukmirovic Stevens composed FERAL ICONS between 2013 and 2014 for Mara Gearman. This suite of six works for solo viola employs Stevens' signature sound of extended tonality and isometric rhythms.

The opening title track, *Feral Icons*, begins in a driving tempo with melodic phrases that merge in and out of double-stop harmonies, highlighting the viola's lower registers and setting the scene for the suite's emotional and musical narrative.

Sovereign, I, the second selection, establishes a quiet and meditative mood, marked by long melodic phrases and rich harmonies, before developing into an impassioned, aria-like section.

The third work, *Sanctuary*, employs a double variation form. A single melodic line in the upper register develops into a contrasting, chorale-like section, expressing love and protection.

The fourth section, *Ex Nihilo*, takes its title from the Latin phrase meaning "creation out of nothing." The music juxtaposes staccato and lyrical phrases, shifting tempos, colorful resonance, and gravelly harmonies. Aggressive double-stops bring the piece to an unresolved, dissonant conclusion.

The stately opening rhythms of *Bloodlines* develop into lyrical passages accompanied by a droning second voice. This fifth work climaxes in a rhapsodic quasi-cadenza.

Black and Gold, the suite's culminating work, uses rich, cantabile melodies to evoke adventure and remote, wide-open spaces. Under a visceral sense of anticipation, feelings of peace and assurance provide a haven at last—a refuge, for now.

By the age of nine, Mara Gearman had decided to pursue a career in music. Her training includes studies with Roberto Diaz and Karen Tuttle at the Curtis Institute of Music, and Pinchas Zukerman. Gearman has received awards from the Tertis International and Primrose Viola competitions, and performs solo and chamber music throughout the United States and Europe.



PHOTO: LAREY MCDANIEL

Currently Third Chair with the Seattle Symphony, Gearman has also been Principal Viola for the Kansas City Symphony and Los Angeles Opera. She is violist in the Barston Quartet, comprised of Seattle Symphony players. Gearman has taught at Central Washington University, Cornish College of the Arts, and the Eastern Music Festival.

She has performed at the Olympic Music Festival, Methow Music Festival, and as a member of the All-Stars Orchestra.

Peter Vukmirovic Stevens is a composer, pianist, and multimedia artist whose music is rooted in his passion for literature and travel, as well as his deep connection to contemporary and outsider art. His distinct compositional voice, expressed in works ranging from solo instruments to symphony orchestra, emerges from an approach that strips away the extraneous to reveal simplicity.



PHOTO: NICOLE TITUS

Stevens, who began studying piano at six years old and started composing soon after, comes to his love of music naturally. He is the grandson of Olga Vukmirovic, the celebrated opera singer from the former Yugoslavia. Stevens also absorbed the musical traditions of the Serbian Orthodox Church, where he sang during services.

A graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, Stevens studied with Bern Herbolzheimer, Samuel Jones, and David Mahler in Seattle, WA, and with Bodhan Bubak in Prague, Czech Republic. Stevens co-founded the Seattle Pianist Collective in 2006 and served as the group's Artistic Director.



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FERAL ICONS FOR VIOLA

I FERAL ICONS (3:01)

II SOVEREIGN, I (7:21)

III SANCTUARY (5:59)

IV EX NIHILO (8:43)

V BLOODLINES (13:14)

VI BLACK AND GOLD (7:05)

RUNNING TIME: 45:24



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