



WILLIAM SUSMAN

# Scatter My Ashes



## **OCTET ENSEMBLE**

Alan Ferber Mike Gurfield Mellissa Hughes Elaine Kwon

Eleonore Oppenheim Demetrius Spaneas William Susman Greg Zuber

## CAMILLE (2010)

1. I. Vitality 3:35
2. II. Tranquility 3:06
3. III. Triumph 2:46

## SCATTER MY ASHES (2009)

4. Scatter My Ashes 2:08
5. The Night Tree 3:16
6. Even in the Dark 1:49
7. Only Clear Space Inside 1:44
8. Eternal Light 3:21

## PIANO CONCERTO (2011) 12:24

9. I. Build-Decay
- II. Glide
- III. Spin
- IV. Jagged
- V. Ripple
- Cadenza
- VI. Shimmer

## MOVING IN TO AN EMPTY SPACE (1992 - Arranged for Octet 2010)

10. Hot Time 3:41
11. Begging the Night for Change 2:47
12. Moving in to an Empty Space 3:50

**Total Time: 44:32**



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### OCTET ENSEMBLE

Alan Ferber: trombone  
Mellissa Hughes: vocals  
Eleonore Oppenheim: double bass  
William Susman: electric piano

Mike Gurfield: trumpet  
Elaine Kwon: piano  
Demetrius Spaneas: saxophone  
Greg Zuber: drums & percussion

Produced by William Susman

Recorded by John Kilgore at Kilgore Sound, New York City, between September 2011 and January 2014; additional recording by Josiah Gluck.

Mixed at Kilgore Sound by John Kilgore; additional mixing by Stephen Hart assisted by Ana Sophia Dunham at The Site, San Rafael, California.

Mastered by Alan Silverman at Arf! Mastering.

Cover Design by Daniel Sofer/Hermosawave Photo Credit: Front: Ben Swift; Rear: Ken Goodman

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**OCTET** is a New York based music ensemble comprised of stellar instrumentalists

performing contemporary compositions that push boundaries. OCTET is dedicated to collaborating with artists in a variety of disciplines, forging a unique, unheard and unseen intermingling of music and media in order to provide audiences an alternative music experience.

Contributing to the unique sound of OCTET is its instrumentation. Essentially, it is a scaled down big band using one each from the brass section plus rhythm: saxophone, trumpet, trombone, drums/percussion, piano, electric piano, vocals, and double bass.

*William Susman's remarkable achievement is to take the familiar instrumentation of American popular music, harmonic and rhythmic influences from jazz and Afro-Cuban music and sinuous melodic lines that are uniquely his own and weave them into something new and fresh, yet timeless and haunting. Memorable yet enigmatic, simple yet profound, Susman's music is irresistible.*

*- John Kilgore*

## **Scatter My Ashes**

from five poems by Sue Susman

### **1. SCATTER MY ASHES**

Scatter my ashes before I die.  
Let me blow and fade  
in the wind  
over water  
into nothing.  
Watch me dissolve in air.  
Scatter my old bones.  
I am keeping the young ones  
fresh, strong the blood circles  
and weaves me into a whole piece  
with long slender red thread  
buried under my skin.

### **2. THE NIGHT TREE**

In the distance in the dark  
I talk hard to an old tree.  
Winding round and round, I am  
a flame curling upwards  
and the tree welcomes me.  
I don't have to have a reason to be here.  
There is time enough to understand.  
I don't have to explain.  
My name is the sound of the wind blowing and  
my spirit is as old.  
Until the sky grows light, I will stay here  
wound tightly to the tree and  
listen to the way the dark feels.  
The fire in my throat burns more quietly now.  
I can hear the empty sound of dawn.

### **3. EVEN IN THE DARK**

The forest breathes in and out as I sleep and curl  
like a cat snuggled into a bigger sleeping body.  
Even in the dark  
I wake and see light from above,  
the moon burning into black earth;  
stars, glittering chips of glass  
scatter in a strange design.  
I keep my eyes open until morning.

### **4. ONLY CLEAR SPACE INSIDE**

Take off the old wood and burn it.  
I am leaving this part of me here.

And as I light the match  
to start this fire, I feel the flames begin  
to jump out of me.  
I am burning myself up from the inside, and  
this fire burns clean, leaves no ashes,  
only clear space inside.  
Now the wind picks up.  
The flames grow higher.  
There is no pain.

### **5. ETERNAL LIGHT**

Heart in the darkness  
holding on to the light inside.  
Inside there is a spark, a light that burns  
and never goes out, never grows dim but  
burns hard and bright  
in the dark void of unending night,  
the vast empty blackness of my self  
where I can only hear the echo of my cavernous soul and  
the simple cadence of my healthy heart  
hurting and healing over and over  
pumping the life into my veins  
pushing it through and around  
so that I am always filled with it  
so that I am always alive to the light  
even when I am lost, cold and wandering  
lonely in the dark.

## **Moving in to an Empty Space**

from three poems by Sue Susman

### **1. HOT TIME**

Hot time  
this summer in the city  
in the artificial light of the street.  
At night people scurry and run together in packs.  
Too many rats in the cage.  
Running towards something in the distance,  
in the dark;  
something hidden from sight,  
something they cannot name.  
They come here to hunt and groan  
in hot dark rooms filled with sweating, hungry bodies,  
dancing with fever into the morning.  
And as the music blasts into flashing strobe-lights,  
the walls begin to swell and breathe.  
There are bodies on the street tonight,

each with its own hidden secret.  
You can choose one to take home with you.  
You can go on alone.  
You can help yourself.  
Steal into the night. No one can find you.  
You become invisible in the dark,  
invisible to others who may want to hurt you;  
invisible even to yourself.

### **2. BEGGING THE NIGHT FOR CHANGE**

She approached me in the supermarket's parking lot,  
a tired-looking woman with a worn-out face,  
asking if I had any change.  
And as I shook my head,  
I felt the dimes and nickels burrow deeper in my pocket,  
felt my back stiffen, my hands curl into fists.  
I couldn't look her in the face  
and so I hurried on,  
shaking my head to lose the fear  
that one day she could be me,  
talking to strangers in parking lots,  
alone in the street, unknown and unseen,  
begging the night for change.

### **3. MOVING IN TO AN EMPTY SPACE**

Tonight I stood watching the stars  
twinkling through the bare branches.  
The air is cold and I am alone  
here in this quiet faraway place.  
And I am at peace, in myself,  
still somewhat afraid.  
I stood watching the night sky,  
as if it would change,  
as if the tiny white lights would move  
or rearrange themselves  
the better to please my eye.  
But there was no change; the night was fixed,  
immutable and cold.  
I am a shifting star, fallen down  
from the vast empty blackness  
to burn on the earth.  
I look up to see where I came from.  
And the lights return my gaze.  
There is no message, no sound  
just the silent reflection of my own face  
shining in the night to remind me  
that I have always been here.



OCTET

### **WILLIAM SUSMAN**

#### ***ELECTRIC PIANO, COMPOSER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR***

The New York Times calls his music “vivid, turbulent, and rich-textured” and Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange praises his album *Music for Moving Pictures* as “A flawless gem...[of] rare beauty.” His music is notable for his integration of a variety of influences, including the Western classical tradition, Afro-Cuban music, free jazz, and several non-Western folk traditions. His training includes music composition at the University of Illinois and computer-generated sound at Stanford followed by studies at IRCAM.

### **MELLISSA HUGHES – VOCALS**

Hailed by Time Out New York as a “dazzling diva, adept at old and new music” soprano Melissa Hughes enjoys a busy career performing with Alarm Will Sound, eighth blackbird, Newspeak, SIGNAL, and Victoire as well as collaborators Steve Reich, John Zorn, Julia Wolfe, Efterklang, My Brightest Diamond, and The National. Miss Hughes records for Nonesuch, Cantelope, and Naxos Records, and is a New Amsterdam Records artist. She holds degrees from Westminster Choir College, and Yale University.

### **DEMETRIUS SPANEAS**

#### ***SAXOPHONE, MUSIC DIRECTOR***

Multi-wind instrumentalist, composer, conductor, and recording artist Demetrius Spaneas leads a varied international career and has worked with such diverse artists as John Cage, Ray Charles, and Kyrgyz

traditional musicians. He has been a featured soloist and composer at major concert venues and festivals throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Mr. Spaneas is a native of Lowell, MA and holds both bachelor and master of music degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music.

### **ALAN FERBER – TROMBONE**

Alan Ferber is a grammy-nominated and internationally renowned jazz trombonist, composer and bandleader. He has recorded six albums as a leader and performed on over 100 as a trombonist. The Wall Street Journal affectionately describes his music as “somehow both old school and cutting edge”. As an educator, Ferber currently serves as an adjunct professor at the Cali School of Music, the Peabody Conservatory and New York University.

### **ELAINE KWON – PIANO**

Elaine is a prize-winning concert pianist, martial artist, Lecturer in Music at MIT, and National Music Festival Piano Mentor. She has performed solo and chamber music concerts globally. She received standing ovations at her sold-out Carnegie Hall benefit concerts (2008-2014), and as soloist with numerous orchestras including the Toronto Philharmonia, National Music Festival Symphony, and Slovak Sinfonietta. Elaine is Co-founder/President of the interactive concert series, Savor Your Senses™, and holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance.

### **GREG ZUBER – DRUMS & PERCUSSION**

Greg Zuber is principal percussionist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, having joined the orchestra in 1986. Prior to that, from 1985 to 1986, he was principal

percussionist with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Zuber is an active soloist, recitalist, composer, and clinician, and performs regularly with Percussionists of the Met and his wife, flutist Patricia Zuber. Mr. Zuber holds a B.A in Music from the University of Illinois and a Masters from Temple University, He is a faculty member of The Juilliard School and the UBS Verbier Music Festival.

### **MIKE GURFIELD – TRUMPET**

Hailed as a “new music veteran” by New York Magazine, this Eastman School of Music alumnus serves as principal trumpet of New York’s Signal Ensemble, Wordless Music Orchestra, is the Artistic Director of the contemporary music collective Deviant Septet, is a founding member of the Brooklyn Brass, and is a regular collaborator with Alarm Will Sound. Gurfield can be heard in recordings on Sony Classical, Warp Records, Warner Brothers Classical, Naxos America and many others.

### **ELEONORE OPPENHEIM – DOUBLE BASS**

Described as “quietly virtuosic” by the New York Times upright and electric bassist Eleonore Oppenheim is quickly gaining a reputation as both a valued ensemble player and an engaging soloist. She has performed with the Philip Glass Ensemble, Victoire, the Wordless Music Orchestra, Signal Ensemble, and the pioneering indie rock band the Instruments. She teaches applied double bass at SUNY Stony Brook, and is an alumna of the Yale School of Music and the Juilliard School.