

NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS

Pianist **Ann DuHamel** releases the first volume of her commissioning project of solo works that are inspired by and draw attention to the climate change crisis. Featuring works by **Laura Schwendinger**, **Judith Shatin**, **Juhi Bansal**, **Karen Lemon**, **Erick Tapia**, **Ian Dicke**, **Daniel Blinkhorn**, and **Gunter Gaupp**, this collection is enlivened by the pathos with which the composers and DuHamel approach the underlying subject matter.

Track List

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| 1. Erick Tapia: <i>Solipsismo</i> | 6:22 |
| 2. Karen Lemon: <i>Forgive Them Not, For They Know What They Do</i> | 6:44 |
| 3. Laura Schwendinger: <i>Air (from Magic Carpet Music)</i> | 7:29 |
| 4. Juhi Bansal: <i>Land of Waking Dreams</i> | 11:17 |
| 5. Ian Dicke: <i>White Parasol</i> | 8:03 |
| 6. Daniel Blinkhorn: <i>frostbYte: chalk outline</i> | 11:37 |
| Judith Shatin: <i>Plain Song</i> | |
| 7. I. Plain Song | 3:09 |
| 8. II. Lullaby | 3:54 |
| 9. III. Shadow and Smoke | 4:04 |
| 10. IV. Tutta Gloria | 3:27 |
| 11. Gunter Gaupp: <i>Those Who Watch</i> | 3:22 |

Ann DuHamel, piano

Total Time: 69:28

Program Notes

Pianist Ann DuHamel's internal sense of despondency about the magnitude of the climate crisis in the fall of 2019 led her to initiate this commissioning project which speaks to the depth of concern and fear many artists share over the future of our environment. Beginning on January 1, 2020, DuHamel put out a call for scores responsive to this programmatic theme; the response was overwhelming, she received works from more than 170 composers in 35 countries. This album is the first volume of recordings documenting this repertoire, music that DuHamel has been performing live extensively since the spring of 2022. In the course of this endeavor, DuHamel collaborated with experts in environmental studies, hydrology, climate activism, and many other disciplines to expand the conceptual frame of her events. Her uplifting idealism in curating this project is matched by her virtuosity and lyricism in the realization of these evocative works.

Ann DuHamel: Prayers for a Feverish Planet: New Music about Climate Change, Vol. 1

New solo piano works drawing attention to climate change, performed by pianist Ann DuHamel

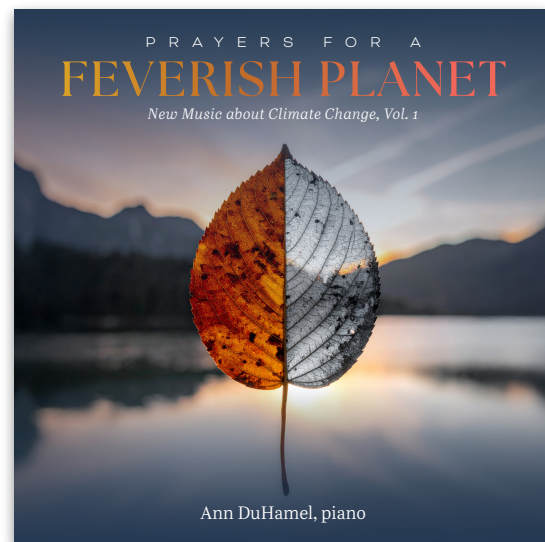
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| US Street Date | 4/24/2026 |
| UPC Code | 613527134532 |
| Catalog Number | FCR487 |
| Audio Resolution | 44.1kHz, 16 bit; 48kHz, 24 bit |
| MSRP | \$20.99 |
| Featured Track | Track 6 |

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Erick Tapia's *Solipsismo* opens the collection with rich, resonant flourishes answered by liquid chord voicings, performed using a liberal amount of sustain pedal to create a spacious sonic environment. Various forms of solipsism are no doubt to blame for the sluggish reaction of many in leadership positions to the specter of climate disaster. Indeed, Karen Lemon must have had this intransigence in mind when writing *Forgive Them Not, For They Know What They Do*. A vigorous *moto perpetuo* texture across registers propels the work's first section before a reflective second half of thoughtful melodic phrases, lush voicings separated by poignant silences, and a mournful closing hymn.

Laura Schwendinger's *Air (from Magic Carpet Music)* is abstract and broad, stretching long contrapuntal lines over an expansive temporal canvas to evoke the ephemeral and ubiquitous characteristics of air itself. Juhi Bansal's sonic painting *Land of Waking Dreams* portrays a desert landscape, a paean to the poetry of untouched nature. Bansal makes use of a chain played on the piano strings, creating a shimmering timbre. Melting Arctic ice is the impetus for Ian Dicke's *White Parasol*. Dicke explores a range of keyboard articulations, and uses dramatic registral contrasts to conjure the cascading consequences of melting on a multi-layered ecosystem.

Also inspired by the Arctic, Daniel Blinkhorn's *frostbYte: chalk outline* integrates video and audio footage recorded on the Svalbard peninsula between the northern coast of Norway and the North Pole. Blinkhorn's electronic part is a mix of immersive sustained harmony, mechanistic, clicking timbres, and processed field recordings, achieving considerable contrast in material and expression across this over ten minute work.

Judith Shatin's *Plain Song* involves a different kind of electronic part; poet Charles Wright reads his own work in fluid dialogue with DuHamel's piano, edited and reorganized with a collage approach reminiscent of Reich's *Different Trains*, albeit with less of a reliance of overt repetition as a structural strategy. Shatin sprinkles her keyboard writing with magical textures played inside the piano, pointillistic constellations, and impetuous chordal outbursts. Wright's texts and Shatin's sympathetic setting speak to our internal grappling with existential hurdles.

The recording closes with Gunter Gaupp's *Those Who Watch*, an energetic electroacoustic work which examines climate change through the lens of media and industry misinformation and dissembling about its urgency. Taking fragments of news clips and fashioning them into a modular electronic part, the piano soloist plays groove oriented passages in sync with the

disparate voices, but increasingly circles in place, as Gaupp distorts the media voices beyond comprehension and the issue is obscured behind the fog of self-absorption.

Ann DuHamel's *Prayers for a Feverish Planet, Vol. 1* features music that explores a broad range of aesthetic approaches that are prevalent in contemporary works for keyboard. From electroacoustic pieces using pre-recorded environmental sounds to those integrating spoken texts, and from prepared piano to extended techniques, DuHamel has curated a collection that has engaging contrast and sonic diversity. Even without a shared thematic focus, it would be a compelling recording. That these pieces share a thematic focus on a crisis of utmost concern only adds to the import of the project, and is a great reminder of how artists can join together to voice a collective response to issues of our time.

Bio

Hailed as “an impeccable artist” (Edie Hill), a “forward thinking classical pianist” (Midwest Record), and “a delight for the ears and the soul” (Encuentro Universitario Internacional de Saxofón, Mexico City), pianist **Ann DuHamel** enjoys an eclectic musical career. Her performances have, so far, spanned 22 countries and 37 United States, including Carnegie Weill Recital Hall. Recent performances include venues in Medellín, Colombia, and Luzern, Switzerland, as well as a performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 that garnered 3rd place from The American Prize in Piano Performance (concerto) — The Lorin Hollander Award, 2025. Her debut album, *Rückblick: New Piano Music Inspired by Brahms* on the Furious Artisans label, has been lauded as “an extraordinary, fascinating CD, musically very strong ... so passionate, technically excellent and inspiring” (Piano Bulletin).

Ann's series *Prayers for a Feverish Planet* responds to the climate crisis with 60+ new works from composers around the world, including new works she commissioned from Gabriela Lena Frank and Libby Larsen. A 2023-24 McKnight Artist Fellow, she currently serves as Professor of Music at the University of Minnesota Morris, where she is the recipient of the 2025 Faculty Distinguished Research Award; as UMM's 2026 Founders Scholar, she has crafted a series considering Chopin and Rzewski through the lens of Artivism. Ann is an avid bibliophile, ravenous chocoholic, eccentric gardener, Futurama fan, piano nerd, tea drinker, walking enthusiast, and yoga devotee.