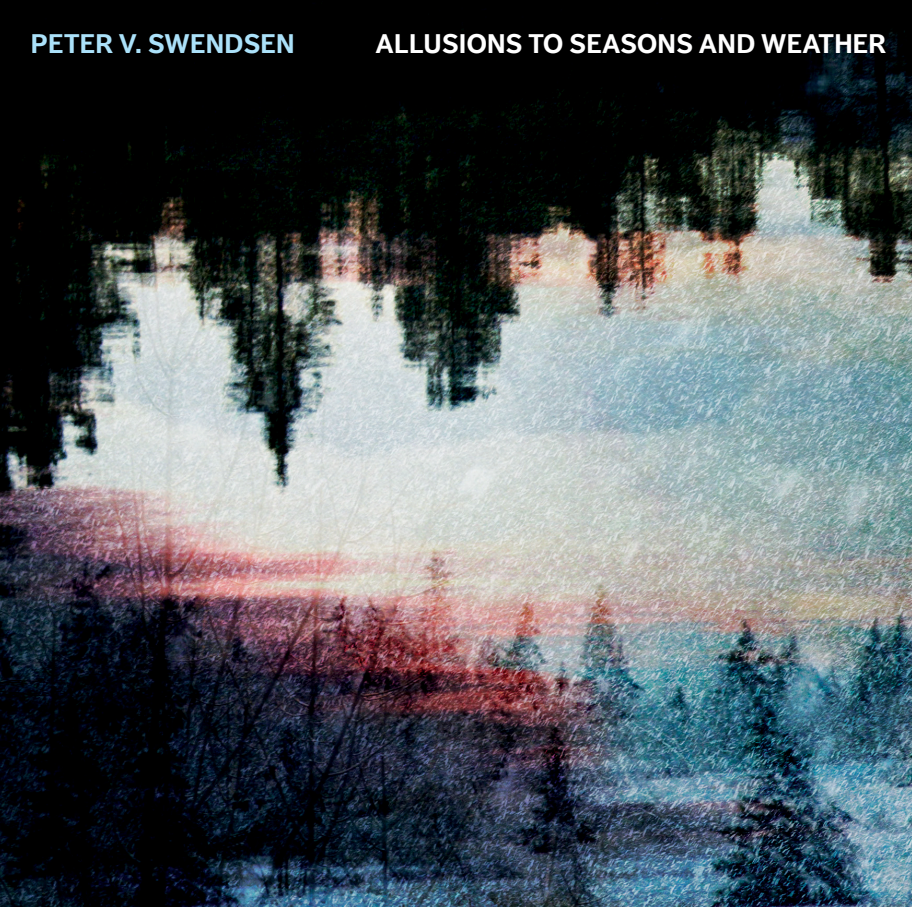


PETER V. SWENDSEN

ALLUSIONS TO SEASONS AND WEATHER



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<b>Allusions to Seasons and Weather</b> (2008-11)	
1. <b>Before Frozen Fog</b> (2008) .....	6:57
<i>tenor recorder and live electronics</i>	
Terri Hron, recorder	
2. <b>Bright Days of Little Sunlight</b> (2008) .....	10:14
<i>chamber ensemble and stereo tape</i>	
Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble:	
Jenny Elfving, violin • Edward Rankin-Parker, cello • Sarah Pyle, flute	
Curt Miller, clarinet • Jennifer Torrence, percussion	
3. <b>Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is</b> (2009) .....	8:41
<i>solo bass drum and live electronics</i>	
Jennifer Torrence, percussion	
4. <b>Northern Circles</b> (2011) .....	10:04
<i>bassoon, saxophone, live electronics, and video</i>	
Dana Jessen, bassoon • Michael Straus, saxophone	
5. <b>four moments near water</b> (2012) .....	9:54
PRAGUE: the Vltava, near Vyšehrad, afternoon, January 2012	
RONDANE: near Rondvassbu, morning, September 2006	
BODØ: docks at Rundholmen, nighttime, September 2011	
PRAGUE: Petřín hill & Pražský hrad, nighttime with snow, January 2012	
<i>cello, stereo tape, and live electronics</i>	
Dylan Messina, cello	
6. <b>Sift</b> (2012) .....	5:13
<i>stereo tape</i>	
Poem by Jan Trumbauer • Read by Alice Rhee	
Score for dance choreographed and performed by Amy Miller	
7. <b>a sudden change in the consistency of snow</b> (2006) .....	8:00
<i>alto saxophone, stereo tape, and video</i>	
Michael Straus, saxophone	
TOTAL: 59:05	



Adina Filipoi

**Peter V. Swendsen** has long been fascinated by the capacity of sound to challenge and extend our sense of place and sharing of experience. He collaborates with performers to shape pieces that traverse and blur acoustic and electroacoustic sound worlds. He also works extensively in collaboration with choreographers and has composed more than 40 scores for dance.

Swendsen spent a year in residence as a Fulbright Fellow at the NoTAM studios in Oslo, Norway, where he worked on a large project based in soundscape composition and ecoacoustics. The music on this album is the culmination of that project, in which live instruments and electronics are combined to shape an experience of time and place for the listener.

Swendsen is associate professor of computer music and digital arts in the TIMARA (Technology in Music and Related Arts) Department at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. His works have been heard throughout the United States, much of Europe, and also in South America and Asia, and have been performed by the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, eighth blackbird, the Roots Ensemble, the NOISE Ensemble, the EAR Duo, Terri Hron, Jennifer Torrence, Thomas Rosenkranz, Chris Froh, Ryan Nestor, and many others.

[swendsen.net](http://swendsen.net)





Adina Filipoi

## Allusions to Seasons and Weather (2008-11)

**Before Frozen Fog** is based on the seasonal shift from late fall to early winter, which took its time reaching Oslo in 2006. Finally, in December, winter's arrival was marked not by snow but by the thick fog that rolled in from the Oslofjord and hung on all exposed surfaces, freezing on grass, trees, and even those who lingered long in its path, until the whole of the shoreline was encased in a crystalline shell. The piece attempts to capture something of this time of year, when the momentum of the seasonal transition overwhelms a place and its people and one realizes that the time has come to let go of the last remnants of autumn's colors and hints of warmth and embrace winter's stark beauty and captivating moments of intense silence.

**Bright Days of Little Sunlight** is based on the experience of winter in Norway—particularly the very gradual yet ephemeral appearance and disappearance of the sun during the shortest days of winter. These days were intensely beautiful, filled with long shadows and much twilight, along with fog, ice, snow, holiday folk songs, and the promise of warmth indoors. The sun barely rose above the Oslofjord, making the bold colors of sunrise and sunset last almost the whole (short) day. A few specific sounds from this time appear in the piece: The cello solo (*Bereden väg för herran*—actually Swedish) and later melody fragments (*Deilig er Jorden*) are traditional folk songs. The latter, in particular, is so consistently performed at this time of year that one feels it is always floating in the air. The tape part, as well as much of the acoustic material, is derived from such things as the foghorns in the Oslofjord, church bells in Lysaker (near Oslo), strong winds recorded in the mountains near Gausdal (in central Norway), and water and ice recordings from Sognefjord, in western Norway.

### **Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is**

In the mountains, wind and weather collide with land, each shaping the other in a sometimes subtle, sometimes violent pas de deux. Along the coast, this collision is more of a constant negotiation, the land and sea exchanging back and forth the clouds and temperatures that hover near the shoreline. In the flat interior, however, the wind and weather are themselves the instigators, the sculptors of an ephemeral topography of sound, texture, and sensation.

#### **The Snow Man**

One must have a mind of winter  
To regard the frost and the boughs  
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;  
And have been cold a long time  
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,  
The spruces rough in the distant glitter  
Of the January sun; and not to think  
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,  
In the sound of a few leaves,  
Which is the sound of the land  
Full of the same wind  
That is blowing in the same bare place  
For the listener, who listens in the snow,  
And, nothing himself, beholds  
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

—*Wallace Stevens, 1921*

In **Northern Circles**, I strive to create for the audience an experience of both time (the summer solstice) and place (the Lofoten Islands, just north of the Arctic Circle, where I spent a week making field recordings just after the summer solstice of 2007). I am particularly interested in exploring the sensation of the “midnight sun,” the early morning hours when the sun hovers near—but never drops below—the horizon. The piece is scored for bassoon and alto saxophone, an interactive sonic environment provided by live electronics processing, field recordings made in various locations in the Lofoten Islands, and video based on footage shot in these same locations.

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**four moments near water** is based on field recordings from four locations in Norway and Prague. I find my own time near water to be contemplative and intriguing. In some remote environments (such as Rondane National Park in Norway), water is one of the few producers of sound; in more urban environments (such as Prague), water is often a place to gather for respite and reflection. This piece provides an opportunity for both the performer and the audience to spend a short time in four locations, each with passing references to other local sounds and music.

**Sift**—the light tree the wood creak  
—the light. Weight, weight pours  
from left to sift. The light tree—  
the light creaks. Weight from left  
to sift. Loosen. From left  
to loosen—creak. Loose the light.  
Sift the light. To right—  
right to sift. To creak. To  
leak the light—to shift.

—*Jan Trumbauer, 2012*

**a sudden change in the consistency of snow** is an interpretation of that kind of early-winter snow that is almost sleet or hail, changing all the time, sometimes softening enough to bestow the lovely winter quiet that exists when everything is covered and dampened with snow, but other times quite hard and sharp and percussive as it bounces on frozen surfaces. As air and surface temperatures fluctuate, the falling water sometimes vacillates between textures in short spurts and sometimes slowly modulates in extended gestures. It can pound on your hood and resonate inside your head and then subdue its intensity to reveal a unique sonic spaciousness. Each element of the piece traverses these continua of temperament, texture, precision, and expansiveness. As is the case with snow itself, stillness is rare and momentary up close, but very much present on the whole.

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## Artists

Recorder player and composer **Terri Hron** comfortably migrates from performance to composition, exploring acoustic and electronic sounds in both written and improvised situations. *Bird on a Wire* is Hron's ongoing project to commission, perform, and record new pieces for recorder and electronics. The first album was released in 2009; the second, *Flocking Patterns*, involving eight composers writing in multi-channel, was premiered and recorded in surround in 2011. Hron's compositions span from chamber orchestra to acousmatic pieces. She performs in a number of groups, including with the interdisciplinary SpaceMelt—Samuel Davidson (clarinet/EWI) and Michael Markowsky (visuals)—with pianist/composer Ricardo Gallo as the RicTer Scale, and with Katelyn Clark as Of a Feather.

Bassoonist **Dana Jessen** is in demand as a soloist, chamber musician, improviser, and new music specialist. She is the founder of Splinter, a San Francisco-based reed quintet, and has performed with prominent groups such as the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Ensemble Dal Niente, and the Calefax Reed Quintet. As the founder and artistic director of the New Music Bassoon Fund, Jessen led the commission of *Rushes*, an hour-long composition for seven bassoons by composer and Bang on a Can co-founder Michael Gordon. Her recordings can be heard on Cantaloupe, RIOJA, Evil Rabbit, and the New World record labels. She is a lecturer at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

Cellist and composer **Dylan Messina** is a 2012 graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he studied with cellist Darrett Adkins and composer Lewis Nielson. Messina has given American and world premieres of works by such composers as Timothy McCormack, Lewis Nielson, and Chaya Czernowin. While at Oberlin, Messina took a special interest in works by student composers, premiering more than 50 student works. He has performed in venues across the United States and Europe, including the Kennedy Center, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Baruch Performing Arts Center in New York City. His 2012 vinyl release on TAU Records, *Cycles: Solo Cello and Electronics*, includes compositions by David Bird, Peter V. Swendsen, and Messina, and was funded by a 2012 Oberlin Creativity Fund Grant.

Active as a saxophonist and frequent guest lecturer, **Michael Straus** has performed and presented his work on music, technology, and interdisciplinary arts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dartmouth, the University of Virginia, Brown, Amsterdam's STEIM, Stanford, the University of Michigan, Yale's Music & Technology Lab, and the University of California at Berkeley, among other institutions. Straus joined the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in July 2013 as the assistant dean of technology and facilities. Prior to his position at Oberlin, Straus was the operations director at Other Minds in San Francisco, where he produced a major new-music festival and led large-scale collaborations with Cal Performances, the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive, SFJazz, and Djerassi Resident Artists Program.

**Jennifer Torrence** is a percussionist specializing in contemporary classical music who regularly commissions solo works, performs as a concerto soloist, and works as a chamber musician in a variety of contexts. She has served as the principal percussionist of the Bodø Sinfonietta (Norway) and has performed across the United States, Europe, Russia, Japan, and Australia. A longtime collaborator with Peter V. Swendsen, Torrence has taken part in the world premiere of *Bright Days of Little Sunlight*, *Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is*, and the forthcoming evening-length percussion, electronics, and video work *What Noises Remain*.

**Jan Trumbauer** writes, creates images, and works at the intersection between movement and theatricality. She grounds her work in a sense of place and a sensitivity to texture, and enjoys collaborating with musicians, visual artists, and other writers and dancers. She creates work and performs in Seattle.

**Alice Rhee** is a writer and artist based in the mountains of Seoul, South Korea. She works at a global creative agency and finds truth in architectural theory, unintentional humor, and taking public transportation in foreign cities at dawn.

## Special Thanks

Every performer on this album deserves tremendous credit and special thanks. Many of them were deeply involved in the creation and premiere of the pieces you will hear, and all of them are generous and enthusiastic supporters of my music. The music in this collection has its roots in Norway, where I lived when this project began. Living in Norway was an engrossing and artistically inspiring experience, full of unique visual, sonic, and temporal sensations that thoroughly influenced my music. I am grateful to the Fulbright Foundation, particularly Tove Knudsen, for supporting my time in Norway, as well as to Jøran Rudi and the NoTAM Studios in Oslo.

Since returning to the U.S., I have been fortunate to be a part of the vibrant new music community at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. My students and colleagues are an inspiration, and Oberlin is a great supporter of my work. The biggest thanks go to my unfailingly supportive parents and my lovely, patient, and talented wife, Adina Filipoi, with whom I shared the experiences that inspired this music.

—Peter V. Swendsen

**OBERLIN MUSIC** is the official record label of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

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**The Oberlin Conservatory of Music**, founded in 1865 and situated amid the intellectual vitality of Oberlin College, is the oldest continuously operating conservatory in the United States. Recognized internationally as a professional music school of the highest caliber, it was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the country's highest honor given to artists and arts patrons.

PRODUCER: Peter V. Swendsen

AUDIO ENGINEERS: Paul Eachus (tracks 2, 4, 7), Peter V. Swendsen (tracks 3, 5, 6), Daniel Porter (track 1), and David Bird (track 5)

*Before Frozen Fog* mixed by Daniel Porter and Terri Hron • *four moments near water* mixed by David Bird and Peter V. Swendsen • All other tracks mixed by Peter V. Swendsen

MASTERING: Paul Eachus

LABEL MANAGER: Michael Straus

EDITORIAL DIRECTORS: Cathleen Partlow Strauss and Erich Burnett

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Denise Burt, [elevator-design.dk](http://elevator-design.dk)

PHOTOGRAPHY: Peter V. Swendsen, with photo collages by Denise Burt

DEAN OF THE CONSERVATORY: Andrea Kalyon







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