



PRESENTS

GENEVIEVE FEIWEN LEE
PIANO

Of Dreams, Dance and Spirit



Department of Music
Faculty Recital

Mabel Shaw Bridges Hall of Music
Streaming Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 3:00 PM

Genevieve Feiwen Lee

piano

Ukom
from *Talking Drums* (1990) Joshua Uzoigwe
1946–2005



O Traum der Jugend, o goldner Stern Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel
1805–1847

Land of Waking Dreams (2015) Juhi Bansal
b. 1984



Homage to William Levi Dawson (1990) Zenobia Powell Perry
1908–2004

Troubled Water
from *Spiritual Suite* Margaret Bonds
1913–1972



Water Dance (2011) Karen Tanaka
b. 1961



Daydreams (2019) Gao Ping
b. 1970
Twilight
Song Without Words
Dance
Blues for a lost Phone
Dance
Wind Prayer



Pomona College is grateful to its alumni and friends whose continuing generosity makes this and other programs presented by the Department of Music possible.

PROGRAM NOTES

Composer, pianist, and ethnomusicologist **Joshua Uzoigwe** began his formal education at Nigeria's top schools: King's College, Lagos; the International School, Ibadan; and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He studied the works of prominent Nigerian musicians and Western European composers. He continued at the Guildhall School of Music in London and later at the University of Belfast, where he studied ethnomusicology under British anthropologist and ethnomusicologist John Blacking. Uzoigwe went back to Nigeria to conduct field research in traditional music amongst his own people, the Igbos, focusing on the ritual musical tradition called *ukom*. His compositions, written for orchestra, chamber ensemble, voice, and piano, reflect the synthesis of Nigerian Igbo/Yoruba and European musical idioms. He was also a productive scholar, publishing two books and journal articles. In Nigeria, Uzoigwe taught at the University of Ife, the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, and later at the University of Uyo until his death.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and her brother Felix were born into a family with a rich matrilineage of musical and artistic gifts. Fanny was an accomplished pianist at an early age and performed the entire volume of J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* from memory for a family occasion. She and Felix were educated together until their adolescence, and they retained a close and complicated musical bond even when their careers were pushed in different directions. Fanny was discouraged from pursuing an outward career as a professional musician, but she still managed to compose an impressive number of works, including over 200 songs. In 1823, the Mendelssohn family began a series of Sunday Musicales where new works of Felix were introduced, visiting artists performed, and Fanny was often featured as a pianist. She later went on to curate these Musicales and turned them into a prestigious concert series. The year 1846 was a particularly rewarding one in which Fanny wrote over 50 works and also saw the first publication of earlier songs and solo piano music. She died after a series of small strokes in mid-1847.

Described as "radiant and transcendent" by *New Classic LA*, the music of **Juhi Bansal** takes inspiration from her multicultural background growing up in India and Hong Kong. Her work features themes celebrating musical and cultural diversity, nature and the environment, and strong female role models.

Current projects include *Waves of Change*, a digital experience on womanhood, identity, and clash of cultures inspired by the story of the Bangladesh Girls Surf Club; and *Edge of a Dream*, an opera about Ada Lovelace, daughter of infamous poet Lord Byron and a nineteenth-century pioneer in computing commissioned by Los Angeles Opera. Recent seasons have included commissions from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, Prototype Festival, Beth Morrison Projects, New York Virtuoso Singers, Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre, and more.

Land of Waking Dreams is inspired by the night sky seen from the desert backcountry. This work borrows the shapes, gestures, and colors of a murmuring nightscape. Pointillistic stars and murky clouds against a carpet of shifting blues. Whistling wind across open plateaus, silence and a deep resonance.

–JB

Zenobia Powell Perry grew up in Boley, Oklahoma, which was the largest predominately black town in the US during the early twentieth century. She received early musical training from composer and pianist R. Nathaniel Dett, and later, while in her 40s, from Darius Milhaud as she began to focus more seriously on composing. Throughout her life, she was a dedicated teacher, spending most of her career at Central State University in Ohio. A lifelong active pianist, she performed solo concerts, was part of a piano-duo, and

accompanied numerous choirs and soloists in churches and schools. She composed for her community and did not seek to promote herself—her songs, piano pieces, choral works, and opera are still waiting to gain a wider audience. While a student at Tuskegee Institute, she assisted the composer and choir conductor William Dawson. At his death in 1990, she was asked to write a piece to commemorate his life and works, which resulted in *Homage to William Levi Dawson on his 90th Birthday*.

Born in Chicago, **Margaret Bonds** exhibited prodigious talent at an early age as she learned piano from her mother. She continued studying piano and composition with Florence Price and William Dawson, and was accepted to Northwestern University at age 16. She endured the institutional discrimination that barred her from living on campus and went on to receive undergraduate and graduate degrees. Bonds was the first African American to be a soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and later toured as a pianist in the 1940s and '50s. She also led a successful career as a composer and teacher. Bonds and Langston Hughes formed a close friendship and she set many of his works to music. She wrote for orchestra, choir, chamber ensemble, voice, and piano, but only a fraction of her works exist in print. Because she performed many of her own works and was a skillful improviser, much of her piano music was not written down.

Karen Tanaka's works have been performed by distinguished orchestras and ensembles worldwide including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Brodsky Quartet, and Gothic Voices, among others. After studying composition at Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, she moved to Paris in 1986 to study with Tristan Murail and work at IRCAM. In 1987 she received the Gaudeamus Prize in the Netherlands. In 1990–1991 she studied with Luciano Berio in Florence, Italy.

In 2012, she was selected as a fellow of the Sundance Institute's Composers Lab for feature films and was mentored by Hollywood's leading composers. Recently, she served as an orchestrator for the BBC's TV series, *Planet Earth II*. The animated film she scored, *Sister*, was nominated for the 92nd Academy Awards for Best Animated Short Film.

Her music is published by Chester Music in London (Wise Music Group), Schott Music in New York (PSNY), ABRSM in London, and Editions BIM in Switzerland. Karen Tanaka lives in Los Angeles and teaches composition at California Institute of the Arts.

The title, *Water Dance*, suggests cool, transparent water flowing freely. The work is a joyful dance with a pleasant feeling of a pulse, where the water occasionally whispers to us through its shimmering play with light. The music presents a rich, flickering, and changing texture: just as the water flows constantly and never the same phase.

–KT

Composer and pianist **Gao Ping** was born in Chengdu, Sichuan province of China. He studied in the US in the 1990s. In demand as a composer, he receives commissions and performances from musicians around the world and his works are featured in many prestigious venues and festivals.

Gao Ping's two albums, released on Naxos label, were critically acclaimed. Currently Professor in Composition at the Conservatory of Music-Capital Normal University, he also serves as a guest professor at the China Conservatory of Music. He previously taught at Canterbury University in New Zealand. Gao Ping is the composer-in-residence for the Forbidden City Chamber Orchestra, a Chinese instrumental ensemble based in Beijing.

The six-movement piano suite *Daydreams* was written in February and March of 2019. It was commissioned by Professor Jack Richards for the young pianist Tony Lin, who gave the world premiere in September of the same year.

These pieces germinate from small and simple daily things, a bit like a musical diary. The everyday happenings, though ordinary and unimportant, nevertheless form the basic colors of our life. If willing to discover, there is no lack of beauty, unnoticed beauty, which perhaps can be called a “quotidian beauty.”

In Chinese literature, there is a long tradition of a type of short stories called Sketches, or Literary Sketches, (笔记) which mainly focus on ordinary people and subjects. This type of literary form evolved into a prose form favored by the literati writers, but it also preserved a kind of micro-history that was absent in our history books. The Chinese literati painting (文人画) had similar tendencies. The white-eyed fishes, or the funny cats of Ba-da-shan-ren (1626–1705), subjects all a part of his daily life, provide us enduring interest and contemplation, even interpretation into deeper meanings.

Daydreams comes out of this kind of aesthetic background, intending to let the quotidian things, the purposeless caprice, have a chance to make sounds and become music.

–GP

❧ WITH APPRECIATION ❧

I would like to thank Xuan He for helping me with the pronunciation of Sichuan dialect. I would also like to thank my dear colleague Melissa Givens for her vocal advice. Any deficiencies on my part do not reflect their coaching!

❧ ABOUT THE ARTIST ❧

A versatile performer of music spanning five centuries, Grammy®-nominated **Genevieve Feiwen Lee** has thrilled audiences on the piano, harpsichord, toy piano, keyboard, and electronics. She enjoys finding music that challenges her to go outside of her comfort zone to sing, speak, act, and play new instruments. She has given solo recitals at Merkin Concert Hall in New York and the Salle Gaveau in Paris. Since her first concerto engagement at age 12, she has appeared with the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, Brazil; the Vrazta State Philharmonic, Bulgaria; and The Orchestra of Northern New York. Her concerts in China appeared on Hunan State Television, and her performance from the Spiegelzaal at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam was broadcast on live radio.

Ms. Lee has premiered and commissioned numerous works, and she can be heard on the Innova, Albany, and Reference labels. She was nominated in the Best Chamber Music Performance category at the 58th Grammy® Awards for the recording of Tom Flaherty’s *Airdancing*. In the Los Angeles area, Ms. Lee has been a guest performer with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Chamber Music series at Disney Hall, Southwest Chamber Music, Jacaranda, Piano Spheres, and the Hear Now New Music Festival. She is a founding member of the Mojave Trio and was a member of the Garth Newel Piano Quartet when they performed in Carnegie Hall. Ms. Lee received her degrees from the Peabody Institute, École Normale de Musique de Paris, and the Yale School of Music. Having joined the Pomona College faculty in 1994, she is the first recipient of the Everett S. Olive Professorship, endowed by Yuk Mei Shim ’50.