

MARY KATHLEEN ERNST

KEEPING
TIME



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(3)

KEEPING TIME (2011) *Vivian Fung* 3:49

SECRET AND GLASS GARDENS (2000) *Jennifer Higdon* 9:40

DREAM DANCES (2008) *Katherine Hoover* 8:52

4
(5)

MOSQUITO (1991) *Jing Jing Luo* 5:26

CHAI VARIATIONS (1995) *Judith Shatin* 20:57

5| Theme :31 6| Lighthearted :34 7| Flowing :39 8| Sly :47 9| Whimsical :53

10| Dark :52 11| Shining 1:59 12| Yearning :38 13| With Cunning 1:16

14| Droll :33 15| Majestic 1:56 16| Mysterious 1:28 17| Tender 1:46

18| Deliberate :50 19| Pensive 1:44 20| Menacing 1:19 21| Flamboyant :42

22| Whirling :35 23| Gentle 1:06 24| Theme :50

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2
5

SPONTANEOUS D-COMBUSTION (2012) *Stefania de Kenessey* 16:15

25| Vivace e giocoso 3:56 26| Molto tranquillo 7:14 27| Vivace 5:04

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2
8

A RECOLLECTION (1995) *Nancy Bloomer Deussen* 4:02

TOTAL TIME **68:54**



KEEPING TIME
NARRATIVE

The composers in *Keeping Time* have influenced my life as a musician in very profound ways. Over 30 years ago, my Juilliard colleague and friend Judith Shatin, opened my eyes to the wealth of music composed by women, past and present. During my early years of growth and exploration, the music of these exceptional women captivated me and became an integral part of my repertoire as a pianist. Over time I watched them break barriers and bring to life music of great beauty and complexity that will no doubt stand the test of time. I feel privileged to be a long time champion of their work. I chose the title of this CD, *Keeping Time*, because it reflects the ongoing pulse in music, and honors my association with a compelling group of composers writing during my lifetime. *Keeping Time* is the title track, composed by young, rising star Vivian Fung. I am grateful for the friendship and support of Vivian, Jennifer, Katherine, Jing Jing, Judith, Stefania and Nancy for making this project so rewarding. Although this CD is about keeping time, it also celebrates the timelessness of friendship and the ways in which great music binds us together.



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Mary Kathleen Ernst, hailed by critics as a pianist who “clearly rates among the best,” has won acclaim for performances at major concert halls and music festivals internationally. Among her many awards are top prizes in Spain’s Jose Iturbi International Piano Competition and the National Federation of Music Clubs Competition, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Reader’s Digest, the District of Columbia and Virginia Commissions on the Arts, and a United States Information Agency award for Outstanding Artistic and Human Qualities. Ms. Ernst has emerged as one of the champions of contemporary American music, especially music by American women composers. In the United States, she has been presented by such prestigious organizations as the Kennedy Center in Washington, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, National Public Radio and Television, Voice of America, and overseas by the United States Information Service and the Spanish Ministry of Culture. A commanding performer of diverse repertoire from the Baroque to the present, Ernst has been featured at festivals including Tanglewood, Bar Harbor, New

Orleans Festival of New Music, MusicAlaskaWomen, the Carnegie Hall Composer-Pianist Concerts, Women's Work, and the Contemporary American Theater Festival Concerts. She has premiered American works in the European capitals of Denmark, London, Limerick, Ljubljana, Paris, Vienna, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. A graduate of the Juilliard School, Ernst most recently served on the Performing Artist Faculty at the University of Virginia. In addition to teaching and performing as a member of the McIntire Chamber Music Series, she created and directed *Music and Mind*, a community outreach program in local high schools. While previously serving as Artist in Residence at Shepherd University in West Virginia, she won a major grant from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Arts Partners Program for the creation of COAL, a two-year partnership between the community and composer Judith Shatin which culminated with the premiere of Shatin's oratorio, COAL, for chorus, Appalachian heritage instruments and electronics. The project, which sought to tie a community to its cultural heritage through contemporary music, won national recognition and was the subject of a PBS documentary. She continues to work to bring the arts into communities and all levels of education and is a frequent guest lecturer and performer at universities across the U.S. Ms. Ernst's other recordings include *Two by Three*, music by American women composers released by North South Consonance, *Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto* recorded live with the Charlottesville Symphony, *American Fantasies* on Centaur Records and *Tower of the Eight Winds* on Innova Records, both with violinist Hasse Borup. **MaryKathleenErnst.com**



VIVIAN FUNG often merges Western musical forms with non-Western influences. The Seattle Symphony and Montreal Chamber orchestras, Afiara and Escher string quartets, Music from China, Suwon Chorale (South Korea), and American Opera Projects have performed her music. She won major awards from Guggenheim Foundation, ASCAP, BMI, American Music Center, N.Y. Foundation for the Arts, MAP Fund, Music Alive!, League of American Orchestras, American Composers' Forum, and Canada Council for the Arts. Her Violin Concerto, on Naxos Canadian Classics, won the 2013 JUNO award for Classical Composition of the Year. Other labels include Telarc, Cedille, and Signpost.

vivianfung.net

Keeping Time was commissioned in 2011 for the New Jersey Music Teacher's Association. It is a virtuosic concert etude, where a constant pulse chimes against intricate passagework containing ever-changing rhythmic patterns, at times syncopated, across the entire range of the keyboard. The title refers to the "Kajar," an instrument in the Balinese Gamelan (orchestra) that keeps the steady beat.

JENNIFER HIGDON is one of the most-performed, living American composers. She received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, a Pew Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship and two awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Commissioners range from Philadelphia Orchestra to St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; Eighth Blackbird to Tokyo String Quartet; The President's Own Marine Band to violinist Hilary Hahn. Her Percussion Concerto won the 2010 Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. Higdon holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press and recorded on over three dozen CDs. **jenniferhigdon.com**

Secret and Glass Gardens was written in 2000 for the Van Cliburn Competition's American Composer Invitational. A journey of wonder and discovery, this secret garden reflects the paths of our hearts. It is a place of magical colors and brightly hued glass, where all is in view. The plants that grow there are like no other in color and shape, and every turn of a corner brings new discoveries. The garden sweeps the viewer along amidst small, delicate details and full, grand shapes, carrying magic through all corners and at every step.

KATHERINE HOOVER, composer, flutist and five-time winner of the National Flute Association's Newly Published Music Competition won a National Endowment Composers Fellowship and an Academy of Arts and Letters Composition Award. Her music is published by Theodore Presser, Carl Fischer and Papagena Press and recorded on Koch, Delos, Parnassus, Centaur, Summit, Cantilena, and Leonarda labels. Over 50 orchestras, chamber groups and noted artists have performed her music including flutists Julius Baker and Carol Wincenc, 'cellist Sharon Robinson, pianists Anne-Marie McDermott and Joseph Kalichstein, Colorado Quartet, and Eroica Trio. katherinehoover.com

Dream Dances was premiered July 15, 2008 at the Festival of the Hamptons in Bridgehampton, New York. After writing numerous short works for piano I decided to structure a longer piece by weaving together several dance-like sections: slow and sensuous; playful, lyric; and fast and intense, each with a distinct sense of rhythmic movement.

JING JING LUO, a native of Beijing, China, is a composer and pianist whose musical language melds Eastern and Western influences. Her compositional style reflects experimentation within a non-structured framework using both traditional acoustic instruments and electronic sound. Her music embraces sounds in nature and the struggle between the individual's voice and societal demands. First Prize winner in Music From China International Composers Competition for Traditional Chinese Instruments, she also won grants from Bellagio (Italy), ASCAP, Koussevitzky Foundation, Asian Council on the Arts, New York and Ohio state arts councils, American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. jingjingluo.com

The inspiration for *Mosquito* for piano solo came from the insect itself. The music conveys the same sense of the mosquito's persistence, power of penetration in a small but very pointed way, and something of the irritability of being bitten. The idea of the mosquito provided a starting point for the piece from which I freely improvised. One might think of the mosquito as the dominant of the piece and my flesh and blood as the tonic.

JUDITH SHATIN, who is William R. Kennan, Jr. Professor at the University of Virginia, counts timbral exploration and invention, as well as collaboration with musicians, artists and communities as central to her music. Her work has been called "highly inventive on every level; hugely enjoyable and deeply involving" (*Washington Post*). Themes include the sounding world around us, her Jewish heritage, and socially engaged music. Commissions include Barlow Foundation, Fromm Foundation, Kronos Quartet, McKimm Fund of the Library of Congress and the National Symphony Orchestra, among others. Listen to her on Capstone, Innova, Neuma, New World and Sonora labels. judithshatin.com

Chai Variations on Eliahu HaNavi (1995) was inspired by the folk song *Eliahu HaNavi* (Elijah the Prophet), often sung at the closing service of the Jewish Sabbath. The letters of "CHAI," which means "life" or "living" in Hebrew, symbolically stand for the number 18; hence, 18 variations. The performer chooses the ordering of the variations, reflecting Shatin's sense of performance as collaboration between performer, composer and listener. It also reflects a dynamic conception of musical form, meaning more than six quadrillion possible orderings.

STEFANIA DE KENESSEY, a leading figure in the revival of Neoclassicism, is the founder and artistic director of the "Derriere Guard," an alliance of traditionalists including architects, artists, composers and poets. She is committed "to write beautiful music that speaks to our age but is also grounded in a classical, timeless tradition." An Associate Professor of Music at the Eugene Lang College of the New School for Social Research in New York City, her music has been recorded

for Center Stage Records and North South Consonance. She is currently composing a piano concerto for Mary Kathleen Ernst and an opera based on Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities*.

Spontaneous D-Combustion as a whole will be a concerto for piano and optional/variable instruments in seven short movements, all in the key of D. The movements may be played in any order and in any number. The work is "Gratefully dedicated to my friend and pianist extraordinaire, Mary Kathleen Ernst." This version for piano solo opens with a sparkling, jocular movement, followed by a slow, blues-like interlude and ends with a driving, toccata-like finale in 7 meter.

NANCY BLOOMER DEUSSEN is a leading composer in the movement toward tonal music. Her music has been performed in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, and China. She was a top prizewinner in the 2013 American Prize in Chamber Music and the 2012 American Prize in Orchestral and Choral Composition. Recent performances include the Dayton Philharmonic Symphony, American Harp Society in San Francisco, US Army Symphony Orchestra, American Pen Women conference in Washington, DC, New Millennium Chamber Orchestra, and Mission Chamber Orchestra of San Jose, CA. She is co-founder and President Emeritus of the National Association of Composers, San Francisco, CA. nancybloomerdeussen.com

A Recollection is the first movement in a suite of two pieces entitled *Musings: Circa 1940*. When I was composing the piece I sat in an almost dreamlike state, remembering my childhood growing up in the Bronx. I especially recalled the summers—the heat and humidity, the street I grew up on, the lazy walks to the park with dear friends, eating German cookies at my German friend's apartment and wiling away afternoons playing games and just being a child. I also remembered the dark times—losing my mother at age 6, blackouts for air attacks and going without basics during WW2, and the serious illness of my sister. It was a time of great happiness and sadness. All these memories combined when I was composing the work.



AMERICAN WOMEN COMPOSER
QUOTES

“Mary Kathleen brings tremendous energy and excitement to *Keeping Time*, a tricky work in which a constant pulse chimes against intricate passagework with ever-changing rhythmic patterns, at times syncopated, across the entire range of the keyboard.” **VIVIAN FUNG**

“Mary Kathleen Ernst’s premiere recording of my work, *Secret & Glass Gardens*, is exquisitely sensitive and powerful.”
JENNIFER HIGDON

“My *Dream Dances* calls for a variety of sounds and touches, and Mary Kathleen Ernst gives it a truly vibrant and virtuosic performance.”
KATHERINE HOOVER

“Mary Kathleen Ernst has been ‘flying’ my *Mosquito* all over the world since 1991. When I heard her crisp, precise execution of passages running over the keyboard and the graceful subtlety and humor of each ‘bite’, I thought, ‘Wow! This is the best player of *Mosquito* I could ever have!’” **JING JING LUO**

“In *Chai Variations*, pianist Mary Kathleen Ernst conjures a dramatic range of musical shadings with her compelling combination of bravura and delicacy.” **JUDITH SHATIN**

“In *Spontaneous D-Combustion*, Mary Kathleen Ernst shows the firepower and bravura technique to carry off the most dazzlingly difficult, complex technical challenges. The slow movement is deeply heartfelt and full of lyricism, with long, spun out legato melodies with a mysteriously quiet, contemplative voice.” **STEFANIA DE KENESSEY**

“A *Recollection* depicts childhood memories, both sad and joyful, of growing up in New York. It is a very private piece, nostalgic and close to my heart, and Mary Kathleen has captured its essence perfectly in her lovely, sensitive performance.”
NANCY BLOOMER DEUSSEN

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