

PROGRAM NOTES - By Paul Barnes

VICTORIA BOND: Illuminations on Byzantine Chant (2021)

This work represents over twenty years of creative collaboration with my dear friend Victoria Bond. Chanting in Orthodox churches for the last quarter of a century, I wanted to select byzantine hymns that reflected the wide emotional range and spiritual message of Orthodox Christianity.

Potirion Sotiriu (1999)

The idea for the *Potirion Sotiriu* began as a fragile melody I sang for Victoria, on a foggy hillside in the Czech city of Zlin. I was recording Victoria's first piano concerto "Black Light" and we were on our way to a recording session where I related my ecstatic experiences chanting in the Greek Orthodox Church. She asked me to sing one of my favorite melodies and I sang the communion hymn *Potirion Sotiriu*, "The Cup of Salvation," which is sung on the feasts of the Theotokos. Victoria was moved by the hymn and thus began her exploration into the mystical world of Byzantine chant.

The work begins with a beautifully voiced statement of the original melody in its entirety and then goes through a fascinating journey and discovery of the various components of the chant. In a loosely constructed set of variations, the work concludes with an exciting coda revealing the innate power of the chant itself. *Potirion* was eventually transformed by Victoria into the piano concerto "Ancient Keys" which I recorded on my second volume of *American Piano Concertos* released on the Albany label in 2006.

Simeron Kremate (2019)

Simeron Kremate was written in the fall of 2018/spring of 2019 and is based on the Greek Orthodox crucifixion chant from the Holy Thursday service chanted during Orthodox Holy Week. Its opening five-note melody in the plagal of the second mode features the augmented seconds that are characteristic of this musically compelling mode. The text "Simeron kremate" opens the hymn emphasizing the liturgical truth that "today" (*simeron*), we mystically participate in this great act of love from the past thereby making the past eternally present. Victoria also decided to incorporate a Jewish Passover chant "Tal" (dew) whose opening melody bears an uncanny similarity to the opening of the Greek chant. This Jewish prayer for the blessing of dew is sung on the first day of Passover, the date of which the Greek Orthodox always consider for the timing of their own celebration of Pascha, the Greek word for "Passover." Just as the Jewish community liturgically asks God for the gift of dew, so the Greek Orthodox community contemplates the gift of God in Christ, who today is suspended on a cross. The work opens with the traditional apichima of the plagal of the second mode which aurally establishes the musical atmosphere of the mode. Victoria follows this with a Jewish style cantillation (based on the cantillation of the great cantor Yosele Rosenblatt) which leads to the first statement of the "Simeron" chant. These opening notes are then developed in multiple ways before the intimate entry of the "Tal" melody. The work concludes with a 'tranquillo' passage of rare beauty ingeniously combining both themes. The work ends tentatively and unresolved as the opening notes of the chant dissipate into eternity. The work

was jointly commissioned by the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska and the Soli Deo Gloria Music Foundation in Chicago.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a vocal line in 4/4 time, marked 'Lento' and 'mp'. The lyrics are in Greek and English: 'Σή - με - ρον κρε - μά - ται ε - πί ξύ - λου, Si - me - ron kre - ma - te e - pi xi - lou'. The bottom staff is a 'T. Solo' line in 8/8 time, marked 'A tempo ♩ = 92 (like a prayer)'. The lyrics are 'Tal, tal, tal tein, Li - rat-son art - sach.'.

Σήμερον Κρεμάται (Today is Suspended)

From the Matins Service of Holy Friday (celebrated on Thursday evening)
 Today, He who suspended the earth on the waters is suspended on a cross. 3x
 The King of the Angels wears a crown of thorns.
 He who wraps the sky in clouds is wrapped in a fake purple robe.
 He who freed Adam in the Jordan accepts to be slapped.
 The Bridegroom of the Church is fixed with nails to the cross.
 The Son of the virgin is pierced with a spear.
 We worship Your Passion, O Christ. 3x
 Show us also Your glorious Resurrection.

Enite ton Kyrion (2021)

Enite ton Kyrion was written in 2021 as the final movement of Victoria's byzantine trilogy *Three Illuminations on Byzantine Chant*. When I commissioned the work which was funded by the Hixson Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I wanted this final movement to be a musical expression of divine love. I selected the Sunday communion hymn *Enite ton Kyrion*, "Praise the Lord" from Psalm 148.

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest.

Sung in the plagal of the fourth mode, the melody is a simple diatonic expression of love sung in the Divine Liturgy just before the faithful come forward to receive holy communion, the mystical joining of humanity with God, the ultimate expression of divine love. I told Victoria early in the process that I envisioned this final movement to be similar to the final movement of Schumann's glorious *Fantasie* which after the emotional intensity of the first and second movements begins slowly as various keys are beautifully and meditatively explored. Victoria's work did not disappoint! *Enite* begins actually as the resolution of the previous

work *Simeron Kremate* which left the final e-flat of the *Simeron* chant unresolved until the first note of *Enite!* Fragments of the melody emerge as she explores several different keys and colors before a complete statement in C major is presented in canon. In a beautiful expression of musical cyclicism, both *Potirion* and *Simeron* return effectively preparing the final statement of the *Enite* theme. Preceded by a most exciting dominant prologation, the *Enite* theme returns with an exultant and ecstatic tintinnabulation with giant bells booming in the bass. The entire melody is presented in canon and then slowly dissipates into an ineffable expression of love.

I recorded *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant* in May of 2021 at Kimball Recital Hall of the Glenn Korff School of Music. The recording *Illumination: The Piano Works of Victoria Bond* was released on Albany Records on Oct 1, 2021 and is available on Amazon and all streaming services. I am also editing the score for publication in the fall of 2021.

VICTORIA BOND

Victoria Bond leads a multifaceted career as composer, conductor, lecturer, and artistic director of Cutting Edge Concerts. Bond's opera, *Clara*, premiered at the Berlin Philharmonic Easter Festival in Germany in 2019. Recent commissions include: *The Adventures of Gulliver* (American Opera Project through a commissioning grant from Opera America); *Blue and Green Music* (Chamber Music America commission for the Cassatt String Quartet); *The Miracle of Light* (The Young Peoples Chorus of NYC, commission, premiered by Chamber Opera Chicago). Recent recordings include *Instruments of Revelation* (Naxos American Classics), *Soul of a Nation: Portraits of Presidential Character* (Albany Records), *The Voices of Air* (Albany). Recent performances include: scenes from *Mrs. President* (Dell'Arte Opera Ensemble), scenes from *Clara* (The German Forum), *Mrs. President* (Rochester Lyric Opera). Ms. Bond has composed eight operas, six ballets, two piano concertos and orchestral, chamber, choral and keyboard compositions. She has been commissioned by ensembles including the Houston and Shanghai Symphony Orchestras, Cleveland and Indianapolis Chamber Orchestras, Michigan Philharmonic, Cassatt String Quartet, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Soli Deo Gloria Music Foundation, American Opera Project, Young Peoples' Chorus of NYC, Manhattan Choral Ensemble, Choral Society of the Hamptons, American Ballet Theater, Pennsylvania Ballet, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Her compositions have been performed by the Dallas Symphony, New York City Opera, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Anchorage Opera, Irish National Orchestra (RTE), Shanghai Symphony and members of the New York Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony, among others. Victoria Bond is principal guest conductor of Chamber Opera, Chicago, a position she has held since 2008. Ms. Bond is the recipient of the Victor Herbert Award, the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Walter Hinrichsen Award, the Perry F. Kendig Award and the Miriam Gideon Prize. She is a graduate of Juilliard with a DMA in conducting.

PHILIP GLASS: Piano Quintet "Annunciation" (2018)

Transcribed for solo piano by Paul Barnes (2020)

One of my very first conversations with Philip Glass soon after we met in the mid 90s explored the musical and spiritual intersection of Buddhist and Eastern Christian byzantine chant. This mutual interest has culminated in Glass's latest composition, the Piano Quintet "Annunciation."

I also serve as head chanter of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Lincoln, Nebraska and sang the beautiful byzantine communion hymn of the Annunciation for Glass in January of 2017. Glass then agreed to base his first piano quintet on this melody and to title the work "Annunciation." The text of the hymn comes from Psalm 133:13, "The Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired her for his dwelling place."

The work is in two parts. The Part One opens with a meditative chromatic chord progression which eventually leads to the first entrance of the chant first stated in the piano. Glass develops this beautiful theme as it is shared by the various members of the quintet culminating in an opulent neo-romantic closing section recapping the introductory chromatic chord progression. A partial restatement of the theme ends the movement with a brooding D minor coda. Part Two is a poignant musical meditation on Part One revealing Glass's innate ability to connect the transcendental ethos of the original chant with his own spacious approach to musical time. A particularly expressive section features the piano in soaring sparse octave melody over undulating eighth notes in the violin and cello. The work ends with an increasingly energetic and ecstatic 7/8 coda based on the opening chant transformed into scale passages that ascend and dissipate into a pianissimo chromatic flourish evocative of incense rising.

I gave the world premiere performance with the Chiara Quartet at the Lied Center for Performing Arts on April 17, 2018. The Journal Star described the performance as *"meditative...striking...touchingly played by Barnes and the Chiara Quartet, "Annunciation" is a romantic, late-period Glass masterwork."* Fred Child, host of APR's Performance Today was present for the premiere and wrote: *"Pianist Paul Barnes put together and performed a thrilling evening of music!"* Barnes' interview with Glass and Fred Child was featured on Performance Today in late June along with the broadcast of the world premiere performance. The New York premiere took place on May 12, 2018 in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York Classical Review called the quintet a *"fascinating mosaic of Glass's late style...with a warm inner expression that seemed to echo Brahms."* And New York Music Daily labeled the quintet *"magically direct...lushly glittering."* Barnes recording of the quintet with Brooklyn Rider was released in October of 2019. *ResMusica* in Paris wrote: *"Paul Barnes, whose pianistic lines are always clear, is a marvel of dialogue with Brooklyn Rider."*

PHILIP GLASS: Pendulum for Violin and Piano (unpublished)

Pendulum was written to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the American Civil Liberties Union. It is unpublished and I was given permission by Glass to perform it on this afternoon's program.

PHILIP GLASS: Four Movements for Two Pianos (2008)

Four Movements for Two Pianos was commissioned by the Klavier-Festival Ruhr, for pianists Dennis Russell Davies & Maki Namekawa who gave the world premiere performance in July of 2008. The work musically explores many of Glass's trademark features including energetic arpeggios, unique additive rhythmic structures, and beautiful lyric climaxes.

PHILIP GLASS

Through his operas, his symphonies, his compositions for his own ensemble, and his wide-ranging collaborations with artists ranging from Twyla Tharp to Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen to David Bowie, **Philip Glass** has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his times. The operas - "Einstein on the Beach," "Satyagraha," "Akhnaten," and "The Voyage," among many others - play throughout the world's leading houses, and rarely to an empty seat. Glass has written music for experimental theater and for Academy Award-winning motion pictures such as "The Hours" and Martin Scorsese's "Kundun," while "Koyaanisqatsi," his initial filmic landscape with Godfrey Reggio and the Philip Glass Ensemble, may be the most radical and influential mating of sound and vision since "Fantasia." His associations, personal and professional, with leading rock, pop and world music artists date back to the 1960s, including the beginning of his collaborative relationship with artist Robert Wilson. Indeed, Glass is the first composer to win a wide, multi-generational audience in the opera house, the concert hall, the dance world, in film and in popular music - simultaneously.

He was born in 1937 and grew up in Baltimore. He studied at the University of Chicago, the Juilliard School and in Aspen with Darius Milhaud. Finding himself dissatisfied with much of what then passed for modern music, he moved to Europe, where he studied with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (who also taught Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Quincy Jones) and worked closely with the sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar. He returned to New York in 1967 and formed the Philip Glass Ensemble - seven musicians playing keyboards and a variety of woodwinds, amplified and fed through a mixer. The new musical style that Glass was evolving was eventually dubbed "minimalism." Glass himself never liked the term and preferred to speak of himself as a composer of "music with repetitive structures." Much of his early work was based on the extended reiteration of brief, elegant melodic fragments that wove in and out of an aural tapestry. Or, to put it another way, it immersed a listener in a sort of sonic weather that twists, turns, surrounds, develops. There has been nothing "minimalist" about his output. In the past 25 years, Glass has composed more than twenty-five operas, large and small; twelve symphonies; three piano concertos and concertos for violin, piano, timpani, and saxophone quartet and orchestra; soundtracks to films ranging from new scores for the stylized classics of Jean Cocteau to Errol Morris's documentary about former defense secretary Robert McNamara; string quartets; a growing body of work for solo piano and organ. He has collaborated with Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Yo-Yo Ma, and Doris Lessing, among many others. He presents lectures, workshops, and solo keyboard performances around the world, and continues to appear regularly with the Philip Glass Ensemble.