

Gyre Music presents

Father Said:
sacred and secular music for father and son

Frank Wallace *guitar, baritone, composer*

Speak Love (2005)

Song
Absence
Song
Death in Life
Isolation

Frank Wallace, b. 1952
poems by Henriette de Saussure Blanding, 1911

From the Windy Place (1997)

The pilgrim's road
Sand and sky
In the shadow of the church
The gift

Frank Wallace

Débil del Alba (2003)

Frank Wallace

Cunctipotens Genitor (2005)

Frank Wallace

Intermission

Father Said: (2003)

The stars
The fixed course
Sand dunes
The cage
The river
Climbing cliffs
The taste
Pungent odor
Shall I fret
Shade
Dusk
Interlude
Tantalize your troubles
Cool zephyrs
A calm
Cold winds
Aunt Tabitha

Frank Wallace
poems by Frank C. Wallace, 1888-1951

guitar by Stephan Connor

Program Notes

I “met” Henriette de Saussure Blanding in Santa Barbara in February of 2005. She was the grandmother of a friend of mine who introduced me to her first book of poetry dated 1911, when she was a young woman in college. The stories of a free spirited and colorful woman fascinated me, as did her romantic poetry.

From the Windy Place was written for my first son Gus whose life began in the northwestern province of Galicia in Spain. The pilgrimage is one of life and the gift is birth. The “church” in movement three is the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, a kind of spiritual home for my soul. **Débil del Alba** was written for my second son, Adam, and his friend, Jessyca to perform as a guitar solo with dancer.

The **Cunctipotens Genitor** variations are based on music from the time of the great pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela, Spain in the 12th century and earlier. I have sung this music throughout Spain and it has formed a basis for some of my own composition, most profoundly the variations that follow.

Father Said: is a powerful combination of the profound folk wisdom of great-grandfather pioneer Joel Sylvanus Wallace (b. c.1845) as remembered in the elegant poetry of grandfather Frank C. Wallace (b. Chico, Texas, 1888) and presented in the compelling compositions and performance of the grandson (Frank A Wallace, b. Houston, 1952).

An extraordinary image of early American life and its connection to nature, the cycle is dedicated to my father, Earl Wallace (b. 1917, Waco). Earl only met great-grandfather Joel once or twice as a child, remembering an old man with a long white beard once knocking on the door. “The stars / May fall, but look again and you will see / The fixed stars shining on as if to shame / Our fears.” So the saga begins with the setting of the great outdoors that pervades the piece. It continues, “We threaded tangled trails that wound the brakes / And creeks in sleeves of endless turns and twists. / When one is lost, the right turn seems the wrong.”

Father Said: has a marvelous structure as set out by the poet in which short triptychs of wise sayings come between longer stories of childhood scenes. It concludes:

*“And, too, I wondered if
My Mother’s words were children of her wish
That she might go at some full harvest time;
And Father’s that he ride away with Death
At grass-rise time, beginning with the flush
Of Spring his new adventure in a land
Of youth, eternal morning, growing things,
Somewhere among the pastures of the stars.”*

-- notes by Frank Wallace

Biography

Frank Wallace’s compositions for guitar, lute and voice are the fruit of a colorful career in music that has been unlike any other of his generation of guitarists. Wallace has distinguished himself not only as a dynamic soloist and accompanist on classical and romantic guitars, but he is also recognized as a leading player of the *vihuela de mano* and lute. He is a master of self-accompanied song. With his rich baritone he sings and plays the solo songs of renaissance Italy and Spain, Elizabethan England, Schubert and his own compositions with equal attention to the subtleties of melody, words, and accompaniments.

Frank Wallace-his own new works (Gyre 10012), Wallace’s debut recording of his own compositions, won him a **2001 Artist Fellowship** grant from the Arts Council of New Hampshire. As an outstanding young classical guitarist from San Francisco Conservatory in the 70’s, Wallace joined the guitar faculty at New England Conservatory while also studying early music with Marleen Montgomery. He has performed at many of the leading early music festivals including Utrecht, Regensburg and Boston, and has also performed, lectured and taught at a number of Lute Society of America Seminars, the Holland Festival/Utrecht, Amherst Early Music Week and the Guitar Foundation of America Festival. Wallace tours with soprano Nancy Knowles as Duo LiveOak and records exclusively for Gyre Music, which released his fourth solo album, **Sketches**, in October 2004.

Mr. Wallace plays a guitar by Stephan Connor, 2004

Speak Love (2005)

Song

Were I a bird I would wing to thee
Were I a lark I would sing to thee
Were I a star I would shine for thee
Were I a lover I'd pine for thee.

Were I the breeze I would blow for thee,
Were I the rose I would grow for thee,
Were I a wave I would break for thee,
Were I a heart I would ache for thee.

Were I the wind I would sigh for thee,
Were I a hero I'd die for thee,
None of these gifts can I give to thee,
Bid me, dear, only to live for thee.

Absence

Tonight I cannot see your eyes
Smile sweet in-to my own
The last faint ray of daylight dies
I sit in dark alone
Yet through yon stars that brightly shine
I know your heart is seeking mine.

Tonight I cannot hear your call
Across the deadening years
That rise between a giant wall
That yields not to my fears.
Yet in the sobbing of the sea
I know your spirit speaks to me.

Tonight I may not feel the touch
Of clinging fingertips
Tonight my heart yearns over much
With hungering for your lips
Yet love may bid time backward roll
This hour I clasp you soul to soul.

Song

What light may e'er relieve the gloom
Through which men blindly grope?
I looked into your eyes, my sweet,
And found that light was Hope.

What power of men or e'en of gods
May rend the bonds of death?
I looked into your heart, my sweet,
And felt that power was Faith.

What truth may lift our sordid lives
From earth to heaven above?
I looked into your soul, my sweet,
And knew that truth was Love.

If while your love were still my very own,
Cold Death had laid his hand upon your heart,
I would have bowed my head and made no moan,
Scorning a power too weak our souls to part.
I would have longed for voice and lips and hands,
Yet with the wandering
night winds from the sea,
Our souls had still embraced in mystic lands,
Known only to Love's holy sympathy.

Death in Life

Such sacred grief were blessedness...Tonight
Mine is the anguish of a different lot:
To know your lips as sweet, your eyes as bright,
And, searching for your soul — to find it not!

When I was but a child and knew not pain,
One day you clasped me closely to your breast,
And on my cheek your lips convulsive pressed,
While o'er my face the hot tears fell like rain.

That hour was long ago, Then why today
When years have given me my rightful part
In the soul's sorrow, [Why, Why] do you close your heart
To love, and smiling, turn your face away?

FATHER SAID:

I. The stars

The stars
May fall, but look again and you will see
The fixed stars shining on as if to shame
Our fears.

II. The fixed course

We threaded tangled trails that wound the brakes
And creeks in sleeves of endless turns and twists.
When one is lost the right turn seems the wrong.
But on we trailed, for father was in charge,
And no objection to his course had weight.
A wag remarked, "Our course may run bee true,
But all the stars are out of place tonight."
And then our goal.

"By daylight," Father used

To say, "a woodsman knows his trees; by night
He knows the stars. If he will lay his course
By things as fixed as stars he'll come out right."

III. Sand dunes

Sand dunes
Are cliffs that gave way to the weaker winds
Which proved more willful than the granite cliffs
Themselves.

IV. The cage

A cage

*A bowl, a jar that chokes the yellow vine,
A tethered cub depress me more than Death
Itself.*

V. The river

This side

*The river is much like the other side
And yet the farther banks call out to me
To come.*

VI. Climbing Cliffs

*Our Father took us to the hills one day
To climb the cliffs and play among the rocks.
When he had reached a shady ledge he stopped
While we still climbed, and clung to rocky walls.
We called to him to see how high we were,
And on we tugged.*

*Below he watched and warned
Of footings, loose or rolling stones that lay
Unseen to trip the step or cheat our grasp.
With some new height attained, we cried again
For him to thrill with us in our success.
Then Brother shouted down, "the higher you climb
The farther you can see!"*

*Now since that day
I've heard the echo of our Father's answer:
"The higher you climb the farther you can fall!"*

VII. The taste

The taste

*Of water from a coffee mug is flat
And stale as aromatic Java from
A gourd.*

VIII. Pungent odor

The spears

*Of pungent odor from the wild horse-mint
Have wounded me with poisoned tips until
I drowse.*

IX. Shall I fret

Shal I

*Fret at the summer sun when it distills
The nectars in the lush Elberta peach
For me?*

X. Ingenuity

*He found no shade, but made his own,
So shade and shine he had together;
He turned his back to break the sun,
Or face it, so to change his weather.*

XI. Crow flight

*At dusk the somber crows
Beat ebon pinions
In rhythmic, silent flight
To bleak dominions
Of the night.*

*Across the after-glow
Like driven minions
They file to darker gloom,
Their beating pinions
Waving doom.*

*I watch the long line reach
The sky's low hem;
I fear, but wish I might
Be one of them
For one gray night.*

XII. Tantalize your troubles

*Our home looked north, and stood four-square against
The bleak blue northers. Father boxed the hall
For winter, but the winds were not outdone:
They screamed about each crack in fiendish glee,
And cried and wailed, and snarled and growled in all
Their furious whirr and whine. "The wind, the wind,"
My Mother sighed.
Then Father rose and with
A twinkle in his eye left us about
The roaring fire to go into the blasts.
We heard him tinker at the shrieking cracks,
And then a reinforced array of wraiths
And goblins, banshees, ogres, imps and oafs
Began a bedlam, turn by turn, and now
In unison, running the scales in runes
Of strident pitch.
"You'll drive us daft as loons,
You and your horse-hair harps," Mother began;
But Father smiLed in greater merriment:
"Our worries grow inside of us, so turn
Your troubles inside out; grin at the thing
That bothers you and it will laugh with you."
We listened with hungry ears for each
New sound the playful winds might improvise.*

*Too soon the norther calmed, for then we missed
The harpings of the hosts that filled the winds.*

XIII. Cool zephyrs

The pure

*In heart are fresh cool zephyrs blowing down
Across the summer meadows close behind
The rain.*

XIV. A calm

Pity

*The aged? Never! They have come to know
A calm the storms of raging youth can not
Disturb.*

XV. Cold winds

Cold winds

*May chill the deepest marrow of our bones
But they are never quite so cold when faced
For friends.*

XVI. Aunt Tabitha

*When Aunt Tabitha came to spend the day
She brought her yarns to knit gray socks and rib
Them black. It seemed her palsied hands were timed
To catch the stitches for her knits and purls,
Though they were wrinkled as her bony face.
That she might catch her breath from slight fatigue
She lit her small dirt-dauber pipe with coals
She balanced on the poker from the hearth.
My brother thought it strange that trembling hands
Could turn the trick.*

*"Her physick grows for worse,"
Our Mother said to Father after Aunty left,
"I doubt if she is here when acorns fall."
"Or rise of grass in April," Father said
In solemn mood.*

*Long since I have forgot
When Aunt Tabitha passed, at acorn fall
Or rise of grass. And, too, I wondered if
My Mother's words were children of her wish
That she might go at some full harvest time;
And Father's that he ride away with Death
At grass-rise time, beginning with the flush
Of Spring his new adventure in a land
Of youth, eternal morning, growing things,
Somewhere among the pastures of the stars.*