

Harlequin in Love

Duo LiveOak

Nancy Knowles, soprano, poet
Frank Wallace, baritone, guitarist, lutenist, composer

Father Said: (2003)

a song cycle for baritone and guitar

Frank Wallace

poems: Frank C. Wallace, 1888-1951

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

Woman of the Water (2002)

a song cycle for soprano and lute

Frank Wallace

poems: Theodore Roethke

The Young Girl
Her Words
The Apparition
Her Reticence/Her Longing
Song
The Moment
The Restored
Meditation

Intermission

Harlequin in Love(2000)

Frank Wallace

for guitar solo

He Fools
He Pines
He Loves
On the Sol, in Mi
He Flees

Bestiary (2002)

Frank Wallace

a song cycle for soprano,
baritone and guitar

poems:

The Sloth	Theodore Roethke
The Cow	Theodore Roethke
The Lady and the Bear	Theodore Roethke
The Star-nosed Mole	Nancy Knowles
The Snake	Theodore Roethke
The Serpent	Theodore Roethke

Something's Coming/America

Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim
(*West Side Story*, 1957)

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

Jerome Kern/Otto Harback
(*Roberta*, 1933)

Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man

Jerome Kern/Oscar Hammerstein II
(*Showboat*, 1927)

*Guitar by Stephan Connor, 2004**Lute by Joel van Lennep, 1981*

In Catalan the word for the evergreen live oak is made into a verb, *alzinarse*--to revitalize. Passionate about the tonal and expressive powers of the ensemble of voices and plucked strings, Duo LiveOak is bringing new life to the long-neglected form of the art song with guitar and lute. Knowles and Wallace combine their considerable talents in composition, poetry, drama, and musical performance to create "a brilliant collection of new repertoire performed with equal amounts of grace, sensitivity and virtuosity" (Guitar Review). Their concerts have the intimacy of a poetry reading and the dramatic power of an opera. Hailed for many years on both sides of the Atlantic for their innovative concerts and recordings of medieval and renaissance music, echoes of the past reverberate throughout Duo LiveOak's new works.

Nancy Knowles, soprano and poet, is consistently praised by critics and audiences alike for the beauty of her voice as well as for her presence and grace on stage. With a longstanding reputation for her skillful interweaving of song, poetry and drama in concert, Knowles conceives programs for the duo that are both thought-provoking and whimsical. Long known for her performances of medieval Spanish music, Knowles is currently performing

the evocative solo repertoire of medieval Spain in **Voice of the Rose**: the sacred feminine. "the soprano Nancy Knowles gave a vocal image of the "heavenly queen" in Royne Celestre—sturdy, compassionate, serene." -- The New York Times

Frank Wallace, guitarist/baritone/composer, has been recognized for his extraordinary talent not only as a player of the classical and romantic guitar, but also as a master of self-accompanied song. He is in addition a leading performer on the *vihuela de mano*. Wallace's works for solo classical guitar and his songs for voice, guitar and lute reflect his colorful career, drawing on influences ranging from avant garde to medieval to the blues. The richness and complexity of his song accompaniments and his compelling vocal melodies reflect the influence of his mentors, John Dowland and Franz Schubert. He has recently released two new solo CDs on Gyre, **Delphin**, music for vihuela de mano, and **Sketches**, featuring his own works for classical guitar.

Program Notes

As a rare heir to the renaissance tradition of singer/instrumentalist/composer, I aim to bring back the richness of the art song to the classical guitar repertoire as well as to offer a fresh voice in lute song writing. It is odd that our popular culture has embraced the guitar as the ultimate accompaniment to the voice, but, as yet, the classical world has not discovered this magical combination.

Father Said: is a group of extraordinarily intimate vignettes of the life of an early American family and its connection to nature. The sixteen songs are set in the pioneer plains of central Texas. They are a celebration of fatherly love and humor, and a powerful combination of the nineteenth century folk wisdom of my great-grandfather Joel Sylvanus Wallace, as remembered in the elegant twentieth century poetry of my grandfather Frank C. Wallace, my namesake, who died shortly before I was born.

Father, Mother, Brother and ancient Aunt Tabitha all inhabit the twenty-five minutes of song in which Father muses, "*Shall I / Fret at the summer sun when it distills / The nectars in the lush Elberta peach / For me?*" His stout independence proclaims in **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.*"

As a songwriter I am blessed by having not only a soprano, but also a poet, as my partner. Nancy has long been the creative force behind our programming for concerts. Now she helps me to shape my song cycles, from the choosing and sequencing of texts to writing new poems conceived for a specific work. For the second cycle in this concert, **Woman of the Water**, Nancy put together a moving group of poems by the late American poet Theodore Roethke* (pronounced *ret-kee*). The poems are from **The Far Field**, Roethke's last book of poems, published in 1964, one year after his death. In the context of our settings, the poems trace the passions of a woman who lives by the sea, from her awakening young body and the beginnings of love, through longing and frustration to union and joy in her later years. In his lifetime Roethke was honored with many awards, including the Pulitzer Prize; in spite of recurring bouts of depression, he produced an inspiring body of work. It is interesting to imagine **Woman of the Water** as an allegory of his own soul's journey. The lute was chosen as a more graceful, or feminine accompaniment to this delicate tale. The lute part is flavored by an SATB orientation, which creates simple but rich chords, yet has impressionistic flourishes and instrumental fantasy. Throughout, a repetition of motives and chord progressions unify the work as a whole.

Harlequin in love is five vignettes inspired by the eternal fool [in us all] Harlequin. Harlequin was born in the 16th–18th century art form known as *commedia d'ell arte*, in which stock characters improvised around standard themes and storylines. **Bestiary** is fun, almost slapstick. The humorous poems, once again by Roethke and one by Nancy, are pure childlike whimsy. Each piece has a slightly different style: *The Sloth* is once again in an imitative polyphonic mode; *The Cow* suggested a British ditty to me with an accompaniment inspired by Benjamin Britten's folk song arrangements; *The Lady and the Bear* just had to be in the passionate meter of 15/8, a little circus act in dialogue format; Nancy's *Star-nosed Mole* crawls through his dark space on a 12-tone row; *The Snake* clashes through G and G# in a bluesy, night time sort of mood; leading to what is fundamentally a blues duet in *The Serpent*, who longs to leave the forest for his "singing career."

In homage to the longstanding influence of popular music on my work, we end the concert with several of my guitar arrangements of Broadway songs by two masters, Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Kern.

Frank Wallace