

¡Out of this World!
a musical tribute to our small planet

Duo LiveOak

Nancy Knowles *mezzo-soprano, poet*
Frank Wallace *baritone, guitarist, lutenist, composer*

Father Said: (2003)

a song cycle for baritone and guitar

Frank Wallace

poems by 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
Tantalize Your Troubles
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

The Elements (2004)

Frank Wallace

for guitar solo

Fire
Earth
Air
Water

How Fragile She Is (2004)

Frank Wallace

a song cycle for soprano, baritone and guitar

poems:

The Circle	Nancy Knowles
Song	Knowles
New Moon	Frank Wallace
Morning Wind	Knowles
Half Moon	Wallace
Full Moon	Wallace
Silent Secret	Knowles
From the Air	Wallace
Full Sun	Wallace
You're on Earth Kid	Knowles

Guitar by Stephan Connor, 2004

Lute by Joel van Lennep, 1981

Program Notes

As an 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.

Since the myth of Orpheus, harps, lyres, lutes and guitars have accompanied the human voice in its most poignant moments. The first written music in this tradition comes from 16th century Italy where among the first books ever published were several lute books including songs by the popular entertainers of the day. A century later, the art form had spread throughout Europe and each culture had made its contribution to the lute song repertoire. Tonight's program features three song-cycles that are my contribution to this continuing tradition.

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

performance presented here by myself, the heir of their passions.

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."*

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. She now helps 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.

The Elements is a poetic essay on the origin of the Earth. Simple enough. **Fire** I conceive as the original burst of energy that birthed this planet. **Earth** is solid ground featuring repetitive modal chords that accompany a slow melody. **Air** is that moment to reflect and brood on creation itself and **Water** the careening, tumbling whirling thing we call life.

How Fragile She Is is a new set of ten songs composed on an alternating set of poems by Nancy and myself, perhaps our most important creative collaboration to date. The theme is the fragility of our precious and only Earth, with the moon being an important symbol of its feminine side. The title song, was written in the car coming home from a concert when I saw a new moon on the horizon, so this:

*Silver threads
hold the moon,
Silly little arachnyll ligaments,
in space,
Where no one knows
how fragile she is.*

*How long will she shine?
Who will catch her
when she falls?
Will the web-weavers
wander on?
Do you have eight legs?*

The cycle is dedicated to Jane Goodall and her untiring work to protect all life on earth. The [Jane Goodall Institute](#) "is a global nonprofit that empowers people to make a difference for all living things. We are creating healthy ecosystems, promoting sustainable livelihoods and nurturing new generations of committed, active citizens around the world."

Frank Wallace

Duo LiveOak

In Catalan the word for the evergreen live oak is made into a verb, *alzinarse*--to revitalize. As **Duo LiveOak**, 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.

Critics and audiences alike consistently praise mezzo soprano **Nancy Knowles** 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 Royné Celestre—sturdy, compassionate, serene." -- The New York Times

Frank Wallace, composer, guitarist, baritone, 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, **Delphín**, music for vihuela de mano, and **Sketches**, featuring his own works for classical guitar.