

An Evening of the Music of Frank Wallace

Frank Wallace *guitar, baritone, composer*
with Robert Ward *guitar*

Sketches for Two (2000)

La Cara
La Bella
La Danza
A la Béla
Caravan
Shreds

Harlequin in Love (2001)

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

Duo Sonata #1 (2001)

Allegro
Adagio
Finale

intermission

Father Said: (2003) lyrics 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

guitars by Stephan Connor, 2001 and 2004

Notes

Sketches for Two was written for my students and was premiered in May 2003 by them at a wonderful concert in Peterborough NH in which they presented an evening of my compositions. **Harlequin in Love** is a programmatic piece based on the life of the fool of *commedia del arte*, *Arlecchino*. Harlequin was a young man of pure heart who nevertheless found himself frequently in trouble by falling in love with Colombina, betrothed of the miserly Panatalone. *Commedia* was an improvised theater based on these stock characters and set plots. **Duo Sonata #1** was written for friend and colleague Robert Ward who joins me for this performance.

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 grandfather Frank C. Wallace (b. Chico, Texas, 1888). An extraordinary image of early American life and its connection to nature, the cycle is dedicated to father, Earl Wallace (b. 1917, Waco), who 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, Mother, Brother and Aunt Tabitha all inhabit the 25 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?"* and ponders *"The spears / Of pungent odor from the wild horse-mint / Have wounded me with poisoned tips until / I drowse."* 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."*

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."*

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Biographies

Robert Ward holds degrees in guitar performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the University of California San Diego. He has studied with Angel, Pepe and Celin Romero, Michael Lorimer, Lee Ryan, and George Sakellariou. Mr. Ward has performed extensively throughout the New England area, Texas, California and Hawaii. He served for two years as the Artistic Director of the Boston Classical Guitar Society and remains active with the society as both a performer and an honorary board member. He has been a featured artist on radio shows Morning Pro Musica, Classics in the Morning, Off the Record and Chamberworks and has recorded for Centaur Records. Robert Ward is a faculty member at Northeastern University.

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. **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 **Woman of the Water** songs of Frank Wallace and his fourth solo album, **Sketches**, in 2004. Wallace's CDs and editions are available at www.gyremusic.com.

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FATHER SAID:

By Frank Wallace, 1887-1951

"to my father Joel Sylvanus Wallace"

Introduction

Defeating death

*My great-grandfather seemed so far remote.
Too vague to fancy him a life-like man.
He was some mystic figure, always old,
And never young, or given to the ways
Of life as you and I, until at length
My Father pointed out a huge pecan,
Which he had planted in his passing year
As though he wished to live, defeating Death.*

Songs

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 Auntie 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.*