

MARK ABEL

THE CAVE OF
WONDROUS VOICE

DAVID SHIFRIN • FRED SHERRY • HILA PLITMANN
SABRINA-VIVIAN HÖPCKER • DOMINIC CHELI
CAROL ROSENBERGER • SARAH BECK



MARK ABEL -- THE CAVE OF WONDROUS VOICE

1. INTUITION'S DANCE (9:53)

DAVID SHIFRIN, clarinet
CAROL ROSENBERGER, piano

FOUR POEMS OF MARINA TSVETAEVA (14:17)

(Translations by Alyssa Dinega Gillespie)

2. The Sybil (6:38)

3. Two trees desire to come together (2:57)

4. O sorrow floods my eyes! (3:13)

5. God bent under (1:21)

HILA PLITMANN, soprano
SARAH BECK, English horn
CAROL ROSENBERGER, piano

THE ELASTIC HOURS (20:39)

6. What Friday Brought (10:55)

7. Saturday's Circumference (9:43)

SABRINA-VIVIAN HÖPCKER, violin
DOMINIC CHELI, piano

CLARINET TRIO (23:24)

8. The Unfolding (10:19)

9. Taking Flight (5:58)

10. In Good Time (7:06)

DAVID SHIFRIN, clarinet
FRED SHERRY, cello
CAROL ROSENBERGER, piano

COMPOSER'S NOTES

The Cave of Wondrous Voice is a milestone for me in that chamber music is its primary focus. My dad was a devotee of the chamber pieces of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Dvorak, in particular, and countless hours of my youth were spent with this idiom as it worked its magic on my ears and brain. I'm very fortunate to have a terrific crew on board for the program.

David Shifrin and Carol Rosenberger – two tall pillars of American music making their first recording together since 1984 (!) — begin with *Intuition's Dance*, an energetic piece in which flashes of virtuosity alternate with dreamy ruminations and occasional off-kilter gestures. The work kicks off with a jaunty solo by the clarinet, then pushes forward with the piano through a multifaceted development section that climaxes with a short chromatic run and two snorts from the clarinet signaling “enough of that.”

Intuition has pulled its own plug, and now must rethink and regroup. A variety of alternatives are suggested and tested the rest of the way. Time and again, the piano points in promising directions, but none of them entirely restores the clarinet protagonist's early swagger. In the end, the duo settles for a gentle resolve rather than a grandiose

gesture and, with three swift octave flourishes, the piano declares “the dance is over.”

Next is the album's sole vocal work and my fifth collaboration with the great, envelope-pushing soprano Hila Plitmann. *Four Poems of Marina Tsvetaeva* is of modest length and intended mainly as an introduction to the vast output of this towering and tragic Russian literary icon (1892-1941).

This is the first setting of Tsvetaeva's poetry in English translation. I know of only two other cycles by well-known classical composers, both in Russian and rarely heard — Dmitri Shostakovich's *Six Poems of Marina Tsvetaeva* (1973) and Sofia Gubaidulina's *Hommage a Marina Tsvetaeva* (1984). Some eyebrows may raise at the notion that I've placed myself “in competition” with these two giants, but I don't see it that way. In recent decades, Tsvetaeva has gradually been recognized in the West as a seminal figure — but almost entirely by academics and individual poetry lovers, not the public at large. She needs and deserves further advocacy, and I consider my cycle a uniquely American response to her work.

A key factor in Tsvetaeva's lingering obscurity is the difficulty of translating her verses, which are filled with multiple meanings and

linguistic devices that can be interpreted only by a skilled analyst fluent in Russian. I was extremely lucky to encounter one of America's leading Tsvetaeva scholars, Alyssa Dinega Gillespie, chairman of the Russian Department at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, who not only kindly allowed me to use four of her translations but arranged for the cycle's premiere at Bowdoin on March 29, 2020.

I leave it to the reader to absorb the power, beauty and pathos of Tsvetaeva's poems, and to investigate her dramatic and harrowing life story. Those involved in the recording — Plitmann, Rosenberger, English hornist Sarah Beck and myself — were deeply moved by the experience of transmuting her words from the last century into a musical form for the present one.

The Elastic Hours shifts us again to instrumental music. The titles of the work and its two movements are admittedly programmatic but (as with the *Clarinet Trio*) added after the fact of composition. Some time passed before I realized that both movements follow a near-seismographic path that strongly suggests the subconscious mind's journey through the course of a day. Thoughts and intentions arise and are explored until being discarded and the world made anew several times between sleep cycles.

Friday, a work day, begins with shape and apparent purpose before external distraction and flights of fantasy intrude. The intermingling eventually ends in exhaustion. Saturday, on the other hand, is jolted awake by a nightmare that must be calmed by a soothing and mildly ambiguous figure from the piano. The "off day," however, turns into a tumultuous and relentless one that necessitates a re-statement of the placid piano motif in the closing bars.

A composer couldn't ask for more hard-working and enthusiastic collaborators than the ones who brought *The Elastic Hours* to life. The fine German violinist Sabrina-Vivian Höpcker and up-and-coming American pianist Dominic Cheli not only grasped the thrust of the piece and executed it beautifully, but added colorful dimensions and dynamics I didn't realize were there. To expropriate an awards category from the venerable jazz magazine *DownBeat*, Sabrina and Dominic are most definitely "Talent Deserving Wider Recognition."

In keeping with chamber tradition, the ***Clarinet Trio*** is "absolute" music; its individual movement titles emerged spontaneously some months after the work's completion in 2017. Knowing Brahms' wonderful Op. 114 trio since childhood was not an intimidating factor for me, but

rather a cheerful reminder that this is a nearly unbeatable combination of instruments not exploited by composers nearly as often as one might expect. Having my piece recorded by Shifrin, Rosenberger and Fred Sherry — a third tall pillar — is something I'm very grateful for.

"The Unfolding" is a process, at times eschewing forward motion and wandering into thickets of musing — as if the three players represent different aspects of personality losing the thread of what holds them together. Each time, someone (with a touch of annoyance on occasion) shows the way back. Unity is eventually established nearly eight minutes in — and later even breaks into a confident strut. But the last measures' slowed-down ostinatos signal that introversion will get the final word.

"Taking Flight" is characterized by kinetic energy and warm lyricism. A half-minute episode midway through hearkens back to the angst of "The Unfolding," but it's soon swept aside by an uptempo minor-key section that gives way to a lengthy construct built on two series of rapid piano arpeggios. The music then snaps back into the pulsing motif that opened the movement.

The finale, "In Good Time," opens starkly with clarinet and cello alone. The piano's

entry sets in motion a transition leading into an elegy first intoned by the cello and soon joined by the clarinet. The music gradually moves into sunnier climes, as if a funeral orator was reminiscing about the deceased's gentle side until, finally, there's nothing left to say. The clarinet breaks the mood and pushes us back into life's multihued fray. And so it goes until a peaceful coda brings the movement to a tender close.

My heartfelt thanks to David Shifrin for presenting the Trio's premiere at Chamber Music Northwest in Portland, Oregon, on July 6, 2018.

— Mark Abel
markabelmusic.com



Marina Tsvetaeva, 1911
by Max Voloshin

FOUR POEMS OF MARINA TSVETAEVA

(Translations by Alyssa Dinega Gillespie)

The Sybil (1922)

The Sibyl is a powerful and unusual poem depicting the ancient oracles, which some mythologies contend were decayed trees into which God breathed a temporary life and human form — only to disappear into an astral whirlwind when their time of service elapsed.

Sibyl: burnt out, sibyl: stump.
All birds perished, but God has come.

Sibyl: drunk up, sibyl: waste.
All veins shriveled: the zealot prays!

Sibyl: has-been, Sybil: gape
Of fate and death — Ancient tree among
maids.

Sovereign tree in the naked wood –
At first, fire rustled as foliage should.

Then under closed eyelids – rushed and
stunned,
Through dried-up channels God spewed in.

And, swiftly despairing of outside help:
With heart and voice fallen: into myself!

Sibyl: all-seeing! Sibyl: vast!
Annunciation was done in that

Immortal hour, when grass turned gray,
And fleeting maidenhood became a cave

Of wondrous voice... A whoosh of
stars —
Sibyl: as she quits this earth.

Two trees desire to come together (1919)

Two trees desire to come together.
Two trees. Just opposite my window.
The trees are old. My house is also.
But I am young, or else, quite likely,
I would not pity strange trees' sorrows.

The smaller one, its arms outreaching,
Just like a woman, overreaches
Its furthest sinews — cruel to watch it,
Still reaching – toward that one, the
other:
The older, more unbending being –
And yet the more forlorn one, maybe.

Two trees: amidst the sunset's ardor
And in the rain — and when the snow
falls —
Forevermore: one toward the other,
Such is the law: one toward the other,
Unchanging law: one toward the other.

O sorrow floods my eyes! (1939)

This poem — part of the cycle *Stikhi k Chekhii* “Verses to the Czech Land” — was written shortly after the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, where Tsvetaeva spent some important and difficult years during her post-World War I exile from the Soviet Union.

O sorrow floods my eyes!
Lament of rage and love!
O Czechia in tears!
Hispania in blood!

O mountain black as night,
That shadows all the earth!
It's time – it's time – it's time,
To abrogate my birth.

I won't consent — to be.
In this hell of monstrous stares
I won't consent — to live.
With wolves of public squares

I won't consent to howl.
With sharks in dim ravines
I won't consent to swim —
Down streams of human spines.

I don't need holes for ears
Nor prophet's eyes to know,
To your demented world
There's just one answer: no.

God bent under (1916)

God bent under the weight of caring,
Then grew still.
Suddenly he smiled, suddenly
He created

Many holy angels
With radiant bodies.
Some have enormous wings,
And some have no wings at all.

This is why I weep so much.
It's because
I have fallen more in love with those
sweet angels
Than with God himself.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Clarinetist **David Shifrin**, one of America's most celebrated wind players, is active as an orchestral soloist, recitalist and chamber music artist. Artistic director of Chamber Music Northwest from 1981 and of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York from 1992 to 2004, Mr. Shifrin was a winner of the coveted Avery Fisher Prize in 2000, Yale University's Cultural Leadership Citation in 2009 and the 2012 Interlochen Center for the Arts Ovation Award for distinguished alumni.



He has appeared with such distinguished ensembles as the Guarneri, Tokyo, and Emerson string quartets, and with major orchestras including Philadelphia, Minnesota, Detroit, Dallas, Houston, Milwaukee and Denver, and ones in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan. In addition, he served as principal clarinet-

ist with the Cleveland Orchestra, American Symphony Orchestra (under founder Leopold Stokowski), the Honolulu and Dallas symphonies, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and New York Chamber Symphony.

A frequent guest at numerous summer festivals, Mr. Shifrin has appeared at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center, performing the Mozart Clarinet Concerto in its original version. His Delos recording of the Mozart received a Record of the Year award from Stereo Review, and he has been nominated for three Grammy awards.

Mr. Shifrin, a graduate of the Interlochen Arts Academy and Curtis Institute of Music, is professor of music at Yale University, artistic director of the Chamber Music Society at Yale series, the “Yale in New York” series at Carnegie Hall and the Phoenix Chamber Music Society Winter Festival.

He continues to broaden the repertoire for clarinet and orchestra by commissioning and championing the works of 20th and 21st century American composers including, among others, John Adams, Joan Tower, Stephen Albert, Bruce Adolphe, Ezra Laderman, Lalo Schifrin, David Schiff, John Corigliano, Bright Sheng and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

In addition to his more than 20 recordings for Delos, Mr. Shifrin has recorded for the Angel, RCA, Nonesuch, Arabesque and CRI labels.

davidshifrin.com

Fred Sherry has introduced audiences on five continents and all fifty United States to the music of our time for over five decades. He was a founding member of Tashi and Speculum Musicae, Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and has been a member of the Group for Contemporary Music, Berio's Juilliard Ensemble and the Galimir String Quartet. He has also enjoyed a close collaboration with jazz pianist and composer Chick Corea.

Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, Steve Mackey, David Rakowski, Somei Satoh, Charles Wuorinen and John Zorn have written concertos for Sherry, which he has performed with orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony, Municipal Orchestra of Buenos Aires, BBC Symphony Orchestra, New York City Ballet, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, New World Symphony and RAI Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale. He has premiered solo and chamber works dedicated to him by Milton Babbitt, Derek Bermel, Jason Eckardt, Lukas Foss, Oliver Knussen, Peter Lieber-



son, Donald Martino and Toru Takemitsu, among others, and has appeared at festivals including Aldeburgh, Casals, Tanglewood, Spoleto, Takemitsu's Music Today, Chamber Music Northwest, OK Mozart, Ravinia and Mostly Mozart.

Mr. Sherry's vast discography encompasses a wide range of classic and modern rep-

ertoire. He has been soloist and "sideman" on hundreds of commercial and esoteric recordings for RCA, Columbia, Vanguard, CRI, Albany, Bridge, ECM, New World, Delos, Naxos, Tzadik and other labels. Mr. Sherry organized and performed on Robert Craft's New York recording sessions from 1995-2012. This longstanding collaboration produced celebrated performances of the Schoenberg Cello Concerto (after G.M. Monn), all four String Quartets and the String Quartet Concerto, as well as major works by Stravinsky and Webern.

A member of the cello faculty of The Juilliard School, The Mannes School of Music and The Manhattan School of Music, Mr. Sherry has presented master classes at Curtis Institute of Music, McGill University, Indiana University, and was the Director of the Contemporary Performance Institute at the Composers Conference from 2015-2019.

fredsherry.com

Grammy award-winning vocalist and actress **Hila Plitmann** is a glittering jewel on the international music scene, known worldwide for her astonishing musicianship, light and beautiful voice, unique expressive quality and the ability to perform challenging new work. She has performed



with many leading conductors, including Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Thomas Adès, Carl St. Clair, Giancarlo Guerrero, Robert Spano and JoAnn Falletta, working with the likes of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the National Symphony and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Hila is also emerging as a unique crossover artist; her own songs and arrangements can be heard and seen on YouTube and in live concert. She has accumulated an impressive catalogue of varied recordings, including Hans Zimmer's Grammy-winning soundtrack for *The Da Vinci Code*, Eric Whitacre's *Good Night Moon* with the LSO, and Oscar winner John Corigliano's song cycle *Mr. Tambourine Man* with the Buffalo Philharmonic (for which she won a best female vocalist Grammy). Some of her recent discs are Richard Danielpour's *Toward A Season of Peace* and Corigliano's *Vocalise*, both released to critical acclaim on Naxos.

In constant demand as a singer of new and contemporary music, Ms. Plitmann shines as a soloist in many world premieres, including: The staged orchestral version of Frank Zappa's *200 Motels* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Dallas Opera's production of Mark Adamo's *Becoming Santa Claus*; Yuval Sharon and Annie Gosfield's *War of the Worlds* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Emmy Award winner Jeff Beal's *The Paper Lined Shack*, with the St. Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin, and Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua*, with the Buffalo Philharmonic under JoAnn Falletta.

Ms. Plitmann has previously recorded four of Mark Abel's compositions: *The Palm Trees*

Are Restless, from the Delos album "Home Is a Harbor"; and *Those Who Loved Medusa*, *In the Rear View Mirror*, *Now* and *The Benediction*, from "Time and Distance." She has given the world premieres of the first two works, whose texts are by Kate Gale.

Hila has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and lives with her son and their cat in Los Angeles.

[instagram.com/hilaplittmann](https://www.instagram.com/hilaplittmann)

"Ravishing, elegant pianism" wrote The New York Times of American pianist **Carol Rosenberger**, who continues to attract an international audience as she brings her special blend of refined virtuosity and poetically compelling interpretations to both traditional and contemporary repertoire. "Eloquent and sensitive playing" wrote The Times of London, while that city's Daily Telegraph commented: "Her playing was alive to every fleeting sense impression, yet intellectually commanding. These were ideal performances."

Since her 1970 debut tour of New York, Boston, London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and other capitals, Rosenberger's recital programs and guest appearances with orchestras have carried her to most major European and American cities. Her recordings for Delos have garnered many awards and commen-

ations, including a Grammy Award nomination, Gramophone's Critic's Choice Award, Stereo Review's Best Classical Compact Disc, and Billboard's All Time Great Recording.

Rosenberger's recordings with conductor Gerard Schwarz include concertos of Beethoven, Shostakovich, Hanson, Falla, Strauss and Haydn. With conductors Constantine Orbelian and James DePreist she has recorded works of Bridge, Ravel and Hindemith. She has produced and co-produced many Delos recordings and has guided the Delos Music for Young People Series.

Born in Detroit, Carol studied in the U.S. with Webster Aitken and Katja Andj; in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger; and in Vienna with harpsichordist/Baroque scholar Eta Harich-Schneider. She has been the subject of articles in many leading newspapers and magazines, and in 1976 was chosen to represent America's women concert artists by the President's National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. She has been on the faculties of the University of Southern California and California State University, Northridge, and has given performance workshops for young musicians on campuses nationwide.

In 2007, after the deaths of Delos founder Amelia Haygood and chief engineer John



Eargle, Carol took over the directorship of Delos. She has recently written a book, "To Play Again," about her remarkable journey back to the concert stage after a crippling attack of polio in 1955, which threatened to end her piano-playing forever. Released

in 2018, the book was awarded a prize in the memoir category by the Independent Publisher Book Awards.

carolrosenberger.com/biography

Hamburg-born **Sabrina-Vivian Höpcker** is one of Germany's most renowned violinists. Legendary music critic Joachim Kaiser has described her playing as "beguiling" and praised her recordings for their "vitality, intensity and quality."

Similarly, *The Strad*, the world's leading string music magazine, enthused about her "impeccable intonation", "honeyed tone" and "mercurial dexterity" on her CD *Habanera* for the True Sounds label, adding: "The gifted young German violinist's silky virtuosity makes light of the hair-raising difficulties the music presents."

Ms. Höpcker's latest album, on the Delos label, features the entire set of Brahms' 21 *Hungarian Dances* in the seldom-recorded version by Joseph Joachim. It was chosen "Album of the Week" by KUSC, Southern California's most important classical radio outlet.

After her Carnegie Hall solo debut in October 2019 with an all-Paganini program, *The Hedonist* wrote: "The elegant Sabrina-Vivian Höpcker made a statement with



her regal presence and a cavalcade of tonal elegance, admirable technique and passionate interpretation." Maestro Marcello Abbado, former chairman of the jury of the Michelangelo Abbado International Violin Competition, said of her playing: "Her musicality is enchanting, her tone superb, her technique incredible, her virtuosity extraordinary. Brava, Super Brava, Bravissima!"

As a soloist Sabrina has performed with such ensembles as the Bavarian State Orchestra and eminent conductors including Andris Nelsons, Yehudi Menuhin and Zubin Mehta, who described her as an "excellent violinist with a huge musicality."

Ms. Höpcker has won 1st prizes at many national and international violin competitions, most recently at the International Abbado Violin Competition in Milan. She holds the Hofheim am Taunus Bach Award, the Paolo Borciani Prize for chamber music, and the Alois-Kottman-Prize in Gold, in collaboration with the city of Frankfurt am Main.

Sabrina derives particular artistic satisfaction from chamber music (with partners like Fabio Bidini, Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt, Dominic Cheli and Johannes Moser) and devotes herself to it with a special fervor.

sabrnavivianhoepcker.com

Dominic Cheli's playing has been described as "spontaneous yet perfect, the best of how a young person can play." (*Symphony Magazine*). His rapidly advancing career has included a Walt Disney Concert Hall debut with legendary conductor Valery Gergiev, where Dominic was de-



scribed by the Los Angeles Times as "mesmerizing, (he) transfixed the audience ... his fingers were one with each key."

Mr. Cheli gave his Carnegie Hall recital debut this past season, and recently recorded music of Liszt/Schubert for his second CD on the Naxos label. In July 2017, his first album, featuring the music of Muzio Clementi, was hailed as "definitive performances that match splendid playing with an appreciation of Clementi's diverse, classically based style."

A native of St. Louis, Dominic has performed with the Metropolitan Orchestra of St. Louis, as well as the San Diego Symphony, Columbus Symphony, Princeton Symphony, Colburn Orchestra, Virginia Symphony, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie (Germany) and more. He has worked with conductors Yaniv Dinur, Markus Huber, Rossen Milanov, Arthur Fagen and Matthew Aucoin, among others.

Mr. Cheli has debuted at several major festivals, including the Ravinia Festival, Aspen Festival, Mostly Mozart Festival and the Virginia Arts Festival. Upcoming engagements include appearances with the Seattle Symphony, a re-invitation to Ravinia, his debut at Alice Tully Hall, and recitals in Philadelphia, Washington and New York. In 2017, Dominic was named 1st prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition in New York City.

Mr. Cheli has performed as an artist for Project: Music Heals Us, a nonprofit organization that presents interactive classical music performances to diverse audiences in order to provide encouragement, education and healing, with a focus on elderly, disabled, rehabilitating, incarcerated and homeless populations.

Dominic has studied at the Manhattan School of Music, Yale University and the

Colburn School. Andre-Michel Schub, Peter Frankl, Fabio Bidini, Zena Ilyashov and Sylvia Rosenberg have been especially influential on his development as an artist.

dominiccheli.com

Sarah Beck is a very active freelance musician, participating in many musical activities throughout Southern California. She plays English horn and third oboe in the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra. She has also held the same positions with the Santa Barbara Symphony since 2000. Ms. Beck plays in the Laguna Beach Arts Festival's Pageant of the Masters Orchestra, where she performs on oboe and English horn, and she is also the principal oboe with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Los Angeles.

Sarah has performed as a substitute in some of the finest ensembles in the region, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Pacific Symphony. She has played concertos and solo works with the Santa Barbara Symphony, Santa Cecilia Orchestra, San Diego Symphony and Beverly Hills Symphony.

Ms. Beck finished her Master of Fine Arts Degree at the California Institute of the Arts in 1998. While attending CalArts she studied with oboist Allan Vogel. Sarah is



originally from Ohio, and received her Bachelor of Music Degree, Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Her teacher there was Sara Lambert Bloom.

Composer **Mark Abel** has been based in California for the past three decades. A

rock musician and producer in New York as a young man, Abel began developing his classical compositional style during a 20+-year career as a newspaper editor in San Francisco. His music began to circulate more widely after he became affiliated in 2012 with the Delos label, which has released five Abel albums, including *The Cave of Wondrous Voice*.

Abel's idiom eludes easy pigeon-holing. He primarily writes vocal music, whose contours extend from art song to larger forms with orchestra to a 103-minute chamber opera, *Home Is a Harbor*. Along with a strong gift for melody, Abel is also a lyricist of considerable emotional power. He has over time developed an unusual, sturdily constructed hybrid of classical, rock and jazz, constantly working toward new and more refined expressions of that synthesis.

Abel has set poetry by Rainer Maria Rilke, Pablo Neruda, Marina Tsvetaeva, and California poets Kate Gale and Joanne Regenhardt. He has recently focused his attention on instrumental chamber music, while continuing to write song cycles and work on larger-scale vocal projects, often for renowned soprano Hila Plitmann and in collaboration with Gale.

Abel's first recordings for Delos were *Terrain of the Heart*, a collection of three song cy-



cles, and *The Dream Gallery*, a seven-movement cycle for soloists and chamber orchestra depicting the lives of archetypal Californians from all walks of life. *Terrain* was praised as “art song at a high-water mark of invention” and *Gallery* attracted notices such as “profound and compelling.”

Gramophone’s Donald Rosenberg, reviewing *Home Is a Harbor*, which pairs the opera with the song cycle *The Palm Trees Are Restless*, lauded Abel for “employing a colorful blend of styles that serve the emotional nature of each work to bracing and poignant effect.” He added that *Harbor’s*

“lucid narrative and vibrant vocal lines ... make (the opera) an affecting experience.”

Fanfare’s Huntley Dent wrote of *Time and Distance*: “(Few) current songwriters rival Abel’s intriguing texts and their reach into so many psychological and cultural issues. Meaning and melody go hand in hand in

a very contemporary way.” The same album prompted The Journal of Singing’s Gregory Berg to call Abel “a composer with bold and ambitious ideas ..., (with) an impressive body of work that grows by the day.” The European magazine Pizzicato labeled him “one of the most interesting figures in American contemporary music.”

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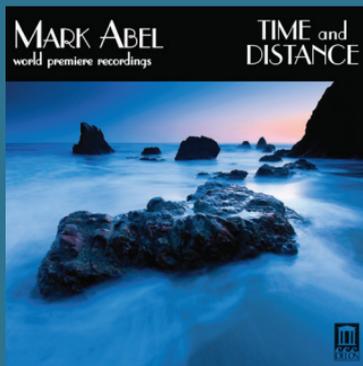
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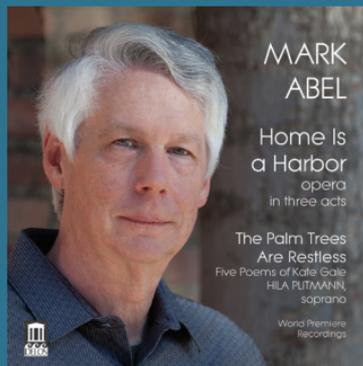
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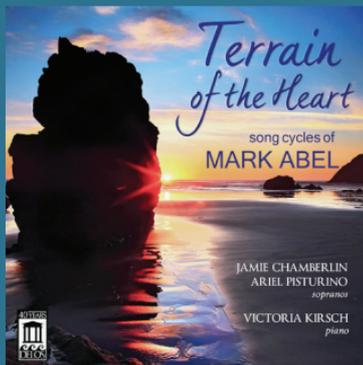
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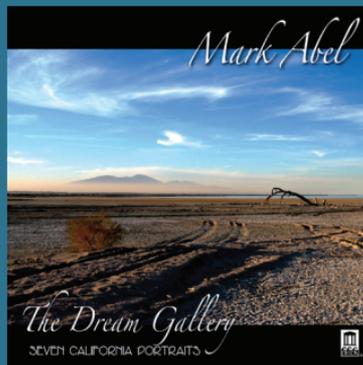
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World Premiere Recordings

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