

FROM EARTH & SKY LINDABETH BINKLEY OBOE
MUSIC OF JENNI BRANDON

1	WOOD SONG FOR SOLO OBOE (2019)*	7:09
	GOING TO THE SUN: SNAPSHOTS FROM GLACIER NATIONAL PARK (2016)*	
2	Early morning on the Road	1:07
3	Fifty miles begin...	1:45
4	Sunrise on Lake McDonald	1:55
5	Driving the Loop	0:26
6	The Weeping Wall	1:36
7	Stepping onto Jackson Glacier Overlook	0:47
8	Jackson Glacier	1:13
9	Sunset at the end of The Road	1:15
	<i>MaryBeth Minnis, bassoon</i>	
	LOVE SONGS (2014)*	
10	I. Lullaby	1:28
11	II. Song of Basket-Weaving	7:34
12	III. Song of the Blue-Corn Dance	2:17
13	IV. Love Song (Chippewa)	1:13
14	V. Love Song from the Andes	1:11
15	VI. My Love Has Departed	4:54
16	VII. Lullaby (Reprise)	1:05
	<i>LaToya Lain, soprano</i>	
	THE SEQUOIA TRIO (2009)	
17	I. Sequoladendron giganteum: The Big Tree	3:58
18	Tree Interlude One	0:27
19	II. "A crowd of hopeful young trees and saplings..."	1:58
20	III. The Three Graces	1:37
21	Tree Interlude Two	0:46
22	IV. The Noble Trees	5:13
	<i>Kennen White, clarinet</i> <i>MaryBeth Minnis, bassoon</i>	
23	METAMORPHOSIS FOR TWO OBOES & PIANO (2018)*	12:47
	<i>Dane Philipsen, oboe</i> <i>Mary Jo Cox, piano</i>	

*World premiere recording

TOTAL TIME: 63:51

FROM EARTH & SKY

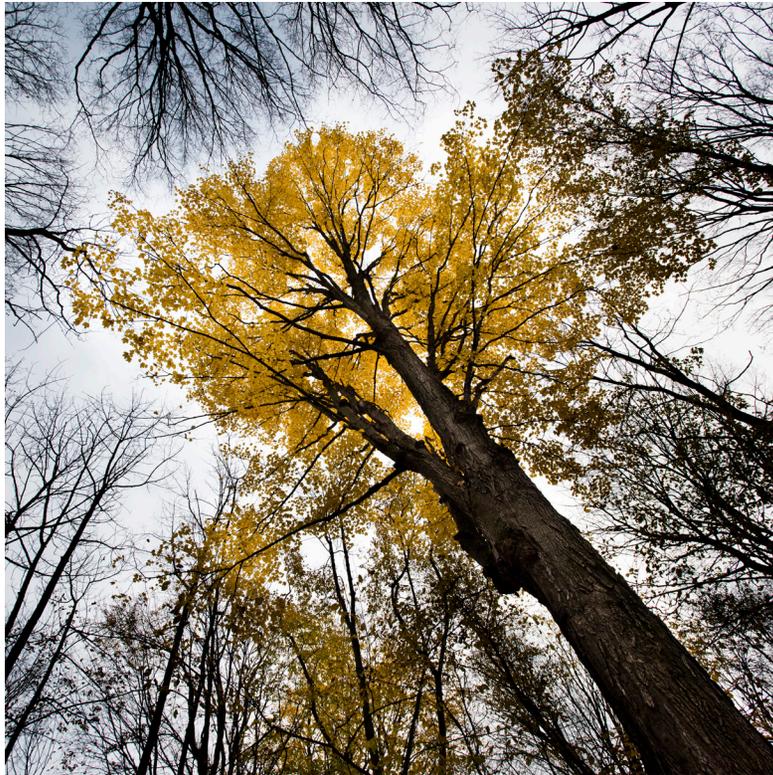
MUSIC OF JENNI BRANDON



LINDABETH BINKLEY, OBOE



with LaToya Lain, soprano; Dane Philipsen, oboe; Kennen White, clarinet;
MaryBeth Minnis, bassoon; Mary Jo Cox, piano

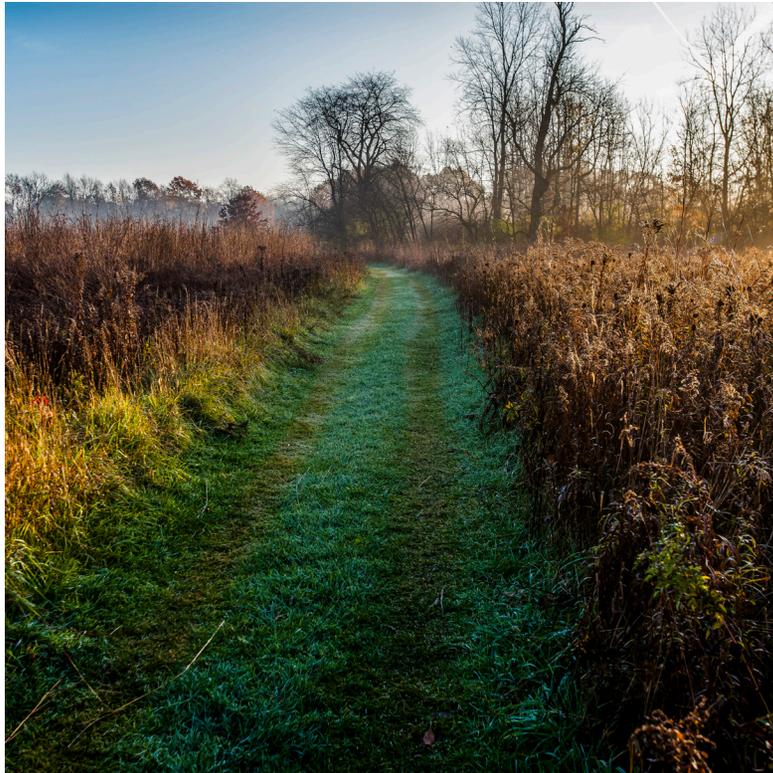


FROM EARTH & SKY brings together a collection of Jenni Brandon's works that beautifully share her deep love for the natural world and, as an additional connecting point, her affinity for the oboe. Whether it be soaring high above the trees, exploring the darkness of poignant loss, or engaging in the profound beauty of transformation, Jenni knows how to let the oboe do what it does best. Her music is engaging on all fronts, which makes it exciting to perform and enjoyable for listeners. I am particularly thrilled to share this recording with an outstanding group of musicians, all of whom generously gave of their time and talent to bring *From Earth & Sky* to fruition.

I am also deeply grateful for Jenni's support throughout this recording project and the new solo oboe work, *Wood Song*, that came about because of it. It was an amazing experience to watch it come to life. She treated every note, every phrase with such reverence and care, sharing and including me in the process from sketch to final copy. *Wood Song* was commissioned specifically for this recording with funding from a Central Michigan University Faculty Research and Creative Endeavors Grant.

Lastly, special thanks go to Casey Robards and Jeremy Reynolds for their assistance during the recording of *Love Songs* (Robards), *Wood Song* (Reynolds), and *Sequoia Trio* (Reynolds). Their support and expertise were much appreciated. I am also grateful to renown photographer and CMU Photojournalism colleague Kent Miller (kentmiller.com) for the stunning images within this booklet which capture the wondrous beauty that is from earth and sky.

-Lindabeth Binkley



PROGRAM NOTES BY JENNI BRANDON

Wood Song for solo oboe (2019)* was inspired by the Sara Teasdale (1884-1933) poem of the same name. It tells of the wood thrush bird as well as the poet's honesty of kissing life "scars and all". Listen for variations and interpretations on the wood thrush's ethereal and mysterious sounds, telling the journey of a soul through poem and music.

Wood Song

BY SARA TEASDALE (1884-1933)

I heard a wood-thrush in the dusk
Twirl three notes and make a star –
My heart that walked with bitterness
Came back from very far.

Three shining notes were all he had,
And yet they made a starry call –
I caught life back against my breast
And kissed it, scars and all.

From the poetry book "Love Songs", *Interlude: Songs out of Sorrow (VI. Wood Song)*. The Macmillan Company, 1917. Poem is in the public domain. This collection of poems won the 1918 Pulitzer Prize.

This work was commissioned by Dr. Lindabeth Binkley with a Faculty Research and Creative Endeavors Grant from Central Michigan University.

**World premiere recording*

Going to the Sun: Snapshots from Glacier National Park (2016)* for oboe and bassoon explores the beauty of Glacier National Park in Montana as though looking back at snapshots taken on a vacation. Painting the landscape with texture, range, and song, the instruments lend their voices and character to each of these sections within this single-movement work:

Early morning on the Road	The Weeping Wall
Fifty miles begin...	Stepping onto Jackson Glacier Overlook
Sunrise on Lake McDonald	Jackson Glacier
Driving the Loop	Sunset at the end of The Road

*This work was commissioned by Jennifer Gookin Cavanaugh with the support of a grant from the Provost's Office at the University of Montana and Elizabeth Ball Crawford with the support from the Great Falls Symphony Orchestra. *World premiere recording*

Love Songs for soprano and oboe (2014)* is a collection of texts that tells the story of a Native American woman - from raising a child, to falling in love, to working the land, and the grief of losing her love. It is a story that can be universally understood, but points to the strength of not only the Native American woman, but to the strength of all women to persevere, to raise children and to keep community strong against all odds. It is a "love song" in that it goes beyond just romantic love, but tells of love for a child and love of the land.

This work was commissioned and premiered by Aryn Day Sweeney, oboist with funding provided by the Indiana Arts Commission in 2014.

**World premiere recording*



Poetry for Love Songs for soprano and oboe

I. Lullaby

Lullaby for children sung by the White Earth Chippewa and the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa as they rocked their children to sleep.

Ed. by Frances Densmore

II. Song of Basket-Weaving

Kulasgh*, Kulasgh, my mother,
I sit at thy knee
Weaving my basket of grasses,
Weaving for my harvest of berries when
the Ripe Days come.
Thy fingers gently touch my hair with
fragrance,
Thy mouth drips a song, for the wind has
kissed it -
(Love sings in thy mouth!)

The soil listens and answers;
I feel a stirring beneath me and hear buds
opening,
The river chants thy song and the clouds
dance to it.

Tonight the stars will float upon thy
singing breath,
Gleaming like slanting flocks above the
sea.

All the earth sings; and its voices are one
song!

I alone am silent: I alone, a maid waiting
him, the Fate,
The Stirring One, the Planter of the
Harvests,
The Basket-Filler.

Kulasgh, Kulasgh, Mother!
See how beautiful, how liberal, is my
basket,
How tightly woven for the waters of Love,
How soft for the treading of children's feet,
How strong to bear them up!

Kulasgh, Kulasgh, Mother, remember me -
Ere the Sunset and the Dropping Leaf!

Interpretation by Constance Lindsay
Skinner

From *The Path on the Rainbow**,
edited by George W. Cronyn, 1918

*Kulasgh, or Cedar Tree, considered the
source of life by the British Columbian
Coast Tribes, as it supplies all their
necessities, even food in fish famine.

III. Song of the Blue-Corn Dance (Zuni)

Beautiful, lo, the summer clouds,
Beautiful, lo, the summer clouds!
Blossoming clouds in the sky,
Like unto shimmering flowers,
Blossoming clouds in the sky,
Onward, lo, they come,
Hither, hither bound!

(This was apparently a work song sung by
the women as they harvested the corn)

Translated by Natalie Curtis Burlin
From *The Path on the Rainbow**,
edited by George W. Cronyn, 1918

IV. Love Song (Chippewa)

Oh
I am thinking
Oh
I am thinking
I have found my lover
Oh
I think it is so!

Ed. by Frances Densmore
*Washington Bureau of American
Ethnology, Bulletin 45 (1910)*

V. Love Song from the Andes (Inca)

To this my song Thou shalt sleep.
In the dead of night I shall come.

Ed. by P. Ainsworth Means
Ancient Civilizations of the Andes,
Charles Scribner & Sons, 1931

VI. My Love has Departed (Chippewa)

A loon
I thought it was
But it was
My love's
Splashing oar.

To Sault Ste. Marie
He has departed.
My love had gone
On before me.
Never again can I see him.

A loon
I thought it was
But it was never again
Love's splashing oar.

Ed. by Frances Densmore,
reworked by Jenni Brandon
*Washington Bureau of American
Ethnology, Bulletin 45 (1910)*

VII. Lullaby (Reprise)

Inspired by the writings about the great Sequoia trees in John Muir's book *The Yosemite*, each movement of ***The Sequoia Trio*** for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon (2009) celebrates a different characteristic of these proud, giant trees.

I. Sequoiadendron giganteum: The Big Tree

"Southward the giants become more and more irrepressibly jubilant, heaving their massive crowns into the sky from every ridge and slope, waving onward in graceful compliance with the complicated topography of the region."

Tree Interlude One

II. "A crowd of hopeful young trees and saplings..."

"But here for every old storm-beaten giant there are many in their prime and for each of these a crowd of hopeful young trees and saplings, growing vigorously on moraines, rocky ledges, along water courses and meadows."

III. The Three Graces

"Groups of two or three (sequoias) are often found standing close together... They are called "loving couples," "three graces," etc... By the time they are full-grown their trunks will touch and crowd against each other..."

Tree Interlude Two

IV. The Noble Trees

"...the Big Trees (sequoia gigantean), the king of all the conifers in the world, 'the noblest of the noble race.'"

Quotes taken from *The Yosemite*, 1912 by John Muir
Text is in the public domain.

Metamorphosis for two oboes and piano (2018)* explores starkness, freedom, and a dance of discovery of self as told through the interweaving lines of the oboes. The piano becomes the support that helps guide the changes along the way, ebbing and flowing in its own voice. The instruments frequently intermingle, continuously evolving into something new. It is a single-movement work in which the section titles come from a variety of synonyms for the word "metamorphosis." The sections relate to each other by transitioning, growing and evolving throughout this journey of change.

I. Vulnerable

II. Evolving

III. Transformation

IV. Rebirth

V. Transfiguration

VI. Breaking through the mold

VII. Regeneration

VIII. Emerging

IX. "The metamorphosis excites in the beholder an emotion of joy..."

*World premiere recording

LINDABETH BINKLEY, OBOE



JENNI BRANDON, COMPOSER

Acclaimed for her “classic triumph of lightness, delicacy, and expressiveness,” oboist **Lindabeth Binkley** has held positions with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, Arizona Opera, and Central City Opera. She is currently Principal Oboist of the Flint Symphony Orchestra and Associate Professor of Oboe at Central Michigan University. Originally from Michigan, Lindabeth holds degrees from Central Michigan University, The University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Arizona.

Shortly after her arrival in Michigan, Lindabeth was appointed Principal Oboe of the Flint Symphony Orchestra and has been active throughout the state in performances with the Ann Arbor Symphony, Lansing Symphony, and Lexington (MI) Bach Festival. She performs regularly with the Powers Woodwind Quintet, a CMU faculty ensemble, and can be heard on their 2017 Centaur Records release, *Hidden Gems* (CEN 3528). As a soloist, she performs regularly in recital at International Double Reed Society Conferences and as a visiting guest artist at college campuses across the United States. Passionate about the teaching of oboe reed making, she maintains an Instagram account devoted entirely to the reed making process, @thinthetip. Visit lindabeth.com to learn more.

Jenni Brandon is a composer and conductor, creating music in collaboration with other musicians and artists. She writes music that is beautiful and lyrical, telling stories through memorable musical lines often influenced by the collaborator’s story, nature, and poetry.

She has been commissioned to write music for soloists, chamber ensembles, concertos, opera and orchestra. Her music appears on over 17 CDS, and has been awarded the Sorel Medallion, American Prize, Paderewski Cycle, Women

Composers Festival of Hartford International Composition Competition, and Bassoon Chamber Music Composition Competition among others.

As a conductor she often conducts her own works and works by living composers. She also presents workshops and talks on collaboration and the business of music, striving to create a supportive environment where collaboration leads to an exploration of ideas. When she is not making music, Jenni is often on her yoga mat, either practicing or teaching yoga. Jenni also loves walking her dogs and travelling with her husband to snorkel in tropical waters. Visit jennibrandon.com to learn more.

Pianist **Dr. Mary Jo Cox** maintains an active schedule as soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States. She has served on the faculty of Central Michigan University and currently holds the position of principal keyboardist with the Midland Symphony Orchestra. In addition, she is the Director of Worship and Arts at First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

Applauded for her “wonderfully rich,” “powerful,” and “captivating” voice, American soprano **LaToya Lain**, a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, has sung opera, oratorio, and performed solo recitals throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and Africa. Equally at home on the performance stage and in the teaching studio, Lain currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Voice at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

MaryBeth Minnis is principal bassoonist of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, a position she has held since 1985. She can frequently be heard as a substitute bassoonist in orchestras throughout Michigan and performs regularly with the Powers Woodwind Quintet, a CMU faculty ensemble.

Minnis is Assistant Professor of Bassoon at Central Michigan University and performs on a Püchner bassoon.

Dane Philipson is the Instructor of Oboe at the Interlochen Arts Academy and teaches at the Interlochen Arts Camps. In the past, he was the principal oboist of the Atlanta Opera and has performed on both oboe and English horn with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and others.

Kennen White is principal clarinetist in the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra and has held positions with Grand Rapids, Toledo, and Santa Fe Opera Orchestras. With degrees from Northwestern and University of Michigan, he performs and records with the Crescent Duo and Powers Woodwind Quintet. White is professor of clarinet at Central Michigan University.

Photography: Nature photographs by Kent Miller
Cover photo by Sarah Davis
sarahdavisphotography.com

Kent Miller: Central Michigan University Photojournalism Professor
Kent Miller’s main focus has been visiting national parks, including several of Kenya’s, several of Alaska’s and several in the lower 48. His wish is to help viewers appreciate the beauty of the precious environment as it is today. Visit kentmiller.com to see more.