

A Christmas Gift

Sir Gawain & the Green Knight: A Christmas Legend for violin, trumpet, cello & piano (1979, rev. 2011) [23:13]

Cheryl Trace, violin; Thaddeus Archer, trumpet; Robert Clemens, cello; Greg Kostraba, piano

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|-----|------|---|
| [1] | 5:43 | I. Arthur's Court at Christmas & Hunting Scenes: Fanfare: Allegro, Allegretto |
| [2] | 5:37 | II. Seduction & Sorcery: Moderato |
| [3] | 3:48 | III. Gawain's Journey: March tempo |
| [4] | 4:04 | IV. Gawain's Humiliation & Wisdom: Adagio |
| [5] | 4:00 | V. The Green Knight: Vivo |

Guitar Suite: For an Old Friend at Christmas (2011) [13:52]

Hilary Field, guitar

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| [6] | 6:29 | I. Moderato, wistfully |
| [7] | 4:57 | II. Moderato |
| [8] | 2:26 | III. Lento |

Four Carols for baritone & piano [11:45]

Jose Rubio, baritone; Avedis Manoogian, piano

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| [9] | 2:30 | I. A Little Child (1984) |
| [10] | 2:16 | II. Green Grow'th the Holly (1984) |
| [11] | 4:12 | III. Carol of the Golden Lamb (2002) |
| [12] | 2:48 | IV. Carol of the Birds (1984) |

A Christmas Ceremony for flute & cello (2011) [13:27]

Betty Braunstein, flute; Josh Aerie, cello

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| [13] | 2:54 | I. Prelude: Allegretto |
| [14] | 3:23 | II. Processional: Allegro moderato |
| [15] | 3:00 | III. Ceremony: Lento |
| [16] | 1:49 | IV. Recessional: Allegro moderato |
| [17] | 2:21 | V. Postlude: Moderato |

A Christmas Rondo for string trio (1976, rev. 2011)

Kris Frankenfeld, violin; Belinda Burge, viola; Ellen Shertzer, cello

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|------|-------|--|
| [18] | 10:31 | |
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Total Playing Time: 72:49

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Rick Sowash, Composer

Since 1990, Rick Sowash (b. 1950) has lived by his wits. He has earned most of his living by weaving the history and folklore of his native Ohio into books which he himself writes, publishes and markets. Rick is also a filmmaker, having written, co-produced and starred in two documentaries: "Johnny Appleseed" and "Storytelling Know-how for Teachers, Preachers & Speech-ifiers." In earlier years, he supported his family in a variety of ways: as an elected public official, an arts administrator, a radio broadcaster, an innkeeper and a church choir director. But Rick's true calling is the composition of classical music. He publishes his own sheet music and produces CD recordings of his 400-plus compositions. A storyteller/speaker all along and an increasingly recognized composer, Rick has made thousands of appearances before audiences large and small. Rick's "Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra," was premiered in Cincinnati in April of 2008. It has been recorded on the Marquis Classics label by David Drosinos and the St. Petersburg Symphony under Vladimir Lande. Rick lives in Cincinnati with Jo, his wife of 40 years. They have two children: poet Shenandoah Sowash, 30, and trombonist Chapman Sowash, 27.

Other CDs featuring the Music of Rick Sowash:

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Enchantment of April, RSP-4: Trios #1, 2 & 3 for clarinet, cello and piano

Pastorale, RSP-5: Six works for various chamber ensembles

Goddess of the Moon, RSP-6: Trios #4, 6 & 9 for clarinet, cello and piano

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For more information on these CDs or Rick Sowash's sheet music, books, films and services, consult his web site: www.sowash.com.

A Christmas Gift

Rick Sowash

New Chamber Music for the Season

A Christmas Gift

A Christmas Legend: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1979, rev. 2011)

Bill Huggins, a lawyer and amateur violinist in Columbus, OH, commissioned me to write a piece he could play with friends who played the flute, the French horn and the harpsichord. As the harpsichord would give the piece an antique sound, I chose to look to Medieval literature for inspiration. "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" is a tale I love and have read many times. I wrote this music as a sort of film score for the story's major scenes.

Attorney Huggins and his friends played the piece enthusiastically and often but it was never performed by anyone else because of the peculiar combination of instruments required. In 2011, I finally re-scored it for piano trio plus trumpet, an ensemble much easier to assemble.

Guitar Suite: For an Old Friend at Christmas (2011)

I wrote this guitar suite for Randy Wright, a graphic artist, aviator and amateur guitarist with whom I've been friends since the 1970's. Over many years, Randy pressed me to write music for the guitar; he sent me recordings, took me to concerts, played his own guitar for me. In the process I became aware of Randy's preference for introspective, sweetly melancholy music. We want our friends to like the gifts we bring them, so when I finally wrote a guitar suite as a gift for Randy, I tried to give the music those qualities.

It was Randy's idea to approach the guitar virtuoso Hilary Field to record the suite for this CD and we were both thrilled when she accepted our invitation.

Four Carols for baritone and piano

I wrote these four carols on traditional texts as anthems for church choirs in which I've sung, an long-time source of fun and inspiration for me. Here, they are rescored for baritone and piano. As with all carols, the tune remains the same over several verses; the piano accompaniment varies somewhat for each verse, evoking the text that is being sung.

A Christmas Ceremony for flute and cello (2011)

My friends Betty Braunstein, flutist, and Josh Aerie, cellist, sometimes perform at weddings in locations where there is no piano. Thus, for such occasions, they asked me to write some music scored only for flute and cello. The music is specifically intended for use at weddings, providing music for five moments within the ceremony: prelude, processional, the ceremony itself, recessional and postlude.

Though the piece does not quote any existing Christmas music, it nevertheless came out sounding Christmas-like, at least to me. Since weddings do, sometimes, take place at Christmas, I settled on the title, A Christmas Ceremony.

A Christmas Rondo for string trio (1976, rev. 2011)

I wrote this music for a string trio in Mansfield, Ohio, my hometown. That needed a piece they could play as a prelude to a Christmas Eve worship service. The piece opens with an original carol, "The King Shall Come." Each time the carol returns, it is presented as a variation, the last one being the finale/coda of the piece. Between the variations on this original carol, traditional carols are played, but I deliberately chose carols which, though not often heard, are very beautiful, familiar-sounding if not exactly familiar, and somewhat mysterious in character.

Biographical Sketches:

Cheryl Trace, violinist, earned a Master of Music in Violin Performance and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education at Butler University. She has been a member of the Toledo Symphony since 1991 and a founding member of Apollo's Fire (Cleveland Baroque Orchestra) playing baroque violin and viola. Cheryl also currently maintains a very active teaching studio as a faculty member of the Toledo Symphony School of Music, teaching Suzuki violin to students ages 3 to adult.

Thaddeus Archerm, trumpeter, is the associate principal trumpet with the Toledo Symphony, and trumpet instructor at the University of Toledo and Heidelberg University. He enjoys playing all genres of music, especially early and new music. He lives in Perrysburg, Ohio, with his wife soprano Carol Dusdieker and two cats Maurice and Callas.

Robert Clemens, cellist, is a tireless champion of the cello's expressivity and flexibility, Robert Clemens has performed opera, chamber music, and as a soloist with ensembles throughout the Midwest. He is a graduate of Bowling Green State University, and has been a member of the Toledo Symphony since 1986.

Greg Kostraba, pianist, is Program Director of WBAA Public Radio at Purdue University. A semifinalist at the Fourth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition for Outstanding Amateurs, Greg has performed throughout the Midwest and been featured on NPR's Performance Today. He holds masters and doctoral degrees in piano performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

Hilary Field, classical guitarist, is a past winner of the Northwest Young Artist Series Competition and was the first guitarist to win the Ladies Musical Club Soloist Competition. She has held faculty positions as the head of the Guitar department at Seattle Pacific University and Pacific Lutheran University. Ms. Field has released several award winning CDs, including her debut recording, "Music of Spain and Latin America," which was an award winner for Classical Album of the Year by the National Association of Independent Record Distributors.

José Rubio, baritone, is an active performer in both operatic and recital repertoire. Mr. Rubio can be heard on Philip Glass's recording label Orange Mountain Music in two of his opera recordings; Orfeo and Galileo Galilei, as well as on Albany Records in the world premiere recording of Angel of the Amazon by Evan Mack. In January of 2012, Mr. Rubio's Carnegie Hall recital debut was met with great acclaim. Mr. Rubio holds an Artist Diploma and Masters degree from the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

Avedis Manoogian, pianist, studied music at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He currently resides in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Kristin Frankenfeld, violinist, performs frequently in the Tri-State area as a member of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and the Cincinnati Ballet Orchestra. An avid chamber musician, she has been featured on the Taft and Linton Chamber series and plays regularly with the the Cincinnati String Quartet. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, she holds both Bachelor and Masters degrees.

Belinda Burge, violist, a native of Ithaca, New York, Belinda Reuning Burge is a former member of the Louisville Orchestra, a member of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and a regular extra player with the Cincinnati Symphony. Belinda has degrees from the Curtis Institute and the Eastman School of Music, and spent her junior and senior years of high school at Interlochen Art Academy.

Ellen Shertzer, cellist, graduated from the University of Michigan with Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Cello Performance. She is the cellist in the chamber ensemble School House Symphony and performs in the Cincinnati area in local orchestras and chamber music groups. Ms. Shertzer teaches Suzuki cello and directs the Cello Choir in the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Preparatory Department.

Betty Braunstein, flutist, is one of the many blades of grass in the field of freelance flutists. She is a member of the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra and a chamber music recitalist. Betty lives and teaches in Ashland, Wisconsin.

Josh Aerie, cellist, is a performing and recording artist, music educator, symphonic conductor, and arts advocate. Josh's career highlights span a wide array of credits and accomplishments, including major-label recordings, nationally syndicated television performances, and film soundtracks. He is a champion of new music and thrives on the joy that comes with bringing music into others' lives.