

Sanctuary at 3 AM [1] 6:27

for B, clarinet and piano; 2000

Lullabye for Kara [2] 7:17

for cello and piano; 2002

Variations on a Hiking Song [3] 15:52

for piano solo; 1992

Impressionist Suite #2

for oboe, clarinet & bassoon; 2000

Cassatt: A Lullabye [4] 3:32

Caillebotte: Precision [5] 4:13

Sisley & Bazille: Joyful Skies, Lament for the Fallen [6] 5:06

The View from Carew [7] 10:00

Romance for B, clarinet, cello & piano; 2000

Total Playing Time 52:45

Sanctuary at 3am RICK SOWASH

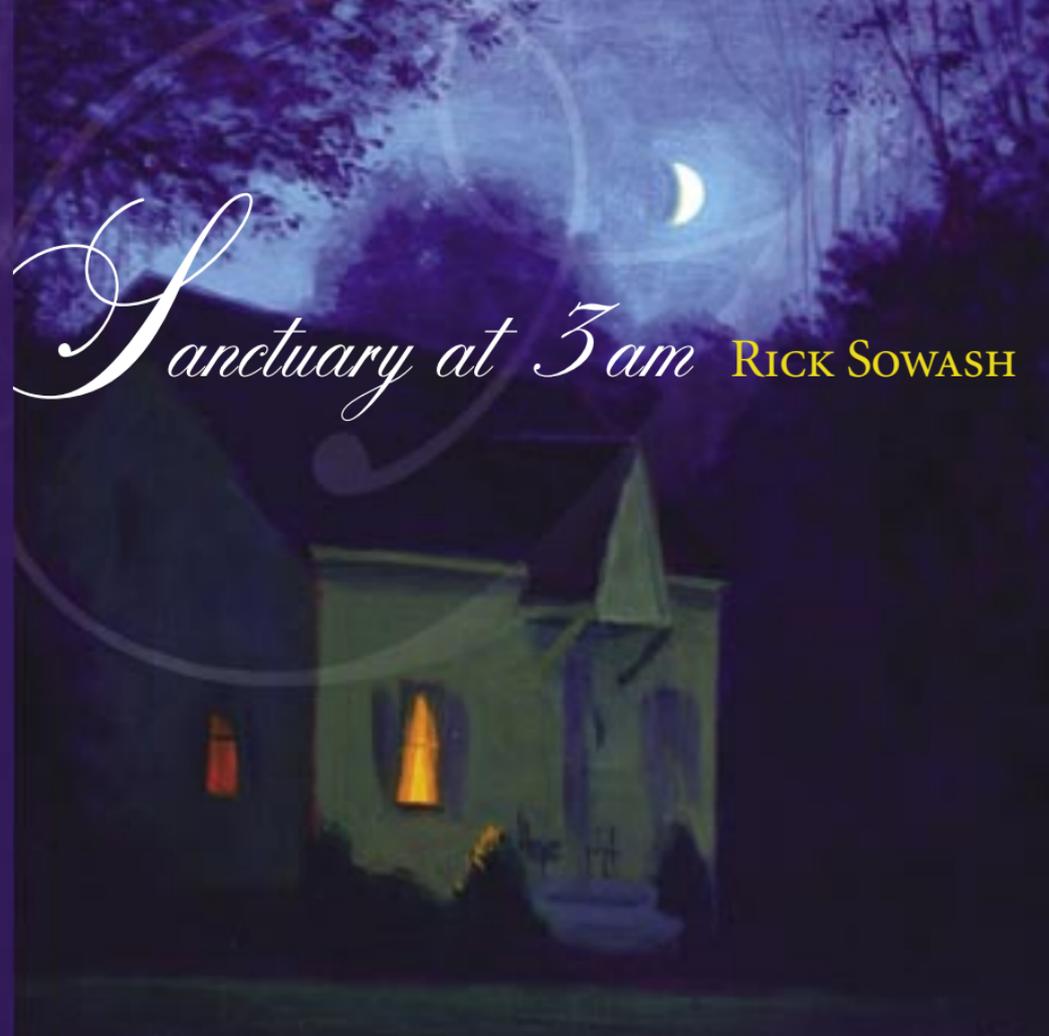
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Sanctuary at 3am RICK SOWASH

Sanctuary at 3 AM

for B \flat clarinet and piano; 2000

Anthony Costa, clarinet, Phil Amalong, piano

This piece was composed for my flutist friend, Betty Porter, though I later decided it would be more effectively scored for the darker sound of the clarinet. The title has three meanings. The piece evokes the peculiar feelings we have upon encountering large, empty places that are intended to be occupied by crowds – in this case, the sanctuary of a church in the deep of the night. It is empty but not quite silent; hear the little creaks and murmurs of an old building, the chimes ringing in the steeple above and perhaps the ghostly echo of a remembered hymn. But the piece is also about the idea of “sanctuary” – a safe place during the dark night of the soul. Finally, the piece affirms the comfort we still find in old-fashioned tonality and tunefulness. Even at this late hour, after the agony that characterized so much of 20th century music, we can return to the sanctuary of G major and g minor and take refuge in a slow, sad tune.

Lullabye for Kara

for cello and piano; 2002

Jeff Schoyen, cello, Phil Amalong, piano

In 1993 my friend Rand Wright (a fine graphic artist, he designs my books and CDs), asked me to compose a suite to be played at his wedding. The result was the Mt. Airy Suite which will be featured on a forthcoming CD. Then in 2002, Rand and Michelle asked me to write a lullabye for their newborn daughter, Kara. Interestingly, a few nights later, as I was falling asleep, a lullabye tune came to me. The next morning I cast it as the opening melody of Randy’s piece. The middle section evokes the sleepy Old South, when life was slow and sleep was deep... or so we like to imagine. The couple attended the premier performance with little Kara in tow. She crooned and chortled as the piece was played before an otherwise silent audience. It was a perfect, non-musical touch and I almost wish we could have included appreciative noises on this CD.

Variations on a Hiking Song

for piano solo; 1992

Phil Amalong, piano

The hiking song is Friedrich Moller's "The Happy Wanderer." So well known a tune doesn't need to be stated. Instead, the piece opens with the bare bones of the tune, a skeleton to be fleshed out in various ways. In my music, I strive to reconcile opposites: loud-soft, major-minor, fast-slow, rising-falling, but also stylistic opposites. Charles Ives explored the tension between what might be called 'vulgar' music vs. 'elegant' music, each enriching the other. Inspired by Ives, my variations juxtapose vernacular cliches against elegant turns. But the distinctions become increasingly blurred. Sometimes it is difficult to know whether the music is ironic or sincere. The final variation resolves the issue. My father, Richard Sowash, to whose memory the piece is dedicated, was dying as I wrote it; the final variation is a tiny, faint, but heartfelt requiem. Reconciliation is achieved and the Wanderer rests.



Rick Sowash

(b. 1950)

Unlike most composers, Rick Sowash has not sought an academic or commercial career in music. Following the example of Charles Ives, Sowash has retained his art as a passionate avocation, earning his living in non-musical ways. He is the author of three books about the history and folklore of Ohio, his native state. He has also been a politician, theatre manager, radio broadcaster and innkeeper. He is a member of ASCAP, both as a composer and as a publisher.



“Even at this late hour, after the agony that characterized so much of 20th century music, we can return to the sanctuary of G major and g minor and take refuge in a slow, sad tune.”

The composer wishes to acknowledge the support of WGUC-FM, Cincinnati's classical music radio station, in the production of this CD. Thanks go to Damon Sink, technical producer for much of the recording, mixing and editing. Special thanks also go to the fine musicians heard on this CD, particularly to pianist Phil Amalong. Money cannot buy the enthusiasm and care they brought to this project. Thanks to Greg Storer for permission to use his painting on the cover. Learn more about his superb work at www.gregstorer.com. Finally, thanks to Randall Wright for the design of the cover and liner notes and for his friendship, solicitude and patience.

Other CDs featuring the Music of Rick Sowash:

Enchantment of April, Three trios for clarinet, cello and piano

Eroica, Four works for various chamber ensembles

A Portrait at 50, Five works for various chamber ensembles

The Four Piano Trios, The Mirecourt Trio

Chamber Music with Clarinet, The Mirecourt Trio & Craig Olzenak

Music for the Appalachian Trail, includes my Fantasia on 'Shenandoah'

Songs of Humor & Satire, includes my "Philosophical Anecdotes"

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



Impressionist Suite #2

for oboe, A clarinet & bassoon. 2000.

Mark Ostoich, oboe, Ron Aufmann, clarinet,
Mark Ortwein, bassoon

I. Cassatt: A Lullabye

II. Caillebotte: Precision

III. Sisley & Bazille: Joyful Skies, Lament for the
Fallen

I wrote this piece specially for my friend Lucien Aubert, who is the clarinetist in the celebrated French reed trio, Le trio d'anches Ozi. As they are Frenchmen, playing for French audiences, I thought music about French Impressionist painters might please all concerned. The result was a six-movement suite that was pleasing enough, but too long.

So I broke it up into two three-movement suites. The Impressionist Suite #1: "Three Major Painters" is featured on the CD of my music entitled "Eroica."

The View from Carew:

Romance for B \flat clarinet, cello & piano; 2000

Anthony Costa, clarinet, Jeff Schoyen, cello, Phil Amalong, piano

This work was written for my friend Angelo Santoro, a passionately expressive clarinetist. Angelo asked me to write a piece he could perform with the Cincinnati Community Orchestra. He specified that the music was to be “very romantic... even operatic.” (Angelo is Italian.) I tried my best to comply. The title refers to the view from the top of Carew Tower, the tallest building in Cincinnati. The clarinet represents a lonely man mourning the end of a deeply-felt love affair. He views the city and remembers the happy hours he passed there with his love. I tried to make the music express the sublimity one feels when viewing the world from a high place, but also a feeling of distance, remoteness and loss. The piece begins with an introduction, which recurs at the end, framing the work. There are two big ‘romantic’ themes – an ascending ‘love theme’ (the clarinet’s entrance) and a descending ‘loss theme.’ These are developed and recapitulated in typical sonata-allegro form.

