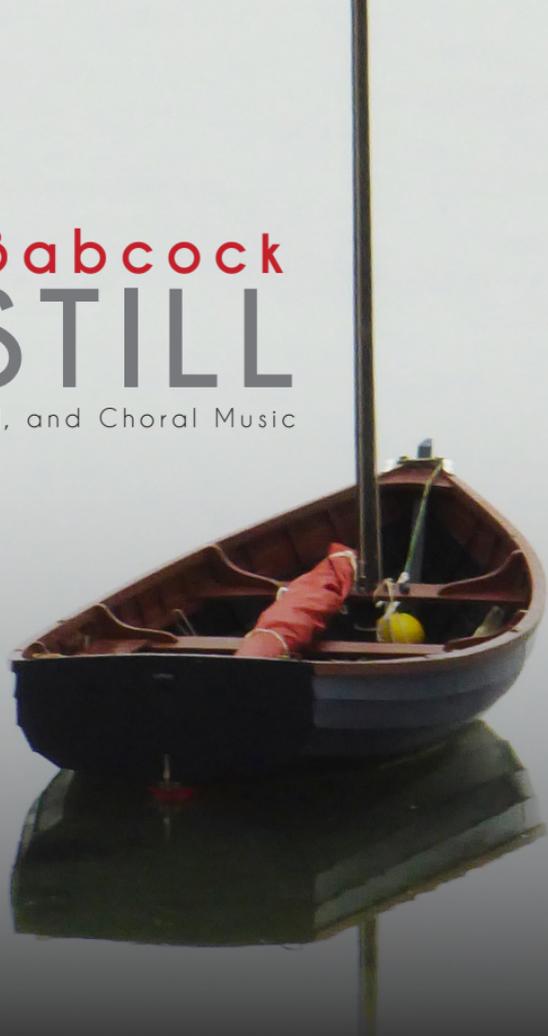


Bruce Babcock
TIME, STILL

Chamber, Vocal, and Choral Music



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FINE MUSIC

IRRATIONAL EXUBERANCE

When Doug Masek, saxophonist with both the Hollywood Bowl and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras, commissioned me to compose a piece, we decided on the unusual and beautiful combination of alto saxophone, cello, and piano. As reflected by its title, "Irrational Exuberance" was a reaction to the unfathomable re-election of a certain U. S. president in 2004. In an attempt to remain, if not optimistic, hopeful, I purposefully chose to compose a sunny piece. This piece, like most of my music, features lots of unusual and alternating meters. My high school band director was Dave Brubeck's brother Henry, and I idolized Dave's colleague and alto saxophonist Paul Desmond. As a result, odd and shifting meters have always been an important aspect of my style.

THIS IS WHAT I KNOW FOUR SONGS ON POEMS OF DOROTHY PARKER

After Juliana Gondek heard fellow UCLA faculty member Doug Masek performing my piece entitled "Irrational Exuberance," she commissioned me to write a set of songs. It was Gondek's idea to use the poetry of Dorothy Parker (1893-1967). Parker, a celebrated member of the Algonquin Round Table, wrote witty and frequently acerbic poetry, short stories, and screen plays. Her work regularly appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and *Esquire*. She was nominated for two Oscars

and won the O. Henry Prize for her short story *The Big Blonde*. Said Ogden Nash, "Mrs. Parker has an eye for people, an ear for language, and a feeling for the little things of life that are so immensely a part of the process of living." She bequeathed her entire estate to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and I thank them for authorizing this use of Dorothy Parker's work.

I narrowed the possible choices to 15-20 poems. Gondek then made the final selections, which include "Somebody's Song," "The Red Dress," "Interior," and "Fair Weather." This is not the wisecracking satirist Dorothy Parker. This is the lovelorn Dorothy Parker writing about matters of the heart, each poem successively a bit darker. While these poems were written in the jazz age, and the song features a saxophone, this is not jazz music. Gondek wanted Masek included in this piece so the saxophone came to be used as the author's emotional foil.

SPRINGSCAPE

SpringScape was judged to be the winning entry in the 2006 Debussy Trio Composition Competition. The combination of harp, viola, and flute is both beautiful and challenging. *Spring Scape* is cast in a single movement with a fast-slow-fast structure. Predominantly in 3/4 time, there are also recurring sections in 7/8. The piece is upbeat and emphasizes melody throughout.

ALL UNTO ME

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32.

All Unto Me is a tribute to Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, a longtime friend of All Saints Church in Pasadena, and was composed to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the church. Archbishop Tutu preached a sermon based on John 12:32 at All Saints on November 6, 2007, in which he said:

"Jesus did not say, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw some.' Jesus said, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all.' All! All! All! All! Black, white, yellow, rich, poor, clever, not so clever, beautiful, not so beautiful. It's one of the most radical things! All, all, all belong. Gay, lesbian, so-called straight. All! All are meant to be held in this incredible embrace that will not let us go."

This was the inspiration for this a cappella piece, though not the text. Tutu's words inspired an emphasis on the word "all," as well as a more inclusive meaning of the word "men" by adding the word "women." One of the sopranos in the choir told me it was the first time in decades of singing in church in which she had the opportunity to sing the word "women."

Archbishop Tutu was once again the guest preacher in our pulpit on February 20, 2011. *All Unto Me* was performed in his presence on that occasion.

METAPHOR TWO

Metaphor two was commissioned by Daniel Kepl, Artistic Director of the Santa Barbara Chamber Music Festival in 2005, at which I was composer-in-residence. It is a simple, quiet and reflective piece, and American in character.

IMAGINED/REMEMBERED A SONATA FOR CELLO & PIANO

"Imagined/Remembered" was also commissioned by Daniel Kepl for the 2005 Santa Barbara Chamber Music Festival. The piece is tonal in nature and is characterized once again by linear melodic writing and unusual meters. The first movement is the most song-like. It was described by a jazz pianist friend of mine as a unique manifestation of "rhythm without pulse." The second movement is the slowest and also the most dark and dramatic. It was composed on the day I learned of the death of a friend and musical colleague. The third movement is both the most energetic and virtuosic for the cello. It ends with a propulsive burst of exuberant momentum.

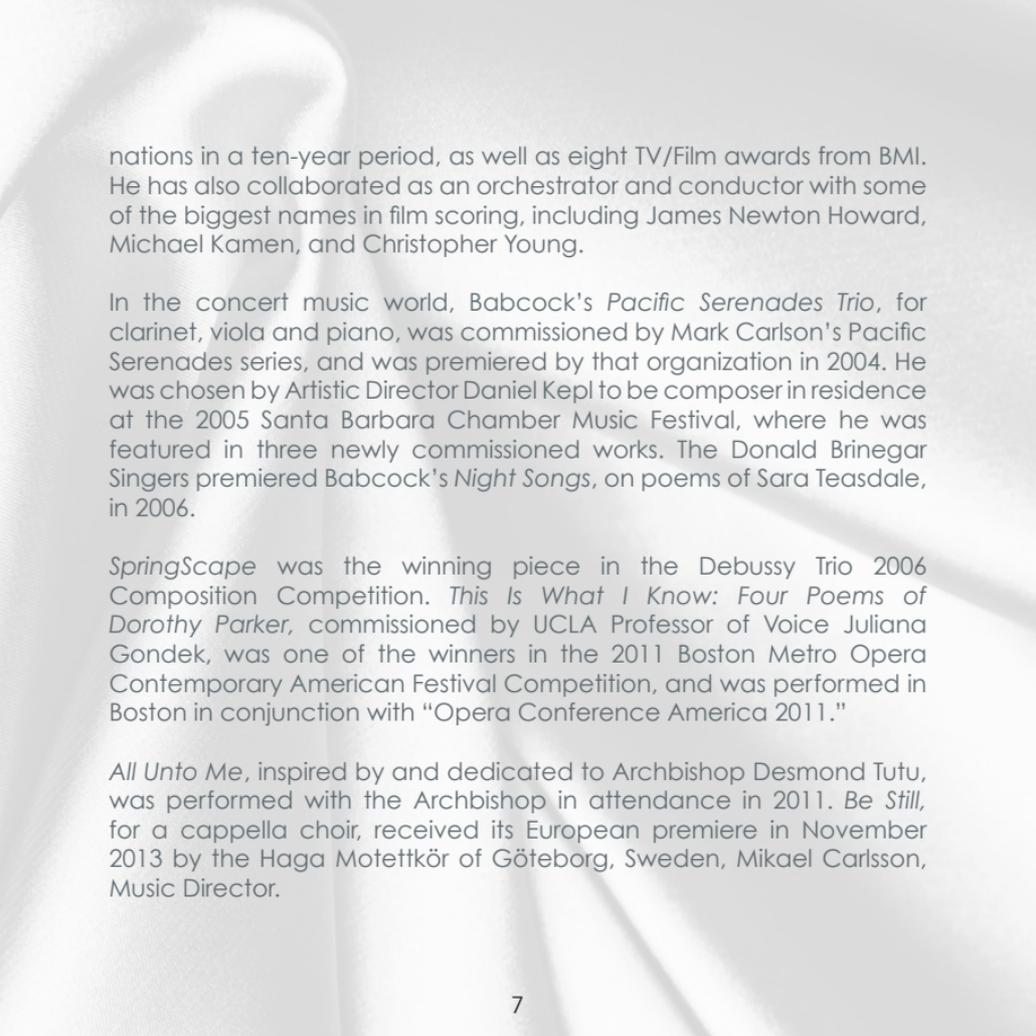


Bruce Babcock

Applauded by Aaron Copland, inspired by Desmond Tutu, and mentored by Hugo Friedhofer and Earle Hagen, Bruce Babcock has spent his working life composing music for the musicians of Los Angeles. Successful in both film and television, and the concert hall, he is known for vibrant, sonorous, expressive pieces that immerse audience and performers alike in an inclusive and exuberant celebration of the musical art. Eleven of these musicians are featured in this collection

of chamber, vocal and choral music. Five of the pieces on this album were commissions and two were winners in international competitions.

Babcock holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in music composition from California State University, Northridge (CSUN). While at CSUN, Bruce's *Impasse* was performed for Aaron Copland during his 1975 residency. Copland's comments on the piece, recorded for posterity, include "an impression of musicality which is very pleasant, indeed ... a convincing sense of an overall mood ... knows what he wants ... sure of what he's doing." Babcock's mentors in Hollywood included Hugo Friedhofer, Paul Glass, and Earle Hagen. He won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement in Music Composition for a Series in 1992, one of eight total Emmy nomi-



nations in a ten-year period, as well as eight TV/Film awards from BMI. He has also collaborated as an orchestrator and conductor with some of the biggest names in film scoring, including James Newton Howard, Michael Kamen, and Christopher Young.

In the concert music world, Babcock's *Pacific Serenades Trio*, for clarinet, viola and piano, was commissioned by Mark Carlson's Pacific Serenades series, and was premiered by that organization in 2004. He was chosen by Artistic Director Daniel Kepl to be composer in residence at the 2005 Santa Barbara Chamber Music Festival, where he was featured in three newly commissioned works. The Donald Brinegar Singers premiered Babcock's *Night Songs*, on poems of Sara Teasdale, in 2006.

SpringScape was the winning piece in the Debussy Trio 2006 Composition Competition. *This Is What I Know: Four Poems of Dorothy Parker*, commissioned by UCLA Professor of Voice Juliana Gondek, was one of the winners in the 2011 Boston Metro Opera Contemporary American Festival Competition, and was performed in Boston in conjunction with "Opera Conference America 2011."

All Unto Me, inspired by and dedicated to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was performed with the Archbishop in attendance in 2011. *Be Still*, for a cappella choir, received its European premiere in November 2013 by the Haga Motettkör of Göteborg, Sweden, Mikael Carlsson, Music Director.

for more information on the wonderful
performers on this album please visit.

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