

Walk in Beauty

emanuele arcuoli
piano



Disc A —51:36—

1. **Connor Chee:** Navajo Vocab for Piano, No.9 3:32

Peter Garland: Walk in Beauty

Movement 1:

2. Walk in Beauty 4:45
3. Turquoise Trail (In Memoriam Louise Varèse) 3:26
4. A Peyote Fan
(for Lou Harrison and William Colvig) 1:13

Movement 2:

5. A Pine-Pitch Basket (for Susan Ohori) 3:23

Movement 3:

6. Lightning Flash (rumba-not really...)
for Conlon "El Rey" Nancarrow 1:48
7. Walk in Beauty (Calling Home my Shadow) 2:20

8. **Kyle Gann:** Earth-Preserving Chant 11:24

9. **Michael Daugherty:** Buffalo Dance 5:27

10. **John Luther Adams:** Tukiliit 6:47

11. **Raven Chacon:** Nilchi' Shada'ji Nalaghali
(Winds that turn on the side from Sun) 7:34

Disc B —64:04—

1. **Martin Bresnick:** Ishi's Song 8:43

2. **Louis W. Ballard:** The Osage Variation 4:44

3. **Jennifer Higdon:** Secret and Glass Gardens 11:47

Peter Gilbert: Intermezzi

4. *I: Gently* 1:20
5. *II: Serenely but impetuously lilting* 2:09
6. *III: Grand, but holding back somewhat* 2:00
7. *IV: Stately and unhurried but still lyrical* 3:53

Carl Ruggles: Evocations – Four Chants for Piano

8. *Largo* 2:19
9. *Andante con Fantasia* 3:37
10. *Moderato Appassionato* 1:50
11. *Adagio Sostenuto* 3:40

12. **Brent Michael Davids:** Testament of Atom 2:13

Louis W. Ballard: Four American Indian Piano Preludes

13. *Ombaska (Daylight)* 2:28
14. *Tabideh (The Hunt)* 1:07
15. *Nikatoheh (Love Song)* 1:36
16. *To'kah'ni (Warrior Dance)* 1:24

17. **Talib Rasul Hakim:** Sound Gone 9:13

This double-album is informed not by a single theme, but rather by two distinct yet interrelated topics. The first is the evocation of nature, which is never described in detail, but evoked and abstract. The second is Native American culture, which is presented here through pieces directly inspired by it or written by American Indian composers, and which, beyond rhetoric, feeds on nature and evocations.

In the majority of cases, I am keen to stress, these musics also call to mind – at least in my personal experience – New Mexico (the recording sessions took place in Albuquerque) and the Southwest; magical and marvellous places with which I have a deep connection and which I was adamant to capture in these recordings.

My main goal, however, was to propose a selection of lesser-known American compositions which I believe deserve more attention. The stylistic approaches are quite varied and in some cases (such as the Hakim, Daugherty, and Ballard) co-exist in the same piece.

— Emanuele Arciuli



Connor Chee: Navajo Vocab, No.9 (2014)

The music of the Navajo people always serves a particular purpose. The traditional chants are often used for ceremonies, but there are many that are simply meant to accompany everyday tasks. This particular piece derives its melody from a corn grinding chant. The theme of many corn grinding chants seems to center around a common story—the father is taking care of the baby while the mother grinds corn, and he urges the mother to work quickly because the baby is crying. In this piece, I hoped to capture both the character of a lullaby, as well as the mother's rush to complete the task at hand.

Peter Garland: Walk in Beauty (1989)

Walk in Beauty was commissioned by and is dedicated to Aki Takahashi. The conceptual basis of the piece is found in the all-night peyote ceremonies of the Native American Church and the curing ceremonies of the Navajo. There is also a simple musical correlation: in the fast, nervous repetition of single notes, and their high-pitch registration (as in the first section) can be heard the influence of peyote drumming and musical style. And perhaps there is a certain similarity in the emotional function of the music too.

The movements follow a hypothetical sunset to sunrise time cycle, and are dedicated to close friends. Movement One is in three parts: (1) *Walk in Beauty (opening song) for Aki Takahashi*; (2) *Turquoise Trail: In memoriam Louise Varese (sunset song)*; and (3) *A Peyote Fan (night song) for Lou Harrison and William Colvig*. Movement Two is subtitled *A Pine-Pitch Basket (midnight song)*, after the baskets covered with pitch used as water vessels in the Southwest, and is dedicated to Susan Otori. Movement Three is in two sections: (1) *Lightning Flash (rumba-not really) for Conlon "El Rey" Nancarrow (night song)*; and (2) *Walk in Beauty (Calling Home my Shadow) for Peter Garland – myself (sunrise song)*. The piece was written from August 15 to October 31, 1989.

As mentioned, the second section of the first movement, *Turquoise Trail*, is dedicated to the memory of Louise Varese – translator, author, and wife of the composer – who died July 1, 1989 at the age of 98, and whom I was privileged to meet. In the midst of this part a musical "visitor" arrives, and interrupts the texture: the ghost of Erik Satie. This is a dual reference: to Aki Takahashi's fame as an interpreter of Satie and to a comment I made to Louise Varese on my only visit with her, in New York City in 1975, that I was amazed to be spending an afternoon with a person who had entertained Erik Satie on a similar day in 1921.

Kyle Gann: Earth Preserving Chant (2010)

The Gulf of Mexico oil spill was at its most destructive, and I had spent the morning reading about it, the day in June 2010 I received an e-mail from Emanuele Arciuli offering me a commission for a piano piece on an American Indian theme. The idea of a chant, a prayer, to save the earth (or rather, to keep it habitable for humans since the earth will someday go blithely on without us) leaped into my head. The song would have to be a model of ecology, or carefully husbanded resources, using as little material as possible. I chose not to use actual American Indian sources, since this was for so specific a purpose, but I wrote in the rhythmic style I long ago developed from my love of Hopi and Pueblo music.

Michael Daugherty: Buffalo Dance (2012)

Buffalo Dance for solo piano was commissioned and premiered by the pianist extraordinaire Emanuele Arciuli. The music is inspired by paintings of Native Americans, landscapes and buffalos by the Native American artist Fritz Scholder (1937-2005). The Buffalo (or Bison) Dance was a festive dance of North American Plains Indians, which celebrated the return of Buffalo herds. In my virtuosic fantasy for solo piano, I celebrate the spirits, dreams, stampedes, colors and storms of Scholder's ground-breaking paintings of the Native American rituals past and present.

John Luther Adams: Tukiliit (2011)

Perhaps for as long as we've been around, we humans have made monuments and figures with stones. From Iceland to India, from the Faroe Islands to the red rock country of Utah, people all over the world have arranged stones to mark special places on the earth, and our presence within them. This is especially true in the Arctic, where the Inuit and their ancestors create stone sculptures known as *inuksuit*. Occasionally these figures mimic the form of the human body. They also mark good places for hunting and fishing, the best route from one place to another, traces of the passing of humans across the vast landscapes that Canadians sometimes call "The Big Lonely". *Tukiliit* is the Inuktitut word for any stone object with special meaning. Translated more or less literally it means "The Stone People Who Live in the Wind". The piece was commissioned by Aeroporti di Puglia; written for Emanuele Arciuli.

Raven Chacon: Nilchi' Shada'ji Nalaghali (*Navajo: Winds that turn on the side from Sun*) (2008)

This work requires the pianist to depress the keys of an amplified, heavily gained, piano as softly as possible, just enough to raise the dampers, but not enough for the hammers to sound the strings. The resounding strings are free to oscillate within the body of the piano, with tones feeding-back as single notes, chords, and clusters are played. The pianist finds that the subtleties in each gesture are determined by the reactions of the unwieldy instrument.

Martin Bresnick: Ishi's Song (2012)

Ishi was among the last of the Yahi Indians. Living in northern California, these Native Americans were part of a larger group known as the Yana. They were ruthlessly suppressed and finally decimated at the end of the 19th century. The few remaining Yahi people hid in the mountains until they all died, leaving only Ishi. He was found and brought to the University of California at Berkeley by sympathetic Anthropology professors Alfred Kroeber and T.T. Waterman. Ishi lived for several years at the University's museum, then in San Francisco, teaching the professors and other researchers the ways of his people and helping to create a dictionary of his language. He was the last native speaker of the Yahi-Yana language. The opening melody of my work was taken from a transcription of a recording made by Ishi himself singing what he called "The Maidu Doctor's Song". There is no known translation of the text. Commissioned by the Aeroporti di Puglia; Dedicated to Maestro Emanuele Arciuli

Louis W. Ballard (1931-2007) was one of the first, possibly the very first Native American to become a composer of Western art – or classical – music. Of Quapaw-Cherokee descent, he was born in Oklahoma, but spent most of his life in Santa Fe. He studied with great musicians like Surinach, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and Milhaud, among others. Ballard's music has found little acclaim in America, and is almost completely ignored in Europe. On the contrary, it deserves – more than simple attention – respect and recognition for the quality of some of his orchestral and choral compositions. *Osage Variation* (1967) is part of a ballet, *Four Moons*, which he wrote as homage to four *Dance Etoiles* born in Oklahoma and all of native American descent, who then became internationally recognised stars. The piano transcription of some of the ballet pieces – including *Osage Variation* – do not manage to render the orchestral tones, but conveys the variety of accents and styles effectively, and gives a good sense of Ballard's talent as a composer. The *Four American Indian Piano Preludes* (1963) present a bigger breadth and complexity. They were written by Ballard when, still very young, while taking lessons from Milhaud. Here the Native ancestry is more evident, even if the author does not directly draw on autochthonous themes.

-E.A.

Jennifer Higdon: Secret and Glass Gardens (2005)

A journey of wonder and discovery, this secret garden reflects the paths of our hearts. It is a place of magical colors and brightly hued glass, where all is in view. The plants that grow there are like no other, in color and shape, and every turn of a corner brings new discoveries. The garden sweeps the viewer along amidst small, delicate details and full, grand shapes, carrying magic through all corners and at every step. Composed for the Van Cliburn International Competition.

Peter Gilbert: Four Intermezzi (2012-15)

I have a strong love for 19th century repertoire but in my composing I generally avoid referencing this legacy head-on as it can be an unforgiving and, to be truthful, overwhelming task. But sometimes the challenges that seem most hopeless become the most interesting. These short works are not attempts at copying 19th century style. They are rather attempts to encounter it. In many ways these pieces are an oblique homage to Brahms. I admire so much his ability to create the beautiful dense forest of rich relationships in which every single note seems to pull upon the others, smoothly gliding through each transition with silently meshing gears invisible to the eye.

But one can not recreate Brahms, or at least I will not. These pieces are rather somewhere in between then and me....

...or perhaps they are really just a point of pause between then and wherever I may be going—intermezzi, which become momentarily audible and then disappear again into whatever will be next.

Carl Ruggles: Evocations (1937-43, rev.1954)

Evocations - Four Chants for Piano is a short cycle which does not reflect a coherent project nor a predefined dramaturgical strategy. Ruggles (1876-1971) had written other short pieces for piano which he then decided not to include in the final work; the four that he chose (written between 1937 and 1943 and later revised) were selected more for the compositional merit than for their contrasting character. What is striking and moving in this beautiful cycle is the expressive urgency, the lyrical tension. There are quasi-dodecaphonic series, successions of pitches reminiscent of Alban Berg, but also of that production by Schoenberg moving toward 12-tone music (and in *Fünf Klavierstücke, Op. 23*). Of particular beauty is the last piece, a kind of farewell to the world, in which the ghost notes (notes performed pianissimo, so dear to Charles Ives) are tinged with a sense of astonishment and unreality.

-E.A.

Brent Michael Davids: Testament of Atom (2008)

Testament of Atom is a slowly unfolding but also jazzy work for solo piano. Borrowing the explicitly religious mythology of the "Testament of Adam," this work contrarily celebrates the more natural world of science, evolution and free-thought. This work was composed for piano virtuoso Emanuele Arciuli.

Talib Rasul Hakim: Sound Gone (1967)

Talib Rasul Hakim (1940-88) was born Steven Chambers and later converted to Sufism. He studied with Morton Feldman and Ornette Coleman, among others. He wrote music for various instrumental ensembles, including the magnificent *Visions of Ishwara* for orchestra. *Sound Gone* is the only piano piece which has encountered some acclaim (also thanks to a recording by Nathalie Hinderas, several years ago). It brings together experimental gestures and techniques (including some effects playing directly on the piano strings) and a jazz-style improvisation on a very slow modal riff. The idea is that the pianist should aim for a "loose-lingering-like" approach. Here, in practice, each sound, rather than being part of a musical structure, is intended as an individual element, prominent and marked even when emerging from a brief chord played pianissimo. One could almost see it as secular prayer; definitely it is an unusual and fascinating composition.

-E.A.

Notes by the composers except where indicated.

Emanuele Arciuli has established himself as one of the most original and interesting performers on today's classical music scene. His repertoire ranges from Bach to contemporary music, with a strong affinity for composers from the United States. Having gained the respect of distinguished composers such as Helmut Lachenmann, Frederic Rzewski, John Adams, and George Crumb, Emanuele Arciuli has had many new works written for him, including piano concertos by Michael Nyman and Louis W. Ballard, whose Indiana Concerto he premiered in 2008 with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Round Midnight Variations, a group of 16 compositions that were written expressively for Arciuli by composers such as Crumb, Babbitt, Kernis, Rzewski, Torke, Daugherty, Bolcom, Hoffman, and Harbison, has recently sparked the interest of international critics. The variations, which were released by Stradivarius on CD under the title 'Round Midnight – Hommage to Thelonious Monk' in May 2011, have been celebrated by the international press.

His special interest in Native American cultures has impacted Emanuele Arciuli's career, and resulted in him commissioning works from a number of Native American composers. His recent project is called Indian Gallery and features new works inspired by Native American visual art by composers such as John Luther Adams, Martin Bresnick, Michael Daugherty, Kyle Gann, Peter Garland, Huang Ruo and Morton Subotnick.

His numerous recordings include *Gates to Everywhere*, with music by Carla Bley, Fred Hersch, and Chick Corea, the complete piano works of Berg and Webern, the world premiere of Bruno Maderna's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, *Red Rain* by Huang Ruo (Innova). His CD dedicated to George Crumb (Bridge) was nominated for a Grammy Award, and his CD with works by Adams and Rzewski (Stradivarius) received the Italian critics' award for Best Record in 2006. Recently VAI Records has released a DVD featuring Ives' *Concord Sonata*.

Emanuele Arciuli regularly performs at major concert halls and festivals, such as the Berliner Festwochen at Philharmonie, Wien Modern at Musikverein, La Scala Milano, Biennale di Venezia, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Miami Piano Festival, Miller Theater New York, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Brescia and Bergamo International Piano Festival. He has collaborated with internationally renowned orchestras such as the Indianapolis Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber, Saint Petersburg Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira RAI National Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Brussels Philharmonic and many others. Conductors with whom he has worked include Roberto Abbado, Dennis Russell Davies, Yoel Levi, James MacMillan, Kazushi Ono, Wayne Marshall, Andrey Boreyco and Mario Venzago.

His comprehensive book on American piano music, *Musica per pianoforte negli Stati Uniti*, was recently published in Italy. In May 2011, Emanuele Arciuli was awarded with the most important Italian critic's prize, the Premio Franco Abbiati. In winning this prize, Emanuele Arciuli follows in the footsteps of Maurizio Pollini, Radu Lupu, and Zubin Mehta. He is a professor at the Conservatory in Bari and a frequent guest professor at several American universities.

Technical Details:

Venue: University of New Mexico - Music Department - Keller Hall. Albuquerque - NM

March 31, April 1th, July 31, August 1th, 2016

Recorded by: Manuel Rettinger - Liz Rincon

Mixing and Mastering: Nicola Monopoli

Piano: Steinway D 553669

Piano Technician: Fred Sturm

Translation (Emanuele Arciuli's text): Laura Leante

Emanuele Arciuli photo: ©Alberta Zallone

Cover: David Bradley: *The Interior* (1980); Acrylic on canvas (collection of Emanuele Arciuli)

Interior: Emmi Whitehorse: *835 Amusement*; Mixed media on paper mounted on canvas (collection of Emanuele Arciuli)

Acknowledgements:

UNM Music Dep., Martin Clayton, Peter Gilbert, Laura Leante, Nicola Monopoli, Karola Obermueller, Manny Rettinger, Liz Rincon, Fred Sturm, Madeline Williamson, Alberta Zallone.

Innova is supported by an endowment from the McKnight Foundation.

Philip Blackburn, director, design

Chris Campbell, operations director

Tim Igel, publicist

