

- 1 Driveline: A Power Walk for Guitar and Alto Saxophone • DAVID KECHLEY • 10:37
- 2 Face of the Moon • MARILYN SHRUDE • 8:50
- Rock Garden • DANIEL WORLEY
  - 3 I. In a Slight Funk • 3:09
  - 4 II. Singing to Myself • 3:36
  - 5 III. Throwing Stones • 3:43
- 6 Introducción, Danza, y Contemplativo • ERNESTO GARCÍA DE LEÓN • 6:07
- 7 Barcarolle • MICHAEL RUSZCZYNSKI • 8:15
- 8 In the Dragon's Garden • DAVID KECHLEY • 15:30  
 Floating on the Wild • Islands in the Sand • The Sea of Stones • Beyond the Wall •  
 Dancing between the Rocks
- Images of China • JING JING LUO
  - 9 I. Two Scholars • 2:20
  - 10 II. Mountain Sound • 3:17
  - 11 III. Morning Mist • 4:21
  - 12 IV. Drunken Man • 2:04

## RYOANJI DUO

Frank Bongiorno, saxophone

Robert Nathanson, classical guitar

Frank Bongiorno and Robert Nathanson have performed as a duo since their debut performance at the Tenth World Saxophone Congress in Pesaro, Italy in 1992. Frequently invited to perform at saxophone, guitar, and composer conferences, the duo has also toured throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, with performances in Berlin, Valencia (Spain), Montreal, San Francisco, and Chicago.

As champions of new music, the Ryoanji Duo has commissioned award-winning composers such as David Kechley, Marilyn Shlude, Daniel Worley, Ernesto Garcia de León, and others to write for this unique chamber group. In addition, in their search to further expand the repertoire for the duo, they have transcribed and performed select well-known "classics" by Mozart, Handel, Villa-Lobos, Ravel, Fauré and other significant composers of the past.

Both are currently on the faculty in the Department of Music at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington where they teach saxophone and classical guitar respectively, among other courses.

All works commissioned by the Ryoanji Duo

World Premieres:

In the Dragon's Garden, 9/5/92, Teatro Rossini, Pesaro, Italy

Duelme, 9/26/97, Palau De La Música, Valencia, Spain

Barcarolle, 8/25/98, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL

Face of the Moon, 7/8/00, University of Montreal

Rock Garden, 7/8/00, University of Montreal

Introducción, Danza y Contemplativo, 3/8/00, University of Arizona, Tucson

Images of China, 7/9/01, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh

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# images

## RYOANJI DUO

Frank Bongiorno  
 Robert Nathanson

new music for  
 guitar & saxophone



## Driveline: A Power Walk for Guitar and Alto Saxophone (1997) · DAVID KECHLEY

Published by Pine Valley Press, PO Box 582, Williamstown, MA 01267; 413.458.2431

*Driveline* refers to the single melody "line" which opens the work with great energy and rhythmic momentum, setting the music into motion like the drive shaft (or line) in a car or truck. The aggressive, walking bass or "powerwalk" melody is then elaborated by each instrument as it moves through an ever more elaborate set of variations. The score states that this work "... honors the memory of Abraham C. Keller, a good friend, and a well-known political and social activist in Seattle. He had a reputation for unbending principles and a boundless energy to do battle on countless local and global issues. The tenacity and momentum of the music as well as its reflective moments are a most appropriate tribute to Abe's memory."

Since the premiere of Second Composition for Large Orchestra by the Seattle Symphony in 1968, David Kechley has produced 67 major works that have been performed throughout North America and Europe as well as other parts of the world. Over 800 performances have taken place including those by the Minnesota Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Pops, Seattle Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Colorado Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, Lark Quartet, and the United States Military Academy Band. Kechley's works have been featured at national and international conferences and has received numerous grants and awards.

David Kechley was born in Seattle where he received a Bachelors Degree in 1970 and Masters in 1974 from the University of Washington. He completed a Doctorate in Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1979. He is presently Professor of Music at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

## Face of the Moon (2000) · MARILYN SHRUDE (b. 1946)

Published by Marilyn Shrude, Bowling Green, OH

Just as the moon is admired for its utter simplicity, it is equally a revelation in complexity-changing (yet constant) from day to month to year. My musical impression is an individual reflection on a reality that has intrigued many artists. In this work a germinal two-note motive is repeated, altered, expanded, and embellished to explore a range of emotions—contentment, agitation, calm, elation, disquiet, reflection. The result is a composition of many layers, made more so by the unique combination of saxophone and guitar. The following serves as a preface in the score:

*The moon is a mirror,  
surely, but is a mirror a forbidden window  
becoming itself by its own reflective act,  
or is it just a dull word of unenlightened imitation?*

—"For Any Known Fact: Nude Walking Alone on a Beach in Moonlight" from *Song of the World Becoming*. New and Collected Poems, 1981-2001. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2001. Reprinted by permission of Pattinam Rogers.

Chicago-born composer Marilyn Shrude received degrees from Alverno College and Northwestern University. Her works have been heard at the Kennedy Center, Symphony Hall (Boston), Orchestra Hall (Chicago), Smetana Hall (Prague), Carnegie Recital Hall, Merkin Hall and Brussels Town Hall; on the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Series, Fromm Music Series, St. Louis Orchestra Chamber Series, Music Today and New Music Chicago; and at meetings of the World Saxophone Congress, Society of Composers, International Harp Congress, MENC, CBDNA and MTNA. She has been a guest at college campuses and festivals throughout the world.

Since 1977 she has been on the faculty of Bowling Green State University, where she teaches and chairs the Department of Musicology/Composition/Theory. She continues to be active as a pianist and clinician with saxophonist John Sampen. In 2001 she was named a Distinguished Artist Professor of Music at Bowling Green State University.

## Rock Garden (2000) · DANIEL WORLEY (b. 1962)

### i. In a Slight Funk · ii. Singing to Myself · iii. Throwing Stones

Published by Daniel Worley, c/o Miscellaneous Records, 320 East Cross Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198; 734-484-1394

The title, *Rock Garden*, refers both to the odd and rather unique shapes each of the movements takes, while still maintaining an air of formal familiarity—much like any good addition to a rock garden; and the grounding of its musical materials in rock music. However, only the basic building blocks have any real relationship to rock—the music takes on an often surprising life of its own.

An active composer, producer, and performer, Daniel Worley is continually fascinated by the relationships between sound, gesture, context and meaning in all genres of music, and has been diversely exploring these relationships for longer than he can remember. As a composer he has been commissioned by the Albany Symphony, the Tulsa Philharmonic, the Dogs of Desire, the Ryoanji Duo, TONK, Derek Bermel and Timothy McAllister, as well as receiving many awards, honors, and grants, including the 1999 SEAMUS/ASCAP Student Commission, two ASCAP Young Composer Grants, a Charles Ives Scholarship, a Tampa Bay Composers Forum Prize and others. His concert music has been performed throughout the United States and Europe, and can be found on several commercial (if obscure) recordings.

## Introducción, Danza y Contemplativo (1999)

ERNESTO GARCÍA DE LEÓN (b. 1952) Published by Ernesto García de León, Mexico City, Mexico © México D.F. 1999

Ernesto García de León (born in 1952 in Jalitpan, Veracruz Mexico) is a Mexican composer who specializes in guitar music, and whose works are becoming increasingly known internationally. During the 1980s he participated in numerous conferences of Hispano-American composers; became a founding member of "Nova Guitarra Musica," a group of Mexican guitarists and composers dedicated to disseminating contemporary guitar music; recorded in 1988 the first disc solely dedicated to his music *Del Crepusculo*; and he has gained increasing renown for his music through performances by prominent guitarists in Mexico, North and South America, Europe and Asia. He studied at the Music School of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) where he is now professor of guitar. He lives in Mexico City where he composes and plays concerts exclusively of his own music.

## Barcarolle (1998) · MICHAEL RUSZCZYNSKI (b. 1964)

Published by Halliley Music Works, 30 Seaman Avenue 1C, New York, NY 10034; 212.567.7135

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Michael Ruszczyński received much of his formal training with Christopher Rouse, Warren Benson, Joseph Schwanter, and Samuel Adler at the Eastman School of Music. As an accomplished writer of orchestral music, he became the youngest recipient of ASCAP's prestigious Rudolf Nissim Orchestral Competition for his Twelve Secrets at the age of twenty-three. Other awards include a Yaddo Fellowship and the Charles Ives Prize from the American Academy and Institute of Arts & Letters, among others. In addition, he has received grants from the Pew Charitable Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Meet the Composer, Inc.

## In the Dragon's Garden (1992) · DAVID KECHLEY (b. 1947)

### Floating on the Wild · Islands in the Sand · The Sea of Stones · Beyond the Wall Dancing between the Rocks

Published by Pine Valley Press, PO Box 582, Williamstown, MA 01267; 413.458.2431

*In the Dragon's Garden* represents a turning point in the composer's work. It was inspired by several visits to Ryoanji, a temple in Kyoto, Japan. Ryoanji roughly translates as "dragon-temple," probably because of the large dragon painted on one of the inner walls. More significantly this temple contains one of the most famous Zen gardens in the world. Fifteen large rocks are set with precise randomness in a carefully raked rectangle of small white stones, and the entire garden is surrounded by low earthen walls. In this garden, one is free to imagine the many possible meanings it may have. Some of these are reflected in the subtitles of the various sections which continue from one to the next with few obvious beginnings or endings.

The composer himself has not claimed the work to be Japanese in sound, although others have. The melodic and harmonic material, shaku hachi-like bending of pitches on the saxophone, and even the roll-off gesture similar to the wood block sounds used in Zen temples all contribute. The composer has indicated the most important aspects to be the structural aesthetic concepts exemplified by the use of irregular accents which seem naturally placed, but are carefully calculated with "precise randomness" just like the large rocks in the garden. The musical ideas, which sprang forth from this work in 1992, have clearly continued to influence Kechley's work since that time.

## Images of China (2000) · JING JING LUO (b. 1953)

### i. Two Scholars · ii. Mountain Sound · iii. Morning Mist · iv. Drunken Man

Published by Jing Jing Luo, JingJingLuo46@yahoo.com

*Images of China* marks the first contact in the composer's music home-coming to the new tonal writing in a specific lyrical language. In this work she draws upon Chinese painting colors and Chinese folklore writing styles. All four brief movements share and develop the same materials. The subjects are described by the four interrelated titles. This work reflects a new adventure in trying to find a way to mingle old materials with new ideas and contribute something new to the western idea of 'tonality' and to refresh it.

Beijing-born Jing Jing Luo is widely considered to be one of the leading young composers both in China and the United States. In the early 80's in China, she was the Composer-in-Residence with the Canton Orchestra and the Beijing Symphonic Band. She received her Ph.D. in composition from SUNY, Stony Brook, New York, and a M.A. in composition from Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China. Currently teaching at Ashland University in Ohio, she has been invited to present lectures on her own music and Chinese contemporary composition by Oberlin Conservatory and many other American universities.