

Family Album

(New Music With Guitar, Vol. 7)

— David Starobin, guitar —

— Daniel Druckman, percussion —

from 48 Preludes for Guitar (2005) (9:55) William Bland

- 1 Prelude No. 4 in C-sharp Minor (1:27) (b. 1947)
- 2 Prelude No. 3 in D-flat Major (1:15)
- 3 Prelude No. 15 in G Major (1:45)
- 4 Prelude No. 6 in B Minor (1:22)
- 5 Prelude No. 8 in C Minor (1:46)
- 6 Prelude No. 9 in E Major (2:00)

New Rochelle Suite (2004/05) (7:08)

(amplified guitar and percussion)

- 7 I Grand Opening (:59)
- 8 II Kafka (1:31)
- 9 III Thanksgiving (1:12)
- 10 IV Night Tango (2:26)
- 11 V Stampede (:44)

Poul Ruders

(b. 1949)

12 Bailarín (1998) (3:58)

(guitar solo)

Tania León

(1943)

Three Places in New Rochelle (2002) (8:38)

(amplified guitar and percussion)

David Starobin

(b. 1951)

13 I Bombay Express (1:29)

14 II Mirage (2:24)

15 III The Top of Mount Joy (4:32)

Semi-Suite (1997/98) (23:23)

(guitar solo)

Paul Lansky

(b. 1944)

16 I Putative Prelude (3:07)

17 II Aimless Air (5:13)

18 III Crooked Courante (2:14)

19 IV Shameless Sarabande (4:15)

20 V Awkward Allemande (3:31)

21 VI Partly Pavane (4:45)

© and © 2007, Bridge Records, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Total Time: 53:29

I've been very fortunate in having long and close relationships with a number of composers whose music I've grown up with, and whose music has been instrumental in 'growing me up'. This disc includes pieces by four such artists-- old friends and collaborators--virtually, family. Two of the compositions were written for me to play with my then-teenage percussion-playing daughter, Allegra. These two works were recorded for this disc along side ace percussionist, Danny Druckman—an old buddy. The producers and engineers of this recording include my wife, Becky Starobin, and three of my closest recording colleagues over the decades-- Adam Abeshouse, Silas Brown, and David Merrill. So, a family affair it is, and one which has afforded me the incomparable pleasure of close and loving study.

With the exception of my kid brother Michael, **William Bland** is the composer with whom I've had the longest continuing relationship. Thirty-eight years ago we met as students, and he has written nearly two dozen works (including a concerto) for me. Bland has been called, perhaps with tongue in cheek, "the Chopin of West Virginia". The appellation has some merit, though, as he has devoted the bulk of his compositional work to the creation of

an extensive solo repertoire for two instruments-- the piano and the guitar. Bill's cycle of piano sonatas now numbers seventeen large scale works, and his collections of guitar music, *Six Pieces* (1974-1981) and *Dancebook* (1996) have begun to be played and recorded by guitarists on both sides of the Atlantic. Bland's accessible style--his lyric gift, his love of flamboyant instrumental virtuosity, his incorporation of tonal harmony, and his inclusion of popular materials-- makes me think of him as more of a West Virginian Gottschalk.

The six preludes heard here come from Bill's projected *48 Preludes for Guitar*-- a work in progress, commissioned by and dedicated to the ex-patriot American guitarist, Michael McCartney. Bland's preludes are miniatures in the best sense of the word: carefully crafted single-idea pieces which occasionally incorporate popular idioms such as ragtime and blues. The composer writes that "The preludes are written in every key, but alternate between proceeding upward chromatically, and pairing the relative major with minor. For example, #1 and #2 are 'C Major' and 'A Minor', while #3 and #4 are 'D-flat Major' and 'C-sharp Minor'." The introspective B minor, the bluesy C minor, and the sublime E major preludes provide ample evidence of a major cycle in the making.

For further information about William Bland's recordings, see: www.BridgeRecords.com

Poul Ruders is among my favorite composers. A titan among those writing concert and theater music today, his string of sensational operas during the past 10 years includes the nightmarish *The Handmaid's Tale*, the phantasmagoric *Kafka's Trial*, and most recently, a one-act opera based on Lars von Trier's film, *Dancer in the Dark*. Amidst his large catalog are two guitar concertos, which I regard as small masterpieces. Poul often stays with us in New Rochelle and has written much of his guitar music while tucked away in his room on our third floor.

New Rochelle Suite (2004/5) for guitar and percussion is a piece of *gebrauchsmusik*, written for my daughter Allegra and me to play together at home. "I. Grand Opening" begins with a snare drum roll and fanfare and builds to a furious conclusion, punctuated, finally, by a comic vibra-slap. "II. Kafka" takes the opening motto of Ruders's opera, *Kafka's Trial*, and turns it into a klezmer-like dance. "III. Thanksgiving" bizarrely fragments a waltz tune, accompanied by a mocking guiro, and "IV. Night Tango" quietly glides through its paces with bass drum, triangle and castanets coaxing the guitar along to the movement's surreal "bird-call"

conclusion. "V. Stampede" rushes breathlessly to its final whip crack and functions as a coda to the little suite. For more information on Poul Ruders, please see: www.poulruders.net

I first met **Tania León** in the 70s. Born in Cuba, she has made New York City her home since 1967. Over the years I've worked with Tania producing recordings of her music, and occasionally have had the opportunity to perform under her baton. Her perky *Bailarín* (Dancer) was written in 1998 as a contribution to my 'Newdance' CD, a compilation of short dance pieces written by 18 composers. Tania's piece arrived too late to be included on that disc, but happily makes its first appearance here. *Bailarín's* insistent groove might spring from Tania's Caribbean origins, but the piece is very much the work of a modern composer ringing her changes. The buoyant and rhythmic main theme heard at the outset is broken up by a series of brief arhythmic cadenzas. After each cadenza, the fast groove returns, but always with altered pitch material. The final transformation leaves off suddenly, as if in midair. For further information about Tania León, please see: www.tanialeon.com

Three Places in New Rochelle was composed in October, 2002, and was intended as a father-daughter project. Allegra and I gave the piece its first performances at Vassar College and in the public schools of our home town, New Rochelle. The title is a wink at the great Charles Ives, whose *Three Places in New England* is a much-loved masterpiece. The first movement of my 'Three Places', 'Bombay Express', takes its name from a favorite Indian take-out joint located on New Rochelle's main drag. Here, noises from the street playfully find their way into the music.

II. 'Mirage' is named after a 24-hour diner--a breakfast mecca for the bleary-eyed. Triangle, water-filled metal bowls, and splashed water accompany a simple melody. The unusual 'instrument' heard in the middle section of the movement is a metal egg-beater (with crank). The third movement of the set turned out quite differently than originally planned. I had already sketched a light-hearted salsa movement when, out of the blue, my wife was struck by a life-threatening accident. Two days later, walking home from the hospital along Mount Joy Place, after receiving the news that she was going to pull through, I was overwhelmed by feelings of gratitude. That evening, I wrote 'The Top of Mount Joy', a love song to my Becky.

I've gotten to know **Paul Lansky** through my work at Bridge Records. Paul is much admired for his pioneering work in the field of computer music, and his fans and acolytes range from the band Radiohead, to the hundreds of musicians he has influenced during his tenure at Princeton University. Lansky's *Semi-Suite* began life as a single movement, 'Crooked Courante', which was composed for my 'Newdance' disc. The piece quickly grew into a suite, with titles and forms loosely based upon their early music namesakes. Paul's knowledge of the instrument (he played as a kid) is thorough, and his idiomatic writing is a pure delight for the guitarist. Sonorities are rich and full, left-hand articulation is employed artfully, and the musical argument seems to flow directly from the core of the instrument. Lansky's guitar music has that rare combination of being assertive yet intimate. For further information about Paul Lansky please see: www.music.princeton.edu/~paul

A word about the three guitars heard on this recording: On the pieces by León, Ruders and Starobin, I play on a Gary Southwell, 2002 spruce top instrument, using a Fishman Acoustic Pro amplifier for the pieces with percussion. Southwell's brilliantly designed guitar combines characteristics of the 19th century Viennese guitar (adjustable action, smaller neck and shorter string

scale) with modern aspects of guitar design. On William Bland's *Preludes*, I played a 1977 cedar top instrument by the American builder, Richard Bruné. This particular guitar has an impressive pedigree: it was played by Andrés Segovia between the years 1982 and 1984, and is now part of its builder's private collection. It's a magnificent instrument, and I thank Mr. Bruné for loaning it to me for this recording. For Paul Lansky's *Semi-Suite*, I played a 1971 José Ramirez 1A cedar top, initialed MT (Mariano Tezanos Martín). Because of this instrument's superb sustaining capability, I was able to employ a flexibility of rubato that many guitars, with their faster decay, simply don't allow. What a pleasure!

David Starobin
New Rochelle, July, 2007

Composers including Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Lukas Foss, Poul Ruders, Gunther Schuller and Milton Babbitt have dedicated new works to **David Starobin**, producing a repertoire of more than 350 new scores. Starobin has performed these works throughout the world, collaborating with ensembles including The New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Houston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Odense

Symphony, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Emerson and Guarneri Quartets. David Starobin began his guitar studies at age 7, with the Puerto Rican guitarist Manuel Gayol, later working with Albert Valdes Blain, and Aaron Shearer at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. While a student at Peabody, Starobin worked closely with pianist Leon Fleisher, and was a frequent participant in the Marlboro Music Festival. Among his many honors are a Harvard University/Fromm grant, for "his commitment to the music of our time"; a Lincoln Center/Avery Fisher grant; and Peabody Conservatory's "Distinguished Alumni Award". Between 1993 and 2004, Starobin was the chairman of the guitar department at the Manhattan School of Music, where he still teaches. In 1981, David Starobin founded the record label, Bridge Records, Inc.. Starobin's work for Bridge as performer, producer and executive producer has earned two Grammy awards and sixteen Grammy nominations.

Daniel Druckman was born and raised in New York City. The son of composer Jacob Druckman, he had invaluable exposure to music and musicians at an early age. Mr. Druckman has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Composer's Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic's Horizons con-

certs, the San Francisco Symphony's New and Unusual Music series, and in recital in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Tokyo. He has been a member of the New York Philharmonic since 1991, where he serves as associate principal percussion, and has made numerous guest appearances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Da Capo Chamber Players, the American Brass Quintet, the Group for Contemporary Music, Orpheus, Steve Reich and Musicians, and the Philip Glass Ensemble. An integral part of New York's new music community, both as soloist and as a member of the New York New Music Ensemble and Speculum Musicae, Mr. Druckman has premiered works by Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, Aaron Jay Kernis, Oliver Knussen, Poul Ruders, Joseph Schwantner, Ralph Shapey and Charles Wuorinen, among many others. Mr. Druckman is a faculty member of the Juilliard School, where he serves as chairman of the percussion department and director of the percussion ensemble.

Producers: Adam Abeshouse (Bland, Lansky);
Silas Brown (Ruders, Starobin); Becky Starobin (León)
Engineers: Adam Abeshouse (Bland, Lansky); Silas Brown (Ruders, Starobin);
David Merrill, (León)
Editors: Charlie Post (Bland, Ruders, Starobin); Silas Brown (León, Lansky)
Six Preludes was recorded on May 28, 2007, *New Rochelle Suite* and *Three Places in New Rochelle* were recorded on March 31, 2007. *Semi-Suite* was recorded October 4 and 5, 2006 at the Recital Hall of the Performing Arts Center, Purchase College, State University of NY, Purchase, NY. *Bailarin* was recorded at KAS Music and Sound, Astoria, NY on September 10, 2005.
Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse
Associate Mastering Engineer: Silas Brown
Graphic Design: Douglas H. Holly
Photographs: Becky Starobin; Photograph of Allegra Starobin by Melissa Spencer
Executive Producer: Becky Starobin

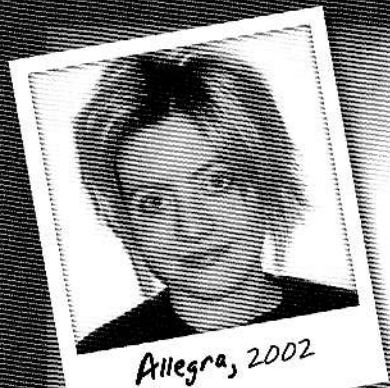
William Bland's *48 Preludes* is in manuscript (BMI); Poul Ruders's *New Rochelle Suite* is published by Editions Wilhelm Hansen; Tania León's *Bailarin* is published by Peer Music Classical; David Starobin's *Three Places in New Rochelle* is published by Editions New Rochelle (ASCAP); Paul Lansky's *Semi-Suite* is published by Editions New Rochelle (ASCAP).

The recording of *New Rochelle Suite* and *Three Places in New Rochelle* was made with assistance from The Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund



For Bridge Records: Barbara Bersito, Natalie Bersito, Douglas H. Holly, Alexis Napoliello, Brad Napoliello, Charlie Post, Doron Schächter, and Robert Starobin

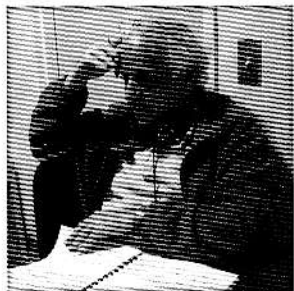
Bridge Records, Inc.
200 Clinton Ave. New Rochelle, NY 10801
For information about Bridge releases and to join our mailing list:
Email Bridge@bridgerecords.com www.bridgerecords.com
Brad Napoliello, webmaster



Allegra, 2002



Bill Bland "Best man", David and
Becky's Wedding Day, 1975



Paul Lansky, 2006



David and Danny after recording
New Rochelle pieces, 2007



Povl and David
Copenhagen, 2000



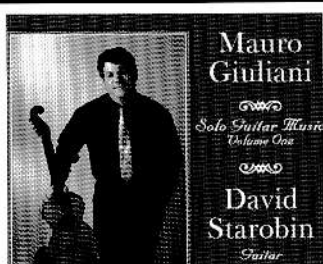
David and Tania, 2005



BRIDGE®



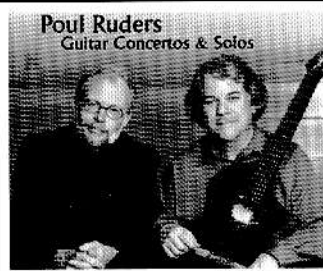
Bridge 9009



Bridge 9029



Bridge 9084



Bridge 9136

www.BridgeRecords.com