

# JENNIFER HIGDON

1) **An Exaltation of Larks** (2005) (15:58)

*string quartet*

**Lark Quartet**

Deborah Buck, violin 1  
Basia Danilow, violin 2  
Kathryn Lockwood, viola  
Caroline Stinson, cello

**Scenes from the Poet's Dreams** (1999) (23:43)

*piano quintet (piano left hand and string quartet)*

- 2) I. Racing Through Stars (2:13)
- 3) II. Summer Shimmers Across the Glass of Green Ponds (7:02)
- 4) III. I Saw the Electric Insects Coming (3:49)
- 5) IV. In the Blue Fields They Sing (7:05)
- 6) V. The Fast Dancers Dance Faster (3:30)

**Gary Graffman, piano**

**Lark Quartet**

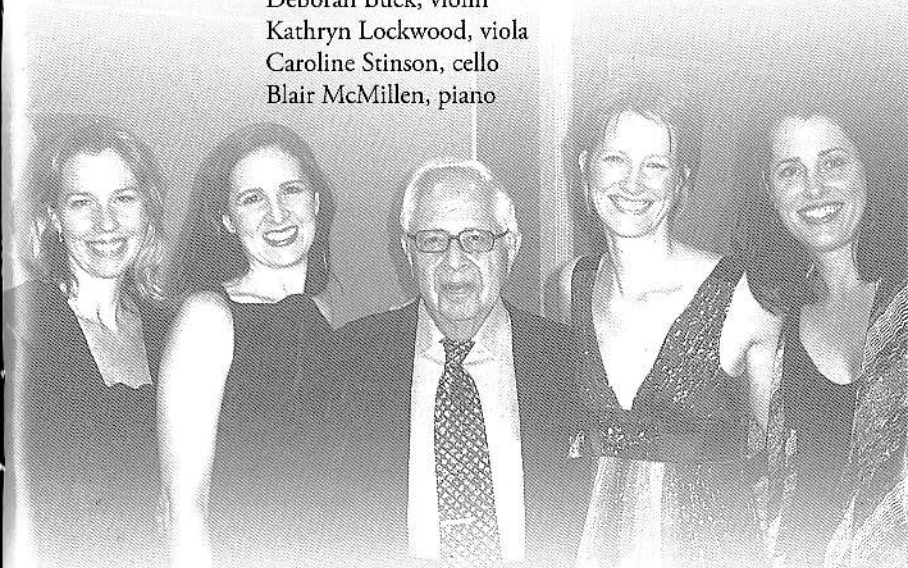
Deborah Buck, violin 1  
Basia Danilow, violin 2  
Kathryn Lockwood, viola  
Caroline Stinson, cello

**Light Refracted** (2002) (15:38)

*clarinet, violin, viola, cello, piano*

- 7) I. Inward (11:31)
- 8) II. Outward (4:07)

Todd Palmer, clarinet  
Deborah Buck, violin  
Kathryn Lockwood, viola  
Caroline Stinson, cello  
Blair McMillen, piano



Gary Graffman with the Lark Quartet



### *AN EXALTATION OF LARKS*

**E**xaltation: an act of exalting; the state of being exalted; an excessively intensified sense of well-being, power, importance; an increase in degree or intensity. *Lark*: a bird whose song is delivered in flight.

The first time someone told me that a collection of Larks is called an "Exaltation", I immediately thought, "What a sound an exaltation of larks must make!" This prompted my imagination to run wild in a composerly-fashion, thinking of thousands

of birds flying and singing wildly, with extraordinary energy and intensity. Not to mention the wonderful play on words that is implied with "exaltation". How to capture the beauty of the idea of exalting and singing? A string quartet seemed perfect!

"An Exaltation of Larks" was commissioned for the Tokyo String Quartet by the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, and sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Peters.

### *SCENES FROM THE POET'S DREAMS*

**W**hat kind of dreams would a poet have? Because they presumably work in a world of imagination, would their dreams be different than what others might dream? Or are we all poets in our own dream worlds? The poet might be the main character or s/he might also be just a part of the fabric, observing from the sidelines. This also represents the pianist's role within a piano quintet, prominent but also just part of the story. And so, different dreams present themselves...

The first movement "Racing Through Stars" portrays a journey, beginning slowly and progressing faster and faster, of moving away from Earth, into the sky and past all sorts of small, brilliant stars. Not realizing at first where the journey is going, the dreamer becomes more and more thrilled with the view as s/he looks back to what has been and

then forward to all that is coming. In the course of this trip, the quintet gets a chance to race through all 12 major keys. "Summer Shimmers Across the Glass of Green Ponds" is quite the contrast to the previous dream... here, the stillness is glasslike, as the dreamer sits by a pond, on a Summer's eve, at twilight, watching the float, which does not even jiggle in the water, at the end of a fishing pole... even the fish are still. "I Saw The Electric Insects Coming" is the kind of nightmare that no one likes to have, but in the poet's mind, the insects are both small and the size of buildings, and they are, regrettably, electric. Their invulnerability seems to be magnified by this presence of electricity, and the incessant hum is a reminder that they're never far away. There seems to be no escaping as they follow us from the day into the night. A small tribute to George Crumb (he of such a wonderful imagination) occurs in this movement. "In The Blue Fields They Sing" is a vision of a possible heaven...a place where the fields are like the sky. And

somewhere in those fields, there is a sweet and wonderful singing...as Blue would sing. "The Fast Dancers Dance Faster!" brings us the dancers, in a group ensemble and then in duets, as the pianist gets a chance to dance with each partner of the ensemble. Each string player has a different style in this dance, but having all those styles combined makes for a wonderful, frenzied romp. *Scenes From the Poet's Dreams*, was commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society for the Lark Quartet and Gary Graffman.

### LIGHT REFRACTED

**L**ight *Refracted* is a meditation on light. I have an orchestral work, *blue cathedral*, which reflects on light in a different manner. That piece uses the image of a cathedral, as a programmatic element. After it was premiered, several individuals pointed me to Monet's cathedral paintings, one of which is completely in blues. I became fascinated with the idea that painters often paint a particular

subject in varying degrees of light (as Monet did). I wondered if composers could do the same thing. So when I started *Light Refracted*, I decided to take the musical elements used in *blue cathedral*, and recast them in a different light. It was extremely difficult, but also an interesting challenge. Like Monet, I tried to examine the melodies, rhythms, harmonies, and orchestration in a new context. So the first movement reflects that "artistic" study and manipulation. The second movement was later added, upon the request of several performers, who wanted a fast-moving, energetic ending to the piece. So I decided that I should approach this 2nd movement in the same way... reexamine another work and recast/recompose it during the composition process. The result: a first movement that reflects on our inner light, and how we take that light in; and a second movement that is the opposite, our projection of light out to the world. The first movement of *Light Refracted* was commissioned by Music at Angel Fire. The second movement was commissioned by Astral Artists.

**P**ulitzer-prize winner Jennifer Higdon (b. Brooklyn, NY, December 31, 1962) started late in music, teaching herself to play flute at the age of 15 and then beginning formal musical studies at 18, with an even later start in composition at the age of 21. Despite this late start, Higdon has become a major figure in contemporary classical music and makes her living from commissions, completing between 5-10 pieces a year. These works represent a range of genres, from orchestral to chamber and from choral and vocal to wind ensemble. Hailed by the *Washington Post* as "a savvy, sensitive composer with a keen ear, an innate sense of form and a generous dash of pure esprit," the League of American Orchestras reports that she is one of America's most frequently performed composers.

Higdon's list of commissioners is extensive and includes The Philadelphia Orchestra,

The Chicago Symphony, The Atlanta Symphony, The Baltimore Symphony, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Minnesota Orchestra, The Pittsburgh Symphony, The Indianapolis Symphony, The Dallas Symphony, as well as such groups as the Tokyo String Quartet and the President's Own Marine Band.

Higdon received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, with the committee citing Higdon's work as a "deeply engaging piece that combines flowing lyricism with dazzling virtuosity." She has also received awards from the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts & Letters (two awards), the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, Meet-the-Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, and ASCAP.

Higdon has been a Featured Composer at festivals including Tanglewood, Vail, Cabrillo,



Grand Teton, Norfolk, and Winnipeg. She has served as Composer-in-Residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Fort Worth Symphony. During the 2012-13 season, she will be the Creative Director for the Cincinnati Symphony's Boundless Series and Composer-in-Residence with the Arkansas Symphony.

Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works. Her orchestral work *blue cathedral* is one of the most performed contemporary orchestral works and has received more than 400 performances worldwide since its premiere in 2000.

Her works have been recorded on over three dozen CDs. Her *Percussion Concerto* won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition in January,

2010. Other CDs including her music that have won Grammys: *Higdon: Concerto for Orchestra/City Scape*, *Strange Imaginary Animals*, and *Transmigration*. Higdon's most recent releases include the *Violin Concerto* with Deutsche Grammophon, *On a Wire* with Atlanta Symphony Media (Naxos), as well as a disc of chamber music with the Lark Ensemble titled *Norable Women*. The symphonic band versions of Higdon's *Percussion Concerto*, *Soprano Sax Concerto*, and *Oboe Concerto* will all be released this season as well.

Dr. Higdon currently holds the Milton L. Rock Chair in Composition Studies at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.

*For more info, visit [JenniferHigdon.com](http://JenniferHigdon.com)*



The Lark Quartet continues to delight audiences with its energy, passionate commitment and artistry since its inception in 1985. The Lark has performed in many of the world's great cultural centers such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Library of Congress, London's Wigmore Hall, L'Opéra de la Bastille in Paris, and appeared at international festivals including Lockenhaus, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Mostly Mozart, Istanbul Festival, Wolftrap and the Beethoven Festival in Moscow. Promising to deliver "a performance of grace, proportion and burnished brilliance" (The Washington Post), The Lark Quartet offers audiences new insights into the art of chamber music through programs that begin with the virtuosity of the western tradition and continue into music from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, regularly sharing the stage with dynamic collaborators and instrumentations.

The Lark has a distinguished tradition of working closely with today's most celebrated composers and commissioning new works, many of which have become mainstays of the chamber music repertoire, including *Billy in the Darbies* by William Bolcom for Stephen Salters, baritone, and Lark; *Scenes from the Poet's Dreams* by Jennifer Higdon for Lark and Gary Graffman; *Quartet no. 1 Musica celestis* and *Quartet no. 2 Musica instrumentalis* (winning the 1997 Pulitzer Prize) by Aaron Jay Kernis; *Piano Quintet* by Paul Moravec for Lark and Jeremy Denk; *Quartet no. 2 In Memoriam* and *Piano Quintet no. 2*, by Peter Schickele; *Early That Summer* by Julia Wolfe; *Viaggio in Italia* by Giovanni Sollima; and *Intarsio* for Lark and Yousif Sheronick, percussion, by Glen Velez.

With a discography comprising more than a dozen CDs, the Lark has recorded for the Decca/Argo, Arabesque, Bridge, ERI, En-

deavor, Koch, Point and New World labels. The quartet served as Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst from 2004-08 and has performed and taught as part of residencies across the United States. The Lark Quartet members, Deborah Buck and Basia Danilow, violins, Kathryn Lockwood, viola and Caroline Stinson, cello, all live in the New York City area with their families.

*For more information, please visit  
[www.LarkQuartet.com](http://www.LarkQuartet.com).*

Deborah Buck has built a strong presence as a chamber musician, concertmaster, recording artist, and soloist. Ms. Buck continues to lead many U.S. and New York based ensembles and since 2009, has served as the tenured concertmaster of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. A frequent recitalist, Ms. Buck has performed via broadcasts of the Dame Myra Hess Series in Chicago

for WFMT and for "Sunday's Live" in Los Angeles for KKKO. Additional past recital venues have included the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC. As a concerto soloist, she has performed with the Little Orchestra Society at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, and the West Virginia Symphony. Ms. Buck has enjoyed varied recording work ranging from music for Motion Picture/Television and Phonograph to being the featured soloist for the re-mastered American silent film classic, "The Scarlet Letter" (Turner Classic Movies). Ms. Buck has also recorded for Endeavor Classics, Koch, Arabesque, and the North South record labels. As a Starling and Jascha Heifetz Scholarship recipient, Ms. Buck's past teachers have included Dorothy DeLay (The Juilliard School) Robert Lipsett, (University of Southern California) and Michael Tseitlin. Ms. Buck performs on a violin by Vincenzo Postiglione, graciously on loan by Ray and Marcia Corwin.

Basia Danilow enjoys a diverse musical life encompassing chamber music, recording, orchestral and solo performances in the US and abroad. A winner of the Artists International Competition, she has appeared in recital at Lincoln Center, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall and the Kosciuszko Foundation as well as in Yugoslavia and Russia. In addition to being a member of the Lark Quartet, Ms. Danilow is concertmaster of The Princeton Symphony Orchestra, often appearing as soloist. She is a member of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and performs regularly with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Ms. Danilow has recorded for the Sony, Atlantic and RCA Victor Red Seal labels and regularly participates in numerous festivals such as Caramoor, Lincoln Center Festival, Central Vermont Chamber Music Festival, Windham, Music Festival of the Hamptons and the International Summer Institute at the Moscow Conservatory. Ms. Danilow received her education at the Mannes College of Music, Montclair State University and the Moscow Conservatory.

Kathryn Lockwood has been hailed as a Violist of exceptional talent. In addition to being a member of Lark, Ms. Lockwood is a member of the viola and percussion duo, duoJalal and performs with groups including Trio Solisti, Music from Copland House, and the Broyhill Chamber Ensemble. Kathryn moved from her homeland of Australia to the US and was the winner of awards including Naumburg Chamber Music, Coleman Chamber Music, Concert Artists Guild, and solo competitions including Primrose, Washington International, and the Pasadena Instrumental. As an original member of the Pacifica Quartet, Ms. Lockwood toured extensively around the world. She can be heard on recordings on Cedille Records; on a CD of viola music by Inessa Zaretsky; "Fireoptics" and "Klap Ur Handz" with Lark on Endeavor; and "A Different World" with duoJalal on Innova Recordings. Ms. Lockwood is currently on the faculty at University of Massachusetts/Amherst. She earned her Master's degree with Donald

McInnes at USC, and her Bachelor of Music degree from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, studying with Elizabeth Morgan.

Cellist Caroline Stinson has performed in the US, Canada and Europe as a soloist, recitalist and chamber musician in both traditional and contemporary repertoire. Ms. Stinson's solo appearances include the Museum of Modern Art's Summergarden, Poisson Rouge and Bargemusic in New York; Cité de la Musique Strasbourg and Lucerne Festival in Europe, and the Centennial Centre and Winspear Halls in Canada. As a soloist she has performed with the Banff Festival and Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestras, the Alberta Baroque Ensemble, the Interlochen World Youth and Syracuse Symphonics. A champion of contemporary music, Ms. Stinson has commissioned concerti from Steven Bryant and Andrew Waggoner and works for solo cello, as well as chamber music with Lark and Open End Ensemble.

Caroline's début solo CD, *Lines*, was released on Albany Records in 2011 and she has recorded for the Naxos, Koch, Bridge, Phoenix, Capstone and Innova labels. A native of Canada, she is the grateful recipient of numerous grants and awards including the Canada Council Watkins Prize in music. Her teachers were Alan Harris (Cleveland), Maria Kliegel (Germany), Joel Krosnick (Juilliard) and Tanya Prochazka. At Juilliard, Caroline is on the Pre-College faculty and is an assistant to Joel Krosnick, and is on the cello and chamber music faculty of the Setnor School of Music at Syracuse University.



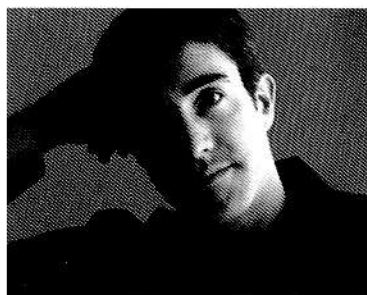
Gary Graffman has been a major figure in the music world since his debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the age of eighteen. For the next three decades he toured almost constantly, playing the most demanding works in the piano literature. Graffman made numerous recordings with the orchestras of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland and Chicago under such conductors as Bernstein, Ormandy, Szell and Mehta. His discography includes concertos by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Brahms, Chopin and Beethoven,

with the performances widely regarded as touchstones. In 1979, however, an injury to his right hand limited Mr. Graffman's concertizing to the small body of music written for the left hand alone, and he joined the faculty of Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music. In 1986—exactly fifty years after entering Curtis as a seven-year-old student, Mr. Graffman was appointed director of that renowned all-scholarship conservatory, also serving as its president from 1995 to 2006. Now retired from administrative duties, Mr. Graffman remains on the Curtis faculty while continuing his active concert career as a one-handed pianist. In addition to major left-hand concertos by Ravel, Prokofiev, Britten, Strauss and Korngold, Mr. Graffman's current repertoire includes six new concertos and one chamber music work commissioned for him as well as complete recitals for the left hand alone.



Clarinetist Todd Palmer has appeared as soloist, recitalist, chamber music collaborator, educator, arranger, and presenter in a variety of musical endeavors around the world. A three time Grammy nominated artist, he has appeared as soloist with the Atlanta, Houston, BBC Scotland orchestras; St. Paul, New York, Cincinnati, Montréal chamber symphonies, among many others. In addition to the Lark Quarter, he has collaborated with many of the world's finest string ensembles such as the St. Lawrence, Brentano, Borromeo, Pacifica, Daedalus and Ying quartets. Palmer

has also shared the stage with sopranos Kathleen Battle, Renée Fleming, Elizabeth Futral, Heidi Grant Murphy and Dawn Upshaw, as well as many other artists. He has championed Osvaldo Golijov's *Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind* around the world and commissioned the theatre work *Orpheus and Euridice* by Ricky Gordon which was presented by Great Performers at Lincoln Center. He was a winner of the Young Concert Artist International Auditions, and has participated for 18 years at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, SC, along with numerous other summer music festivals in the US and abroad. He has held principle clarinet positions in the Minnesota Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Gotham Opera, Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Grand Teton Festival, and for two years appeared in Lincoln Center's revival of *South Pacific*.



Blair McMillen has established himself as one of the most versatile and sought-after pianists today. He has performed in venues both traditional and avant-garde; from Carnegie Hall, the Moscow Conservatory, the Metropolitan Museum, Caramoor, Miller Theatre, and the Library of Congress, to (le) Poisson Rouge, Galapagos, the Knitting Factory, and The Stone. Highlights from recent seasons include the Walter Piston *Concertino* at Carnegie Hall with the American Symphony Orchestra, over a

dozen performances of John Cage's piano magnum-opus *Sonatas and Interludes*, and numerous appearances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. An avid chamber player, Mr. McMillen is pianist for the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players, among others. He is the co-founder and director of the Rite of Summer Music Festival on NYC's Governor's Island, an alt-classical outdoor series which had its critically acclaimed inaugural season in Summer 2011. Blair McMillen holds degrees from Oberlin College, the Juilliard School, and Manhattan School of Music. He lives in New York City and serves on the music faculty at Bard College and Conservatory.



Producer: Silas Brown

Recorded, edited, and mastered by Silas Brown

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Design: Douglas Holly

Photographs of Lark Quartet: Alicia Hansen

Photograph of Gary Graffman: Carol Rosegg

Photograph of Todd Palmer: Christian Steiner

Photograph of Blair McMillen: Keiko Nagata

Executive Producers: Becky and David Starobin

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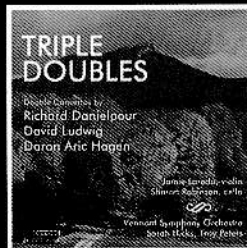
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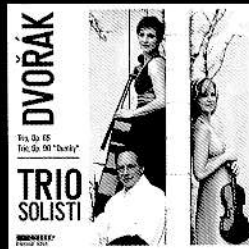
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The Lark Quartet's dedication to the performance and promotion of American composers continues with this recording featuring works by Jennifer Higdon. Included on this disc are three works that have been in the Lark repertoire for a number of years and with which we felt a depth of musical connection worthy of recording. The Lark wishes to thank our dear colleagues Gary, Todd, and Blair for their beautiful, personal playing and their dedication to the performance and recording of these vibrant works.

-The Lark Quartet, January 2013



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