

Acknowledgments

Recorded on June 16 & 17, 2011 in Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall
at the University of Oklahoma School of Music, Norman, Oklahoma

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Recording Engineer: Jeff Harrison, Harrison Digital Productions,
Belchertown, Massachusetts

Mixing, Editing, and Mastering: Dan Fedora, Harrison Digital
Productions, Lance Drege, and Karen Beres

Cover Image: David Maslanka

Publishers:

This Is The World is available from David Maslanka Publications.

Gavel Patter is available direct from Libby Larsen.

Paganini Variations for Two Pianos is published by Chester Music.

Special thanks to:

The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, at the University of
North Carolina School of the Arts, and former director Margaret
S. Mertz for their full funding support of the Maslanka commission
through the LINKS Commissioning Project

The University of Oklahoma Research Council Faculty Grant
program for their financial support of this recording.



This Is The World

CanAm Piano Duo

Karen Beres & Christopher Hahn, piano
Lance Drege & David Steffens, percussion

David Maslanka This Is The World

Libby Larsen Gavel Patter

Witold Lutoslawski Paganini Variations for Two Pianos



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The Music

THIS IS THE WORLD we know, the world of air and breathing and sun and beating hearts

The overall feeling of *THIS IS THE WORLD* is one of quiet awe at the nature of our world, both the planet on which we live, and the amazing web of life that it supports — not only that but its place, and our place in the universal web of life, the jeweled “net of Indra.”

I. The **Nighthawks** painting of Edward Hopper is his iconic contribution to American Culture. It is one of the favorite paintings. It captures something absolutely fundamental about the American experience, and that is expressed probably more by the architecture of the picture — the amazing collection of shapes, and the relationship of light to dark, especially the overwhelming darkness — than by the unspoken “story” of the diner and the people in it. My music expresses some aspects of my own take on the “story,” especially the hidden life in the blank windows of the building in the background, but my overall composition is, as well, a parallel to Hopper’s life-long preoccupation with shapes and light. He managed to convey powerful unspoken human and universal elements through abstract forms.

II. The very sweet melody and luminous harmonies of **Do You Know My Name?** touch me in a very hard way every time I play through this music. The melody is derived very loosely from the Bach Chorale *On the Fortieth Day After Easter*. The title *Do You Know My Name?* comes with no further explanation. . .

III. **Out of the Blue** grows out of the Chorale melody *Christ is Risen*. This melody has an inexpressible mystery in it for me, and I have used variations of it in several other compositions. *Out of the Blue* suggests the sudden arrival of something surprising — in this case a luminous joy.

IV. **The Closer You Get the Stranger the Stars Look** began as a whimsical pastel drawing that I made some years ago. The stars are square (!), one is a Cheshire cat, one has “a message for you,” and one has horns and fangs. This quiet and whimsical music suggests a deep listening to one’s innermost self.

V. **Let it Be** embodies yet another Chorale melody, *Lord, Do Not Be Angry With Me*. The music is a deep prayer for peace within, peace with others, peace with our beautiful world, and the emergence of our lives as children of the universe.

—David Maslanka

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1943. He attended the Oberlin College Conservatory where he studied composition with Joseph Wood. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, and did masters and doctoral study in composition at Michigan State University where his principal teacher was H. Owen Reed. Maslanka’s music for winds has become especially well known. Among his 40-plus works for wind ensemble and band are Symphonies 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9, 12 concertos, a Mass, and many concert pieces. His wind chamber music includes four wind quintets, two saxophone quartets, and many works for solo instrument and piano. In addition, he has written a variety of orchestral and choral pieces.

David Maslanka’s compositions are published by Carl Fischer, Inc., David Maslanka Publications, Kjos Music Company, Marimba Productions, Inc., the North American Saxophone Alliance, OU Percussion Press, and TrevCo Music, and have been recorded on Albany, Reference Recordings, BIS (Sweden), Naxos, Cambria, CRI, Mark, Novisse, AUR, Cafua (Japan), Brain Music (Japan), Barking Dog, and Klavier labels. He has served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, and since 1990 has been a freelance composer. He now lives in Missoula, Montana. David Maslanka is a member of ASCAP.

Gavel Patter

Gavel Patter, for four-hand piano, results from the investigation I have been making of finding musical form in American language traditions. Finding unusually strong rhythm and flow in American auctioneering patter, it occurred to me to compose music that uses auctioneering patter as its musical material. *Gavel Patter* uses auctioneers’ styles, pitches, timing, and complex rhythms to propel it. I have also incorporated a ‘run to the close’ in which the auctioneer, with the help of a partner placed out on the auction floor, plays two bidders off against each other at high speed in order to drive the bidding up to the close with the loud rap of the gavel.

—Libby Larsen

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of more than 400 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Grammy Award winning and widely recorded, including more than 50 CD's of her work, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertoire.

As a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer's Forum, which has become an invaluable aid for composers in a transitional time for American arts. A former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen has also held residencies with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony and the Colorado Symphony.

Paganini Variations for Two Pianos, with added percussion parts by Marta Ptasińska

In the original setting for two pianos, Witold Lutoslawski's 1941 *Paganini Variations* featured the percussive treatment of the piano, an increasingly popular choice among composers by the Second World War. The addition of a percussion duo (which utilizes the same battery as Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*) in this arrangement by Marta Ptasińska serves to augment the brilliant writing for the pianos, while realizing the orchestral potential of the piece, culminating in an energetic and breathless tour de force.

The *Paganini Variations* closely resembles the original, Paganini's own variations from the Twenty-fourth Caprice for solo violin. The virtuoso possibilities of the violin showcased in the Caprice are adapted by Lutoslawski to make his *Variations* an idiomatic piano work, and the use of two pianos imbues the familiar theme with intricate rhythmic interplay and chromatic interest.

Witold Lutoslawski (25 January 1913 – 7 February 1994) was born in Warsaw in 1913 and soon showed his prodigious musical and intellectual talent. He studied at the Warsaw Conservatory (1932-37) and soon made his mark as a pianist and composer. During these studies, Poland lived through a politically difficult time. Lutoslawski's attempts at studying in Paris were therefore replaced by military training, imprisonment by the Germans and escape back to Warsaw. He

and Andrzej Panufnik survived the war playing piano in cafes (where amongst others the Paganini Variations (1941) were created). Few works from before 1945 have been published: those that have include the Paganini Variations for two pianos.

Among many international prizes awarded to Lutoslawski were the UNESCO Prize (1959,1968), the French order of Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres (1982), Grawemeyer Award (1985), Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal (1986), in the last year of his life, the Swedish Polar Music Prize and the Inamori Foundation Prize, Kyoto, for his outstanding contribution to contemporary European music, and, posthumously, the International Music Award for best large-scale composition for the fourth symphony.

Marta Ptasińska is one of the best-known Polish woman composers. Born in Warsaw, Poland, and living in the United States since 1972, she has been musically active in both the U.S. and Europe. Also widely recognized as a virtuoso percussionist specializing in performances of contemporary music, she has appeared on many new music festivals, and premiered numerous percussion works. Since 1970 she has been teaching composition and percussion first at the State College in Warsaw and then successively at Bennington College in Vermont, the University of California in Berkeley and Santa Barbara, and Indiana University.

The Performers



Karen Beres and Christopher Hahn have been presenting innovative programs of duet and two-piano repertoire as the **CanAm Piano Duo** since 2002. In recital, they create a stimulating musical experience through innovative programming, lively audience interaction, and musicianship and precision of the highest caliber.

The CanAm Piano Duo won the silver medal at the 2008 International Chamber Music Ensemble Competition in Boston, and received a distinguished ranking at the 2009 IBLA Grand Prize competition in Ragusa, Italy. As avid proponents of contemporary music, Karen and Christopher perform a varied repertoire of new works and masterpieces of the twentieth century

alongside more traditional works for the genre. The CanAm Piano Duo is frequently engaged to present recitals, master classes and workshops in the United States, Canada and Europe, including the *World Piano Conference* in Serbia, and the *Classical Music Festival* in Eisenstadt, Austria. They are also extensively involved in music education and have been recognized for their motivating programs for students of all ages. Visit them at www.canampianoduo.com for more information.

Karen Beres is a frequent collaborative pianist in performances across the United States, Canada, and Europe. A summer staff member for the *Classical Music Festival* in Eisenstadt, Austria, she is involved in rehearsals with the choirs, in chamber music performances, and as a workshop presenter for the affiliated *Piano Seminar*. A winner of a campus-wide Excellence in Teaching award, Dr. Beres is a keyboard faculty member at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Christopher Hahn has performed as a solo and collaborative artist throughout North America and Europe with concerts in Carnegie Hall—Weill Recital Hall, The Music Gallery in Toronto, and at the Haydnsaal in Eisenstadt, Austria. He has had the honor of performing for the Archbishop Desmond Tutu with the Metropolitan Opera's Leona Mitchell, and has also performed with such recognized artists as flutist Christina Jennings, trumpet/piano virtuoso Guy Few, pianist Lydia Brown, cellist Amit Peled, and Russian dissident poet, Evgeny Yevtushenko. As a guest of the American Embassy in Sarajevo, Dr. Hahn gave a concert tour of Bosnia-Herzegovina with performances in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and at the *Luciano Pavarotti Center* in Mostar. Christopher is an associate professor of piano at the University of Montana.



An associate professor in the School of Music at the University of Oklahoma, **Lance Drege** directs the percussion program, teaches applied percussion, conducts the OU Percussion Orchestra, and teaches other percussion related courses. From 1997-2002, Dr. Drege served as Assistant to the Director for the School of Music. Prior to coming to OU, Drege taught public school instrumental music in Hobart, Oklahoma and Elk City, Oklahoma. Drege has been a member of the percussion section of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic from 1989-1999 and has held the Principal Timpanist chair since that time. A staff member of

the *Classical Music Festival* in Eisenstadt, Austria, Drege plays principal tympani in the festival orchestra in addition to his administrative duties. He has twice served as the Oklahoma State Chapter President for the Percussive Arts Society, is a past recipient of the Presidential Distinguished Educator Award, and is an Artist/Education Endorser for the Vic Firth Percussion Company.



David Steffens is Professor of Percussion at Oklahoma City University's Bass School of Music and Principal Percussionist of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic Orchestra. He holds the Bachelor of Music degree from Central Michigan University, the Master of Music degree from Michigan State University, the Performer's Certificate and Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music - University of Rochester. Dr. Steffens has been Principal Percussionist of the Midland Symphony, Principal Timpanist of the West Shore Symphony Orchestra, a member of the Greater Lansing Symphony and the Schlossfestspiele Heidelberg Germany. He is a founding member of the Robert

Hohner Percussion Ensemble and can be heard on several internationally released compact discs on the Digital Music Products recording label and the Albany records label. He is a regular performer with the Lyric Theater Company of Oklahoma and numerous nationally touring Broadway shows. Dr. Steffens also has served as percussion artist/faculty for the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute and the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.