

**University of Texas at El Paso**

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**From the Selected Works of Dominic Dousa**

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October 13, 2005

## Solo Composition Recital (October 13, 2005)

Dominic Dousa, *University of Texas at El Paso*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/dominic\\_dousa/76/](https://works.bepress.com/dominic_dousa/76/)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO DEPARTMENT OF

# Music

PRESENTS

**Faculty Recital Series**

***MUSICAL LANDSCAPES***

**Dominic Dousa, composer/piano**

*with*

**Dena Kay Jones, piano**

**John Siqueiros, guitar**

**Christopher Meerdink, tenor**

**Don Wilkinson, soprano saxophone**

**Laurence Gibson, viola**

Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall 7:30pm

## PROGRAM

### *High Vistas* (2005)

- I. Autumnal Air
- II. Mountain Mists
- III. The Sky's the Limit

Dominic Dousa (b. 1973)

Dena Kay Jones and Dominic Dousa, piano

### *Suite for Solo Guitar* (2004)

- I. Prelude
- II. Song Without Words
- III. Dance

John Siqueiros, guitar

### *INTERMISSION*

### *Songs of Sea and Life* (2004)

- I. 'The winds, as at their our of birth'
- II. Break, Break, Break
- III. Crossing the Bar

Poetry by Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

Christopher Meerdink, tenor  
Dominic Dousa, piano

### *Ludington Woods* (1999)

- I. Con spirito
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Energico, con spirito

Don Wilkinson, soprano saxophone  
Laurence Gibson, viola  
Dominic Dousa, piano

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *MUSICAL LANDSCAPES*

Like visual art, natural landscapes have the power to evoke moods through their colors, forms, and textures. Other sensory elements, like the air that changes with the seasons, serve to further shape and intensify these moods. Many of my compositions are influenced by my experiences of the natural world. Through music, I hope to paint a "landscape in sound," not so much in an attempt to suggest visual images, but rather to recreate the feelings and moods of those experiences.

The first half of tonight's program features works written in response to my travels through the beautiful landscapes of the desert southwest, my home since the summer of last year. The second half of the program opens with musical settings of Alfred Tennyson's poetry, with images of the sea expressed in word, and concludes with a work that has its roots in my native Midwest.

#### *High Vistas*

Composed Autumn 2004 / May 2005; El Paso

Performance Time: Approximately 18 minutes

The spectacular scenery of the southern New Mexico wilderness provided the inspiration for this four-hand piano suite. The main themes of all three movements came to me while touring the Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft, though subsequent trips to other regions, including the Rio Grande valley and the Gila Wilderness, left impressions that found their way into the music. *Autumnal Air* recalls the vibrant feelings of the crisp, cool, refreshing air and radiant colors of the season. The other two movements are based on experiences from a trip to the southern Sacramentos in early September of last year, when cool, rainy weather and low clouds that shrouded the mountains provided a stark contrast to the warm desert below. The landscape offered glimpses of green and grandeur, though one could only imagine the broad, spectacular views of the surrounding peaks and of the Tularosa basin. Feelings of quiet, dreamy beauty and a sense of awe and mystery are evoked in *Mountain Mists*. Later that day, as darkness began to fall, the clouds slowly began to lift. Although the overcast skies did not fully break, the magnificence of the boundless heavens lay just beyond the rising clouds. *The Sky's the Limit* expresses the exhilarating thoughts of the vastness above and the soaring of the human spirit.

#### *Suite for Solo Guitar*

Composed November-December 2004; El Paso

Performance Time: Approximately 19 minutes

Shortly after my arrival in El Paso, faculty guitarist John Siqueiros and I embarked on a collaborative project, which resulted in this suite. At that time, I had only a passing familiarity with works for guitar, mainly from hearing transcriptions of Renaissance- and Baroque-era compositions. Perhaps through this acquaintance I incorporated some elements of the Baroque style — motoric rhythm, melodic and harmonic sequence, one line projecting both melody and harmony — into the suite. On the whole, the piece is tuneful with a relaxed mood, reflecting the feelings of observing the simple beauties of the surrounding desert scenery on warm, sunny autumn afternoons. The suite opens with a short prelude, which maintains a constant rhythmic energy. In the second movement, *Song Without Words*, the lyrical dimension of the guitar is highlighted, as tranquil, slower sections alternate with more animated and agitated faster sections. Like a concluding gigue in a Baroque suite, the final movement is in a lively 6/8 meter, with a spirited feel throughout.

### *Songs of Sea and Life*

Composed October-December 2004; El Paso

Performance Time: Approximately 10 minutes

The common themes of the three poems that comprise this song cycle are the imagery of the sea and its metaphors for various life experiences. 'The winds, as at their hour of birth' reflects the purity of new life and freedom. The shimmering accompaniment and soaring vocal lines underscore the ethereal and blissful atmosphere evoked by the images of winds and streams and of the proclamations, "we are free."

In "Break, Break, Break," the poet almost defiantly goads the sea to continue its churning while a storm rages in his own mind. He then remarks whimsically about those who amid the tumult are seemingly unperturbed ("O well for...") before his attention turns to the troubling awareness that his own sense of comfort and ease is gone ("But O for the touch..."). The setting of the final stanza combines the energetic mood of the breaking waves and the somber realization that what has brought security will not come back. However, the song ends not with a feeling of resignation, but with an invigorating finish that suggests a sense of resolve to forge a new path.

In "Crossing the Bar," the softly pulsating accompaniment and opening melodic motive in the piano evokes a sea that is now calm, gentle, and a place of repose. This tranquil mood gives way to moments of introspection and melancholy ("And may there be no moaning....", "And may there be no sadness..."), as one prepares for the final stage in life's journey. The song concludes with a fervent expression of hope and confidence that one will find peace. The end of the last verse, "when I have crossed the bar," brings the first conclusive cadence in the home key, indicating that one will indeed find rest at the end of life's journey.

### *Ludington Woods*

Composed May 1999; Mt. Pleasant, MI

Performance Time: Approximately 27 minutes

As another academic year came to an end, I set out on one of my favorite activities, a drive through the countryside, near my adopted home at the time, central Michigan. What I anticipated would be a short trip turned into a half-day excursion which took me to the shores of Lake Michigan and the wooded landscapes of Ludington State Park, 80 miles away. Not long before this trip, a saxophonist friend and I had discussed the idea of writing a few short compositions for soprano saxophone and viola that we could perform. That bright spring day and the beautiful scenery put me into such a fine mood that melodies and ideas came to me for a longer work. Just like my anticipated short trip turned into a longer outing, the anticipated short pieces quickly grew into a full-scale three-movement chamber work for the two instruments and piano.

Many of the melodies in this piece have a folk-like spirit, reflecting the vibrant feelings of that day and the enjoyment of simple pleasures. Although the instrumentation is unusual, the piece follows a structure typical of a classical multi-movement chamber composition. The first movement has a generally lively character and is in sonata form, with its typical thematic contrasts and development. Both the saxophone and viola present long, lyrical melodies in the slower second movement, whose minor-key middle section adds a touch of melancholy. The vivacious and tuneful final movement brings the piece to a sunny close.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Dominic Dousa**, a native of Rochester, Minnesota, joined the faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso Department of Music in August of 2004. He holds degrees in music from Ball State University (D.A., 2003), Central Michigan University (M.M., 2000), and Harvard University (A.B. summa cum laude, 1995) and in statistics from Iowa State University (M.S., 1998). He also has studied composition in Prague (1995-96). His primary composition teachers include Jody Nagel, David Gillingham, Craig Weston and Milan Slavický.

Before coming to UTEP, Dr. Dousa held teaching positions at St. Mary's University in Winona, MN (aural skills, music appreciation) and Rochester (MN) Community and Technical College (business & economic statistics). As a graduate student, he also has taught music courses at Ball State University, Anderson (IN) University, and Central Michigan University, and statistics courses at Iowa State University.

Dr. Dousa's compositions have received performances in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Peru, China, the Czech Republic, and Finland. Events where his works have been presented include the 2000 World Saxophone Congress in Montreal, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Bach Festival in Trujillo, Peru (2000), and a concert series in Toluca, Mexico that was sponsored in part by the Mexican Institute of Culture (2001).

Two of Dousa's song cycles, *With a Song in My Heart* and *Six Songs on the Poetry of Langston Hughes*, have been recorded by baritone Gerald J. Blanchard (with Dousa at the piano) and released on the CD "With a Song in My Heart" by Blue Griffin Recording. This CD features art songs set to texts of African American poets.

In addition to his activities as teacher and composer, Dousa has remained active as an accompanist and chamber musician.

**Laurence Gibson** graduated of the Eastman School of Music, where he was a violin student of Josef Knitzer, and studied conducting at the University of Wisconsin with Otto Werner-Mueller. Before coming to El Paso, he performed with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra as assistant concertmaster.

In El Paso, Prof. Gibson has pursued a triple career as violinist, conductor, and educator. For over 25 years he has served as concertmaster of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and music director for Ballet El Paso.

**Dena Kay Jones** joined the music faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso in 2002. She has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States and Spain. Notable performances include her New York debut at Merkin Hall in March of 2003 and her appearance with cellists Zuill Bailey and Dennis Brott at the El Paso Pro Musica Chamber Festival in January of 2004.

A native of central Illinois, Dr. Jones received both the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in piano performance from the University of Illinois. In August of 2001, she completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she studied with Steinway artist Nohema Fernández.

In addition to maintaining a widely varied repertoire from the standard piano literature, Dr. Jones has focused her energies on performance and research of the Spanish piano repertoire. She was invited to be a guest lecturer and performer at the International Joaquin Rodrigo festival at Winona State University in 2001 and recently was awarded a grant from the Spanish Embassy in conjunction with American universities to record a CD of Spanish music starting in the summer of 2006.

**Christopher Meerdink** joined the music faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso in 2004. Previously he taught at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana as a member of the voice faculty. Dr. Meerdink earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Houghton College and his Master of Music degree from Bowling Green State University. He completed his doctorate at the University of Michigan in voice performance under the direction of George Shirley.

Dr. Meerdink has performed extensively in recital and on the opera stage. Some of his roles include Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, the Magician in *The Consul* and Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*. He spent four years working for Toledo Opera as a Resident Artist. His performing experience there included mainstage roles, as well as concert engagements and opera quartet programs. He toured extensively throughout northwestern Ohio and southern Michigan with the Toledo Opera Education and Outreach Program.

**John Siqueiros** joined the music faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso in 2002. He earned degrees in guitar performance from UTEP (B.M., 1979) and the University of California at San Diego (M.A., 1989). At UCSD, he studied under the direction of the renowned guitar master Pepe Romero. He has participated in a master classes directed by Manuel Barrueco, Leo Brouwer, Sharon Isben, and Michael Lorimer.

Prof. Siqueiros has over 30 years of teaching experience. He has held teaching positions at the University of California at San Diego, New Mexico State University, and Houston's Jr. High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Before returning to El Paso, he spent 12 years in the San Francisco Bay Area where he was active as a performer and teacher.

**Don Wilkinson** teaches oboe, bassoon, saxophone, and woodwind methods at UTEP and also directs the Basketball Pep Band. For 15 years, Dr. Wilkinson's served as band director at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels in the public schools of California. He has also taught woodwinds and jazz band at Hastings College in Nebraska, and oboe, saxophone, and jazz band at Western Kentucky University.

Throughout his teaching and directing career, Dr. Wilkinson has remained an active performer, playing with ensembles such as the Fresno Opera Orchestra and the Claremore Chamber Players in Kentucky, as well as several community orchestras, dance bands and show orchestras. In El Paso, he performs on oboe, bassoon and saxophone with the El Paso Symphony, the El Paso Opera Orchestra, the Bruce Nehring Consort, El Paso Pro Musica, and many other groups. He has given numerous solo and chamber music performances with his wife, pianist Judi Wilkinson, who is also a faculty member at the UTEP Department of Music.

Dr. Wilkinson's doctorate, completed at the University of Arizona in 1984, is unique in that it was the University's first woodwind performance degree granted with all five woodwinds emphasized equally. He is currently finishing a larger research project involving oral cavity acoustics and intuitive teaching techniques for wind instruments.

## **Texts for *Songs of Sea and Life***

### **Song: 'The winds, as at their hour of birth'**

The winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, 'We are free.'

The streams, through many a liliated row  
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, 'We are free.'

### **Break, Break, Break**

Break, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

### **Crossing the Bar**

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crossed the bar.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)