

Jarba, Mare Jarba  
Traditional Hungarian-Romani folksong

Transliteration:  
Jarba, mare jarba mas duce a casa, da nu pot ca am jurat,  
Jarba, mare jarba mas duce a casa, da nu pot ca am jurat.  
Mare jarba, verde jarba nu me pot duce a casa.  
Jarba, mare jarba mas duce a casa, da nu pot ca am jurat.

O mers mama de pe sat, O lasat coliba goala,  
Infrunzitu, ingurzitu da plina de saracie, da plina de saracie.  
Mare jarba, verde jarba nu me pot duce a casa.  
Jarba, mare jarba mas duce a casa, da nu pot ca am jurat.

This excerpt from *Songs for Muska* features an incredible text by Somaia Ramish, a poet from Afghanistan, expertly translated by Farzana Marie and featured in her book *Load Poems Like Guns*.

Load poems like guns — war’s geography calls you to arms.  
The enemy has no signs, counter-signs,

colors  
signals  
symbols!  
Load poems like guns — each moment is loaded with bombs

bullets  
blasts  
death-sounds —  
death and war  
don’t follow rules  
you can make your pages into white flags a thousand times  
but swallow your words, say no more. Load your poems —  
your body —  
your thoughts —  
like guns.  
The schoolhouses of war rise up  
within you.  
Maybe you  
are next.

—Somaia Ramish  
Translated by Farzana Marie, used with permission from *Load Poems Like Guns*, Holy Cow! Press, 2015

*sing to us, cedars* is a lullaby in times of uncertainty. This piece was written after a very difficult year of observing collective suffering as the COVID death toll increased, countless unarmed black people were killed at the hands of law enforcement, and wildfires destroyed ecosystems and homes. I found myself losing faith in goodness as people screamed over each other about who was "right" instead of taking the time to listen and care for one another. That year, I would often walk through a park with close friends. We'd walk and talk for hours, enjoying the fresh air. We would notice how the ducklings that swam in the creek would grow older between visits, and we watched the leaves change colors and fall to the ground as the months went on. This escape was so important to me; it reminded me that there are good things in this world worth fighting for even when all feels hopeless. I wrote this piece for 10-part choir in the span of six hours during a late-night composing session in spring of 2021. This poem by Emily Pauline Johnson is written from the perspective of the birds after a long, exhausting day of flight. The piece is inspired by the sounds of the woods on a breezy day and is my sonic representation of feelings of instability and uncertainty. But just as the sun would peek through the swaying branches to warm my face each day I walked through that park, I hope that you may find moments of beauty and comfort throughout this piece.

*The Birds' Lullaby* by E. Pauline Johnson  
I  
Sing to us, cedars; the twilight is creeping  
With shadowy garments, the wilderness through;  
All day we have carolled, and now would be sleeping,  
So echo the anthems we warbled to you;  
While we swing, swing,  
And your branches sing,  
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

II  
Sing to us, cedars; the night-wind is sighing,  
Is wooing, is pleading, to hear you reply;  
And here in your arms we are restfully lying,

Translation:  
Green grass, tall grass, I would like to go home,  
but I cannot, because I have sworn not to.  
Tall grass, green grass – oh, that I cannot go home!

My mother has left the village; she left the hut empty,  
Adorned with leaves but full of poverty.  
Tall grass, green grass – oh, that I cannot go home!  
Tall grass, green grass – I would like to go home.  
but I cannot, because I have sworn not to.

IV. I know my mind  
I know my mind and I have made my choice;  
Not from your temper does my doom depend;  
Love me or love me not, you have no voice  
In this, which is my portion to the end.  
Your presence and your favours, the full part  
That you could give, you now can take away:  
What lies between your beauty and my heart  
Not even you can trouble or betray.  
Mistake me not — unto my inmost core  
I do desire your kiss upon my mouth;  
They have not craved a cup of water more  
That bleach upon the deserts of the south;  
Here might you bless me; what you cannot do  
Is bow me down, who have been loved by you.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) was an American poet who produced a great body of work in her lifetime. Among her works are several books of poetry, essays, plays, an opera libretto, and over two hundred sonnets. The sonnets cover a vast range of topics including love, loss, beauty, music, death, war, science, legendary figures, and the end of humanity. Beautifully constructed, I find that many of Millay's sonnets are well suited to be set to music. From 2000-2006, I set sixteen of her sonnets for a cappella choir, arranged into six sonnet sets.

"By our first strange and fatall interview,  
By all desires which thereof did ensue,"  
-John Donne

These words are found at the beginning of *The Fatal Interview*, a book of sonnets written in 1931 by Millay. While married to Eugene Boisevain, Millay had a long-term love affair with George Dillon, a poet who was fourteen years her junior. This affair inspired her to write the fifty two sonnets that comprise The Fatal Interview; John Donne's poetry aptly describes the sparks that flew after Millay and Dillon first met. In Sonnets of the Fatal Interview, I set four sonnets that outline the curve of Millay's and Dillon's relationship. This beast that rends me (mvmt. 1) shows Millay's desire for Dillon; Since of no creature (mvmt. 2) living illustrates her deep love for him; Hearing your words (mvmt. 3) and I know my mind (mvmt. 4) trace her decision to break off the affair with Dillon and return to her husband.

*Tuttarana*  
The title of this piece is a conglomeration of two words: the Italian word 'tutti', means 'all' or 'everyone', and the term 'tarana' designates a specific Hindustani (North Indian) musical form, whose closest Western counterpart is the 'scat' in jazz. Made up of rhythmic syllables, a tarana is the singer's chance to display agility and dexterity. While a Hindustani tarana is a solo form, I wanted to bring the tarana into an ensemble setting.

Tuttarana was commissioned by the Mount Holyoke College Glee Club for their 2014-15 season, and has since been performed across the US, also in arrangements for SATB and brass quintet. An addendum: Three years after I wrote this piece, the #metoo movement, created by Tarana Burke broke on social media. It occurred to me that the title of this piece, if read a different way, literally means "We are all Tarana." I couldn't believe the incredible coincidence that this work, a powerful 3-minute tidal wave of sound, written for an all-female ensemble from the oldest women's college in the country, bore this name. I'm so grateful for what this movement has done to move the discussion forward about the horrors we face as women, and how we can begin to change and heal our society. -R.E.

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*Starburst*  
This brief one-movement work originally for string orchestra, and arranged for chamber ensemble by Jannina Norpoth, is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colors. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. A common definition of a starburst: "the rapid formation of large numbers of new stars in a galaxy at a rate high enough to alter the structure of the galaxy significantly" lends itself almost literally to the nature of the performing ensemble who premiered the work, The Sphinx Virtuosi, and I wrote the piece with their dynamic in mind. -J.M.

*Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman, No. 1* was inspired by Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and employs, in fact, the same instrumentation. In addition, the original theme resembles the first theme in the Copland. It is dedicated to women who take risks and who are adventurous. Written under the Fanfare Project and commissioned by the Houston Symphony, the premiere performance was on January 10, 1987, with the Houston Symphony, Hans Vonk, conductor. This work is dedicated to the conductor Marin Alsop.

The title, *Monuments*, occurred to me when a friend, living in Philidelphia, said she had toured monuments in that city on Memorial Day in 2021. By that time I had written what I call a "noble, lyrical melody for trombone" to serve as the main theme in the composition. *Monuments* was finished on September 11, 2021. Other awesome monuments had been created on that date twenty years before. -A.H.

Democracy in the United States has always been a messy process that is in a constant state of flux. When the nation's Constitution was penned, the framers of the document didn't differentiate voting rights between men and women. This led to various interpretations in the thirteen original colonies. For instance, while most of the colonies passed state laws that stipulated only a male adult who possessed property worth fifty pounds to vote, New Jersey's laws allowed women to vote between 1776 and 1807, after which they were excluded. Women weren't the only disenfranchised party in these states – slaves, men of particular religions, and men too poor to own the requisite amount of land were excluded as well. As the country progressed, wording was added to many states' voting laws to ensure that white men (and a slim grouping at that) were the sole possessors of the vote.

Women's inability to vote carried significant consequences. They paid taxes with no legal voice in crafting the laws of the land (i.e. taxation without representation). They were barred from becoming politicians, formulating laws, and serving on juries. If a woman got married, she immediately lost custody of her wages, children, possessions, and property. Women grew progressively frustrated by these circumstances and began to organize. The first women's rights convention was held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, and officially launched the beginning of the women's Suffrage movement. While additional conventions were held over the next several years, forward progress was halted during the Civil War (1861-1865), after which the cause was taken up again. Starting in the late 1860s, various Suffrage organizations formed, fell apart, and re-formed in pursuit of rallying women and men to the cause. Black female Suffragists were not treated well by many of their white counterparts; as a result, they created organizations and clubs of their own. Even when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in 1919 and ratified in 1920, many states immediately passed laws that blocked Black women from voting by one means or another; this situation wasn't rectified until Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act which federally protected all citizen's right to vote and put an end to discriminatory practices throughout the country. Nonetheless, we still witness today how various parts of our nation try new methods to disenfranchise Black women and men from voting. For instance, in June 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court removed a significant section of the 1965 Voting Rights Act which enabled especially southern states to once again seek to disenfranchise primarily Black voters because they are no longer required to get the approval of the Justice Department when revising voting laws in their states. Even more recently, the aftermath of the 2020 presidential election brought a fresh wave of attacks on voting rights in states all around the country. Not only is democracy a messy process, but it is something we must be vigilant in safekeeping for all of our citizens.

*The Battle for the Ballot* features the voices of seven Suffragists, four of whom are Black (Carrie W. Clifford, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Adella Hunt Logan, and Mary Church Terrell) and three of whom are white (Jane Addams, Susan B. Anthony, and Carrie Chapman Catt). I excerpted lines from their speeches and writings, then interwove these lines together to form a single narrative that follows their reasoning for fighting so hard for the right to vote.

Commissioned by the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Music Director & Conductor Cristian Măcelaru, with generous support from JoAnn Close and Michael Good, *The Battle for the Ballot* commemorates the centenary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920 granting women the right to vote. -S.G.

Composer and performer bios and ensemble rosters are available online at [bgsu.edu/festival](https://bgsu.edu/festival).

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# The 43rd Annual Bowling Green New Music Festival

October 12-15, 2022

College of Musical Arts - Bowling Green State University

## Concert 8

Saturday, October 15 - 8pm - Kobacker Hall

BGSU Collegiate Chorale - Richard Schnipke, conductor

I.

**Spring Dreams** (1997) .....Chen Yi

**Jarba, Mare Jarba** (2014) .....Stacy Garrop

II.

**Load Poems Like Guns** from *Songs for Muska* (2019) .....Jocelyn Hagen

**sing to us, cedars** (2021) .....Leah Tracy

III.

**I know my mind** from *Sonnets of the Fatal Interview* (2005) ....Stacy Garrop

**Tuttarana** (2015) .....Reena Esmail

- Intermission -

BGSU Philharmonia - Emily Freeman Brown, conductor

**Starburst** (2012, arr. Jannina Norpoth 2020).....Jessie Montgomery

Ezra Calvino, conductor

**Monuments** (*Resonate Consortium Premiere, 2021*),.....Adolphus Hailstork

Brittany Lasch, trombone

**Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman no.1** (1986).....Joan Tower

**The Battle for the Ballot** (2020).....Stacy Garrop

Myra Merritt, narrator

## Program Notes

Commissioned by the Ithaca College School of Music, *Spring Dreams* was premiered by the Ithaca College Choir on November 15, 1997, under the direction of Prof. Lawrence Doebler. The music is a setting of the poem *Spring Dreams* by Meng Hao-ran (689-740, Tang Dynasty), sung in Chinese. In the beginning of the piece, several groups of ostinati are brought in gradually in various tempos, imitating the vivid pulse of birds singing everywhere, accompanying a fresh melody in the Beijing Opera speech-singing style, sung here by the sopranos. This music brings us the excitement and happiness of being in spring. There is a turning point in the middle of the poem, when the poet clearly wakes up from his sweet dream by hearing a bird singing, and he realizes that many flowers must have been ruined by a whole night of wind and showers. He sympathizes with the fallen petals, as he treasures the beautiful springtime. The music is brought to a climax by expressively repeating the words from the last line of the poem: Know you how many petals falling? Singing the melody in unison towards the end, we are deeply immersed in wordless sorrow, while the bird singing sounds like crying in the air. --Chen Yi

Translation of the poem: Spring dreams not conscious of dawning, Not awoken till I hear birds singing; O night long, wind and showers -- Know you how many petals falling?