

LEAPS & BOUNDS

The Music of Lance Hulme



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Disc A

Sirens' Song

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | I. Distant Voices | 5:02 |
| 2. | II. Dire Straits | 2:48 |
| 3. | III. The Beckoning Horizon | 6:34 |
| | | |
| 4. | Wildcat | 9:47 |
| 5. | An Eternal Flame | 8:19 |
| 6. | JethroZen | 7:03 |
| 7. | Caritas Abundat: Setting the Diamond | 10:38 |

Total Playing Time: 50:21

Disc B

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Leaps & Bounds | 9:27 |
| 2. | Bonfire Bacchanal | 7:22 |
| 3. | Anna's Candle | 10:35 |
| 4. | Slapdash Redux | 7:54 |

Appalachian Advent

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------|
| 5. | I. I Wonder As I Wander | 2:53 |
| 6. | II. As Joseph Was A'Walking | 3:31 |
| 7. | III. Come Thou Long Expected Jesus | 2:48 |

Sax Attractor

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|------|
| 8. | I. Attractor pas de deux | 2:52 |
| 9. | II. Romance Attractor | 6:06 |
| 10. | III. Toccata Attractor | 3:49 |
| 11. | IV. Fugettino and Attractor | 2:04 |

Total Playing Time 59:35

Sirens' Song

Brno Philharmonic Orchestra

Mikel Toms, director

When Jonathan Shames asked me to write a piece for the University of Oklahoma Philharmonic, I was excited. A composer is lucky to get a five- or six-minute piece performed at the beginning of a symphony concert but with an academic ensemble, I had the latitude to compose a longer, more traditionally symphonic piece. “Sirens’ Song” is a symphony in three continuous sections: Adagio, Allegro Molto and Maestoso. The first section, titled “Distant Voices” is principally one orchestral color through which three melodic lines weave, in and out of tonal focus. “Dire Straits” is an exercise in orchestral power and mayhem. The last section, “The Beckoning Horizon,” spins a long, continuously developing melody meant to mirror a spoken soliloquy such as one finds in epics. The orchestration underpinning this spinning out is drawn from colors and techniques common to late-19th century and early 20th-century orchestration, orchestral writing which is uncommon in orchestral music of our time. The titles allude to my lifelong fascination with the Odyssey and the character of Odysseus, to whom brash defiance of the ancient gods grants both great victories and much suffering.

Wildcat

Wildcat 9 Saxophone Orchestra

Susan Fancher, soprano saxophone

Taiki Azuma, soprano saxophone

Ben Crouch, alto saxophone

Laurent Estoppey, alto saxophone

Robert Faub, tenor saxophone

Xin Gao, tenor saxophone

Drew Hays, baritone saxophone

Mark Engebretson, baritone saxophone

Steven Stusek, bass saxophone

Lance Hulme, conductor

“Wildcat” was commissioned by the Raschér Saxophone Quartet for their saxophone orchestra and premiered at the Würzburger Bach Fest. The title refers to the Wildcat,

an all-wood rollercoaster – at one time the tallest in the world – in Youngstown, Ohio, where my father grew up. Going on the Wildcat was a rite of passage in my family, during which my mild and thoughtful theologian father would transform into an exhilarated child, whooping and laughing (and standing!) like an overexcited 10-year-old. The composition reflects this reckless joy and energy, with swoops, turns and abrupt ascents and descents throughout. Two periods of calm can also be compared to the deceptive peace which one experiences just before the climatic rush of the rollercoaster descent, racing to a chaotic and exhilarating finale.

An Eternal Flame

Ida Bieler, violin

Composing “An Eternal Flame” was the subject of violinist Brandon Ironside’s doctoral dissertation. Much technical collaboration went into the process, and the creative back-and-forth reminded me of Brahms’ association with the violinist Joseph Joachim. The resulting piece won the 2021 International Malta Composition Competition. The solo violin makes much use of left-hand pizzicato, which acts as a tactus behind a circular, fixed melody alternating with a developmental motivic soaring line. The composition is dedicated to the brave people of Ukraine and the title derives from a poem by Alicia Richards:

I walk in darkness
In hope of that distant light
An eternal flame
The single candle never extinguished
A gentle tongue of deep, quiet passion
Which may one remote day
Lead me out of this black night

Which wholly engulfs me
I walk in hope of this yet-unseen flame
That quiet, flickering illumination
So fragile and yet so implacably there

JethroZen

Erika Boysen, flute

John Covach, electric guitar

I admit my heart sunk a little when Tom Moore asked me to write a piece for solo flute. With works like Debussy's "Syrinx" and Varèse's "Density 21.5", I really didn't know what I could add to the repertoire which wouldn't be more of the same. But then two ideas occurred to me: firstly, I have an affinity for Ian Anderson's breathy flute playing with the rock band "Jethro Tull," and secondly, I also am deeply attracted to the Japanese *shakuhachi* flute. Why not combine the two into one piece? The addition of electric guitar seemed self-evident, both as the natural accompaniment for the "Tull" music and as a mirror a *koto*, the zither which often is part of a Japanese chamber ensemble.

Caritas Abundat: Setting the Diamond

Clara O'Brien, mezzo-soprano

Timothy Holley, cello

When trumpeter Chris Gekker appeared as guest soloist on my concert series, *À la carte*, he asked to perform Hildegard von Bingen's "Caritas Abundat." I was delighted. Not only would I get an opportunity to present the beautiful music of this remarkable medieval abbess, theologian, poet, healer and musician, but I would be able to exercise my deep love of early European music. I decided to set the hymn, unaltered and showcased, in a computer-generated sonic bed, much like a jeweler sets a beautiful gem in a "basket." I paired the music with an historically informed vocal counterpoint, much like how the music might have been performed in Hildegard's time. To introduce the two iterations (the melody parts switch voices), I included a cello performing the "Tonus Peregrinus" psalm tone, admittedly a somewhat autobiographical gesture. The text emerges from the sounds of a mountain stream into church bells and at the end submerges back into that stream, a commentary on the text which elucidates the abundance of love in creation. As well as this fixed media recording, this piece exists as a real-time installation which I have performed many times.

Caritas abundat in omnia,
de imis excellentissima
super sidera,

atque amantissima in omnia,
quia summo Regi
osculum pacis dedit.

Loving tenderness abounds for all
from the darkest
to the most eminent one beyond the stars,

Exquisitely loving all
she bequeaths the kiss of peace
upon the ultimate King.

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

Leaps & Bounds

University of Maryland Wind Orchestra

Michael Votta, conductor

At the premiere, when introducing “Leaps & Bounds” to the audience, Mike Votta referred to the underlying rhythm running throughout the work as a “groove.” I like that. The piece is built on an asymmetrical polymetric ostinato that runs the entire duration but calling it a groove is more accurate and better describes my motivation for using this compositional device. The groove holds together the three elements of the work: an ascending brass fanfare, an underlying bass syncopated bass line in the lower winds (tossed to the brass at the end of the first section) and a soloistic lyrical melody tossed between the upper woodwinds. In the climax, all three elements are layered on top of each other, locking into a single orchestral texture.

Bonfire Bacchanal

Laura Stevens, flute

Anthony Taylor, clarinet/bass clarinet

Stephanie Willow Patterson, bassoon

Abigail Pack, horn

James Douglass, piano

Marjorie Bagley, violin

Scott Rawls, viola

Alexander Ezerman, cello

Lance Hulme, cond.

“Bonfire Bacchanal” was commissioned by the State Theater of Baden, Germany and premiered in a muggy, airtight room at the Karlsruhe Palace at the end of what may have been one of the longest concerts of contemporary music. The movement title reflects a sly, subversive quality I felt existed in the music and is also a gentle tweaking of the Teutonic nose of musical sobriety. The form is a series of duos and trios, with new instrumental combinations for each section of the “arch” form (ABCBA). This first section combines bassoon, bass clarinet, viola and cello in a boogie-like bass line with violin, horn and flute rhythmic punctuations and fusion jazz-inspired piano chords. The second section pairs flute and horn against descending solo lines shared between cello, bass clarinet and bassoon and once again, the piano acting as spoiler, this time with staccato clusters. The third section pairs alternating flute and clarinet and violin and viola duos with cello and piano entering as a counterpoint. This process then reverses, and a giddy coda brings the piece to conclusion.

Anna’s Candle

Laura Stevens, flute

Anthony Taylor, clarinet

Alexander Ezerman, cello

“Anna’s Candle” was a compositional breakthrough for me. I was looking for a way to transmit a type of music which lies between being spontaneous and carefully planned, without meter and yet able to carry contrapuntal rhythmic interplay. I suppose it is ironic, given the composition is so clearly grounded in the tonality of E, that it was the music of

Harrison Birtwistle that led me to this breakthrough, one that has influenced my entire approach to composed music ever since. As with all my titles, “Anna’s Candle” was given to this piece after I was finished composing as a literary reference eluding to that inexpressible something the music seems to want to communicate. In this case, the title refers to the last moments in the heroine’s life in Leo Tolstoy’s novel “Anna Karenina”.

“And the candle, by the light of which she had been reading the book filled with anxieties, deceits, grief and evil, flared up with a brighter light than before, lit up all that had hitherto been shrouded in darkness, flickered, began to grow dim, and went out forever”.

Slapdash Redux

Popocatepetl Percussion Duo

Gabriele Petracco, vibraphone

Marko Jugovic, vibraphone

I wrote a piece called “Slapdash” for my graduate student David Helms as a favor for playing on a recording session for no pay. This virtuoso vibraphone solo worked well, but it is for the best of players, and I wanted to get more performances. So I decided to rewrite the work for two vibraphones – “Slapdash Redux.” However, borrowing a page from Bernard Rands’ orchestration of “Canti del Sole,” I used this opportunity to expand on the original composition, essentially composing a variation on the original. It proved successful enough to be programmed for the first International Percussion Premiere Night in Trieste, Italy, and to make friends with Marco and Gabriele of the Popocatepetl Percussion Duo who made the recording featured here. As for the title, it echoes both the compositional method and, by splitting the title in two, the performance practice employed.

Appalachian Advent

Clara O’Brien, mezzo-soprano

James Douglass, piano

My grandfather was an Appalachian fiddler, so I come by my love of the folk music of that region honestly. My family sang these songs at Christmas, and they are built into my memories of the holiday. Many Appalachian folksongs are of Scottish or Scots-Irish

origin and reflect the piety of a people who perhaps saw their faith as an anchor in a world of poverty and violence. In any case, it's a natural extension of both my love of this music and my being a composer to arrange these tunes in my own musical language.

Sax Attractor

Susan Fancher, soprano saxophone

James Douglass, piano

An attractor set is a phenomenon in mathematics in which, with repeated iterative cycles, random numbers gradually migrate to the same sub-set. As a musical metaphor, this idea mirrors how in each movement of this sonata, the musical materials, no matter the technique or original presentation, gradually migrate to the same set of intervals and pitches. That my friend Susan Fancher is not only a fantastic saxophonist but also a trained mathematician seems appropriate for this work, which she commissioned for her 2010 China tour. Each movement migrates in its own way to a specific set of intervals (a nod here to Henri Dutilleux), and each presents the set in a unique but recognizable fashion: in the first movement, melodically in continuous variation form; the second, harmonically in a lyrical adagio; in the third, motivically in a hocket-like toccata; and finally, as countertheme, harmony and motive in the fourth movement fugetto, which, in itself, is a nod to Beethoven.



Bonfire Bacchanal recording session



Leaps & Bounds recording session



Wildcat9 Saxophone Orchestra recording session

Lance Hulme

Composer **Lance Hulme** has a multi-faceted career as keyboardist, conductor, arranger and educator. His music has been performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia and South America and has garnered both critical and audience acclaim. Recordings of his music include compact disk releases on the *Albany*, *Bridge*, *LiveNotes*, *Ablaze* and *Métier* labels. His music is published by Donemus Publishing.

Critics have described Hulme as a “chameleon composer” (*Gilles Quental*) and “a craftsman with a fine ear and a formidable technique” (*Classical Voice North Carolina*) whose musical oeuvre encompasses a “wide range” (*Knowing the Score*) of musical genres and styles. His music “cannot be pigeon-holed into one compositional school” (*Die Badische Neueste Nachrichten*) but rather draws upon the diverse elements of his musical experience to “weave a rich expressive texture” (*Die Rheinpfalz Zeitung*.) He “reflects the ambience and musical approach of the North American musical tradition. Compositional eclecticism, a conscience, playful and uninhibited attitude with tradition and the crossover between ‘serious’ and vernacular music. All these elements are to be found as well as the most advanced structural and aural techniques” (*Die Rheinpfalz Zeitung*).

Hulme’s music has won many awards including Grand Prize, *International Witold Lutoslawski Composition Competition*, 1st Prize; ASCAP/Rudolf Nissim Prize; Grand Prize, *International Trumpet Guild Composition Competition*; 1st Prize, *2021 Malta International Composition Competition* and awards from the *Composición Musical Cuitat de Tarragona*, *Citta di Trieste Orchestra Competition* and the *Ladislav Kubik Composition Competition*. Notable performances and commissions include *Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra*, the *Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra*, *Southern German Radio*, the *State Theater of Baden*, the *State Orchestra of Magdeburg*, *West German Radio*, the *Karlsruhe University Chorus*, the *Raschèr Saxophone Orchestra*, *Quattro Mani*, the *Henschell Quartet* and others. His compositions have been presented at *ISCM*, *Warsaw Autumn*, *Eastern Music Festival* and *Aspen Summer* festivals. He has been a fellow at the *MacDowell Colony* and was awarded a two-year Fulbright Grant to Austria.

Lance Hulme studied at the Yale University School of Music, the Eastman School of Music and the University of Minnesota, and he also studied at the Universität für Musik in Vienna, Austria.

From the beginning, Lance Hulme pursued an eclectic musical career encompassing many different aspects of music-making. His first conducting appearance was the premiere of a piece written for his high school orchestra. Throughout his undergraduate study of classical composition, he played keyboards in various jazz and pop groups, wrote and directed musicals and stage music and transcribed and arranged music for other performers. An interim period followed in which he was keyboardist for the jazz-fusion band *Dreamscape*. Following graduate study, he went to Vienna, Austria on a Fulbright Grant, staying in Europe for 18 years. During that time, he co-founded and directed *Ensemble Surprise*, an eclectic chamber ensemble which featured “700 years of new music,” of which he was the “Rector Spiritus who knows exactly what to do with such an ensemble.” (*Die Rheinpfalz*). As pianist, he has been described as “a carefully prepared virtuoso.” (*Die Badische Neueste Nachrichten*).

In 2003, an offer to teach brought Dr. Hulme back to the U.S., and he is currently a professor at *North Carolina Central University*, where he directs the music theory and composition program. He also is on the faculty for the *NCCU FabLab* and teaches Music Technology. He is director of a concert series, *À la carte*, which presents music from a wide variety of genres, styles and epochs. In the years since its debut, *À la carte* has risen in the ranks to be one of the most important concert series in North Carolina. “*À la carte* has earned its audience’s confidence and respect.” (Classical Voice North Carolina).

Hulme’s interests also include music technology, both as composer and educator. His compositions using computers have been presented in many venues including interactive collaborations with choreographers and visual artists. Most recently, he has worked extensively with dance real-time installations at the Modern Repertory Dance Theater. He is also a sound engineer and has produced many recordings, including releases with Albany, Ablaze and *Métier* Records.



Lance Hulme © Doug Burke

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Justin Merritt, engineer

Bonfire Bacchanal recorded at:

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William Stevens, recording engineer

Anna's Candle recorded at:

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William Stevens, recording engineer

Wildcat recorded at:

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William Stevens, recording engineer

Sax Attractor recorded at:

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Leaps & Bounds recorded at:

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Antonio d'Urzo, recording engineer

An Eternal Flame recorded at:

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Lance Hulme, engineer

Sirens' Song recorded at:

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