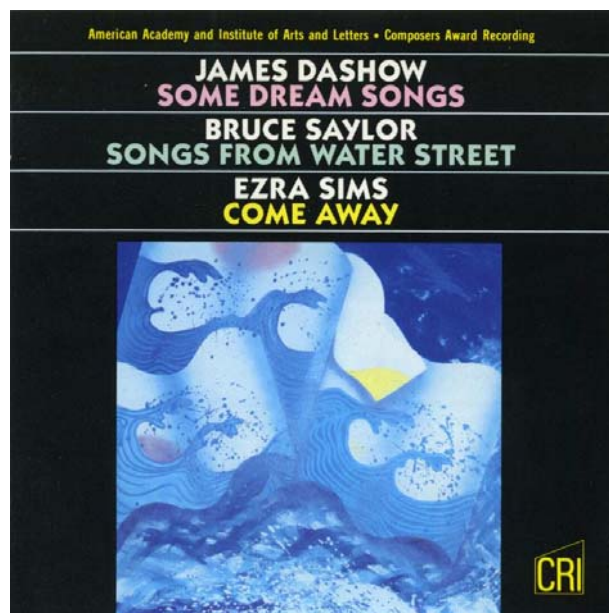


James Dashow / Bruce Saylor / Ezra Sims



James Dashow	
<i>Some Dream Songs</i> (1975)	(20:07)
1. Verse One	(2:50)
2. Verse Two	(2:05)
3. Verse Three	(4:30)

4. Verse Four	(2:44)
5. Verse Five	(3:33)
6. Verse Six	(4:09)

Joan Logue, soprano; Mario Buffa, violin,
Giancarlo Simonacci, piano

Bruce Saylor: <i>Songs from Water Street</i> (1980)	(22:45)
7. 1. A Vision of the Garden	(4:42)
8. 2. From a Notebook	(3:28)
9. 3. Swimming by Night Tarantella	(3:39)
10. 4. The Parrot Fish	(3:34)
11. 5. The Water Hyacinth	(6:50)

Constance Beavon, mezzo-soprano; Miles
Hoffman, viola; David Abramovitz, piano

Ezra Sims	
12. <i>Come Away</i> (1978)	(20:36)

Janice Felty, mezzo-soprano; David Hoose,
conductor. With members of the Dinosaur Annex
Music Ensemble: Anne Black, viola; Donald
Davis, trombone; Ian Greitzer, clarinet; Thomas
Hannton, French horn; Suellen Hershman, alto
flute; James Orleans, double bass.

Total Playing Time: 65:39

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Notes

James Dashow - *Some Dream Songs* (1975)

Once again, bookstore browsing brought a slim volume to my attention. This time the book was by poet John Berryman and contained his first group of *Dream Songs*. The expression of moods ranging from exhilaration to mumbling uncertainty, from an urbane sophisticated intelligence to a k.o.'d, ironic cynic were all compressed into a series of short, densely composed poems. Each of the poems was dominated by one feeling while still conveying hints of others. Together they painted a portrait of a complex, deeply feeling human being trying to come to grips with the realities of contemporary life. All this was immediately and profoundly provocative to me and I began to conceive musical ideas corresponding to the individual poems as well as to the main character, Henry. My intention was to pick the most poignantly characteristic poems or sections of poems with which to provide a complementary musical framework for Berryman's hero (or rather, for Berryman as Henry, notwithstanding the poet's denial).

Shortly afterwards, Berryman's complete *Dream Songs* was published. Expanded considerably from the first group, the complete *Dream Songs* was still more autobiographically revealing while sadly (and angrily) bearing witness to the poet's inexorable steps to his suicide. The occasional flashes of poetic lightning, which recalled the essential optimism of the earlier *Songs*, were still present (as they also were in the small posthumous collection of *Songs* that appeared only relatively recently), but now Berryman transmuted his brilliance into shades growing steadily darker. At this point, I found myself more involved with the earlier poems and, in fact, my musical

setting, *Some Dream Songs*, has drawn most of its texts from the first collection, finishing with that sort of cynical optimism which characterized triumphant Henry.

Some Dream Songs attempts to capture the essence of Henry in all his complexity. The soprano sings, talks, mimics, converses with the pianist, and croons with the violinist. In short, the music and its means of articulation go hand in hand with the poems' mercurial subject, his exceptional vitality and tragicomic ups-and-downs. The way each poem was printed on its page, with occasionally wide blank space within lines (or unusual "ungrammatic" punctuation), indicated rhythms and breathings different from what would have normally been assumed. Yet, these provided clear points of departure for the musical phrasing. The declamation is carried over into instrumental elaboration, although sometimes the reverse will occur. At all times there is a concern that musical counterpoint reflect the simultaneous strands of differing moods that accompany almost all manifestations of personality; this is especially so with Henry. I would be very pleased if, as a result of being introduced here to Henry, listeners were inspired to get to know him better through a reading of the complete *Dream Songs*.

Some Dream Songs was recorded under a grant from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. It was originally written for the Forum Players (a new music ensemble in Rome) and is dedicated to my friend and former teacher, Arthur Berger.

—James Dashow

James Dashow, born in 1944 in Chicago, has studied with Babbitt, Cone, Randall, and Kim at Princeton University; with Berger, Shifrin, and Boykan at Brandeis University; and with Petrassi at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Roma. For several years he directed the Forum Players in Rome, a contemporary music ensemble, and is now director of the Studio di Musica Elettronica Sciadoni. He is associated as composer and teacher with the Centro di Sonologia Computazionale of the University of Padova.

Dashow has composed for large and small ensembles, solo pieces, and opera; in recent years he has concentrated on the realization of digitally synthesized musical works. He has been the recipient of numerous prizes and commissions, including a Fulbright fellowship to Rome, first prize at the V Concours International de Musique Electroacoustique, Bourges, two NEA (USA) grants for works with soloist and computer generated electronic accompaniment, two commissions from the Venice Biennale, a Rockefeller Foundation grant for the composition of lyric opera for voices, multi-channel digitally synthesized music, computer graphics, and computer controlled lasers, and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters prize.

Dashow has been invited to present solo concerts of his work for acoustic and electronic instruments at major new music festivals and in conjunction with European national radio networks. He has also lectured widely in the U.S. and Europe about the musical concepts and sound synthesis techniques he had developed for the computer. In 1983, he was acting director of the M.I.T. Experimental Music Studio, and also taught the Studio's graduate music seminar. More recently, Dashow taught graduate and undergraduate composition courses at Princeton University during the 1987 fall semester. In 1986, Dashow was invited by the RAI (Italian National Radio) to present a series of broadcasts on contemporary music. The following year the series was expanded to three times a week and continued during the 1988–1989 broadcast season.

He contributes irregularly to several magazines, including *Perspectives of New Music*, *Computer Music Journal*, and *La Musica*.

Recordings of Dashow's music are available on CRI SD 456: *Second Voyage* for tenor and computer synthesized accompaniment, George Shirley, tenor; PAN (Roma) PRC 520 05: *A Way of Staying* for soprano and computer synthesized sounds, Joan Logue, soprano; PAN PRC 520-12: *Conditional Assemblies, Partial Distances, Effetti Collaterali* for clarinet and computer, Phillip Rehfeldt, clarinet; WERGO Compact Disc WER 2010-50: *Sequence Symbols*; WERGO Compact Disc WER 2018-50: *Oro, Argento & Legno* for flute and computer, Mario Conti, flute; *Mnemonics* for violin and computer, Mario Buffa, violin; scene ii from *Archedes*: laser ballet from Finale, Act I, *Il Piccolo Principe*.

Bruce Saylor - *Songs from Water Street* (1980)

The poet James Merrill, in a note to Saylor, March 11, 1989, wrote this of his 1962 book of poems:

"I had lived six or seven years on Water Street in a Connecticut village that jutted into Long Island Sound. One day when I was wondering what to call a new book of poems (and how to order its contents) a wise friend suggested Water Street on the grounds that the simpler the phrase, the greater its evocative power. All my problems were now solved. From unexpected crevices in poem after poem appeared winkings, meltings, tricklings, crystallizations; also streets, roads, avenues in various parts of the world. The title had discovered my little collection's hidden unity."

The composition of Saylor's *Songs from Water Street* began when the American poet J.D. McClatchy commissioned Saylor to compose a musical setting of a poem by Merrill to honor the latter poet's fiftieth birthday in 1976. Saylor chose "Swimming

by Night," which he set for baritone and piano. When violist Miles Hoffman approached the composer about writing a new work for a 1980 recital, Saylor transformed "Swimming by Night" into a song for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano and added four new songs to the group, all set to poems from Merrill's *Water Street* collection. Four of these songs were first performed at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. on May 10, 1980 by Miles Hoffman, violist; Constance Beavon, mezzo-soprano; and Maureen Wallis, pianist. The complete cycle of five songs was given its premiere by Constance Beavon, Maureen Gallagher, violist; and Aleck Karis, pianist, by the Group for Contemporary Music in New York City, on January 25, 1982. Saylor has also set another group of poems from *Water Street* called "Five Old Favorites" (1983), and has written incidental music for Merrill's *Voices from Sandover* (1989).

Bruce Saylor was born in Philadelphia in 1946. He holds two degrees in composition from the Juilliard School, he studied at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and he earned his Ph.D. from the City University of New York. He has taught at Juilliard and at New York University, and is now professor at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College. Among his many awards are two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, commissions from the state arts councils of Pennsylvania and New York, the national prize from the National Society of Arts and Letters, a Fulbright grant, the Guggenheim Fellowship, a Mellon Foundation grant, and both the Charles Ives Scholarship and the Music Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He has received commissions from many individual performers, and also from symphony orchestras (including Houston, San Francisco, and Yale), the Library of Congress Summer Chamber Festival, North-South Consonance, the Yard, the Jerome Foundation, the Guggenheim Museum's "Works and Process" series, and others. Mr. Saylor resides in New York City with his wife, the mezzo-soprano Constance Beavon and their three young daughters.

Ezra Sims - *Come Away* (1978)

Come Away was written for Laurel Stavis and Dinosaur Annex and was first performed by them in the Spring of 1979.

The second song, the lullaby ("Come, Sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving"), came first. After that, the other poems were chosen for textural and musical reasons; they are all apostrophes beginning with the same word, and they are all amenable to treatment with the musical materials of the lullaby.

The result is a cycle moving from youth's impetuous eroticism ("Come, oh come, my life's delight") through the discontents and resignations of the middle years, to maturity's calm and joyous acceptance of death ("Come, lovely and soothing death").

It is a continuous fabric, the interlude following each song continuing that song's materials and manner to make a transition to the next. The instrumental coda, after the Whitman, sums up the whole piece in a contrapuntal web, a quodlibet, made of melodies of the five songs, and comes to its summation with the clarinet introducing the folksong Charles Guiteau ("Come all you tender Christians").

The first four songs are for mezzo, viola, and clarinet; the fifth is with the other instruments (alto flute, French horn, trombone, and double bass) until the climax, when the clarinet and viola complete the ensemble. The introductory flourish and the coda are for the full ensemble, and each instrument also participates in three of the four interludes.

Technically, the piece uses a wide range of devices, old and new. If I am any judge, its achievement lies in its arriving at a considerable emotional power through the deployment of a strong and intricate pattern of tonalities in a densely microtonal idiom.

—Ezra Sims

Ezra Sims was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1928. He was awarded degrees by Birmingham-Southern College, Yale University, and Mills College. His principal teachers were G. Ackley Brower and Hugh Thomas (at the Birmingham Conservatory of Music), Quincy Porter (at Yale), and Darius Milhaud (at Mills). He is known principally as a composer of the microtonal music which he has written almost exclusively since 1970 (and of which *Come Away* is an example).

The encomium of his American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award reads:

“Ezra Sims...has already contributed an outstanding body of works, many of which have explored with singular imagination, conviction—and success—the beautiful but elusive world of microtonal music. *Chamber Cantata on Chinese Poems* and *Sextet* are brilliant examples of his rarefied but penetrating art.”

His other recordings are on CRI SD 186: *Chamber Cantata on Chinese Poems*; CRI SD 223; Third Quartet; CRI SD 377: String Quartet #2 and *Elegie—nach Rilke*; and Northeastern 224: Sextet, *All Done From Memory*, and others.

Joan Logue, soprano, whose repertoire extends from Renaissance music to the music of today, has performed in opera theatres throughout Italy and has made numerous tours of Europe and the Middle East. A top prize winner at the ISCM Contemporary Vocal Music sponsored by La Scala, Ms. Logue has made several recordings of contemporary music (for Edipan, Fonit-Entaphon, Cetra, and Pentaphon) including the opera *ES* by Aldo Clementi.

Mario Buffa, violinist, has become known as one of the foremost interpreters of chamber music in all its various forms. He has been featured as soloist at various festivals of electronic music such as the International Musical Informatics conference in Napoli in 1985 and the Ars Elettronica Festival in Linz. Mr. Buffa teaches at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome.

Giancarlo Simonacci, pianist and composer, is active as soloist and with various chamber music groups. He has participated in major festivals, Italian and Austrian radio, and has produced a variety of musical programs for the RAI. Mr. Simonacci teaches piano at the Refice Conservatory in Frosinone.

Constance Beavon, mezzo-soprano, has an international award-winning career as a vocalist, spanning opera, oratorio, and chamber music. Ms. Beavon debuted with the Geneva Opera in 1985 and has performed as soloist at Avery Fisher and Carnegie halls in New York. Her performances of contemporary American music can be heard on CRI, Orion Master Recordings, Turnabout, and Opus One.

Miles Hoffman, violist, is the founder and artistic director of the American Chamber Players and Library of Congress Summer Chamber Festival. As soloist and chamber musician, he has performed throughout the Washington D.C. area, including the Barns of Wolf Trap and as guest with the Tokyo Quartet.

David Abramovitz, pianist, has coached for both the Zurich and the Paris Opera Studios. As founder and director of Les Musiciens Amoureux, he has presented concerts at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and as musician, he is well known for his interpretations of French and twentieth-century repertoire.

Janice Felty, mezzo-soprano, is an active, award-winning performer of operatic, concert, and contemporary repertoires. In Vienna in 1989, Ms. Felty performed the role of Dorabella in the Peter Sellars's film production of *Così fan tutte*. In contemporary music, Ms. Felty has performed, in concert hall and studio, the work of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, John Harbison, John Anthony Lennon, and Tod Machover.

David Hoose, conductor, has been music director of the Cantata Singers for seven years. Mr. Hoose is also music director of the Boston University Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra and Brandeis Contemporary Chamber Players, and is co-founder of Cantiones Sacrae. He has given more than 100 premieres of contemporary works, and is equally well known for his interpretations of Schütz, Bach, Handel, and Haydn.

Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble began its existence as an affiliate of New England Dinosaur Dance Theatre, and has been independent since 1977. The group has been active in recordings, residencies, and concerts throughout the New England and New York areas.

Production Notes

Some Dream Songs

Publisher: BMG Ariola, Spa (S.I.A.E. Italy)

Producer: Guido Podesta

Recording Engineer: Paolo Venditti

Recorded at RCA Roma, Studio C, Rome, Italy, May 2 & 3, 1988

Songs from Water Street

Publisher: E.C. Schirmer Music Co., Inc. (ASCAP)

Recording Engineer: Max Wilcox

Recorded at RCA Studio A, New York City, July 1986

Come Away

Publisher: ACA (BMI)

Producer: Ezra Sims

Recording Engineer: Frank Cunningham

Recorded at Blue Jay Studios, Carlisle, Massachusetts, April 21, 1986

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