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John Oliver: Catalogue of Selected Works with clarinet

Serial number

Price* Duration

Orchestral

GYPSY CHRONICLES ²⁰¹⁰ for Chamber orchestra with instruments of the world

OLI_2010_Gypsy Chronicles_sc

Commissioned by Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra

\$25.00 15:00

Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Tabla, Frame Drum/Darbuka, Oud, Persian Tar, Santur, Zheng, erhu, string sextet

I wrote this piece to celebrate the great project of intercultural music making. To this end, I imagined myself on the road to Byzantium, or Constantinople, or Istanbul (take your pick): somewhere on the Silk Road, with a bunch of gypsies, who originate from Allah/God/Vishnu knows where. And they are all playing their instruments together. So the first movement (of four) is somewhat traditional in sound, evocative of some sort of imagined Persian music. The Persian 17-note mode – the tuning of the "tar" (triple-coursed gourd-resonating guitar from Iran) – is at the core of the sound of this music, which is infused with the unison melodic practice of the Middle East, yet it is mysteriously striving to compose itself, perhaps suggesting echoes of the early melodic conversions of Claude Vivier and Stockhausen, yet I unabashedly veer toward the Troubadours. All great fun to prepare you for the small monuments of the second and third movements, two smaller "chronicles". And in closing, the music returns to dance.

THE BRIDGE ²⁰¹⁰ for Mixed Chinese and Western chamber orchestra

Commissioned by BC Chinese Music Ensemble

10:02

Dizi (Bangdi), Flute (Alto Flute), Guanzi, Bass Clarinet, Percussion (one player: gongs, gamelan pots vibraphone, dagu, bass drum), Piano, Pipa, Zongruan, Sanxian, Gaoju, Erhu, Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass.

About a thousand years ago, when the Christian Church split into Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, the musicians of the catholic church and of Europe started to write music down. From this simple act, a new music was born that allowed for more subtle and complex changes in the music: many new combinations of voices, harmonies and rhythms were born. Music to the east of modern-day Turkey remained essentially driven by song and melody. I also observe that in China, the plucked strings are an important part of the orchestra, whereas in the West, they are not. So I chose three soloists: the viola (big violin), the sanxian (Chinese banjo) and percussion. In my composition, I try to create a bridge between the two ways of making music by using the most recognizable features of each tradition: the diatonic chords of western music and the melodic drive of Chinese music. In the first part, I create this bridge by showing how the two solo instruments can play the same musical material but sound completely different: the western viola begins, sounding almost angry and war-like; the Chinese banjo, the sanxian, then takes a turn at the musical idea, turning into playful folk music. Thus begins a dialogue that continues on, transforming into a joyful celebration. In the second part, I create a very static music that evokes the music of the 15th century: the solo instruments create a hypnotic imitation music that seems to circle inward on itself. In the last section, the main theme is derived from both the first and second parts. This time the music proceeds according to principals of Western harmonic progression – mainly by thirds, like the main melodic interval – the "bridge" is created by a sudden appearance of a few bars of traditional classical piano chords that spawn a whole new pulsating music of harmonic and melodic drive that takes us to the end of the composition.

FACE IN THE SKY ²⁰⁰⁷ for Orchestra (2222 4331 timp, pc, strings)

OLI_07_facesky_sc

Commissioned by New Westminster Symphony Orchestra

\$14.00 11:00

*2 Flutes (2 doubles piccolo)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinet in B-flat
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
1 Bass Trombone (valved)*

The idea for the "Faces" series of orchestral works came to me as the result of a commission from the Windsor Symphony for a work inspired by the visual arts. For Windsor, I created "Face in the Abstract" inspired by the meeting of portraiture and landscape painting with Abstract Expressionism. The second and third pieces in the series were commissioned by the New Westminster Symphony. "Face in the Sky" is inspired by the kind of dream state I find myself in while contemplating the shifting clouds of Vancouver. "Face in the Concrete" is inspired by the tension that exists in society between individual voices and stories, and the pounding of feet of crowds marching to the tune of the most awe-inspiring idea of the moment. Specifically, it was inspired by two images: that of a pacifist's face being pushed into the concrete by police, and the "nuclear" shadow of an evaporated body in the concrete in Hiroshima after the bomb was dropped. The overall idea that unifies all of the pieces is a desire to create music that is at once familiar and new, and that creates a new visceral experience for the listener.

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John Oliver: Catalogue of Selected Works with clarinet

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FACE IN THE CONCRETE ²⁰⁰⁷ for Orchestra (2222 4331 timp, 2pc,strings)

OLI_07_faceconcrete_sc

Commissioned by New Westminster Symphony Orchestra

\$18.00 10:45

2 Flutes (2 doubles piccolo)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinet in B-flat
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
1 Bass Trombone (valved)

The idea for the "Faces" series of orchestral works came to me as the result of a commission from the Windsor Symphony for a work inspired by the visual arts. For Windsor, I created "Face in the Abstract" inspired by the meeting of portraiture and landscape painting with Abstract Expressionism. The second and third pieces in the series were commissioned by the New Westminster Symphony. "Face in the Sky" is inspired by the kind of dream state I find myself in while contemplating the shifting clouds of Vancouver. "Face in the Concrete" is inspired by the tension that exists in society between individual voices and stories, and the pounding of feet of crowds marching to the tune of the most awe-inspiring idea of the moment. Specifically, it was inspired by two images: that of a pacifist's face being pushed into the concrete by police, and the "nuclear" shadow" of an evaporated body in the concrete in Hiroshima after the bomb was dropped. The overall idea that unifies all of the pieces is a desire to create music that is at once familiar and new, and that creates a new visceral experience for the listener.

FACES ²⁰⁰⁷ for orchestra (2222 4331 timp, 2pc, strings)

OLI_07_faces_sc

Commissioned by Windsor and New Westminster Symphony Orchestras

\$46.00 30:45

2 flutes (2 doubles piccolo)
2 oboes
2 clarinet in B-flat
2 bassoons
4 horns in F
3 trumpets in C
2 trombones
1 bass trombone (valved)

The idea for the "Faces" series of orchestral works came to me as the result of a commission from the Windsor Symphony for a work inspired by the visual arts. For Windsor, I created "Face in the Abstract," which is inspired by the meeting of portraiture and landscape painting with Abstract Expressionism. The second and third pieces in the series were commissioned by the New Westminster Symphony. The second movement, "Face in the Sky," is inspired by the kind of dream state I find myself in while contemplating the shifting clouds of Vancouver. "Face in the Concrete" is inspired by the tension that exists in society between individual voices and stories, and the pounding of feet of crowds marching to the tune of the most awe-inspiring idea of the moment. Specifically, it was inspired by two images: that of a pacifist's face being pushed into the concrete by police, and the "nuclear" shadow" of an evaporated body in the concrete in Hiroshima after the bomb was dropped. The overall idea that unifies all of the pieces is a desire to create music that is at once familiar and new, and that creates a new visceral experience for the listener.

FACE IN THE ABSTRACT ²⁰⁰⁶ for Orchestra (2222 4331 timp, 2pc,strings)

OLI_07_faceabstract_sc

Commissioned by the Windsor Symphony Orchestra

\$22.00 9:00

2 Flutes (2 doubles piccolo)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinet in B-flat
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
1 Bass Trombone (valved)

There is a mysterious story trying to escape from the art of Johannes Deutsch and Anselm Keefer, two artists who influenced me while writing this music. Both maintain a mysterious, multi-layered, implied narrative that is unclear and therefore tends to be invented by the perceiver. These artists work with cultural depth. They explore their visual ideas using techniques and subjects that are rich with cultural meaning and associations, drawing the perceiver into a dialogue with their own cultural and personal memory. Similarly, I use musical ideas that are richly associative because they sound familiar, yet I also create sound structures that are a direct result of analyzing sound with computers and I build new harmonies and melodies that draw attention to the sounds themselves. In this way, the music is simultaneously "about itself" and about the listener. But I want the sounds to amaze the listener as they amaze me. Detailed compositional calculations may be my concern as the creator, but I design the result to touch the listener on a visceral level.

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John Oliver: Catalogue of Selected Works with clarinet

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UP WIND ²⁰⁰⁴ for Orchestra (3333 4331 Timp, 2 pc, hp, Piano, str)
Commissioned by the Vancouver Symphony

OLI_04_upwind_sc
\$46.00 20:53

3 Flutes (player 2 & player 3 double piccolo)
2 Oboes
english Horn
2 clarinets in B_b (player 2 doubles E_b Clarinet)
Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons
contraBassoon

Smoke gets in your eyes. Wind gets in your ears. You can't see the wind but you know it's there because you hear and feel it. Music is the same: it's in the air, it is unseen. We tend to believe what we see, but are less sure about what we hear. Often we think music is in the notes: "here is the tune, it goes like this; here are the chords." Yet the sound of music goes far beyond these notes and chords. I am interested in the integration of traditional notions of music (e.g. the known affects that melody and harmony produce) with new forms of organizing sound based on contemporary science and thought.

In Up Wind, I use only a few notes to create three contrasting movements that draw different lines and shapes. The first movement presents mostly fast upward lines and slower lines moving down or in zigzags. The second movement uses only the extreme registers of the instruments. The high register clusters produce difference tones in the listeners' ears: the music literally invades your body (safely). The third movement pulls a wandering melody out of quickly rising lines.

Chamber with electroacoustic

AM BUSHED ²⁰⁰⁹ for violin, piano or guitar accompaniment, and digital audio, with optional guest
Commissioned by Duo Vita

OLI_09_ambushed_sc
\$15.00 9:52

violin and guitar (and/or lute, harp, piano, hammered dulcimer, synthesizer, etc.) or piano (and/or any number of chording instruments from any world tradition), and digital audio (5.1 surround, 4 channels, or stereo); optional instruments include 2nd melody instrument (s) from any world tradition, medium range (e.g. clarinet, viola), and violoncello (and/or any number of bass instruments from any world tradition). Improvising drums and percussion may be added freely.

This work was conceived of as a companion piece to my composition titled "On Freedom," a work commissioned by Duo46 (Beth Schneider, violin and Matt Gould, guitar) for their duo, with 4-channel surround sound. Whereas that work is a virtuoso piece for duo, "Am Bushed" was designed for Duo46 to play with any number of invited guest musicians. The music is an open invitation for reflection by musicians and audience on the years of the reign of George W. Bush as President of the United States of America (2001-2009), and of the aggressions set in motion by his father George H. W. Bush.

Specifically, this piece is dedicated to those American citizens and concerned citizens of the world who lived through this period feeling that their freedom to freely express their ideas about the world in which we live had been stifled by the Bush doctrine that those who disagreed with his foreign policy could be considered de facto enemies of the state, best summed up by his famous saying "you are either with us, or you are with the terrorists."

DUST ²⁰⁰³ for Clarinet & digital audio (4-channel or stereo)
Commissioned by François Houle

OLI_03_dust_sc
\$12.00 8:46

In *Dust* I return to the ideas & sound world of my dramatic award-winning work *El Reposo del Fuego* for synthesizers and audio. That work ended with the phrase "El Tiempo es polvo" (Time is Dust). This work continues where *El Reposo del Fuego* left off, and explores the concept of time as dust. Eerily, *El Reposo del Fuego* took disaster, grief and loss as its themes and was written around the time of the Mexico City earthquake (1985); I began work on *Dust*, which explores the sense of dilated time that occurs during a disaster, a month before the attack on the USA of September 11 and completed it afterward, amazed by this synchronicity.

The clarinet virtuosity of François Houle plays a central role in this dramatic intense work. Nominated for the Outstanding Classical Composition Award at the 2006 Western Canadian Music Awards.

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Chamber Music

TRAVELS WITHOUT MY PARROT ²⁰¹⁴ for clarinet, shaker, guitar and string quintet

11:00

clarinet, shaker, guitar, 2 violins, viola, cello, double bass.

This music was John Oliver's contribution to a semi-theatrical production by the Big World Band of a story "The Parrot and the Merchant" by Rumi.

Oliver contributed the travel music, as the Merchant travels from Iran to the Indian jungle to communicate the story of his parrot's life in captivity in Tehran. Since the journey takes the Merchant away from home and back again, it seemed an appropriate musical form to extract from the complete piece, which was a collection of music composed by various band members in 2014 when it was written.

RIVER DANCE ²⁰¹⁴ for violin and six instruments

3:05

Commissioned by Sophia Li

flute, oboe, bass clarinet, violin, viola, cello, contrabass

River Dance was written for Vancouver violinist Sophia Li as a showpiece for her solo recital at the River Rock Casino Theatre, Richmond, BC on November 23, 2014. Sophia commissioned the work and I dedicate it to her. Richmond is home to a large ethnic Chinese population and is situated at the foot of the Fraser river, the most important source of salmon for the local population, as well as an industrial port. This work celebrates the river and the daily dance of tension between food and industry.

CONTEMPLATING MOTION ²⁰¹⁰ for clarinet, bass trombone, harp, violin, cello

OLI_2010_Contemplating

Commissioned by Turning Point Ensemble

\$8.00 6:00

This work is inspired by listening to a single sound and its harmonic (overtone) structure: contemplating the motion inside sound (difference tones) when two or more instruments play in unison. Difference tones create fluctuating beating and additional sounds in the air. So we hear more than the notes that are played.

Similarly, when sounds are so low that they go below our threshold of hearing, they turn into beating patterns. Rhythm and pulse are just a continuum at the low end of our hearing. This short piece explores the sound based on two notes, C and D, and then combines them in the end, culminating in a slowing down that represents the transition from pulsed listening to harmonic listening.

WORLD IN THE MIRROR - CHINA ²⁰¹⁰ for flute, clarinet, vibraphone, piano, cello

15:14

In the summer of 2009, I wrote "Trembling Aspen" for two harps, my first composition embarking on a new peaceful music, while experimenting with "Nodal" software (developed at Monash University, Clayton, Australia, based on an original concept by Jon McCormack). This software facilitates the creation of polyphonic music that merges traditional motivic ideas with the self-similar motion of natural phenomenon, such as the movement of leaves in the wind. In my "World in the Mirror" series, I create a very still music with the most recognizable musical shapes of various of the world's musical cultures. The recurrence of the musical elements in unpredictable reorderings lends a hypnotic quality to the music that tends to slow the listener's heart rate and brings the instrumental colours and melodic shapes into intimate relation. My aim is also to create music that can be played by various different musical ensembles of the world. For example, the "China" piece may be played by a western, Chinese ensemble, or mixed ensemble. The simplicity of the music also makes it accessible to younger or amateur musicians.

The present version of the score was completely revised and expanded in 2011 to become a work with unique multiple presentation possibilities: the music can end at several places depending on the performance situation. If the work is being played in a concert situation, one of the shorter versions can be played. The longer versions of the piece should be presented to audiences who may be able to sustain the concentrated deep listening that is required to appreciate the music. The various alternate endings are to be found at the following measure numbers: 115, 164, 234, 308, and the actual ending.

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John Oliver: Catalogue of Selected Works with clarinet

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CONSENSUS ²⁰⁰⁷ for Mixed World Music Ensemble, 7 or more players
Commissioned by Vancouver Chinese Music Ensemble

OLI_07_consen_sc
\$18.00 10:00

*High Wind (Flute, Dizi, Soprano Sax Oboe, Shakuhachi, etc.),
High Bowed String (erhu, violin, sarangi, kamancheh),
Other melody instrument (viola, pipa, electric guitar, alto or tenor sax, clarinet),
Drum Set (tabla, dumbek, congas, frame drum, or other: adapt part.),
Keyboard (zheng, harp, yang chin, accordion, synthesizer),
Classical Guitar (amplified) or Electric guitar (GR-33 synth optional),
Guitar 2 [optional part] (classical, steel-string, electric, zhongruan, tar),
4-string Bass Guitar or other bass (electric, acoustic or guitarron; contrabass clarinet, bassoon, sax).*

Classically-trained musicians of many of the world's cultures increasingly want to play music together, and want to play with musicians from oral traditions. A great synthesis is underway. With so many different approaches to creating and playing music, such a project has great challenges. But regardless of the musician's musical background or training, there is one thing most can agree upon: that music was born of about four notes. My work is a way for musicians to get together to play a piece based on the notes D, E, G, & A.

Each musician brings special training to such music-making. Those who can read music well can teach the score to musicians who play better by ear, so that all can reach a musical consensus. The "solos" section can be extended through improvisation, with the duration of each solo to be determined by a cueing system devised by the musicians. Classical musicians are encouraged to ornament, vary, add to, and alter the written solos to make them idomatic for their instrument.

Although conceived of for a mixed Asian and Western ensemble, several, quite different, core ensembles could be used. For example, an amplified band: soprano sax, electric violin, 3 electric guitars, drum set, synthesizer and electric bass; an "intercultural" band: shakuhachi, kamancheh, clarinet, dumbek, accordion, classical guitar, zhonruan, and guitarron. The first version was performed on dizi, erhu, pipa, drum set, zheng, classical guitar, zhongruan, and electric bass.

GALLERY ¹⁹⁹⁶ for Wind Quintet

Commissioned by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

OLI_96_gallery_sc
\$16.00 16:15

Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn in F, Bassoon

I wrote GALLERY in the spirit of Bach's Musical Offering and the writings of painter Wassily Kandinsky. GALLERY began its life as a collection of sketches, written mainly when inspiration struck. The form of the work evolved from the material, without preconceiving a formal structure. In fact, the final order of the movements was hard to decide. The work was slightly revised in 2008.

Lately, I have been thinking about temperament and the effect of sound on listeners. Sound is a continuum, untempered. Humans can discern approximately 72 steps within an octave, in the speaking register of their hearing. The equal tempered tuning system (that used on keyboard instruments, for example) allows for highly developed polyphonic music, using many, varied melodic and harmonic structures, but with only 12, equally-spaced steps per octave. Its weakness lies in its inherent inability to sound "restful", because of the constant beating of the sounding intervals. An overload of dissonance comes quickly to music sounding with this tuning. On the other hand, music played using just intonation (pure intervals spaced according to low-integer ratios) sounds restful, even at a higher level of intensity. Wind instruments tend to play pure intervals when they play together, without a piano. So, in GALLERY, I have written pieces using both systems.

The first movement resembles artist sketches for a series of paintings. Within the first movement, the sketches are titled "frame," "resonance," "points," "lines," and "plane." (One can hear the reverberations of Kandinsky's treatise "Point and Line to Plane" and an echo of the idea of Mussorgsky's walking music in his "Pictures at an Exhibition" can be heard in the opening "frame" music.) At the end of this movement, you will hear a melody that reappears at important places throughout the various movements. In the second movement, "Points Breakdown," I use just intervals (7th to 12th harmonics) and canon technique to create what composer John Burke has called "bouncing around inside a dominant seventh chord." "Lines Interlacing," the third movement, is subtitled "In the style of a tarantella," though it is a strict canon at the fourth that develops the "sketch" that appeared near the beginning. This same tune is then given a new mixed accompaniment in the fourth part, "Alluvial Plane." The fifth part, "Eternity Canon," is a trio of the high winds that combines the "points" idea of narrow linear movement with the rhythmic profile of "lines" and ends the phrases with the "resonance" model. All of this is organised as a canon at the unison that transposes up a major third with each iteration. This sends the players (and the listener) into the highest registers of the instruments, into undulating clusters, before a final descent. The sixth movement, called "Watercolours," now combines the previous music into a new masterwork for all to hear. The sliding tones added to the "lines" material enriches the colour of the piece. Concepts of line and counterpoint mix traditional meaning with new and our study of "point and line to plane" is complete.

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FIELDS BEFORE US ¹⁹⁹⁰ for Soprano Sax, Bass Clarinet, 3 Congas (one player)
Commissioned by Lori Freedman

OLI_90_fields_sc
\$18.00 16:20

In five movements: 1] Killing Fields; 2] Corn Fields; 3] Magnetic Fields; 4] Elysian Fields; 5] Playing Fields.

The title Fields Before Us evokes nature in the present tense, history when interpreting the word "before" in its temporal meaning, and the future when taken to mean "in front of us." The additional titles of each movement intend to create an evocative atmosphere for the listening, but otherwise have no narrative intent.

The work is comprised of five movements, the fifth of which is a collage of the previous four. Each movement reveals a particular approach to time and space. All are Unified by the use of the Fibonacci (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8) and other additive number series. The first and third movements employ canon techniques; the second a multi-layered, colouristic technique; and the fourth a wavelike melodic organisation. Though each of the four movements is distinct, they share basic musical materials (intervallic and temporal relationships.) This allows me to play a game with the listener's memory in the fifth movement, showing how the previous four can be intertwined in an effect similar to looking at a quadruple-layered chess game, in which we can see four games at once. Such multiplicity is a metaphor for modern life.

URBAN DANCES ¹⁹⁸⁰ for Clarinet & Guitar

OLI_2009_urbandances_sc
\$9.00 9:10

I originally wrote and performed this suite of pieces in 1979 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Long forgotten, I resurrected the suite in 2009 at the request of guitarist Alexander Dunn, and with the kind assistance of guitarist Douglas Hensley, who had the original score in his archives. All three of us went to school together at the Conservatory and this is an auspicious "rerelease" of this early work. I made only minor adjustments to the original. (Note that the fourth movement, "Certitude," also appears as a solo guitar piece in my MINIMUSICA Concert Studies.)

I rededicate this work to all of my friends who play guitar and clarinet!

For more information, to listen to sound clips, and to buy scores online, please go to the web site www.johnolivermusic.com
This catalogue, as well as full and partial-listing catalogues, can be downloaded there in PDF format.

Parts are available for rent or purchase.

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