

AMBER GUDAITIS

Contemporary Music and Dance

A Music Composition Recital
Featuring New Choreographic Works by
Amber Gudaitis and Vanessa Freeman

All music composed by
Amber Gudaitis

Arizona State University
Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts

EVELYN SMITH MUSIC THEATER
FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2014 ~ 7:30 PM

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Burning Grounds (title of musical composition) 2013

this desolate flower (title of choreographic composition)

Brittany Davidson, violin I

Emilio Vazquez, violin II

Ali Friedman, viola

Marguerite Salajko, cello

Choreography by Vanessa Freeman

Performed by Amber Gudaitis, Vanessa Freeman, and Cheyenne Spencer

Moods for solo piano (*written for Dzidra Traun*) 2009

III Poem

Robert Avril, piano

Oddity 2012

Lexie Kruse, trumpet

Choreography written and performed by Amber Gudaitis

Fire Incantations

I. Candlelight

II. Blue Fire

III. White Light

IV. Alchemist's Flame

V. Red Embers

Commissioned by Tuba COR 2013

(Music and Choreography by Amber Gudaitis)

John Ericson, horn

Gail Novak, piano

Deanna Swoboda, tuba

Vanessa Freeman, dance

Polaris: Firefly Music 2012

Neil Hathaway, vibraphone

Lexie Kruse, trumpet

Eric Retterer, graduated wood blocks

Choreography and poetry written and performed by Amber Gudaitis

Special thanks to the show's lighting technicians: Jeff Ouper & Samuel Wiseman

Out of respect for the performers and those audience members around you, please turn all electrical accessories off. (All the way off, please.) Thank you.

About the Music

Burning Grounds was written in collaboration with choreographer, Vanessa Freeman. The piece as a whole was inspired by the painting by Philip C. Curtis, titled "High Chairs", which depicts several children's high chairs, strewn across a desert landscape.

The concept of lost or discarded childhood was a theme that inspired both the music and the dance. The music moves back and forth between harsh, dissonant motifs and lush, tranquil harmonies. These tranquil sections are intentionally stunted, cut short of full phrase by the recurring theme of a high pitched wail, evoking a sense of longing and incompleteness. The piece is a depiction of waning memories, left outside to fade on the Burning Grounds.

The choreographic work, **this desolate flower**, represents the loss of innocence and the isolation that we feel through the maturation process into adulthood. We look upon our younger days in remembrance of what it used to be like to experience vast joy in comparison to a life of responsibilities. These obligations isolate us from our inner child, leaving us with the hope that one day we will be able to reconnect with that innocence again.

The choreography also emphasizes how the human connection in childhood is completely different from experiencing life as an adult. Many adults present a facade, hiding their agenda and not truly connecting with others. Rather, they use those individuals for personal gain and competition.

(program notes by Amber Gudaitis and Vanessa Freeman)

Oddity evokes the confidence and swagger that is unique to trumpet and contemporary pointe choreography. These arts are both viewed as an authoritative presence on the stage. *Oddity* strongly coordinates music and dance, incorporating contemporary - and at times, chaotic - gestures. As a recurring respite from this chaos, the two parts are unified by a commanding gesture: the dancer counts off an austere tempo, and the trumpet responds by playing a confident swing melody.

Fire Incantations

Fire has a mysterious quality that captures our interest. Children are perplexed by the elegant flame that rises from a burning match, and adults regard fire as a powerful force to fear and respect. *Fire Incantations* was written to illustrate these mystical qualities. Like a collection of spells welcoming some supernatural force, each movement of *Fire Incantations* was written to portray the character of a different color of flame.

Sharing the stage, musicians and dancer together cast an atmosphere of energy and heat. Slinky bodily movements akin to a developing flame are paired with driving tempo and jolting dissonances. Gentle breath-like gestures are danced alongside delicate *arpeggiation* in the piano. And, the rage of *fortissimo* brass resonates while green light outlines the dancer's form, elusive and enchanting.

These are the conjurings of flame and heat, the spells and enchantments of mystical powers. *Fire Incantations*.

(page turn)

Polaris, subtitled Firefly Music

Polaris is a depiction of a summer evening, spent outside chasing fireflies. Being this type of portrayal, Polaris was titled after the first star that shines after dark. The performance is prefaced with spoken word: a poem written as support to the temperament of the musical composition. Each instrument and even the choreography itself are used as an element of the overall atmosphere. It is not a composition of complexity. Rather, it is an interpretation of subtlety and the simple beauty that lies therein.

Polaris

After the twilight clouds have thinned
And before the mists of dawn encircle the trees
When crickets sing in the pearly light of the moon,
And long fields of grass stretch open and far

A cool blue sets the greenery aglow in the stillness of night,
A cosmic sea stretches into the universe above,
And delicate fireflies dance a slow dance
While courting the vibrant stars.

Birds of the moon splinter the night with their cries
Deep, hell bound cries that echo like regrets
In the corners of life and love and loss.
Delicate beings of blue shadowed skies,
Passing through the curtains of dusk.

And they fly in the green forests turned pale,
Where spirits roam like lovers and romanticize
How the winds turn to dreams and catch sail.
And the mind leads as we walk through the heavens,
Between jeweled constellations of fireflies.

Amber Gudaitis

*I would like to give special thanks to my family, who have been an enormous support to me
in all the unique challenges of this degree.*