

FROM THE SOUL

Frank Morelli *Bassoon*

	Jeff Scott (b. 1967)	
1.	Elegy for Innocence (2008)	9:43
	Lori Laitman (b. 1955)	
	I Never Saw Another Butterfly (Version for Voice and Bassoon) (1996)	
2.	i. The Butterfly	5:02
3.	ii. Yes, That's the Way Things Are	2:21
4.	iii. Birdsong	3:54
5.	iv. The Garden	2:10
6.	v. Man Proposes, God Disposes	0:53
7.	vi. The Old House	3:03
	Dominick Argento (1927-2019)	
8.	Man with a Paint Box Aria from "Postcard from Morocco" (1971)	8:53
	Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961)	
	Meeelaan for Bassoon and String Quartet (1999)	
9.	i. Blues	4:28
10.	ii. Tango	4:08
11.	iii. Bebop	3:45
	Nirmali Fenn (b. 1979)	
12.	Prayer (2022) World-Premiere Recording	10:11
	TOTAL TIME	[58:31]

Frank Morelli, *Bassoon*
Wei-Yi Yang, *Piano*
Janna Baty, *Mezzo-Soprano*
Callisto Quartet

FROM THE SOUL

Each work chosen for this album speaks from the soul. *Elegy for Innocence* (2008) by Jeffrey Scott (b. 1967) serves as the perfect “keynote address” for this compilation. The composer recalls: “I was contemplating the innocence one has as he or she starts out in life, and the bittersweet journey as the expectation of life’s offerings yields to reality.” In describing her song cycle *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (1996), Lori Laitman (b. 1955) shares: “One cannot help but be touched by the hope, innocence, and truth of the poems. The cycle progresses from feelings of innocence and hope to those of despair and sorrow.” *A Man with a Paint Box Aria* from the opera *Postcard from Morocco* (1971) by Dominick Argento (1927–2019) portrays an older man’s recollection of an innocent, youthful fantasy in which an imaginary ship docks in the clouds outside his bedroom window. In this instance, the bittersweet and complicated feelings of the storyteller are more subtle. *Meeelaan* (1999) by Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961) is original, deeply felt, and soulful, mirroring the composer on many levels. The album’s final statement, *Prayer*, was written for me in 2022 by composer Nirmali Fenn (b. 1979). She explains: “The piece unfolds as a journey through body, soul, and spirit, with prayer acting as a channel that connects these dimensions.”

Jeffrey Scott recalls that *Elegy for Innocence* “begins with a simple, Copland-esque opening, a sinister, almost uninvited middle section, followed by a melancholic solo bassoon melody, ending with a virtuosic and optimistic finish.” Performing this work with my dear friend and colleague, pianist **Wei-Yi Yang**, I find that Mr. Scott’s composition truly speaks from the soul—from its opening lullaby through the twists and turns that follow.

Paraphrased from her notes, **Lori Laitman** writes: “Composed in 1996 for solo voice with alto saxophone, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* was my first Holocaust-themed song cycle, using texts from an astonishing collection of poems written by children from the Terezin Concentration Camp who were later killed in the Holocaust at Auschwitz. The bassoon version was specifically composed for **Frank Morelli** to perform at Ruth

Sommers' 2002 Festival Chamber Music concert at Merkin Hall in New York City. *'The Butterfly'* opens with a cantorial-style bassoon line, conjuring images of a fluttering butterfly. Despite the tremendous sadness of the text, the message of the poem is one of undying spirit. *'Yes, That's the Way Things Are'* was written by three children—Kosek, Löwy, and Bachner—who wrote under the name Koleba. To reflect the irony of the poem, I created music typical of Jewish folk song. The author of *'Birdsong'* is unknown. Most striking is the author's ability to rise above the horrid living conditions to focus on the loveliness of life. The feelings of hope manifested in the earlier songs die in *'The Garden.'* The little boy walking along the garden path is portrayed by a weaving bassoon part with subtle rhythmic changes. Both parts build to a climax, then abruptly come to a close as *'the little boy will be no more.'* *'Man Proposes, God Disposes,'* also written by the three children who signed their name Koleba, recognizes that those who were 'rich before' would perish much faster in the camps than those accustomed to a harsher life. *'The Old House,'* written by Franta Bass, ends the cycle. The barren image of the deserted house is captured by the muted bassoon repeatedly playing one note, like a bell tolling." Having performed this profound cycle together many times, the outstanding mezzo-soprano **Janna Baty** and I are deeply grateful to share it on this album.

A Man with a Paint Box Aria—"Once, when I was a young man"—from **Dominick Argento's** opera *Postcard from Morocco* (1971) compels the bassoonist to sing. Paraphrasing Argento's own words about his musical style: "My music is lyrical because it's sung. I have gone on record as saying that my whole purpose in writing music is to communicate with an audience, and to move them—to make them laugh or weep. That is the fundamental aspect of music."

Wynton Marsalis wrote *Meeelaan* for the eminent bassoonist Milan Turkovic. The title refers to the way Marsalis would often greet him. As stated in Marsalis's official biography: "Marsalis performs and composes across the entire spectrum of jazz and has written jazz-influenced chamber and symphonic works for revered classical ensembles across the U.S. and abroad. He is inspired to experiment in an ever-widening palette of forms and concepts that constitute some of the most advanced thinking in modern jazz and in

American music on the broad scale." *Meeelaan* surely fits this description, with writing that requires the bassoonist and the outstanding **Callisto Quartet** to "turn on a dime" from one expressive quality to the next. The bassoonist must create a sound perhaps more reminiscent of a tenor or baritone saxophone. The result is an original, wide-ranging mixture of styles—from blues to tango to bebop—yet the overall effect remains a unified message that is soulful on many levels.

With this debut recording, *Prayer*, written for me in 2022 by composer **Nirmali Fenn**, brings *From the Soul's* journey to a meaningful close. The bassoonist is asked to evoke the sound and style of the Armenian duduk, a double-reed instrument similar in size to the oboe. The use of jaw vibrato and alternate fingerings creates varied tone colors unlike the more familiar sounds one might expect. In the final section, the pianist places a "singing bowl" on the piano's G4 string, first causing it to vibrate and then gliding it along the string to create an ethereal effect. The composer writes: "*Prayer* is a piece born from collaboration—a testament to how friendship can spark creation. Before composing, Frank asked for a piece that could evoke the spiritual intensity of the Muslim call to prayer. For months, I listened to adhans, only to find my inner ear forging the haunting duduk-like solo that is at the center of this piece. Together, we sculpted the opening over weeks of collaboration; I still recall Frank's instruction—'make it operatic.' Composing *Prayer* was pure joy: when collaborators magnify each other's ideas, the process becomes a journey of discovery, leading to surprising new worlds of sound. Throughout its creation, one question stayed with me: what is prayer for? Beyond religion, I believe prayer is a search for unity—an act of resistance against conflict. The message behind *Prayer* is simple: we all belong to something larger than ourselves, and that truth leaves no room for war."

I wish to offer one final thought: Among the messages presented by the repertoire on this album is that the bassoon needn't have just one voice. The bassoon is my voice, and it has been my life's work to speak through it with variety and sincerity, from both heart and soul.

– Frank Morelli



FRANK MORELLI | Bassoon

Frank Morelli, a student of Stephen Maxym, was the first bassoonist ever to be awarded a doctorate by The Juilliard School. A soloist in Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium on nine occasions, he performed regularly with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for over thirty years, including at the White House for the final State Dinner of the Clinton presidency. Emeritus Co-Principal Bassoon of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Morelli has held faculty positions at the Yale School of Music, The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, The Glenn Gould School, SUNY Stony Brook, and Queens College, CUNY. Of his nearly 200 recordings, *From the Soul* is his sixth solo album and his second release on the Musica Solis label, following *An die Musik*. Among his extensive discography, *Gramophone* magazine praised his performance on the Deutsche Grammophon recording of Mozart's wind concertos with Orpheus, noting that "Frank Morelli's Bassoon Concerto is probably the pick of the series" and that "Morelli's playing is a joy to behold." *The American Record Guide* stated, "[his] bassoon playing ... is as good as it gets." Regarding his recent foray into jazz (*The OX-MO Incident* with saxophonist Keith Oxman), *JazzWeekly.com* wrote: "Morelli makes the usually unwieldy bassoon work wonders... [he] bops with delight... and he glistens on 'Full Moon and Empty Arms,' and is elegiac in 'Three for Five.'" The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra recording *Shadow Dances*, featuring Morelli, won a 2001 Grammy Award. A performer and juror at many of the world's most prestigious festivals, he is also a member of Windscape, the woodwind quintet in residence at the Manhattan School of Music. Morelli has published numerous transcriptions (TrevCo Music), the landmark excerpt book *Stravinsky: Difficult Passages for Bassoon* (Boosey & Hawkes), and his definitive edition of the *Weissenborn: The First Complete Bassoon Method and Studies* (Carl Fischer). Frank Morelli plays a Leitzinger bassoon exclusively.

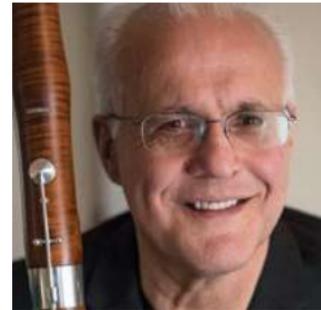


Photo: Paul Horton



Photo: Harold Shapiro

WEI-YI YANG | Piano

Pianist **Wei-Yi Yang** has received worldwide acclaim for his captivating performances and imaginative programming. Winner of the gold medal at the San Antonio International Piano Competition, he has performed at major venues across Europe, Asia, Australia, and ones in America including the Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center. His debut at Carnegie Hall as the soloist in Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie* was hailed by *The New York Times* as "sensational." In demand as a dedicated teacher, Wei-Yi Yang has presented master classes and performances on nearly all the continents. Mr.

Yang's performances have been lauded and featured on NPR, PBS, RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana), ARTE (Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne), the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Company), and on recordings for such labels as Genuin (Leipzig), Hyperion (London), Naxos (Hong Kong), and Albany Records. A dynamic chamber musician with a diverse repertoire, Mr. Yang is a frequent guest artist at festivals in Lucca, Italy; Mallorca, Spain; Novi Sad, Serbia; Monterrey, Mexico; Konstanz, Germany; Kotor, Montenegro; Bergen, Netherland; and La Jolla and Napa, California. Mr. Yang has collaborated with such distinguished musicians as Frederica von Stade, Dawn Upshaw, Richard Stoltzman, David Shifrin, Frank Morelli, Roberto Díaz, Roger Tapping, Clive Greensmith, Ole Akahoshi, Syoko Aki, and Ani Kavafian, to name just a few, and esteemed ensembles such as the Imani Winds, the Brentano, Miro, Dover, Pacifica, and Tokyo string quartets, among numerous others. Born in Taiwan of Chinese and Japanese heritage, Mr. Yang studied with renowned Russian pianists Arkady Aronov and Boris Berman. Mr. Yang has also worked with eminent pianists Claude Frank, Peter Frankl, Vera Gornostaeva, Byron Janis, Lilian Kallir, and Murray Perahia. In 2004, he received his doctorate from Yale University, where he joined the School of Music's faculty in 2005 and serves as Professor of Piano.

JANNA BATY | Mezzo-Soprano

Praised by the Boston Globe for "a rich, viola-like tone and a rapturous, luminous lyricism", mezzo-soprano **Janna Baty** has sung with orchestras and opera companies the world over, including Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Hartford Symphony, Daejeon Philharmonic (Korea), Royal Philharmonic (England), Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá (Colombia), Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Eugene Opera, Opera North, and Boston Lyric Opera, among others. Ms. Baty has sung under James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, Michel Plasson, Carl Davis, Robert Spano, Steuart Bedford, Stephen Lord, and others. A specialist in contemporary music and opera, she has worked alongside many composers on performances of their music. Ms. Baty's discography includes a dozen albums in addition to this one, including Lukas Foss's opera *Griffelkin* (as the Mother) for Chandos; *Vali: Flute Concerto/Deylaman/Folk Songs (Set No. 10)*, and *Reza Vali: The Being of Love* for Naxos; and on BMOP Sound, *The Italian Lesson* (singing the monodrama of the same name by Lee Hoiby), John Harbison's opera *Winter's Tale* (as Hermione); and *Toward That Endless Plain* (singing *Folk Songs, Set Nos. 8 and 14* by Reza Vali), which was a WQXR Top Ten Pick for 2013. Since 2008, Ms. Baty has taught at Yale School of Music, and prior to that she taught at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is a graduate of Oberlin College and Yale School of Music, a US/Canadian dual citizen, and mother to a brilliant daughter. She lives in Hamden, Connecticut.



Photo: Rex Lott



CALLISTO QUARTET

Praised for their “tremendous variety of color” (*The Strad*) and the “cohesion and intonation one might expect from an ensemble twice their age” (*Third Coast Review*), the American-Canadian-Taiwanese **Callisto Quartet** has quickly risen to international acclaim. Since their inception in 2016, they have garnered top prizes in nearly every major chamber music competition, including the Banff, Fischhoff, Bordeaux, Melbourne, and Wigmore Hall competitions. The Callisto Quartet maintains a busy touring schedule, appearing internationally at venues

including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Wigmore Hall. They frequently appear at music festivals including the Ravinia Festival, La Jolla Music Society, Caramoor Center, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and IMS Prussia Cove. The Callisto Quartet recorded *The Maze* by Niloufar Irvani on *Sirventès*, an album released by New Focus Records. As educators, the Callisto Quartet has taught masterclasses at Rice University, Cleveland Institute of Music, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Washington, and UC Santa Barbara, among others. From 2022-2024, they taught chamber music at Yale University, and now serve on faculty at summer festivals including the Bravo Workshop and Rocky Ridge Music. The Callisto Quartet has held residencies at Rice University, Yale University, the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofia, and the Caramoor Center. They enjoy performing alongside many of today’s eminent artists, including Paul Watkins, Tara O’Connor, Lawrence Power, David Shifrin, Misha Amory, Nina Lee, Ettore Causa, Frank Cohen, and Desmond Hoebig. The quartet’s name was inspired by the symmetry between Jupiter’s four major moons and the members of a quartet, taking Callisto from Jupiter’s most stable and hospitable moon.

Photo: Titilayo Ayangade





JEFF SCOTT | *Elegy for Innocence*

Horn player and composer **Jeff Scott**'s journey from Queens, New York, to international acclaim reflects a life of resilience, artistry, and cultural storytelling. Introduced to the French horn at fourteen through a scholarship and the generosity of his first teacher, Scott went on to study at the Manhattan School of Music and SUNY Stony Brook, laying the foundation for a multifaceted career spanning Broadway, ballet, chamber music, and studio recording. A founding member of the groundbreaking wind quintet Imani Winds, Scott helped redefine the possibilities of classical

performance for 24 years. His compositions—ranging from orchestral scores to intimate solo works—blend classical form with the soul of Black American music, jazz, and spoken word. He describes this hybrid aesthetic as *Urban Classical*: music born from struggle, lifted by heritage, and driven by emotional truth. Now Professor of Composition and Horn at the University at Buffalo, Scott continues to mentor the next generation of artists while creating works that transform lived experience into beauty and legacy.



LORI LAITMAN | *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

Lori Laitman is one of America's most prolific and widely performed composers of vocal and choral music. She has written operas, choral works, and more than 350 songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets, including those who perished in the Holocaust. Her music is acclaimed for its individuality, craftsmanship, and lyric beauty—praised for its "unmistakable sense of identity... masterful skill" (*Opera News*) and described as "artistry of the highest order" (*Textura*) and "gripping and thought-provoking" (*American*

Photo: Brittany Florenz

Record Guide). Laitman has received commissions from the BBC, The Royal Philharmonic Society, Opera America, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Colorado, Seattle Opera, the Grant Park Music Festival, the Washington National Opera Chorus, Music of Remembrance, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, among others. Her extensive discography includes releases on Naxos, Albany, Acis, and additional labels. A magna cum laude graduate of Yale College, Laitman earned her Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music.

DOMINICK ARGENTO | *Man with a Paint Box Aria*

Dominick Argento, considered to be America's pre-eminent composer of lyric opera, was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1927. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Peabody Conservatory and his Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music. Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships allowed him to study in Italy, and following his Fulbright, Argento became music director of Hilltop Opera in Baltimore, and taught theory and composition at the Eastman School. In 1958, he joined the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota, where he taught until 1997 and later held the rank of Professor Emeritus. During his years at Eastman, Argento composed his opera, *The Boor* (1957), of which John Rockwell of *The New York Times* stated: "[it] taps deep currents of sentiment and passion." Following his arrival in Minnesota, Argento accepted commissions from the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis. Since the early 1970s Argento's operas were heard with increasing frequency abroad. Among these are *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (1976), *The Dream of Valentino* (1993), and *Casanova's Homecoming* (1984), which Robert Jacobson of *Opera News* hailed as "a masterpiece." Dominick Argento received the Pulitzer Prize for Music in



Photo: King Elder

1975 for his song cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1979, and in 1997 was honored with the title of Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra, a lifetime appointment. *Argento's bio reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes.*

WYNTON MARSALIS | Meelaan

Wynton Marsalis, born in New Orleans in 1961, is an internationally acclaimed trumpeter, composer, bandleader, and educator whose artistry bridges the worlds of jazz and classical music. Renowned for his virtuosic technique and expressive tone, he has expanded the vocabulary of both genres with a body of work that reflects deep respect for American musical traditions. A prodigious talent, Marsalis began performing publicly in his youth and studied at The Juilliard School before joining Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, where he honed his craft among the legends of jazz. He

soon launched a prolific solo career, recording more than 100 albums and earning nine Grammy Awards. In 1997, his monumental oratorio *Blood on the Fields* became the first jazz composition to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Music. As a composer, Marsalis has written extensively for jazz ensemble, chamber groups, and orchestra, including *A Fiddler's Tale*, *All Rise*, *Blues Symphony*, *Swing Symphony*, and *Concerto in D* for violin. His music fuses the rhythmic vitality of jazz with the structural and expressive depth of the classical tradition. Marsalis is the Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center and Director of Jazz Studies at The Juilliard School. Honored with the National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal, he continues to champion jazz as a cornerstone of American culture—celebrating its spirit of creativity, collaboration, and community through performance, education, and composition.



Photo: Clay McBride

NIRMALI FENN | Prayer

Sri Lankan-born Australian composer **Nirmali Fenn** is often described as a musical nomad. Her works arise from a life in motion, exploring the fluidity of home, memory, and belonging beyond geography. Her portrait CD on Kairos was praised for its “dynamic and sculpturally fluid” sound world and its exploration of “the poetics of spacetime thematic resonance.” Fenn’s music has been commissioned by New Music USA, The Juilliard School, ensemble unitedberlin, and Fondation Royaumont, and performed by leading ensembles including the Arditti Quartet, Ensemble Cairn, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Linea, and Trio Radial. She has served as composer-in-residence at major festivals such as Zeitströme Darmstadt and Yarn/Wire. Viewing music as a tool for resistance, empathy, and spatial awareness, Fenn seeks to engage listeners in perceiving the world through sound—inviting both performer and audience to “see” with their ears.



Recorded at Blocker Orchestra Hall, Yale School of Music, New Haven, CT, USA
Recording dates: December 12, 2023 (Marsalis), January 8-9, 2024 (Laitman), January 9, 2024 (Scott, Argento), January 9-10, 2024 (Fenn)

Produced and engineered by Matthew LeFevre
Mastered by Bill Siegmund
Graphic Design: Tim Schwartz | OnionProductions.com
Release date: February 20, 2026

Edited and mixed by Ben Schwartz
Program notes: Frank Morelli
Label Executive: Seunghee Lee
Total Time: [58:31]

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