

## Mountain Currents

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By Nancy Laupheimer

In my experience, collaboration inspires and stimulates creativity, particularly when different forms of expression are combined. As Director of the Taos Chamber Music Group, I am always looking for ways to expand the conventional chamber music setting, which has resulted in



collaborations with non-classical musicians, writers, artists, dancers and historians. So when artist and photographer Caitlin Legere approached me with a proposal for a visual/musical performance "to explore connections to a sense of place," I jumped at the opportunity.

The idea to connect composers, musicians and photographers from New York and New Mexico had as its centerpiece the work of a former teacher of Legere's at Union College, Hilary Tann. Serendipitously I had recently heard Tann's intriguing, hauntingly beautiful music on a recording, and the wheels were set in motion. Almost a year later, the Taos Chamber Music Group will present "Mountain Currents" on Saturday, April 12, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, April 13, 5:30 p.m. at the Harwood Museum.

Tann's compositional style is informed by her love of Wales, a deep interest in the traditional music of Japan, and her strong identification with the natural world. Three of her pieces, "Nothing Forgotten" for violin, cello and piano, "Llef" for flute and cello, and "Gardens of Anna Maria de'Medici" for flute, cello and piano will be featured as well as a piece of mine written in 1989 called "Zephyr" for alto flute and cello. Rounding out the program will be the chamber music masterpiece, Antonin Dvorak's "Dumky' Trio" for violin, cello and piano. TCMG musicians are Martha Caplin on violin, Sally Guenther, cello, Robert Tweten, piano, and myself playing flutes.

"Nothing Forgotten" takes its title from part of a long poem by Jordan Smith, which reads: "You see, what scares me / about this landscape is that nothing is new, / nothing forgotten, nothing lost, / and nothing changes." The piece includes references to two traditional Adirondack songs, and its movements' subtitles make reference to granite as "some half-forgotten spirit," and "all that light caught forever in the pine boughs / bound between the stones and current." Llef is a Welsh word meaning "cry from the heart." It is also the name of a Welsh hymn tune ("O! Jesu Mawr"). Referring to the Welsh mining town where she was born, Tann writes: "But on the mountain top, close to the bracken and lichen, and in the crevices of the rain-swept stone walls, echoes of the old hymns may still be heard." "Gardens..." is based on the life of the last of the Medicis, Anna Maria Luisa (1667-1743), whose love of cultivated nature inspired the composition.

The title of TCMG's program embraces the environmental theme that unites the music and photographs, which will be projected during the performance of "Nothing Forgotten" and "Zephyr." "Mountain" refers to those of Tann's birthplace in Wales and her present home in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. Her music will be accompanied by New York photographer Larry White's stunning images. The Sangre de Cristos and the Rio Grande set the stage for the work of Taos photographers Legere, Geraint Smith, Richard Hasbrouck, and Robert Fitch. Their photographs will reflect the currents of wind and water that inspired me to write "Zephyr" following a rafting trip down the Green River in Utah, where I performed concerts with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Organizing the photographic presentation, Legere puts it more poetically: "The images compiled express a vast range of the daily whim of cloud and sun and the water's journey at the heart of 'Zephyr.'"

"Currents," as it turns out, also applies to other connections besides those relating to the natural world. Geraint Smith is originally from Wales; Legere hails from the Adirondacks; folk music elements are present in Tann's and Dvorak's music; and oriental flavors imbue both Tann's and my compositions. As a result of (or perhaps resulting in) all these overlapping relationships and inspirational sources, a fortuitous blend of evocative music and exquisite imagery has come into being for this one-of-a-kind performance in Taos.

Tann's music is being performed all over the world these days, from China to New York, and released on various recording labels—including Channel Classics, Deux Elles and North/South Recordings—so it is very exciting to have her come to Taos to give an introduction at the concerts. Tickets are \$17 in advance at the Harwood Museum Gift Shop, \$10 for children under 16 and \$20 at the door. They can also be charged by phone through the Taos Center for the Arts, 575-758-2052. A dinner discount is available with a ticket stub at Doc Martin's, Lambert's, Joseph's Table and The Apple Tree restaurants. Visit TCMG's website [taoschambermusicgroup.org](http://taoschambermusicgroup.org) for more information.