

elemental

Frank Wallace

his own new works, vol. III

Hermann Hauser, 1931 guitar

GYRE 10172 | UPC-802442101723

elemental [ˌɛlɪˈmɛntəl], adj

1. fundamental; basic; primal the elemental needs of man

2. motivated by or symbolic of primitive and powerful natural forces or passions elemental rites of worship

[Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged](#) © HarperCollins Publishers

The Elements, op. 29 (2004)

- 01) Fire - 4:53
- 02) Earth - 3:32
- 03) Air - 3:28
- 04) Water - 3:56

05) **A Heavy Sleep**, op. 76 (2013) - 4:37

06) **Black Falcon**, op. 74 (2012) - 9:19

The Bells, op. 61

- 07) d'Orleans - 1:29
- 08) d'Angelus - 4:42
- 09) In the Well - 5:35

Sonata #1, op. 32 (2005)

- 10) Allegro Apassionato- 4:23
- 11) Grave - 3:49
- 12) Prestissimo - 3:00

Passing in the Night, op. 71 (2012)

- 13) 'Round the World - 2:09
- 14) Don't say Goodbye - 2:17
- 15) Par 9 - 0:55
- 16) Say Au Revoir - 1:06
- 17) I'm still your Pappy - 2:56

TOTAL TIME: 62:06



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CREDITS

Guitar by: Hermann Hauser, 1931

Strings: La Bella Argento

Recorded: September 2013 at the Hillsborough Center Congregational Church, NH

Microphones: Schoepps and Neumann through an Orpheus interface

Engineering and mastering: Frank Wallace

Art, photography and design: Nancy Knowles

www.gyremusic.com

Thanks to Edmund and Veronica Brelsford for the opportunity to play this incredible guitar; Hermann Hauser for making it and his grandson Hermann for bringing it back to life; my sons, my parents and all my in-laws for their support; the congregation of the Hillsborough Center Congregational Church; those who have commissioned or inspired works on this recording: Norbert Dams, Edel Muñoz, Detlev Bork, Marek Pasieczny, Thomas Schuttenhelm; the NH Council on the Arts and most of all my wife Nancy, for her endless love, understanding and inspiration.

GENERAL NOTES

I once had the honor of spending a night at the home of master luthier Nico van der Waals. An extremely cordial man, it was a pleasure to meet him and to talk about instruments and music. I will never forget descending the stairs late at night to find him alone in the living room, head bowed in hands, listening to Gustav Leonhardt playing Bach. It was a sacred act—an intensity of listening I'm not sure I had ever witnessed. It is in this spirit that I made this recording. **Elemental** signifies the root, the essence, the building blocks of life and physical being. It reflects the raw and powerful dis-passion of nature as portrayed in the first work, *The Elements: Fire, Earth, Air and Water*. (The fifth element, The Void, is what lies between the notes.) The third recording of my solo works for classical guitar, Elemental is contemplative, earthly, dramatic at times, lyrical occasionally. Perhaps the most all-inclusive description would be textural, or abstract. I employ many compositional styles and techniques, from tone row fragments to modal polyphony and drones. My favorite is to derive pitch sets from names—my starting point for A Heavy Sleep, The Bells and Passing in the Night.

I recorded this CD on an extraordinary instrument. In 1929, smitten by Andrés Segovia's concerts in Geneva, the young violinist Blanche Honegger (1909-2011) asked Segovia if she could study with him, which she did, even living for a time in the Segovia household in Paris. Two years later, Segovia commissioned a concert guitar from Hermann Hauser I. Of the two instruments Hauser delivered, Segovia kept one. The other, the guitar on this CD, he gave to Blanche. At the end of World War II, now a member of the illustrious Moyse Trio with her husband and father-in-law, she left France, ultimately settling in Vermont, where they were among the founders of the Marlboro Music Festival. There Blanche Moyse became renowned as

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a conductor. Her Hauser guitar, which had not weathered well the long journey, eventually came into the hands of my good friend Edmund Brelsford. When I first played it in the early 1990s it had not fully rediscovered its voice after initial work on it by David Rubio. In 1999 Hermann Hauser III, the master's grandson, undertook a major restoration. To celebrate the guitar's revival, I was given the honor of performing several concerts on it, and there it was: a sunburst of sound, with colors of every hue, and a decay like none other —each tone ever-so-reluctantly melting into the next. Its true voice, muted for fifty years, sings again. Enjoy!

Frank Wallace

Please visit www.gyremusic.com for extensive program notes on individual pieces, as well as much more, including all sheet music of Wallace's works (downloadable PDFs and deluxe print editions).

BIOGRAPHY

Frank Wallace is an artist whose wizardry on the guitar rivals the range and depth of his musical ideas in composition. Fanfare dubs him a composer with “an authentic expressive voice” and a “high standard of musical interest” who plays with “flawless technical proficiency”. The American Record Guide calls Wallace's music “exciting, unpredictable and fresh”. A prizewinner in the 2013 José Fernández Rojas International Composition Competition in Logroño, Spain, he has also garnered two New Hampshire Artist Fellowship awards for composition. Tirelessly working to expand the guitar repertoire with new works, Wallace founded and directed Festival 21 in Boston, a celebration of 21st century guitar works. In New York he founded and co-directed the Second Sundays Guitar Series run by the New York City Classical Guitar Society and the Roger Smith Hotel. In performance, Wallace is known for his “elegant virtuosity” on the guitar (Classics Today) as well as for his mastery of self-accompanied song. He has toured widely throughout North and South America and Europe since 1976, both as a soloist and as Duo LiveOak with mezzosoprano Nancy Knowles.

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PROGRAM NOTES

The Elements

by Frank A. Wallace, 2004

op. 29, a poetic essay on the origin of life, in four movements for solo guitar

Originally written for 6-string guitar, I have adapted **The Elements** for 10-string as well which will be recorded on a future CD. It is a poetic essay on the origin of the Earth. **I. Fire** I conceive as the original burst of energy that birthed this universe, big, chaotic. **II. Earth** is the eventual congealing of solid ground which features repetitive modal chords that accompany a slow melody. **III. Air** is spacious, a moment when the potential of life has emerged and a time to reflect on creation itself and **IV. Water** the careening, tumbling, whirling thing we call life.

A Heavy Sleep

by Frank A. Wallace, 2013

op. 76, commissioned by and written for Detlev Bork

A Heavy Sleep was commissioned by and written for German guitarist [Detlev Bork](#) on the occasion of Benjamin Britten's 100th Anniversary. The title and motivic content of the piece were derived from Britten's monumental work *Nocturnal* from 1963. It seemed fitting that since Britten's masterpiece was inspired by John Dowland's great song, *Come Heavy Sleep*, I should in turn find my musical inspiration in the gestures and harmonic language of the *Nocturnal*.

Black Falcon

by Frank A. Wallace, 2013

op. 74, commissioned by and written for Edel Muñoz

I first met [Edel Muñoz](#) at the 2011 St. Joseph Guitar Festival – he was back to do his “winner’s concert”, but I missed it. Fortunately, we met again at Classical Minds in Houston in June 2012 at which point we got to hear each others’ concerts. Edel is one of the most suave and subtle but powerful players I have ever heard. I was thrilled that he asked me to write a piece for him.

I had developed some techniques of generating ideas over the past few years that worked extremely well, but for some reason I tossed those ideas out the door and just wrote from pure inspiration. This is the result, a piece making use of the octatonic scale, my first use of the “diminished” scale in a piece that alternates between dramatic chordal outbursts and flowing bass melodies. Overall **Black Falcon** is in two sections: *Larghissimo* in 4/2 and *Allegro* in 12/8.

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The Bells

by Frank A. Wallace, 2010

op. 61, three preludes for solo guitar

Dedicated to: Thomas Schuttenhelm, Norbert Dams and Marek Pasieczny

d'Orleans The round *Orleans, Beaujancy* is woven into a spacious fabric of dissonant chords, melody peeling high above in harmonics. I re-discovered this piece after it lay dormant for over a year, having totally forgotten this little "experiment" in dissonant chord structures. I was pleased to find how much sonority was possible. The major 7th interval is used repeatedly and creates it's own beating vibrato.

d'Angelus I was honored to be asked by [Norbert Dams](#) to write a piece for his 60th year in which he planned to do 60 concerts around the world. I had composed **d'Orleans** on a whim two years before and knew I wanted to write more "impressionistic" pieces in this vein. Norbert's piece uses a series of notes generated by his name and the name of his publishing house, Daminus: FGBBEBC DAEC DAEAFEC and a chromatic variation A#BDA#C#DE CAAD# CAAFA#FD#.

In the Well The third piece, written for [Marek Pasieczny](#), is the most complicated. It is comprised of major 7th intervals, note sets determined by Marek's name, and an unusual version of the round "**Ding dong bell, pussy is in the well**" that I learned years ago from a wonderful family of singers, George and Lucy Semler.

Sonata #1

by Frank A. Wallace, 2005

op. 32, three movements in a romantic 12-tone style for solo guitar: Allegro, Grave, Presto

As with many guitarists my age, Julian Bream's "**20th Century Guitar Music**" album of the late 60's was a tremendous influence on me. Though my eventual path led to the study and performance for many years of Renaissance music, I never lost my love for the pieces by Britten, Martin, Smith Brindle and Henze on that magnificent recording. Certainly this **Sonata #1** came from years of holding those sounds in my heart. The powerful rhythm and harmony emerged in the midst of several tours in which I was debuting two song cycles in the winter/spring of 2005. It surprised me.

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Passing in the Night

by Frank A. Wallace, 2012

op. 71, five short guitar solos

Commissioned by: [Beatty Music Scholarship Competition](#)

Passing in the Night is five short movements dedicated to my father. It was written in Würzburg Germany August 15-18, 2012 while I was on a composition retreat after 13 concerts in Spain. Anxious to write in general and specifically to fulfill a commission for the Beatty Youth Competition, I did not expect to receive notice that my 94 year old father had a fever and had stopped eating. The words of **Amanda**, a shape note hymn by Justin Morgan, still resounded in my ears from my recent performance in the magical Romanesque San Martín de Frómista: "Death like an overflowing stream sweeps us away, our life's a dream, an empty tale, a morning flower, cut down and withered in an hour."

The five works encompass various styles, perhaps influenced by my travels through several countries and by my father's love of travel. The first "**Round the World**," is inspired by friend and fabulous Bulgarian composer/guitarist Atanas Ourkouzounov. The second, "**Don't say Goodbye**" recalls the stark harmonies and gracious melodies of Justin Morgan and the American shape note school. The titles are both quotes of my father during my last visit when Dad told us of his recent (imagined) trip "round the world." A few months earlier he would have elaborated greatly in detail, exotic surely, but as his body weakened after eleven years of struggle, his mind, or perhaps just his voice, couldn't illumine the imagined trip. On parting Dad said, "Don't say goodbye, say *au revoir*. I'm still your Pappy!" After the meditative second piece, **Don't say Goodbye**, a quirky little **Par 9** evokes his impossible dream of joining the pro golf circuit at age 90. Or rather, it is the feeling in me of how odd it was to feel happy that he had dreams, yet sad that he was so divorced from reality. Which is better? Joyous dancing and love of life infuse the the last two pieces, celebrating a life well lived, **Say au Revoir** and **I'm Still your Pappy**.

Au revoir Pop!