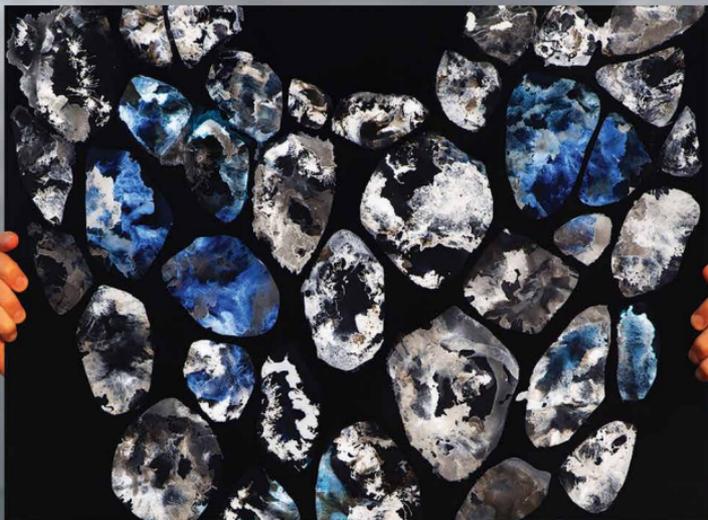


SINGING IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD





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DAVID LANG

1. *these broken wings, part 1* (3:36)

MICHAEL GORDON

2. *the light of the dark* (11:34)

DAVID LANG

3. *these broken wings, part 2 (passacaille)* (5:49)

JULIA WOLFE

4. *singing in the dead of night* (18:51)

DAVID LANG

5. *these broken wings, part 3 (learn to fly)* (5:45)

TT: (46:06)

ALL WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

PROGRAM NOTES

BY DAVID LANG

Over the years Michael, Julie, and I have worked together on several projects, in many different ways. We have written staged oratorios such as *Lost Objects* and *Shelter*, in which musical forces are arrayed around a wide-ranging and very human theme. We have made instrumental pieces in which scraps of tunes were written by one of us and then passed among the others for challenge, improvement, and replacement. Then there is *The Carbon Copy Building*, in which we divided an opera libretto by comic book artist Ben Katchor into separate parts, each of us writing the music for individual scenes, with the whole assembled like a mosaic out of our individual contributions.

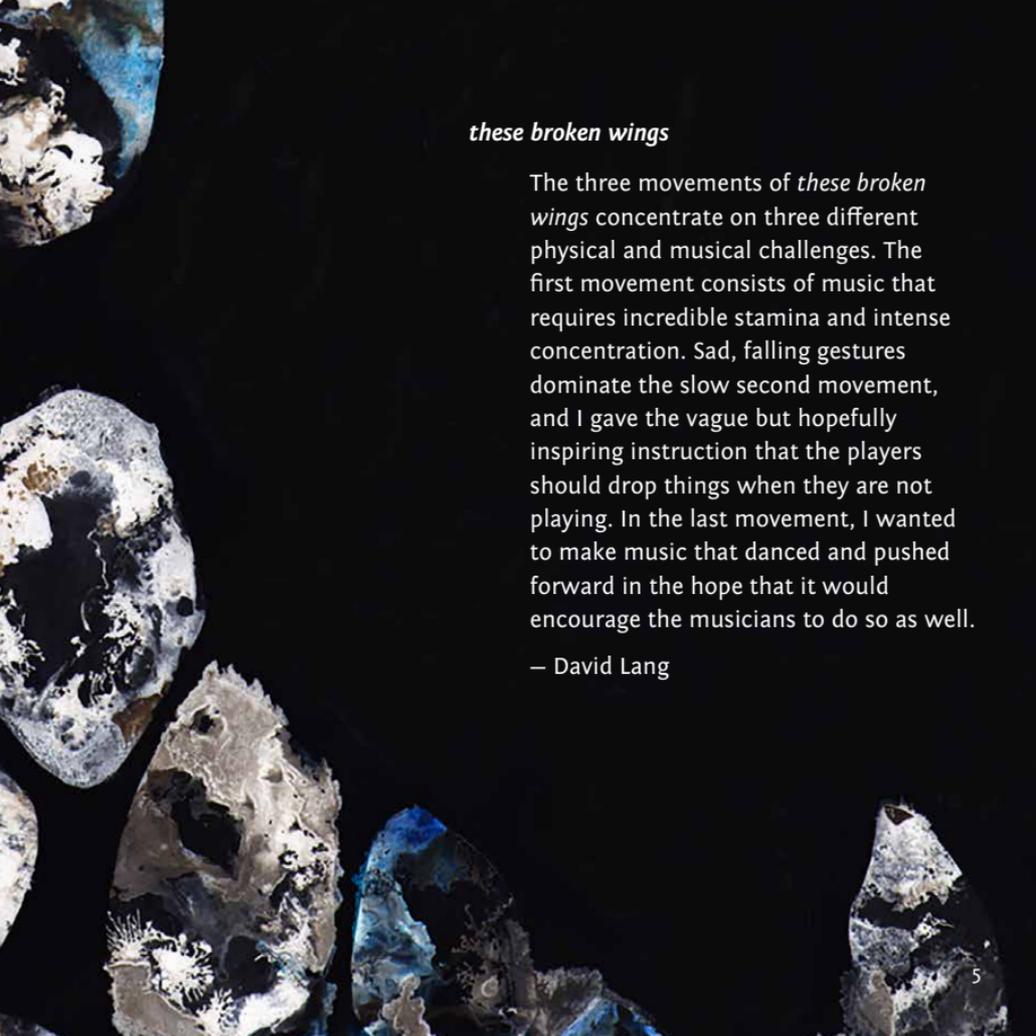
The strange thing is that we usually operate as individual composers, writing our own very separate music, each on his or her own. What is interesting to us about these joint projects is they give us a chance to make something that is larger than our individual opinions, in which we are contributing something meaningful to something that might have a wider range than what we might do on our own. These pieces are meant from the start to have a broad scope, broad enough to include the musical opinions of three related but very independent composers.





When Eighth Blackbird approached us about writing a piece for them, we looked at it in a similar way. How could we make something larger than what we do individually that could take advantage of the full range of Eighth Blackbird's astonishing abilities? We identified to ourselves all the things the Blackbirds did that they were proud of. They have much to take pride in: they play great, of course, but they also have amazing concentration, seem to like really hard music, work like crazy, and memorize everything so they can move around while they play. We wanted to make something broad enough to show all these talents.

We particularly loved that they move. This became the key to what we decided to do. We invited our choreographer friend Susan Marshall to join us, so that the movements of the players could be organized into a whole and shaped into a more theatrical structure, supporting and relating to the music but essentially apart from the musical structure. We wrote music for this piece that both expressed our selves and also gave Susan opportunities to create a theatrical environment.



these broken wings

The three movements of *these broken wings* concentrate on three different physical and musical challenges. The first movement consists of music that requires incredible stamina and intense concentration. Sad, falling gestures dominate the slow second movement, and I gave the vague but hopefully inspiring instruction that the players should drop things when they are not playing. In the last movement, I wanted to make music that danced and pushed forward in the hope that it would encourage the musicians to do so as well.

— David Lang



the light of the dark

the light of the dark was written specifically for Eighth Blackbird. In my initial conversations with the musicians, they mentioned the “other” instruments that they play (accordion, guitar, percussion...), and I imagined a chaos onstage, with the musicians grabbing the nearest available instrument and playing on it. The piece starts with a heavy-metal-esque cello line and builds from there into a kind of out-of-control late-night jam session, complete with unpredictable metallic crashes, swirling virtuosic fiddling, and colliding glissandos.

— Michael Gordon



singing in the dead of night

The title *singing in the dead of night* conjures up the still and surreal nighttime experience of being the only one awake. Out of the silence often comes inspiration — finding one's way to a human song, a symphony of sound. Singing in the dead of night is its own metaphor — beginnings always starting in “the dead of night” — in the void into which a creation is made. The virtuosity and intensity of the music are inspired by the high voltage performers of Eighth Blackbird. The silences, sandpaper sounds, and density are there for the thoughtful and exquisite Susan Marshall.

— Julia Wolfe

BIOGRAPHIES

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

NATHALIE JOACHIM

flutes, auxiliary piano, metals

KEN THOMSON

clarinet, bass clarinet,
auxiliary piano

MATT ALBERT

violin, guitar, auxiliary piano,
metals, sandpaper

NICK PHOTINOS

cello, harmonica, metals,
sandpaper

MATTHEW DUVAL

percussion, accordion, metals,
sandpaper

LISA KAPLAN

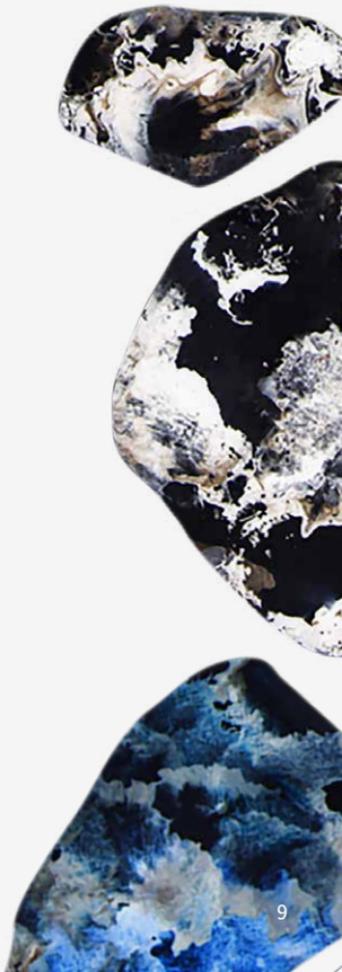
piano, accordion, metals,
sandpaper

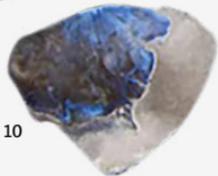
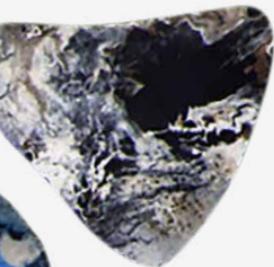
Eighth Blackbird is “one of the smartest, most dynamic contemporary classical ensembles on the planet” (*Chicago Tribune*). Launched by six entrepreneurial Oberlin Conservatory undergraduates in 1996, this Chicago-based super-group has earned its status as “a brand-name... defined by adventure, vibrancy and quality... known for performing from memory, employing choreography and collaborations with theater artists, lighting designers and even puppetry artists” (*Detroit Free Press*).

Eighth Blackbird first gained wide recognition in 1998 as winners of the Concert Artists Guild Competition. Over the course of two decades, the group has commissioned and premiered hundreds of works by composers such as Viet Cuong, Bryce Dessner, Jennifer Higdon, Amy Beth Kirsten, Kinds of Kings, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, and Steve Reich, whose *Double Sextet* went on to win the 2009 Pulitzer Prize. A long-term relationship with Chicago's Cedille

Records has produced ten acclaimed recordings and four Grammy Awards for Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance, most recently in 2016 for *FILAMENT*. Eighth Blackbird was named *Musical America's* 2017 Ensemble of the Year, and in 2016 was the recipient of *Chamber Music America's* inaugural Visionary Award and the prestigious MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

Eighth Blackbird's mission – moving music forward through innovative performance, advocating for new music by living composers, and creating a legacy of guiding an emerging generation of musicians – extends beyond recording and touring to curation and education. The ensemble served as Music Director of the 2009 Ojai Music Festival, and has held residencies at the Curtis Institute of Music, the University of Chicago, and the University of Richmond. Its 2015–2016 season featured a pioneering residency at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art: a living installation with open rehearsals, performances, guest artists, and public talks. In 2017, Eighth Blackbird launched its boldest initiative yet with the creation of Blackbird Creative Laboratory, a tuition-free, two-week summer workshop and performance festival for performers and composers in Ojai, CA.





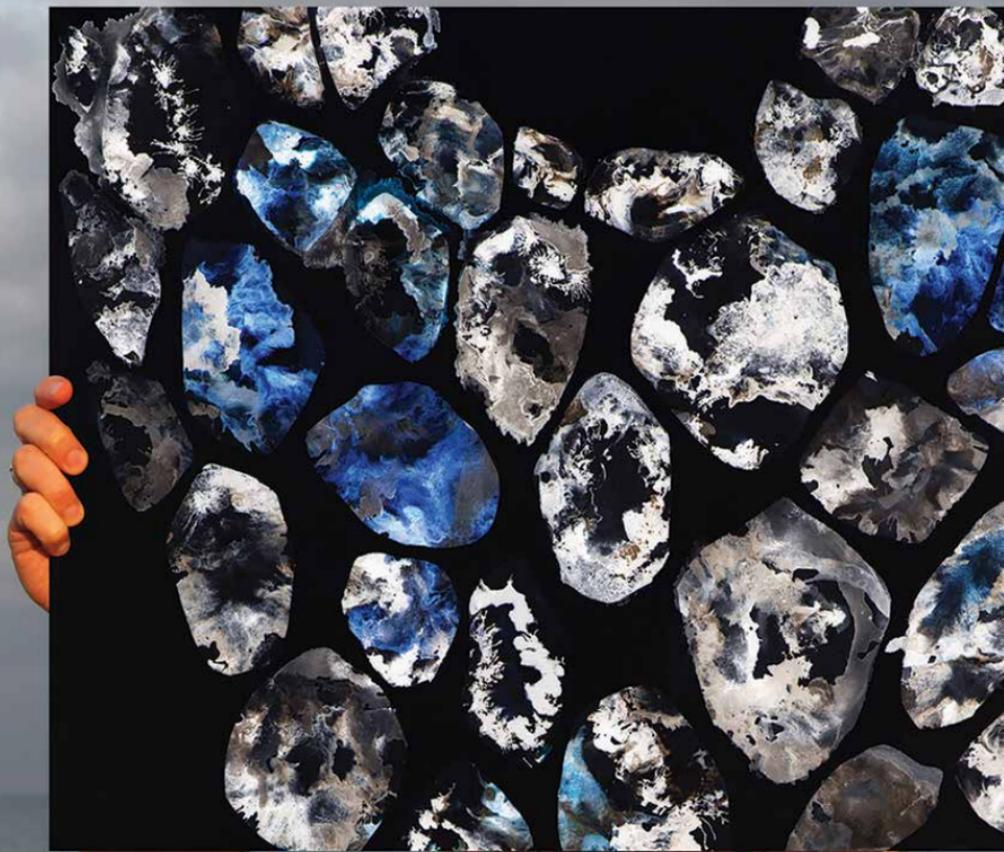
The name “Eighth Blackbird” derives from the eighth stanza of Wallace Stevens’ evocative, imagistic poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*: “I know noble accents / And lucid, inescapable rhythms; / But I know, too, / That the blackbird is involved / In what I know.”

Eighth Blackbird would like to thank our members’ families and loved ones, Elaine Martone, Bill Maylone, Cedille Records, David, Michael and Julia, Deirdre Harrison, Justin Peters, and Kimberly Sutton.

www.eighthblackbird.org

Eighth Blackbird is managed by David Lieberman Artists.

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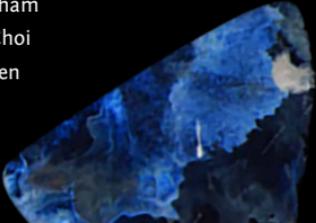
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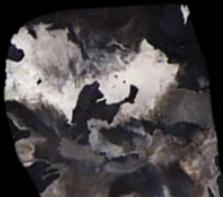
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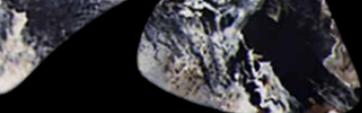
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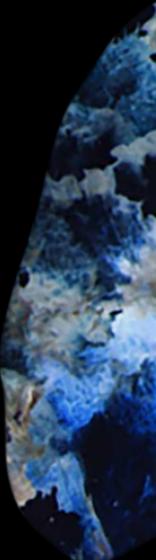
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Engineer Bill Maylone

Production Assistant Jeanne Velonis

Mastering Engineer Michael Bishop

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