

# ***Ashes and Dreams***

*"The imperishability of humanity's songs amidst a chaotic world"*



Photo credit: Chris Hutcheson

## ***Ashes and Dreams: Haiku and Waka in eight miniatures (2016)***

(Soprano, clarinet, piano)

by Lee R. Kesselman

## ***I never saw another butterfly (1996)***

(Soprano, clarinet)

by Lori Laitman, texts by children of the Holocaust

## ***Nattsanger (2008)***

(Soprano, clarinet, piano)

by Abbie Betinis, texts by Rolf Jacobsen

Program Length: 60 minutes

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### ***Ashes & Dreams: Haiku & waka in eight miniatures***

by Lee R. Kesselman

***Ashes & Dreams*** is a 7-song (plus introduction) composed for HAVEN Trio based on Japanese poetry. The poems alternate between *haiku*, the short, aphoristic philosophical poems written by men and the more effusive, emotional poems written in the 31 syllable *waka* form by anonymous female poets. While the male poets speak of eternal concerns of life and death, the women poets sing of matters of their hearts. The *haiku* songs are written in a succinct musical style which matches the nuanced gestures and delicate imagery of the poems. The *waka* songs are more expansive and heartfelt, with richly colored musical textures and lyrical vocal lines. The *waka* accompaniments are more reminiscent of traditional art-songs and musical theatre pieces. My dramatic image is of a man and a woman --- the man speaks a carefully refined, meticulously haiku, then, after listening to the man, the woman retreats to her personal chamber where she unwraps her tightly bound public face and society's garments and allows her personal feelings to flow, unbound.

**Lee R. Kesselman** has been Director of Choral Activities at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, a suburb of Chicago, since 1981. In addition to teaching and composing, Mr. Kesselman is active as a conductor, pianist, clinician and lecturer. Kesselman is best known as a composer of vocal works, including opera, music for chorus, and solo songs. Kesselman is the composer or arranger of over 90 published choral works and an equal number of unpublished works in the genres of choral, opera, symphonic, solo voice and chamber music. More information can be found at: [www.kesselmanpress.com](http://www.kesselmanpress.com)

### ***I never saw another butterfly***

by: Lori Laitman

***I never saw another butterfly*** was composed for soprano Lauren Wagner and saxophonist Gary Louie. Lauren had suggested that I choose poems from *I never saw another butterfly...*, a collection of poems written by children from the Terezin Concentration Camp. One cannot help but be touched by the hope and innocence that these children put into their poetry, despite their terrible surroundings. As I read these poems, I thought that the sound of the alto saxophone (or clarinet) would be an ideal accompaniment - haunting, soulful, and with echoes of Klezmer music.

Described by *Fanfare Magazine* as "one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers," **Lori Laitman** has composed multiple operas and choral works, and over 250 songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets (including those who perished in the

Holocaust). Her music is widely performed, internationally and throughout the United States (Carnegie Hall, Benaroya Recital Hall, Strathmore Hall, Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Concertgebouw and Wigmore Hall among others) and has generated substantial critical acclaim. *The Journal of Singing* wrote “It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music.” More information can be found at: [www.artsongs.com](http://www.artsongs.com)

### ***Nattsanger***

by Abbie Betinis

***Nattsanger*** is a cycle of seven songs exploring the mysterious nature of the period of time from sunset to dawn. Each movement explores a small feature specific to the night, including the setting sun, REM sleep, the non sequitur aspect of the dream state, the relationship of a fixed point to the ever-skewing night sky, and the often confusing fluctuation between dream states and reality. Initially conceived as a partner piece to Dominick Argento’s song cycle “To Be Sung Upon the Water,” it borrows not only its instrumentation (sans bass clarinet) but also aspects of that piece’s arched symmetrical form.

Composer **Abbie Betinis** (b.1980) writes music called “inventive, richly melodic” (*The New York Times*) and “superb... whirling, soaring” (*Tacoma News Tribune*). A 2015 McKnight Artist Fellow, and listed in NPR Music’s “100 Composers Under Forty,” she has written over 60 commissioned pieces and has been composer-in-residence with The Schubert Club, The Rose Ensemble and The Singers–Minnesota Choral Artists. She lives in Minnesota, where she is adjunct professor of composition at Concordia University-St Paul. More information can be found at: [www.abbiebetinis.com](http://www.abbiebetinis.com)

Audio examples of HAVEN available at: [www.haventrio.com](http://www.haventrio.com)