



Terrain of the Heart

song cycles of
MARK ABEL

JAMIE CHAMBERLIN
ARIEL PISTURINO
sopranos

VICTORIA KIRSCH
piano



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TERRAIN OF THE HEART

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MARK ABEL

1-5 **THE DARK-EYED CHAMELEON**

6-10 **FIVE POEMS OF RAINER MARIA RILKE**

11-14 **RAINBOW SONGS**

JAMIE CHAMBERLIN

ARIEL PISTURINO

sopranos

VICTORIA KIRSCH

piano

Total Playing Time: 73:35



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MARK ABEL / TERRAIN OF THE HEART

THE DARK-EYED CHAMELEON (28:50)

1. The Burned Horizon (5:43)
2. Full Sail (3:48)
3. Premonition (5:54)
4. Your Girl (4:55)
5. Cataclysm (8:30)

JAMIE CHAMBERLIN, *soprano*

FIVE POEMS OF RAINER MARIA RILKE (20:40)

6. In this town the last house stands (3:52)
7. My life is not this steeply sloping hour (3:44)
8. All of you undisturbed cities (5:30)
9. You darkness, that I come from (3:29)
10. I live my life in growing orbits (4:05)

ARIEL PISTURINO, *soprano*

RAINBOW SONGS (23:16)

11. It Was an Evening (6:28)
12. Breezes Blow and Eagles Fly (5:44)
13. La Sonnambula (5:36)
14. The Guest (5:28)

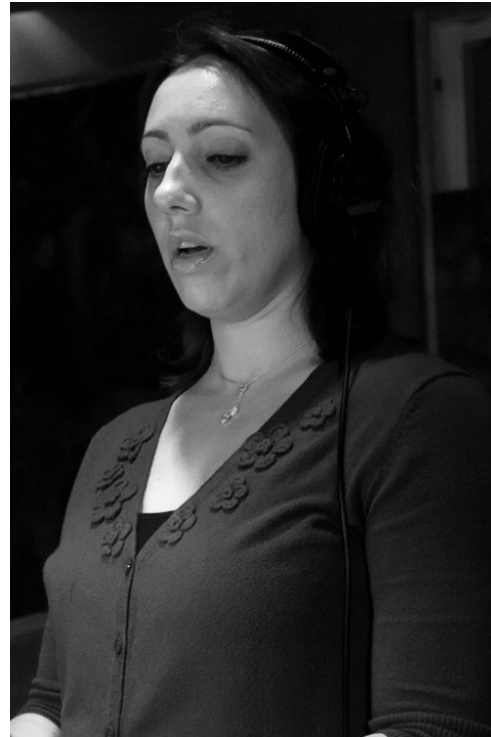
JAMIE CHAMBERLIN, *soprano*

VICTORIA KIRSCH, *piano*

Total Playing Time: 73:35



Jamie Chamberlin



Ariel Pisturino

Mark Abel's previous release on Delos, the seven-movement orchestral cycle *The Dream Gallery*, signaled a radical and culturally relevant new approach to the American art song. With his new CD *Terrain of the Heart*, the West Coast composer takes a fresh look at the idiom while working within the framework through which art song is traditionally presented – as a recital vehicle for solo voice and piano.

Coming fairly late to serious composition, Abel feeds his muse from a richly variegated panoply of life experience, beginning with a boyhood steeped in culture and classical music worldwide. He went on to careers in rock music and journalism before finally trying his hand at creating music that transcends the expressive limitations of rock (while retaining some of its elements) and sits com-



fortably under the umbrella of classical. A musical omnivore also fond of jazz, Abel had only to add his superb writing abilities – in both poetry and prose – to the mix to achieve an intensely personal and revealing style that, in my experience, is unique in the annals of the classical art song.

Whether writing about emotions both glad and sad, Abel's hard-hitting language leaves a lasting impression. It burrows all the deeper into one's consciousness when amplified by his sophisticated musical fusion, aimed at broad-minded listeners -- classically couth or not.

Terrain of the Heart displays new colors in Abel's palette of expression and is fully realized through the performances of his Los Angeles-based collaborators, sopranos Jamie Chamberlin and Ariel Pistorino, and pianist Victoria Kirsch.

The Dark-Eyed Chameleon

Many of us suffer from internalized emotional pain that we are ashamed or afraid to let out, or simply unable to give effective voice to. But artists (especially writ-

ers and composers) are blessed in this regard, as they have the creative tools to mirror their existences effectively in their work, thereby sharing their inner selves in ways that are both personally cathartic *and* meaningful to others.

Such a release valve is *The Dark-Eyed Chameleon*, a five-song cycle that served as Abel's way of dealing with the trauma of a particularly agonizing breakup. The few of us fortunate enough to hear it have reacted with wonder and fascination.

Delos' Director, pianist Carol Rosenberger, put it pretty much in a nutshell: "I've never heard anything like this! A searing personal story of a disintegrating love relationship ... plunging from a peak of happiness into painful collapse. The cycle's honesty and insight evoke a powerful response, and make it unforgettable."

The first song – "**The Burned Horizon**" – both sets the scene and looks back, as its lyrics are written from an after-the-fact perspective. It introduces us to the partner's deeply troubled soul, hiding behind flimsy and crumbling facades as she turns to the temporary refuge of a

romantic relationship. And it outlines some of her history, which is marked by indelible damage from "so long ago." The lyrics also hint at the composer's self-reproach at allowing his better judgment to be clouded by the promise of love. The music generates an unsettled mood, framing texts that seem just as much prose as poetry. Shifting rhythms and free verse combine to repeatedly evoke the pace and patterns of human speech: a device you will hear in many of the songs that follow. A lingering, melancholy sympathy for the former love surfaces at the end ("And finally you came to me If only I had known all this").

"**Full Sail**" recounts the heady intoxication of initial attraction and the ecstatic belief that "the beloved has appeared." The music and singing roll out passionately from the solo piano measures that follow the introduction, swiftly moving toward a near-breathless depiction of the partners as able to overcome any obstacle. At the end, however, a provocative (though undocumented) remark pulls the plug, introducing a sense of uncertainty and foreboding. The singer uneasily inquires: "Is this important? Need

I ask who you are?" For now, though, things will go forward.

The powerful song "**Premonition**" recounts the first direct encounter with the darkest depths of the partner's psyche, manifested in a near-catatonic episode – "You are mute, frozen, alone ... on a dead planet without a name, orbiting a dead sun." Growing doubt and dread are touched upon in a quiet, eerie section introduced by a low bass tremolo in the piano: "Under us, the ground is always shifting." Yet hope (and self-delusion) still prevail.

Perhaps the most touching part of the cycle is "**Your Girl**," a poignant recollection of the ex-lover's young daughter. Music and words alike spin a narrative of joy, carefree play and fresh, unexpected delight – turning suddenly bereft toward the end as a late-night car ride signals that doom is just around the corner. As this emotional piece reaches its climax, words of farewell that there was no time for are expressed by the composer.

"**Cataclysm**," the cycle's final chapter, spells profound trouble right from

the start. The piano's ragged, dissonant opening – soon punctuated by a startling rumble from its bass register – amplify the tormented words. The relationship's death-stroke – "I don't love you anymore" -- comes via telephone, with no reason provided beyond lame and simplistic excuses. The piano crescendos into a sudden hammerblow of wrenching, Messiaen-like chords.

Music and words then unfold in classic stages of grief, as we fully realize that "the beloved" was seeking a short-term respite from inner demons she had little hope of exorcising on her own. Close to halfway through the track, the baleful motif at the end of "Full Sail" resurfaces in the piano, a mute commentary on the earlier song's final line: "I trust you will reveal."

A desolate section asking "Did I ever know you?" follows, capped by a turbulent portrait of being symbolically swept out into a fathomless ocean of mourning and loss. The fever pitch of suffering then gradually begins to die away, and a brief, fugue-like piano solo injects a measure of calm and comfort. After "eons have drifted by," the singer-narrator rises again to the surface

under a star-studded night sky. Once on the beach, there is the blessed realization that “I am no longer thinking of you.” The time for healing can finally begin.

Soprano Chamberlin and pianist Kirsch deliver intensity and total commitment throughout the cycle’s 29-minute span. Abel observes: “Jamie clearly ‘got’ *Chameleon* and poured everything she had into it. I have to say, very simply, she gave a stunning performance.”

Five Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke

This cycle was Abel’s first venture into the realm of art song for voice and piano. The pieces explore the great German master’s sometimes unfathomable inner visions: deeply personal and profound utterances that nonetheless engage readers helplessly, firing their intellects and imaginations and evoking surreal images in ways that few other poets can match. Robert Bly’s sensitive translations faithfully preserve Rilke’s stark simplicity and economy of language.

Abel acknowledges the intimidating challenge of lending musical dimen-

sions to these enigmatic gems: “I had to live with them for quite a few years before daring to set them.” A composer’s goal in art songs is to illuminate and enhance the chosen text, and sensitive listeners will certainly agree that here, Abel has accomplished just that. His spare yet spontaneous approach goes hand-in-hand with the mystery and angularity of the language. His avoidance of needlessly florid complication in the piano writing does much to convey the hypnotic austerity of the verses.

Despite Rilke’s frequent bouts with depression, his introspective nature may well have been his salvation – as he found within himself cogent visions of his place in the world, and of the endless possibilities of life – leaving him both places to hide and to go. This basic theme resonates in several of these songs, beginning with “**In this town the last house stands,**” in which the last house seems no more than a solitary way station along the path of life that leads into the dark and often risky unknown. Yet follow the path we must. Abel’s melodic musings set a reflective but furtively mystic tone.

The imagery of **“My life is not this steeply sloping hour”** makes for one of Rilke’s more optimistic pieces, speaking perhaps of the immortality – amid the routine hubbub of life – of his poetic voice: one that he trusts will outlast that of his physical being. His corporeal place may well lie between two discordant musical notes, yet he hears his song going on, forever beautiful. Abel’s music emphatically confirms that beauty.

Contrast comes with the rather tormented **“All of you undisturbed cities,”** in which composer and poet alike question the concept that we can find safe refuge in life. We are reluctant to acknowledge the ever-lurking “enemy” that quietly besieges our seemingly secure havens: a subtle and silent, yet inexorable force that can capriciously breach the flimsy defenses we subconsciously construct to ward off our inner insecurities. Abel’s vaguely unsettling setting – which includes a jabbing piano solo to be played “with disquiet” -- helps to convey the poetry’s sense of helpless and inconceivable vulnerability.

The cycle’s final two songs swing back into more positive philosophical territory. **“You darkness, that I come from”** delves into the soothing notion that we needn’t fear the possibilities the night may hold for us. Rilke seems to want us to believe here that the comfortable communal fires that illuminate our secure here-and-now should not keep us from pondering future prospects that hide behind the unlit shadows that obscure our ultimate destinies. Musically, Abel drives home the poet’s advice in the cresting section that follows the piano solo: “... and it is possible, a great energy is moving near me.”

A variant of that message comes with **“I live my life in growing orbits,”** which concludes the cycle with particular warmth and wonder. Rilke tells us, seemingly by example – and in eerily ecstatic tones – that we should never stop striving to progress towards our lives’ next levels, even if we can’t foresee what shapes our futures might take, what we may finally achieve, or what we will ultimately mean to the world. Abel has crafted particularly striking musical imagery in this one, evoking visions of



soaring spirits and uncertain destinies joyfully fulfilled. The elastic middle section, with its melismatic vocal line and swirling piano, underscores the aspects of the journey that cannot be known.

"The singer must carry the music forward here, and Ariel Pisturino does a fine job of that," Abel says. "She has a powerful voice and beautiful timbre, and in several spots opens up in operatic fashion to excellent effect. She's a Rilke fan too – and it shows."

Rainbow Songs

We return to Abel's lyrics in this set. He didn't originally intend these four songs to stand as a formal cycle – yet, like an actual rainbow, the thematic "colors" both contrast and complement each other. There is a palpable unity in terms of optimistic sentiment, lyrical expression, melodic tone and pianistic language. And as the composer puts it, "All of them share dreamy qualities and bursts of kinetic energy." They combine to end the album on a cohesive and positive note.

"It Was An Evening" is an idyll of idealized love – of the giddy and unblemished sort that permeates initial infatuation and the process of falling in love. It overflows with fantasy-infused natural metaphors and celestial symbolism. The singer rhapsodizes about the couple's certain future together: "... one day a boat will carry us laughing ... to the Sea of Tranquility." The piano part helps to evoke wonder and images of beauty at every turn.

That one dovetails nicely into **"Breezes Blow and Eagles Fly,"** a look at a romantic relationship nurtured in nature's bosom long ago. Yet the lovers – "too strong for each other" – soon drift gently apart and begin their separate "walkabouts," with neither rancor nor the agonies of sudden parting. But it turns out that mutual affection and respect have endured across the years, and the erstwhile partners discover that they can still share friendship now in the same scenic spaces that witnessed its birth. There's also a pointed dig on behalf of the environment about "... men who will never learn to leave well enough alone."

A temporary dip into desolation comes with **"La Sonnambula"** (the sleepwalker). It opens with a bleak and ghostly sense of loneliness and isolation ("I walk through these dead streets forever ..."), floating over a stark pianistic bed. Abel says the spooky beginning was inspired by the dialogue-less final sequence of Michelangelo Antonioni's great early Sixties film "L'Eclisse."

But redemption and release come over the course of the song as the restorative power of love emerges to set things right again. The singer cautions "it will take a long, long time to make me whole," but expresses the powerful hope that the lovers' shared destiny will lead them to the final "door we will walk through together." The propulsive music makes you believe this is happening in real time.

"The Guest" ends the cycle (and the album) with Abel's achingly appreciative evocation of an alter ego figure: a friendly phantasm who appears "to set me straight" in times of travail and uncertainty. This better angel helps the singer-narrator to float, unaffected,

above the rat race's "madding crowd" of conformity and hustle – giving welcome assurance, even in the face of the world's shallow and meaningless trappings, that "you will endure." The piano accompaniment supports the vocal lines with musings that are alternately dreamy and bustling.

The wide range of Jamie Chamberlin's vocal artistry is fully on display in "Rainbow." As Abel says, "Tenderness, elation, nostalgia, disillusion, positive resolve – she had it covered!"

— Lindsay Koob

THE DARK-EYED CHAMELEON

words by Mark Abel

THE BURNED HORIZON

Behind your mask
lies a secret face
that the world has never seen.
But I have.

It is beautiful and terrible,
tearing at my desolate heart.
How I sought to heal
what can never be healed;
you cannot be healed.

The damage was so long ago.
To survive, you buried the unspeakable,
for protection took a mate
you did not love,
constructed an identity.

It seemed sturdy to most.
But the facade was always brittle
and cracks appeared, time and again,
flaking the plaster off your ochre wall.

Troubled one, an odyssey
would be your fate.
From city to city you roamed,
with a child now,

building then breaking bonds,
never happy.
A curse hung over you.

And finally you came to me,
my dark-eyed chameleon.
... If only I had known all this.

FULL SAIL

Your story, laced with tragedy.
A life tortured, unfulfilled.
How could I not respond?

You, blessed being,
won't you walk down my path?
I have been waiting here
for so many years,
lonely, knife-edged,
the beloved has appeared,
"The Invitation" issued.

Flashing eyes, face of heaven, fertile mind
-- and you want *me*.
I am reborn, my suffering transfigured.
The sun shines brightly, corona of joy.
Our love pure and powerful,
our destinies locked together.

How did it happen, and so soon?
We need no logic, living as lovers do,

heeding a higher call:
be devoted and vulnerable.
All seems right, most of the time.

Wait! Is this important?
Need I ask who you are?
I trust you will reveal.

PREMONITION

Rain fell steadily today.
It always makes me wistful.
No matter, more hours to spend
in the warm tent of our love.

But you are silent and far away.
Where? You can never say.
I have seen this chasm before;
it is uncharted and buried deep within
you.

And when I try to excavate, you dissolve
into a smile that could melt a glacier.
"Our love is the truth," I heard you say,
not long ago.

Today is different.
You are mute, frozen, alone
on a dead planet without a name,
orbiting a dead sun.
I cannot hail you,

my precious, my sphinx,
across these light years of the soul.

"It will pass," you say, and in time it does.
But this ghost, as ancient as thee,
never sleeps.

Under us the ground is always shifting,
unstable like our California.
I still think my love is all you need.
Am I a fool, a saint -- or a target?

YOUR GIRL

Your girl, wonderful and radiant,
a small flower unfolding into early bloom.

She touched my heart so deeply,
and I touched hers, I do believe.
Innocent, uncomplicated love
freely given between us two.

Sheer delight of child's play,
tucked her in at night,
sat in the dark til Dreamland descended,
marveled that this special bliss
had finally come my way.
Joy without measure.
I thanked the Creator
-- for the first time in my life.

As we rode together that night,
shrieking and giggling,
I barely noticed your black cloud.
Though I could not have known,
this would be our final ride.

The sky is blue
and filled with your tomorrows.
Denied good-byes, farewell, dear sprite.
You must be a big girl now.

CATACLYSM

The fatal blow is struck by telephone.
A low comedy of excuses
finally gives way to a hollow metal sound:
"I don't love you anymore."

But who is speaking?
You shared my heart, my bed,
only hours ago.
The monsters who made you
are hovering near;
we were introduced just the other day.
They still have you in curious thrall.
And someone has decided:
Our love must die.

My world, my dream is crumbling
in this tiny room, beneath a flickering
bulb.

You say you prayed for us,
but your god has failed.

I am shaking.
Opened so wide, shields lowered,
with time exploding.
I am being cast to the winds,
without explanation, without apology.

Did I ever know you?
My questions will echo through the years,
down De Chirico's empty streets.
As for you, the rest is silence.

I am swept out to sea, pulled under
by a rip tide of grief and devastation.
I tumble and gasp;
hands reach out, voices cry --- all a blur.
My fate is to ride or die.
This journey can never be described.
Hold on.

Eons have drifted by;
finally the grip relaxes and I surface.
It is night, the air is warm,
stars swim above me.

I pull for shore, alone, unseen;
the dome of heaven lights my way.
And now I have reached the beach.
I am no longer thinking of you.

FIVE POEMS OF RAINER MARIA RILKE

In this town the last house stands

(In diesem Dorfe steht das letzte Haus)

In this town the last house stands
as lonely as if it were the last house
in the world.

The highway, which the tiny town
is not able to stop,
slowly goes deeper out into the night.

The tiny town is only a passing-over place,
worried and afraid,
between two huge spaces --
a path running past houses
instead of a bridge.

And those who leave the town
wander a long way off
and many perhaps die on the road.

My life is not this steeply sloping hour

(Mein leben ist nicht diese steile Stunde)

My life is not this steeply sloping hour
in which you see me hurrying.
Much stands behind me;
I stand before it like a tree;
I am only one of my many mouths,

and at that, the one that will be
still the soonest.

I am the rest between two notes,
which are somehow always in discord
because Death's note wants to climb over
--
but in the dark interval, reconciled,
they stay there trembling.

And the song goes on, beautiful.

All of you undisturbed cities

(Ihr vielen unbestürmten Städte)

All of you undisturbed cities,
haven't you ever longed for the Enemy?
I'd like to see you besieged by him
for ten endless and ground-shaking years.

Until you were desperate
and mad with suffering;
finally in hunger you would feel his
weight.
He lies outside the walls like a countryside.
And he knows very well how to endure
longer than the ones he comes to visit.

Climb up on your roofs and look out:
his camp is there and his morale
doesn't falter,

and his numbers do not decrease;
he will not grow weaker,
and he sends no one into the city
to threaten or promise,
and no one to negotiate.

He is the one who breaks down the walls,
and when he works, he works in silence.

You darkness, that I come from
(Du Dunkelheit, aus der ich stamme)

You darkness, that I come from,
I love you more than all the fires
that fence in the world,
for the fire makes
a circle of light for everyone,
and then no one outside learns of you.
But the darkness pulls in everything:
shapes and fires, animals and myself,
how easily it gathers them! --
powers and people --

and it is possible a great energy
is moving near me.

I have faith in nights.

I live my life in growing orbits
(Ich lebe mein Leben in wachsenden ringen)

I live my life in growing orbits
which move out over
the things of the world.
Perhaps I can never achieve the last,
but that will be my attempt.

I am circling around God,
around the ancient tower,
and I have been circling
for a thousand years,
and I still don't know if I am a falcon,
or a storm, or a great song.

*from "Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke," edited
and translated by Robert Bly, Harper & Row, 1981*

RAINBOW SONGS
words by Mark Abel

IT WAS AN EVENING

It was an evening when
a thousand fireflies lit the air.
The moonlight was streaming
across the fields.
Hearts were dancing, spinning into space.
You were approaching escape velocity,
I was right behind you.

Soon to sink earthward, resting on
the pillow of your breast.

Yesterday the sun was burning,
like a beacon through a storm.
We've been given such a short time here.
Let's fan the flames of desire
until the statues weep.

My love is carving a channel
across your land.
May it be deep and nourish you,
-- a haven for beautiful birds
who trace silent arcs in the sky,
fish of many colors
floating among the reeds.

On these banks the rocks are ancient,
opaque, rounded by wind and time.
We will climb up and over
toward the glowing horizon,
which retreats with our every step, unat-
tainable and unknowable.

Then one day a boat will carry us
laughing to the sea,
the Sea of Tranquility.
Floating there we glimpse other channels
dug by faceless forces long ago
on the Red Planet,
a lantern hanging from heaven.

BREEZES BLOW AND EAGLES FLY

Breezes blow and eagles fly
through the fork in the river.
Still this place survives
the onslaught of time
and men who will never learn
to leave well enough alone.

You showed me this sacred space
when spring gave way to summer.
Far off the back roads we shared
a paradise of love.
Our soaring hopes built on lives untested,
many paths were beckoning,
with fingers of sand.
But our tools were primitive,
like cavemen trying to strike a flint.

We didn't know what we were doing.
Grappling with our shadow demons --
ones that we never knew we had --
then becoming something we feared.

We were too strong for each other,
destined to drift apart.
So began our walkabouts
through the maze of a lifetime.
Fond farewells and vows to stay
in the circle.

Like so many things, corruptible
and impermanent.

Now here you are again.
True was your arrow that pierced my
heart so long ago.
Lodged between the bones of memory,
it never decayed.

You are fine; you always were
– and so simply human.
Let's stay awhile and watch
God's majestic light,
where breezes blow and eagles fly.

LA SONNAMBULA

I walk through these dead streets forever.
The wind blows in gusts
that pierce my defenses.
Helpless, without control,
luminous, transparent.
My past is brought to life, not the way
I'd like it shown.

And now the trumpet sounds
and faces turn
as the judgment is being announced.
But when the curtain falls,
You're there to fold me in your arms.

This much I hope you know:
It will take a long, long time
to make me whole.
There were terrible years,
tales I cannot tell just yet.
Please wait for me to reveal
all that I must be free of.
Bare pastures, dark gardens of pain.

Our love is a blessed thing,
spreading through leafy branches.
The trees of our forest arch and bend
but do not break.
I can believe for the first time
there is grace and peace in store for me.

At the end of the pathway there is a door,
the door we will walk through together
into the most beautiful weather,
some day.
This is my prayer.

THE GUEST

It rises like the tide, imperceptible at first.
And then, before I know which shape
it assumes,
it's standing next to me –
my spirit's double.
Not fearful, but a friend who comes
around in times of trouble.

She may work her magic again.

Her face looks a lot like mine, but ageless.
What torments me
she hardly acknowledges.
Some of us are in need of an empath,
but she provides a different example
to set me straight.

So serene, she spans the distance between
thought and word.
An elegant creature,
quite sure where her path lies.
Lighter than gravity, she floats
high above the madding crowd.

Moving in lockstep, they have nothing
to show us two.
We merge like the river currents
winding through the teeming delta
of consciousness,
harnessing our energy, then borne
toward the ocean's foam.

When my soul is healed anew
I remember the purest times I've ever
had.
As my tears softly fall, she turns to me,
as if to say, "You will endure."

All songs © Oceangoing Music (ASCAP)

MARK ABEL is a California-based composer known for his original musical style, with its cohesive meld of classical, rock and jazz elements, and his vivid lyrics, which combine poetry with powers of observation developed during his 20-plus years of working as a journalist.

Son of the late reporter and author Elie Abel, a prominent figure in American media circles, Mark has lived and made music in the San Francisco Bay Area, Southern California and the state's Central Coast; the industrial Midwest; New York City; Washington, DC; Europe and Asia. These experiences over the decades have greatly shaped his artistic world view, which encompasses music ranging in scope from Ives, Debussy and Berg to John Coltrane, the best music rock has to offer, and far beyond. Mark's unique idiom synthesizes some key aesthetic currents of the 20th century while suggesting a new and flexible model of classical vocal music for the 21st.

Mark is known primarily for his orchestral song cycle "The Dream Gallery," a series of musical and lyric portraits of archetypal Californians released on

Delos in 2012 (DE 3418). The recording, featuring seven different Southern California concert soloists and led by Los Angeles-area conductor Sharon Lavery, received strong praise in the musical press. Concerto Net called the work “profound and compelling,” Allmusic described it as “not much like anything else out there, ... most highly recommended,” while Fanfare declared: “Anyone who is interested in modern vocal music will want to own this disc.”

Two earlier, self-released CDs – “Journey Long, Journey Far” and “Songs of Life, Love and Death” – are notable for several compositional tributes to departed loved ones and a mini-opera entitled “The True Believers” that explores the extremist mindset.

The three soprano-piano cycles that appear on “Terrain of the Heart” comprise Mark’s most extensive foray into the intimate world of art song. His “The Benediction” appears on tenor Kyle Bielfield’s American songs CD “Stopping By” (DE 3445), which made both the classical and classical crossover charts. His orchestral song “Adam” (from “The Dream Gal-

lery”) was chosen for Delos’ “40 Tracks for 40 Years” anniversary collection.

Greek-American soprano **JAMIE CHAMBERLIN**, a native of Santa Barbara, has been acclaimed for her abilities as both a singer and an actress. Alan Rich of LA Weekly writes, “I would be thrilled to revisit the vocal and comedic talents of Jamie Chamberlin any time she comes my way.”

A graduate of UCLA, Jamie performs regularly in opera, concert and recital throughout California and beyond. Recently, she has enjoyed debuts with the Louisville Orchestra in Milhaud’s *Chants de Ronsard*, and with Long Beach Opera as Lucy in Shostakovich’s satirical operetta *Moscow, Cherry Town*.

Jamie made her professional debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2004 singing the soprano solo in the world premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen’s monumental orchestral work *Wing on Wing*. The following season she debuted with Los Angeles Opera, singing the High Priestess in *Aida* and the Cretan Woman in *Idomeneo*, with Plácido Domingo. She

has appeared as a soloist in a variety of repertoire with the Pasadena Symphony, the UCLA Philharmonia and the Fort Collins Symphony, among others.

In 2006 Jamie was chosen for the prestigious Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera. Of her performance as the poet Anne Sexton in Conrad Susa's *Transformations*, the San Francisco Chronicle's Joshua Kosman wrote: "Chamberlin brought a combination of force and fluidity to the part. ... She took her position as the ringmaster of the proceedings. ... Her tribute to Godfather Death was spellbinding."

In 2007 she won first prize in The Performing Arts Scholarship Foundation Competition and 3rd Prize in the inaugural José Iturbi International Music Competition, and she has received awards from numerous other organizations including the Society of Singers and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Jamie appears with LA Opera regularly, most recently as Cio-Cio San in community outreach recitals of highlights from *Madama Butterfly*, and as a member of

the LA Opera Chorus. She is also the principal soprano for Orange County Opera, an opera education company that brings music and laughter to children throughout Southern California.

Heralded as an "impressive young discovery" by the Los Angeles Times, soprano **ARIEL PISTURINO** made her debut with Long Beach Opera as Nancy T'ang in *Nixon in China*. She has performed such roles as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Micaela in *Carmen*, First Woman in Cherubini's *Medea*, Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Giovanna in *Rigoletto*, Susanna in Wolf-Ferrari's *Il Segreto di Susanna*, and First Witch in Bloch's *Macbeth*.

Ariel has been a featured recitalist with the Orange County-based Blackbird Music Project, performing Hindemith's *Das Marienleben* and Shostakovich's *Seven Romances of Alexander Blok*. She frequently collaborates with Southern California composers and works regularly as a studio soprano. She has also been a member of the John Alexander Singers, the elite *a cappella* ensemble drawn from the Pacific Chorale.

Ariel was a fourth-place winner at the Palm Springs Opera Guild Vocal Competition and is an OperaWorks alumna. A native of Kingman, Az., she holds a Master's degree from the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music and a Bachelor's degree in Music from Northern Arizona University.

A musical activist, Ariel co-founded the Chamber Opera Players of LA and is the co-founder and curator of the unSUNg concert series, in collaboration with Lauri's List, a key professional singers' resource website in Southern California.

Her upcoming engagements include a featured soloist performance with the Spacious Vision song project as well as the roles of Lola in Douglas Moore's *Galantry* and Geraldine in Barber's *A Hand of Bridge* with Chamber Opera Players of LA. She will also cover the role of Miss Jessel in Britten's *Turn of the Screw* with Pacific Opera Project.

Pianist **VICTORIA KIRSCH** creates and performs innovative programs throughout Southern California, including concerts based on exhibitions at USC's Fisher

Museum and the Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum at Cal State San Bernardino. These programs have included "Voices Off the Walls: Music for Museums" and spoken/sung word collaborations ("The Poet's Voice: Songs Onstage"). A 2008 recipient of an NEA Chairman's Grant from then-chair Dana Gioia, the Los Angeles native co-created "This, and My Heart: The Worlds of Emily Dickinson," one of several staged art song/poetry programs.

Victoria continues her longtime association with Julia Migenes (Carmen in the opera film with Plácido Domingo), playing for the celebrated soprano's shows throughout the world. She collaborates frequently with leading Southern California-based opera singers, including Suzan Hanson, Shana Blake Hill, Anne Marie Ketchum, Nmon Ford, Cedric Berry, Roberto Perlas Gomez and Dean Elzinga.

Victoria is music director of Opera Arts, a Palm Springs-based performance organization that presents opera-based programming throughout the Coachella Valley. She also serves on the faculty of SongFest, the Los Angeles-based summer art song festival held at the Colburn

School. She has performed on such chamber music series as Jacaranda, Beach=Culture at the Annenberg Beach House in Santa Monica, Sundays Live at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Grand Performances at California Plaza.

Victoria has worked with national and regional opera companies (Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Long Beach and Mississippi Operas) and has served as an official pianist for the Operalia Competition and the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions in Los Angeles, in addition to numerous other competitions and auditions. She has been a popular teaching artist for Los Angeles Opera's Education and Community Programs Department, as well as a member of the LA Opera music staff.

She was a vocal faculty member at USC's Thornton School of Music and for many years was associated with the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, playing in the studio of renowned baritone and master teacher Martial Singher and serving as a member of the vocal faculty.

**Produced by Mark Abel
and Carol Rosenberger**

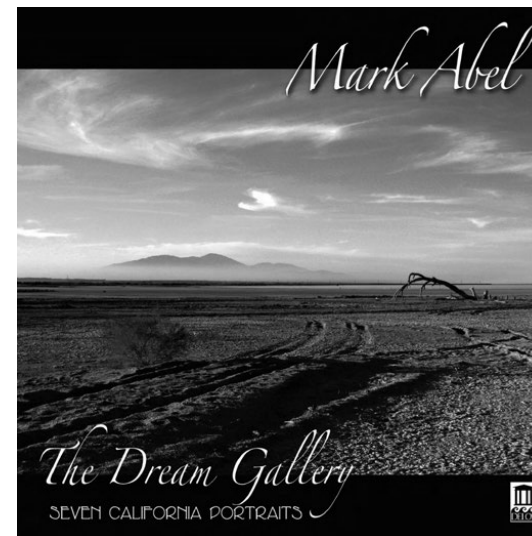
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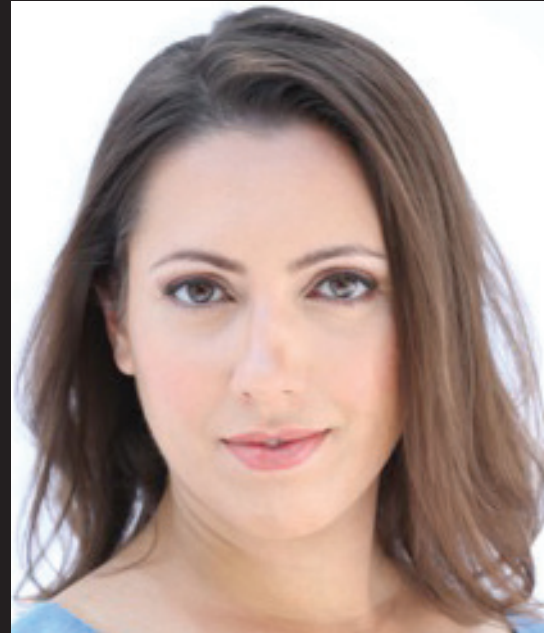
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