

## LULLABIES FOR BENJAMIN

Ever since our son Benjamin was born in February 1990, it has been Donna's and my dream to record a collection of our favourite lullabies for him. The result is this musical offering.

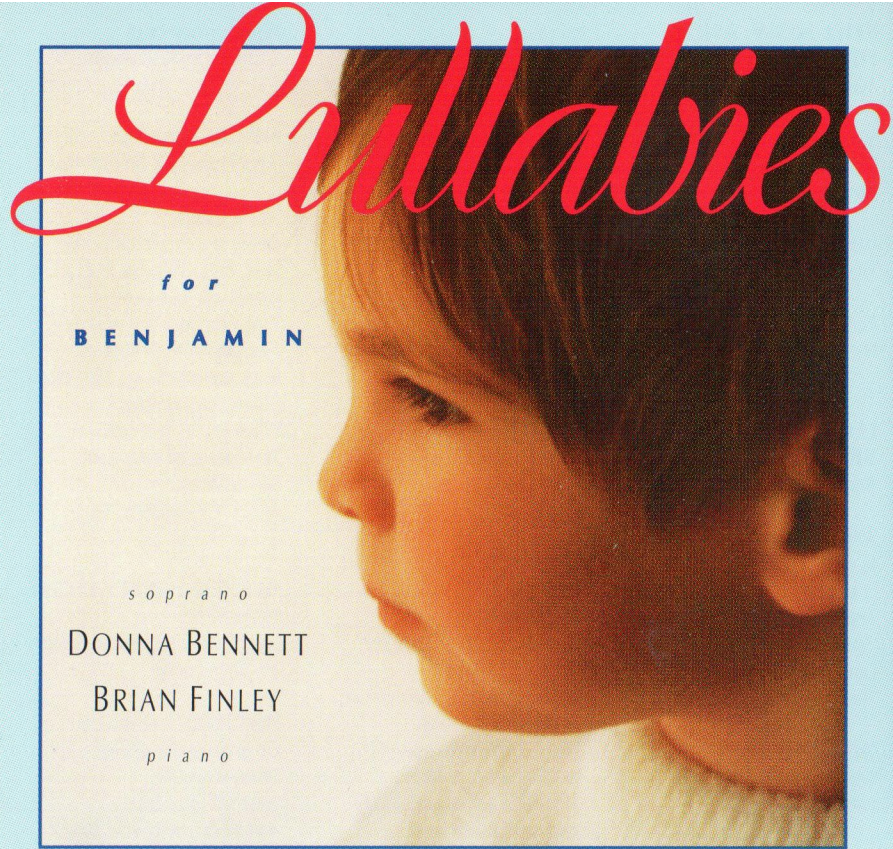
From the Inuit lullaby which opens the collection, to the *Prayer* from the opera *Hansel and Gretel*, each selection has its story in our lives. I remember hearing Schumann's *Des Abends*, for example, as Benjamin lay peacefully in the early morning sun after he first came home. *All the Pretty Little Horses* has always had special meaning for us, as has *Stay Awake* from *Mary Poppins*, a movie which Donna and I rediscovered through Benjamin's eyes. Schubert's *Wiegenlied* has become a true lullaby filled with depth and warmth parents feel for their child. *Morgen!*, composed by Richard Strauss as a wedding present for his bride, was the song that first brought Donna and me together both professionally and romantically.

We are very grateful to Michael Remenyi who introduced us to *Ninna Nanna* by the great Hungarian composer Tibor Polgar. The piece actually incorporates two lullabies, one in the piano part, the other in the voice. As Michael explains, the lullabies were composed for his two children in such a way that both could be lulled to sleep at the same time.

As for my own compositions, I am pleased to introduce three in this recording. *Where the Lullaby?* was composed in April 1993, and was conceived as a parent's search for the lost innocent joy of childhood. As the mother sings to her child, she realizes how far from his bliss she has drifted. Yet as the child shows her life through his eyes, she is soothed and rejuvenated. It is therefore the child who 'sings' the lullaby to the mother. *Evening Song* is a contemplative piece for solo piano. Composed for Donna, its contrast of fantasy and reality leaves the listener to choose which is which. *Lullaby for Benjamin* was composed in May 1993, and with Benjamin and Donna in mind and heart, it is a love song for them both.

It is to Benjamin that Donna and I dedicate this recording. We wish to thank all those who have helped us: the wonderful talents of flautist Rosanne Warren and co-producer Andy Thomson, and the immense support of parents and families. A special thanks to June, in memory, and to our new son Adam, born in October 1993, who gives us a chance to dream about lullabies for Adam.

B.L.F. February 1994





## DONNA BENNETT, SOPRANO

The career of highly versatile and accomplished Canadian soprano Donna Bennett encompasses opera, oratorio, lieder and the classics of Broadway, all of which she performs with equal facility and audience appeal. Singing across Canada, England, Germany and Italy, she has appeared at a number of festivals in Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Henley and Montepulciano. Particular favourites of her diverse operatic roles include Belinda, Despina, Susanna, Papagena, Olympia, Oscar, Gretel and Mabel. Equally adept in twentieth century opera, Ms. Bennett has appeared as Menotti's Monica and Argento's Lady with a Hand Mirror. She performed Bernstein's Dede in *A Quiet Place* at its British premiere, for which she received the composer's praise. In addition, she created the role of the Mermaid in the world premiere of Paul Max Edlin's *The Fisherman* in London.

Ms. Bennett's discography includes Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat* in which she sang the role of Louise. Under the composer's direction, she performed the role in Montepulciano, Berlin, Neuberg and at London's Barbican Centre.

## BRIAN FINLEY, PIANO

Canadian pianist Brian Finley leads a multi-faceted artistic life as soloist, chamber musician, composer, arranger and teacher. Winner of the 1989 Gina Bachauer Award, he has performed with orchestras in Dallas, Cincinnati, Toronto, Windsor and Calgary, and has been heard in broadcasts from Toronto, Seattle and Moscow.

Currently the Artistic Director of the *Brian Finley and Friends* concert series at Victoria Hall in Cobourg, Ontario, Mr. Finley has performed with a host of singers for whom he has composed and arranged music. He performs regularly with members of the Philadelphia String Quartet at the Olympic Music Festival in Washington. In addition, Mr. Finley has worked as repetiteur and assistant conductor to Hans Werner Henze on the composer's production of his opera *The English Cat*.

Ms. Bennett and Mr. Finley were married in 1985 and have two children, Benjamin and Adam. Their first recording together was *A Christmas of Love and Light*.

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### CREDITS:

Recorded and mixed by Andy Thompson at Studio 29, Campbellford, Ontario, Canada. • Steinway Concert Grand Piano from Remenyi House of Music, Toronto.

Cover: Benjamin, photographed by Brian Finley • Design: Martin Soldat

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**STILL NOW, AND  
HEAR MY SINGING...**

*Traditional Inuit lullaby*

Still now, and hear my singing,  
Sleep through the night  
my darling.

We have a tiny son,  
Thanks be to God who sent him.

Though he as yet knows nothing,  
He is so sweet, I'm singing.

**LULLABY FOR  
BENJAMIN**

*Brian Finley*

Soft is the breeze that sings  
to you:  
"I love you"  
And the song sweetly echoes  
through my heart.  
Laughter fresh as morning rain  
That clears the pane of my heart.

Fly high, sweet dove,  
I'm close by, my love,  
with you.

Warm is the sun that smiles

on you;  
I love you,  
And the world hears the music of  
your soul.  
I'll be with you, wherever God's  
wind will carry you,  
We'll never be apart.

Fly high, sweet dove  
I'm close by, my love,  
with you...

**DES ABENDS**  
*from FANTASIESTÜCKE,*  
**OP. 12**  
*Robert Schumann*  
*(piano solo)*

**BARCAROLLE**  
*from THE TALES OF*  
**HOFFMANN**  
*Offenbach, arr. Brian Finley*

Beautiful night, O night of love,  
Smile on our ecstasy!  
Night, sweeter than day, O  
beautiful night of love!  
Time flees without returning,  
And carries with it our  
tender joy,

Zephyrs, embrace us  
with your gentle caresses...

**NINNA NANNA**  
*Tibor Polgar, arr. Brian Finley*

Ninna, nanna,  
dream of a wonderful world!  
Sleep my sweetheart, high above  
guards you, our love.  
When you're in my arms dear,  
Tears, fears, all disappear,  
Sleep my sweetheart, high above  
guards you, our love.  
When you're in my arms dear,  
Tears, fears, all disappear,  
Ninna nanna,  
dream of a wonderful world...

**ALL THE PRETTY LITTLE  
HORSES\***  
*trad. Southern American lullaby,*  
*arr. Brian Finley*

Hush a bye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleepy little baby;  
When you wake,  
you shall have cake,  
And all the pretty little horses!  
Black and bay, dapple and gray,

Coach and six white horses;  
All the pretty little horses!

**ROCK-A-BYE BABY \***  
*arr. Brian Finley*  
*(flute and piano)*

**WIEGENLIED (LULLABY)**  
*Franz Schubert*

Sleep, sleep, lovely sweet boy;  
Your mother's hand gently  
rocks you.  
Gentle sleep, soft comfort,  
Comes floating to you in  
your cradle.

Sleep, sleep in this  
gravelike sweetness,  
Your mother's arm still  
protects you.  
All her wishes, all she has,  
She holds, lovingly.

Sleep, sleep, in your  
fluffy down quilt,  
As lovely sounds surround you;  
A lily, a rose, will be  
your reward,  
After your sleep.

**TRÄUMEREI**  
*Robert Schumann*  
*(piano solo)*

**LULLABY**  
*Johannes Brahms*

Good ev'ning, good night;  
Shining stars are bright!  
In covers, soft and warm,  
With roses adorned.  
With the dawn of the morn,  
God willing, you'll rise,  
With the dawn of the morn,  
God willing, you'll rise!

Good ev'ning, good night;  
Heaven's angels watch o'er you,  
And fill your tender dreams  
With a shining Christmas tree!  
Sweetly sleep now, in peace,  
Dream of paradise,  
Sweetly sleep now, in peace,  
Dream of paradise!

**STAY AWAKE\***  
*from MARY POPPINS*  
*Sherman & Sherman;*  
*arr. Brian Finley*

Stay wake, don't rest your head;  
Don't lie down upon your bed.  
While the moon drifts in  
the skies,  
Stay wake, don't close  
your eyes!  
Though the world is fast asleep,  
Though your pillow's soft  
and deep,  
You're not sleepy as you seem;  
Stay awake, don't nod  
and dream!

**PRAYER\***  
*from HANSEL AND GRETEL*  
*Humperdinck; arr. Brian Finley*

When at night I go to sleep,  
fourteen angels watch do keep,  
Two my head are guarding, two  
my feet are guiding,  
Two are on my right hand, two  
are on my left hand,  
Two who warmly cover, two  
who o'er me hover,  
Two to whom 'tis given to guide  
my steps to heaven!

## WHERE THE LULLABY?

Brian Finley

Lullaby, lie while the ev'ning falls,  
Angels protect you; the  
sandman calls.  
Rest your head, and close  
your eyes  
While your mother  
sings her lullabies...

Long the day lingers, and low the  
clouds lie,  
Where is the morning  
with radiant sky?  
Where's my home, and  
where am I?  
Where the lullaby?

Then heaven's kiss awakes me,  
With warm and smiling sunshine,  
When my baby comes to me!  
Morning dawns,  
Filled with song!  
And in its melody I hear a lullaby...

Come now to greet the morning,  
sweetest child!  
Come to me with a lullaby, and  
help me sleep tonight!

Lullaby, lie while the ev'ning falls,

angels protect you; the  
sandman calls.  
Rest your head, and close your  
eyes  
While your mother sings  
her lullabies...

## RÊVERIE

Claude Debussy  
(piano solo)

## NACHT UND TRÄUME

(NIGHT AND DREAMS)  
Franz Schubert

Holy night, you gently fall;  
Descending too, float dreams,  
Like moonlight through the  
rooms,  
Through still people, still hearts.

They listen with delight;  
And call when the day breaks:  
Return again, holy night!  
Sweet dreams, return again!

## EVENING SONG

Brian Finley  
(piano solo)

## MORGEN!

Richard Strauss

And tomorrow  
the sun will shine again,  
And on the path I will follow,  
We, the happy ones, unite on  
this sun-breathing earth...  
And to the wide shore,  
and blue waves,  
We will silently and slowly  
descend the steps.  
Without a word, we will gaze  
into each other's eyes,  
And upon us will sink the  
muted silence of happiness.

\*Rosanne Warren, flute

Lyrics for "Lullaby for Benjamin" and  
"Where the Lullaby?" by Brian Finley  
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