

Rivers and Trails Composers



Stephen Wood is a wilderness composer, educator, and performer with a holistic view of the world. Traveling the United States in search of inspiration from our country's wildest places, Stephen has served as Composer-in-Residence for Cumberland Island National Seashore, Okefenokee NWR., Bob Marshall Wilderness, Daniel Boone NF, Apalachicola NF, Absaroka Wilderness, and Denali NP.

Stephen's newest CD release, "Untrammeled" is a recent culmination of his wilderness residency adventures through the United States.

"Untrammeled" and other contemporary classical, jazz, and afro-cuban scores and recordings are available through his website, stephenwoodmusic.com.

The Chattooga – for clarinet, violin, and piano

"The Chattooga" was composed in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in honor of the Chattooga River. The music tells the story of rafting one of the Southeast's most premiere whitewater rivers, which features twists and turns, turbulent falls, roller coaster waves, and Class IV rides! "The Chattooga" is an adventure with surprising wilderness beauty.

Creating the border of Georgia and South Carolina, the Chattooga is part of the Tugaloo River watershed. The Chattooga River was designated Wild and Scenic in 1974. Commissioned by the Georgia Sierra Club and Landscape Music, "The Chattooga" was inspired by a wild and scenic white water rafting adventure with the Sierra Club Military Outdoors program.

The Apalachicola – for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, vibraphone, and percussion

"The Apalachicola" was composed for the 2018 Apalachicola NF Artist Residency. The Apalachicola is home to the Bradwell Bay Wilderness Area, Lean Sinks Geological Area, the Sopchoppy River, Prospect Bluff and Fort Gadsen, the grand Apalachicola River, a deep history of forgotten human culture, and exceptionally rich diverse ecosystem.

The music follows the experience of exploring the Apalachicola's hidden past and finding beautiful solitude in the rare longleaf pine stands and ancient cypress wetlands.



Award-winning composer **Oliver Caplan** writes melodies that nourish our souls, offering a voice of hope in an uncertain world.

Mr. Caplan has been commissioned by the Atlanta Chamber Players and Bella Piano Trio and Bronx Arts Ensemble, among others. Winner of a Special Citation for the American Prize in Orchestral Composition,

additional recognitions include Veridian Symphony Competition Wins and the Fifth House Ensemble Competition Grand Prize. Mr. Caplan is the Artistic Director of Juventas New Music Ensemble. Find his website at olivercaplan.com.

Fairhaven Bay for *clarinet, cello, and piano*

from *In the Directions of Dreams*

Inspired by the legendary section of the Sudbury River in Concord, Massachusetts, “Fairhaven Bay” commemorates the 50th anniversary of the United States Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. A favorite haunt of Henry David Thoreau, Fairhaven Bay has continued to be a source of inspiration and reflection for generations of community members, thanks to its protected status.

Nature has always been the place where Mr. Caplan feels most himself, a font for peace and creativity. “Fairhaven Bay” is the final section of “In the Directions of Dreams,” a three-movement work that includes two additional tone poems, Walden Pond and Adams Woods. Together, the three represent one of Oliver’s favorite walks, a sojourn that traverses the historic setting of Thoreau’s Life in the Woods, a landscape of idyllic swimming holes, pine forests, stone walls, and a shimmering river.



Brent Lawrence is a composer and guitarist native to Salem, Virginia. As a creator of both instrumental and vocal works, he is noted for his use of lush harmonies, earworm melodies, and genre-bending compositional style. As an avid enjoyer of nature, many of his recent works have been inspired by narrative interpretations of landscapes. Recently, he has been a 2018 Composition Fellow at the Wyoming Festival in addition to composing works for Esteli Gomez and the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium. Brent is an active member of Cascadia Composers and resides in Eugene, Oregon. Find his website at brent-lawrence.com.

Turquoise Waters for *flute, cello, and percussion*

from *High Desert Panoramas*

Turquoise Waters is the second installment in the High Desert Panoramas cycle and is dedicated to the Owyhee River for the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System and Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts.

Whenever he wanders through eastern Oregon, Brent is always struck by the rivers there. They are often colored with vibrant blues, greens, and turquoise and seem to glisten in the smallest drop of sunlight. These rivers are also home to diverse terrain. Much of the Owyhee area consists of canyonlands, for instance, where the glistening waters flow through columns of sheer rock.

However, Brent finds the plant life surrounding the Owyhee most inspirational. Being located in the high desert, much of the land surrounding it is arid and neutrally colored, except for the river,

where life springs up in the soil around the river. The contrasts of color between sparkling turquoise waters, adjacent effervescently green flora, and the stoic frame of the high desert are the inspirations behind this piece.



Libby Meyer is a composer of concert, theater, and film music. Her interest is in natural soundscapes and the conservation of special places. Her curiosity in the relationship between the arts and the natural world fuel her work. Libby holds a DMA in music composition from Northwestern University in Chicago and is currently a Lecturer in Music Theory and Composition and the director of the music composition program at Michigan Technological University. Find her website at libbymeyermusic.com.

Wild Beauty – for violin, piano, and percussion

Wild Beauty was composed in response to the North Country National Scenic Trail, the longest in the National Trails System, which stretches 4,600 miles over seven states from the middle of North Dakota to the Vermont border of New York. Approximately 500 miles of the trail meander through Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, where Libby lives and has spent many happy hours exploring stretches of the trail.

“*Wild Beauty*” divides into five sections: Morning Chorus, Waves, Fog, Dancing in the Rain, and Sunset. One of the most dramatic features of this region is the unpredictable weather patterns. One can experience many varieties of weather on the same day; from fog to rain to spectacular winds creating even more spectacular waves along our lakeshore. Libby has reflected on this from her personal experiences and has tried to capture this in “*Wild Beauty*.”

A second feature of the region is the unique chorus of bird songs that are an ever-present underscore to any hike on the trail. In “*Wild Beauty*,” Libby has included a few of these songs including the white throated sparrow that opens the piece in the violin as well as the songs of the common loon, barred owl, chickadee, and the white crowned sparrow.

Libby invites the audience to take part in the performance of this piece. Members of the audience are invited to join in with bird calls to share in completing the soundscape of the morning chorus that opens the piece creating what she hopes is an immersive experience.



Passionate about composing about places and the human experience, **Christina Rusnak** integrates context into her music from the world around her. She composes thought-provoking music that engages both the performers and the audience. Ms. Rusnak’s works include a wide range of genres from chamber to acousmatic to jazz. She writes essays

advocating for the music of living composers and serves on the board of the International Alliance for Women in Music. Find her website at christinarusnak.com.

Hyas Tyee Təmwata *for flute, clarinet, cello, and percussion*
from *Oregon Trail*

In addition to the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Trails System, 2018 marks the 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail. In this piece, Ms. Rusnak strives to evoke the essence of the landscape along the route, which is generally divided into three geographic areas: the Plains, the Rockies, and the Oregon Territory. The movements represent three very specific and different sites. Each represents important places for both the trail's historic inhabitants and the settlers who traversed the trail. Thus, the music attempts to take the listener back to the landscape itself, and to life prior to and during the pioneers' cross-country experience. Emigrants endured hardships unimaginable in the 21st century. The Oregon Trail cemented the U.S. boundary with Britain and justified human sacrifice in the name of progress. The emotions of these diverse groups of people found their way into the music.

III. Hyas Tyee Təmwata (Willamette Falls) Oregon: Willamette Falls was the largest waterfall in Oregon Territory and second only to Niagara Falls in the envisioned United States. Fur traders and painters had built up this landscape as North America's Eden. This place was the endpoint of the Oregon Trail – the destination that nearly half a million people strove to reach. Prior to the migration of Americans here, Hyas Tyee Təmwata flourished as a major fishery, with a thriving society of people living in semi-permanent villages. The third movement ties together the falls, the traditional importance of the landscape, and the excitement of the settlers upon their arrival.