

For Immediate Release
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KUDOS FOR LAITMAN'S 'SEED OF DREAM' ON LATEST NAXOS RELEASE

“Lori Laitman has a great gift for song-writing and these songs skillfully employ a variety of styles to convey the pathos of the Holocaust.”
American Record Guide, 2008

Critical acclaim for a Naxos recording of American composer **Lori Laitman**'s '*The Seed of Dream*' has recently been noted by American Record Guide and by Opera News. The album, titled '*For a Look or a Touch*' includes works by Jake Heggie, Gerard Schwarz and Lori Laitman. All three compositions were commissioned by Music of Remembrance, and each piece commemorates the extraordinary musical and artistic gifts of musicians who perished or survived the Holocaust.

Laitman's song cycle for baritone cello and piano is based on five poems penned in Nazi-occupied Lithuania by the pre-eminent Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever. Sutzkever's poetry, written in the Vilna Ghetto during the war, stands witness to the transcendent power of art in the face of unimaginable cruelty and brutality. The cycle saw its world premiere in Seattle, Washington in 2005 to glowing reviews, and was performed for the first time in Europe at The Tolerance Center of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum in Vilna, Lithuania in 2007. It has also generated excitement and interest among some of the world's most prestigious vocalists, among them the famed Austrian baritone Wolfgang Holzmair, who will perform the cycle in his native land in February 2009.

High praise is also accorded to **Jake Heggie**'s song cycle '*For a Look or a Touch*', and '*In Memoriam*', a work for solo cello and strings by **Gerard Schwarz**.

In their October 2008 review of the album, **Opera News** writes: "Composer **Lori Laitman** has set [the songs] with warmth and variety for baritone, cello and piano." Of her treatment of one song in the cycle, Opera News adds: "It is hard to resist the harsh irony of '*A Load of Shoes*,' Laitman's fast, klezmer-tinted waltz to the poet's observation of piles of ownerless shoes "transported from Vilna to Berlin."

American Record Guide expresses deep appreciation of Lori's work in its Sept/Oct 2008 issue: "**Lori Laitman** has a great gift for song-writing and these songs skillfully employ a variety of styles to convey the pathos of the Holocaust. '*I Lie in This Coffin*' describes the poet's experience of hiding in a coffin to elude the Nazis. Beginning with low tones from the piano suggesting the buried spirit of those persecuted in the Holocaust, the song rises to a note of encouragement as the poet remembers the spirit of his dead sister but then returns to the reality of life that is like being buried alive. '*A*

Load of Shoes' is a sort of *danse macabre* as the poet happens to see his own mother's shoes among others being carried on a cart after she had been murdered. The tender and lyrical *'To My Child'* is a lament on the murder of the poet's son. *'Beneath the Whiteness of Your Stars'* combines and alternates a pizzicato habanera rhythm by the cello with a melody written in the Vilna Ghetto by Abraham Brudno as it contrasts the natural beauty of the world with human suffering. *'No Sad Songs, Please'* ends the cycle on a note of hope with the loveliest of melodies. This is very fine song-writing and one must hope that Laitman's songs will continue to receive the recognition they deserve."

Album Details:

Naxos 559379, 61 minutes

HEGGIE: *For a Look or a Touch*; **SCHWARZ:** *In Memoriam*; **LAITMAN:** *The Seed of Dream*

Source:

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