



STL TROMBONES

CONFLUENCE

Confluence

noun.

1. the junction of two rivers, especially rivers of approximately equal width.
2. an act or process of merging.



When we officially began thinking of ourselves as a chamber music group in 2006, we were immediately looking for repertoire. The music store shelves had all of the usual suspects, but we wanted to push forward and create our own stuff. We started writing our own arrangements, and eventually, compositions. We started to get the knack of being creators. We commissioned composers whose music spoke to us. And we adopted new pieces that had had relatively small exposure and started to perform them. With *Confluence*, you will hear the result of that process.

When a group decides to commission a new piece, the process can be a little scary. Will the composer say yes? Will he or she write a piece for trombones that we like as much as the ones

that inspired us to ask them? Will they know how to write for trombones? On this album, we offer three winners.

St. Louis' Adam Maness is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, innovator, and known locally for his work with The 442s, a classical/jazz/folk/you-name-it fusion ensemble. In 2015, Tim approached Adam to see if he would write a piece for The Trombones. *Closing and Opening Doors* offers a charming and unusual narrative of his then-toddler son learning how to open a door. The structure of the piece follows the boy trying, trying, and trying again; sitting down to quietly ruminate; and then gradually, as the music tries to settle into one meter, almost getting it, just about getting it... and TA-DA! the piece comes to a triumphant conclusion as the

child masters his new skill.

Tim is admittedly a groupie of the new music band Alarm Will Sound, and his friendship with Alarm trombonist Michael Clayville led to Gerry and Tim joining in a consortium to commission Caleb Burhans to compose a new piece.

The music of Caleb Burhans, composer, violist, singer, multi-instrumentalist, and a founding member of Alarm Will Sound, shows influences of minimalism, early music, and ambient rock music. The title and sounds of Hereafter suggests a spiritual connection, a frequent impulse in Caleb's music. This score specifies alto trombone, two tenor trombones, and bass trombone. Caleb Burhans writes, "Inspired by sacred brass music of the renaissance and baroque period,

Hereafter is a reflection on what happens after our bodies leave this plane of existence." Caleb makes frequent use of the trombone's unique ability for glissando, and the alto trombone was chosen to mimic the sound of bells.



Caleb Burhans



Carrie Magin/Composer of TaleTeller

As a composer, I'm usually aware of the approximate length and trajectory of the sections I'm composing, but in writing TaleTeller, I found myself surprised at the direction the piece wanted to take. This work gave me the impression I was listening to someone else tell stories or tales, and I hoped to reflect that amusing process in the title. In addition, the piece makes use of the basic musical idea of two repeated notes, which occur in every significant melodic or motivic line, so I found the alliteration of TaleTeller fitting.

TaleTeller was commissioned by the Trombones of the Saint Louis Symphony and was premiered at the University of Central Arkansas in 2020. It was an absolute delight working with this ensemble, and I'm grateful for their outstanding artistry in making TaleTeller come to life!

We are grateful to Justin Cook and the University of Central Arkansas for their help in funding this commission.

Olivier Boreau/Composer of *Imprégnations*

Sometimes, something new and wonderful just lands in your lap. Olivier Boreau is active in eastern France as a bass trombonist, euphoniumist, and conductor, and he has written over fifty compositions. Gerry had previously recorded a solo of Olivier's *Meditations Poétiques*, and Olivier was inspired to write a solo for bass trombone with three tenor trombones. *Imprégnations* was also inspired by three works of visual art by the French painter, Caroline Varlot. The title refers to the technique used in getting the paint onto the canvas. Caroline Varlot writes:

The "Imprégnations" series was inspired by the vision of emotions that grow in our mind and body, like roots, like veins and etch themselves forever in our memory. If you want to go beyond appearances, you will find a spiritual dimension : accept and integrate that what you will do in your life will be impacted by the traces of your past emotional experiences, impregnated and tattooed in you.

The quartet was often able to project these images onto a screen during many performances. We have them included here, with the hope you'll enjoy both works. We look forward to *Imprégnations* becoming a standard on bass trombone recitals.

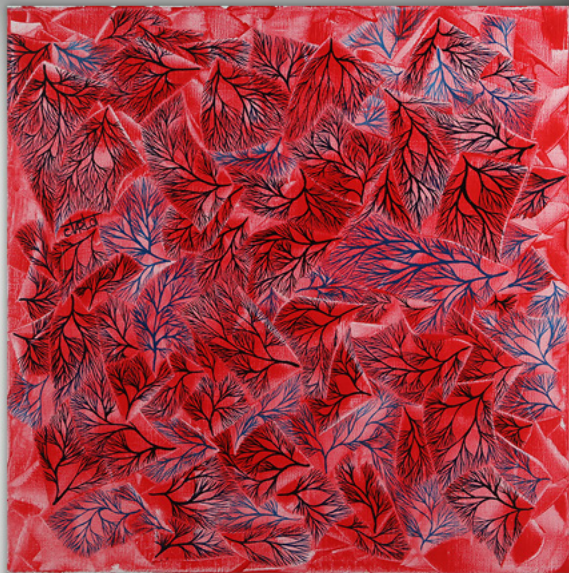


*I Arythmie
émotionnelle*

*II Imp
sous*



Caroline Vialle
III Respirations



prégation
s-marine

III Respirations

Gerry's connection with Tom Gibson at Mercer University led us to a piece that John Hennecken composed for Mercer University Trombone Quartet. Composer John Hennecken writes:

Diasphere is a musical world that features the revolving opposition of two ideas: pensive, deliberate chorales and aggressive, fiery allegros. The chorale sections evoke a ceremonial, sacred character that is enveloped in mystery, as the voices often seek out answers without finding them and land on harmonically unstable cadences. The prayerful meditations are interrupted by incisive fanfares and fragmented antiphony in which the players call out to each other as if from across great distances. When this journey reaches its climactic moment, the heavens and earth are connected by an expansive chord that traverses almost three octaves. Although this glimpse of transcendence gives way to a solemn, uncertain ending, I hope the work as a whole will inspire you to imagine the spirit that this music is in search of.

The contrasting elements in Diasphere are brought to life by the power and beauty that only a trombone quartet can deliver. I am eternally grateful to Timothy Myers, Amanda Stewart, Jonathan Reycraft, and Gerry Pagano for showcasing this piece in concerts all over the United States, as well as to Tom Gibson and Mercer University for commissioning it.

Joan Tower is perhaps the Grande Dame of American composers.

She was composer-in-residence at the St. Louis Symphony from 1985 until 1988. Her oeuvre spans over seventy compositions for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and orchestra. Her first Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman (1986) was followed by five more Fanfares.

Her Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman #5 was originally scored for four trumpets. Maestro Stéphane Denève requested Ms. Tower to make a version for four trombones, which was recorded for video with Denève conducting as part of the opening socially-distanced concerts of the SLSO 2020/2021 season.

Amanda writes:

“We are truly grateful to Joan Tower for arranging one of her iconic fanfares and allowing our group the opportunity to both premier and record this work. It is an honor to bring this exciting piece into the trombone quartet repertoire.”

Members of the STL Trombones contributed to the writing on the album.

Jonathan Reycraft arranged Prokofiev's March Op.99

Jonathan writes:

Since having first experiences through the Indiana University department of bands, Sergei Prokofiev's March Op.99 has been well known as a regular piece in wind band standard literature. It's nicely adaptable for trombone quartet as it happens to even be in B flat major! The whirling opening glissandi combined with Prokofiev's distinctive melodic style make for an energetic addition to the trombone quartet repertoire landscape.



Tim writes:

*As a youngster, I heard a recording of Basil Rathbone reading *The Bells* by Edgar Allan Poe. These lines stuck with me...*

Hear the loud alarum bells—

Brazen bells!

What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!

*These words were in the back of my mind when I conceived *Alarum*. Short, fast, and furious, I hope my piece conveys some of the same electricity of Poe's words. The most amazing thing to me is that my colleagues wanted to perform it again and again!*



Gerry struts his arranging prowess on several of our tracks.

Gerry writes:

While every trombone group should have a few good Bach Fugues in their repertoire, this one is an arrangement of a keyboard work that is our contribution to the library. I started the Bach Prelude and Fugue many years ago while I was living in Tempe, Arizona. At that time, back in the pre-computer file days, it was manuscript paper and pencil. Fast forward to Finale files, and voilá, we have a legible version! The opportunity to play the music of Bach is quite possibly best achieved for trombones in the quartet context.

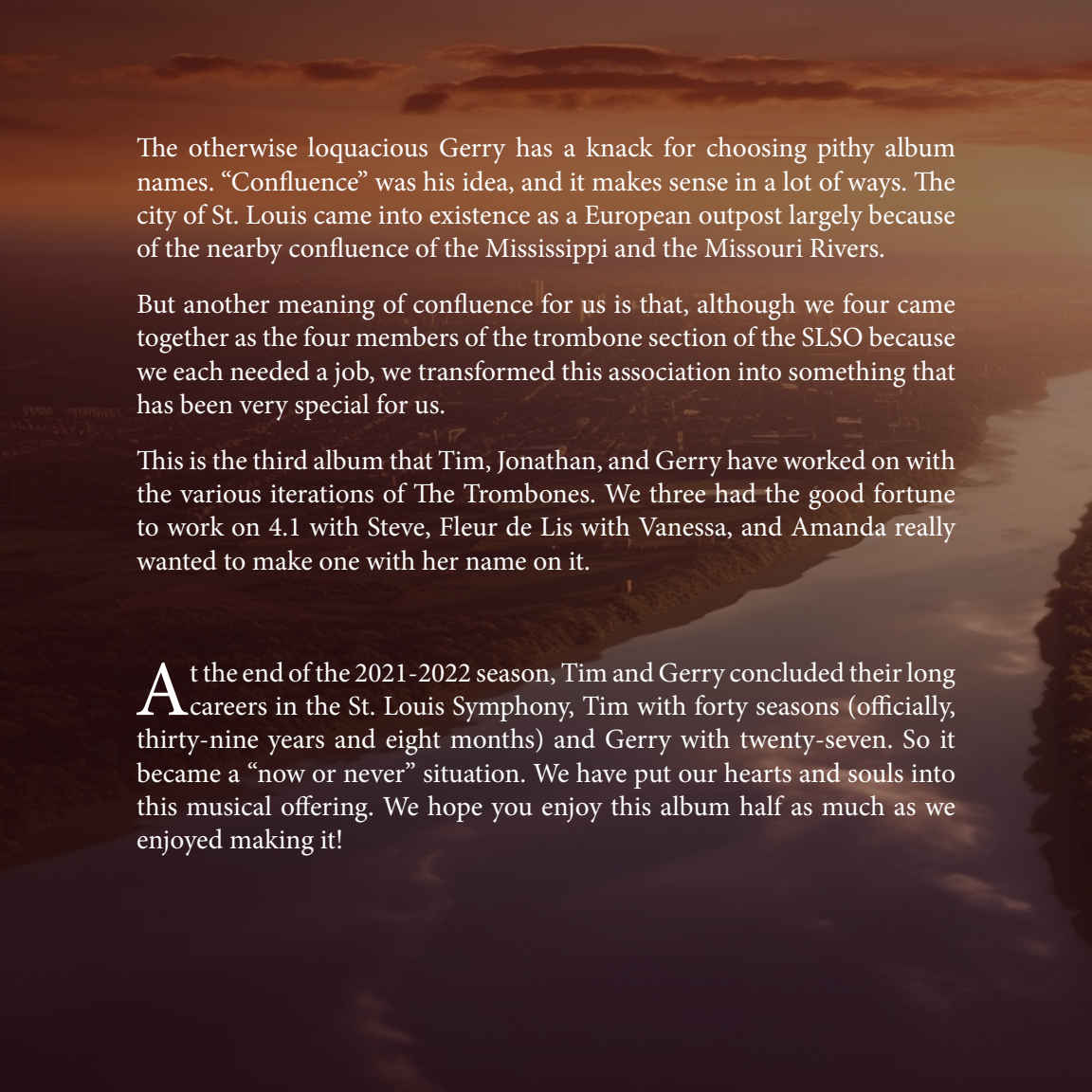
I have been a fan of Pat Matheny since 1979, and I have everything he ever recorded. I'm not sure what that says about me! I also can't say what made me think his version of the old 60's guitar tune, Pipeline, could translate well to trombone. With the help on the arrangement from my colleague Tim, we offer this version up for you to decide. It does provide something new. Quite a change from Bach, I'd say.

Once again, I'm a big fan of Maria Schneider and her orchestra. I just can't help myself, when I hear something I like, I usually think it could sound good on trombone. Well, what do you think? I will say, as we added Sky Blue into our programs, it quickly became a favorite. It's also the origin of the phrase,

coined by Jonathan, “audible gasp”. Yes, in the quiet of the conclusion of one of our performances, we heard the above utterance from an audience member. Shucks folks, we like it too!

For many years, our orchestra has brought the quartet into churches around the St. Louis region, as part of its In Unison Program. Its design is to connect the Symphony and its musicians to the African American community. We have been guests for services on numerous Sunday mornings, sometimes as close as a short walk from Powell Hall. We started arranging a few traditional Gospel tunes as part of our performances. Both Joshua fit de Battle and Just a Closer Walk come from these efforts. In true New Orleans style, it opens up about halfway through with a chorus of ‘improvisation’. Everyone gets in on the fun.

Anyone living in St. Louis for a while soon comes to know the old W. C. Handy tune St. Louis Blues, although it’s often through the lens of Glenn Miller. It has been the theme for the St. Louis Blues hockey team for many years. It doesn’t hurt that Glenn was also an old slush pumper! (slang for trombone, look it up!) We start our medley next to the Mississippi, and end up on the other side of the state in Kansas City, with a short trip in between for some Blues in the Night. And as a special treat, watch out for our singing debut!

An aerial photograph of a river confluence at sunset. The sky is a deep orange and red, with soft clouds. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom left, meeting a larger body of water. The surrounding landscape is hilly and green, with some buildings visible in the distance.

The otherwise loquacious Gerry has a knack for choosing pithy album names. “Confluence” was his idea, and it makes sense in a lot of ways. The city of St. Louis came into existence as a European outpost largely because of the nearby confluence of the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers.

But another meaning of confluence for us is that, although we four came together as the four members of the trombone section of the SLSO because we each needed a job, we transformed this association into something that has been very special for us.

This is the third album that Tim, Jonathan, and Gerry have worked on with the various iterations of The Trombones. We three had the good fortune to work on 4.1 with Steve, Fleur de Lis with Vanessa, and Amanda really wanted to make one with her name on it.

At the end of the 2021-2022 season, Tim and Gerry concluded their long careers in the St. Louis Symphony, Tim with forty seasons (officially, thirty-nine years and eight months) and Gerry with twenty-seven. So it became a “now or never” situation. We have put our hearts and souls into this musical offering. We hope you enjoy this album half as much as we enjoyed making it!

Tracks

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|---|------|
| 1. March Op 99 Sergei Prokofiev | 2:21 |
| 2. Prelude and Fugue, BWV 895 J. S. Bach | 3:20 |
| 3. Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman # 5 Joan Tower | 3:30 |
| 4. Diasphere John Hennecken | 6:29 |
| 5. Alarum Timothy Myers | 4:48 |
| 6. Hereafter Caleb Burhans | 6:22 |
| 7. TaleTeller Carrie Magin | 5:22 |
| 8. Impregnations Olivier Boreau | |
| I — Arythmie émotionnelle (emotional arrhythmia) | 2:30 |
| II — Imprégnation sous-marine (underwater impregnation) | 2:50 |
| III — Respirations (breaths) | 2:34 |
| 9. Closing and Opening Doors Adam Maness | 4:49 |
| 10. Pipeline Brian Carman and Bob Spickard | 3:01 |
| 11. Sky Blue Maria Schneider | 3:26 |
| 12. Just a Closer Walk with Thee Traditional | 3:12 |
| 13. St. Louis Blues Medley | 3:30 |
| St. Louis Blues W.C. Handy | |
| Blues in the Night Harold Arlen | |
| Kansas City Lieber and Stoller | |
| 14. Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho Traditional | 2:40 |

Executive Producer: STL Trombones (formerly The Trombones of the Saint Louis Symphony)

Audio Producer, Engineer, and digital Editing: Paul Eachus

Mixing and mastering engineer: Paul Eachus

Microphones: Mains: AEA R88A, DPA 4003, spots: DPA4006, Room: Austrian Audio OC818

Microphone preamps: RME 12Mic, Millennia Media, Bruel and Kjaer

Recording dates: December 6, 7, 8, and 9, 2021

Recording venue: Cornerstone Fellowship Church of the Nazarene, St. Louis

Thanks to Harold Lumley, John Torres and all the folks at Cornerstone Fellowship Church for offering their sanctuary with its wonderful acoustics; to Paul Eachus for capturing our audio perfectly and gently guiding us toward what we really wanted; to Edwards Trombones for their sponsorship and the outstanding quality control of their products; to Christan Griego for his brilliant grasp of what every player really needs; and special thanks to our families, who support us in innumerable ways.

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STL Trombones group photographs: Jennifer A. Lin

STL Trombones plays Edwards Trombones.