

*Rain Waves* (1997)

Joan Tower

*"Rain Waves* explores the motion of a wave form. Starting with a pointillistic 'rain-type' pattern, the notes float upwards and downwards in increasing intensities. In the less 'staccato-like' and more flowing sections, there is a sense of a 'wind' pushing the notes into longer and wider arched patterns, perhaps like the undulating sheets of rain created in a light southern tropical rainfall.

*Rain Waves* was commissioned by Michigan State University for the Verdehr Trio. It was written in 1997 and is dedicated to the Verdehr Trio in admiration of their unfailing support of the music of our time, and their devoted efforts to give a composer's new work 'life' through their worldwide performance tours and recordings."

—Joan Tower

The world premiere of *Rain Waves* was on December 14, 1997 at The Frick Collection, New York, New York.

Joan Tower (born 1938, New Rochelle, New York) is widely regarded as one of the most important American composers living today. During a career spanning more than fifty years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. She has been the subject of television documentaries of WGBH (Boston), CBS Sunday Morning, and MJW Productions (England).

Tower began her musical study with piano lessons at the age of six. Three years later her family moved to Bolivia where she continued developing her talent as a pianist and absorbing the musical climate of South America. At the age of nineteen, she returned to the United States and entered Bennington College, studying both piano and composition. After completing a bachelor's degree, she studied at Columbia University where she earned a master's degree and a doctorate in composition with instruction from Otto Luening, Jack Beeson, Chou Wen-Chung, and Vladimir Ussachevsky.

From 1969 to 1984, Tower was active as founder and pianist with the 1973 Naumburg Award-winning ensemble the Da Capo Chamber Players. They commissioned and premiered many of her most popular works including *Platinum Spiral*, *Hexachords*, *Wings I*, *Petroushskates*, and *Amazon*.

Her composer-residencies include those with the St. Louis Symphony, the Deer Valley Music Festival, the Yale/Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and a decade with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. She was the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year for the 2010–2011 season and the Albany Symphony's Mentor Composer partner in 2013–2014.

As one of this generation's most dynamic and colorful composers, Tower's bold and energetic music, with its striking imagery and novel structural forms, has won large, enthusiastic audiences. Her first orchestral work, *Sequoia*, quickly entered the repertory with performances by orchestras including St. Louis, New York, San Francisco, Minnesota, Tokyo NHK, Toronto, the National Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, and the London Philharmonia; a choreographed version by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has toured throughout Canada, Europe, and Russia.

*Silver Ladders*, written in 1987 for the St. Louis Symphony won the prestigious 1990 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition and has been performed by the St. Louis, Chicago, Louisville, Dallas, and Berlin (Radio) orchestras. In 2008, The recording of *Made in America* by the Nashville Symphony conducted by Leonard Slatkin won three Grammy Awards including Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

*Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* (No. 1) has been played by over five hundred different ensembles since its 1987 premiere and is recorded on RCA by the St. Louis Symphony, Leonard Slatkin, conductor. The Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* were commissioned respectively by Absolute Vodka, Carnegie Hall, the Kansas City Symphony, and the Aspen Music Festival. Her ballet *Stepping Stones* (1993) was commissioned by choreographer Kathryn Posin for the Milwaukee Ballet.

Tower has written for some of the most distinguished soloists and chamber groups in the United States: concertos for pianist Ursula Oppens, clarinetist David Shifrin and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, flautist Carol Wincenc, percussionist Evelyn Glennie, and violinist Elmar Oliveira; chamber music for the Muir, Toyko and Emerson Quartets; the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio; the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Hailed as "one of the most successful woman composers of all time" in *The New Yorker* magazine, Joan Tower was inducted into the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters. She also serves on the Artistic Advisory panel of the BMI Foundation.

Tower is the Asher B. Edelman Professor of Music at Bard College where she has taught since 1972. Her music is published exclusively by Associated Music Publishers; recordings have been produced by CRI, Summit, and New World Records.