

Rufus Reid

Quiet Pride: The Elizabeth Catlett Project

Saturday, October 13, 2018
7:30 pm



Photo: Jimmy Katz



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QUIET PRIDE: THE ELIZABETH CATLETT PROJECT

COMPOSED BY RUFUS REID

Presented by Hancher and the School of Music's
Jazz Studies Program at the University of Iowa

Saturday, October 13, 2018, at 7:30 pm
Hancher Auditorium, The University of Iowa

QUIET PRIDE MUSICAL MOVEMENTS

Recognition
Glory
Mother and Child
Singing Head
Tapestry In The Sky

DENNIS MACKREL
Conductor

CHARENTE WADE
Voice

STEVE WILSON, ERICA VON KLEIST, SCOTT ROBINSON,
TOM CHRISTENSEN, CARL MARAGHI
Reeds

TANYA DARBY, FREDDIE HENDRIX,
INGRID JENSEN, TIM HAGANS
Trumpets

MICHAEL DEASE, JASON JACKSON,
RYAN KEBERLE, DAVE TAYLOR
Trombones

JOHN CLARK, VINCENT CHANCEY
French Horn

RUFUS REID
Bass, Composer

STEVE ALLEE
Piano

LEWIS NASH
Drums

VIC JURIS
Guitar

We express our deep appreciation to Dr. Damani Phillips and Mr. John Rapson from the School of Music, to the African American Studies Program, and to Hancher Auditorium and the University of Iowa for making this engagement and performance a reality.

The project is supported, in part, by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Photo: Jimmy Katz

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

RUFUS REID COMPOSER

Rufus Reid is highly regarded as one of the world's most iconic, premiere bassists on the international jazz scene. With his reputation firmly established in the education arena, he now adds composition to his vitae. After heading up the international jazz program at William Paterson University for 20 years, Reid decided to participate in the BMI Jazz Composer's Workshop for five years, which has empowered him to move more deeply into the composing arena. He has written for string orchestras, jazz ensembles large and small, concert bands, double bass



Photo: Jimmy Katz

ensemble pieces, and a solo bass composition. *Mass Transit*, Rufus's three-movement composition for symphony orchestra, was premiered in 2011. Also premiered that year was the orchestral arrangement of Reid's *Caress the Thought* with soloist Joe Guastafeste, retired principle bassist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which he originally composed as a solo piece for bass virtuoso, Diana Gannett, who has performed it several times and recorded it on her 2015 CD *Artemis in the Oak Grove* with pianist Ellen Rowe.

Quiet Pride, a five-movement work for large jazz ensemble, inspired by the sculptures of the artist, Elizabeth Catlett, was premiered in 2012 at the Shaw Center for the Performing Arts, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which also presented Catlett's magnificent sculptures on display, in residence during the production's entire run.

This suite of music was recorded by Reid's hand-picked twenty-five piece ensemble, including vocalist as an instrument sans lyrics, and conducted by Dennis Mackrel. *Quiet Pride: The Elizabeth Catlett Project* was released to rave reviews by the Motéma Music label in February 2014. This remarkable CD received two nominations for the 57th Grammy Awards for Best Large Jazz Ensemble and for Best Instrumental Composition for "Recognition," the first movement of this suite. Rufus continues to present this music in universities with Catlett's work on view. He also presents this all-star large ensemble whenever possible, as at Lincoln Center's David Rubenstein Atrium in November 2014, and at The Jazz Standard in New York City in February 2015.

Rufus Reid is equally known as an exceptional educator. Dr. Martin Krivin and Reid created the Jazz Studies & Performance Program at William Paterson University. Reid retired after 20 years, but continues to teach, conducting master classes, workshops, and residencies around the world.

Rufus's book, *The Evolving Bassist*, published since 1974, continues to be recognized as the industry standard as the definitive bass method. In January 2000, the book's millennium edition was published by Warner Music. In

December 2003, *The Evolving Bassist* DVD was released. This two-and-a-half-hour DVD also offers a concert view, featuring Mulgrew Miller and Lewis Nash.

Rufus Reid's major professional career began in Chicago and continues since 1976 in New York City. He has toured and recorded with Eddie Harris, Nancy Wilson, Harold Land & Bobby Hutcherson, Lee Konitz, The Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, Dexter Gordon, J.J. Johnson, Art Farmer, Stan Getz, Frank Wess, Kenny Burrell, Kenny Barron, and countless others. He continues to enjoy associations with Tim Hagans, Bob Mintzer, Marvin Stamm, and Benny Golson.

Reid released *The Rufus Reid Quintet LIVE at The Kennedy Center* in 2007 on Motéma Music, and continues to lead his Out Front Trio with pianist Steve Allee and drummer Duduka da Fonseca. He released *Out Front - The Rufus Reid Trio* on Motéma Records in 2010. Reid recorded with this trio again, adding guests, Bobby Watson, Freddie Hendrix, J.D. Allen, and Toninho Horta, releasing *Hues of a Different Blue* on Motéma Music in 2011.

"*Hues* should be considered a sterling, definitive exemplar of what an ideal jazz album should be—fabulous musicianship in service of the music, expansive tunes played with succinctness and restraint and variety." —Mark Keresman, *Jazz Inside* magazine

Born on February 10, 1944, in Atlanta, Georgia, Rufus Reid was raised in Sacramento, California, where he played the trumpet through junior high and high school. Upon graduation from Sacramento High School, he entered the U.S. Air Force as a trumpet player. During that time, he began to be seriously interested in the bass. After fulfilling his duties in the military, Rufus decided to pursue a career as a professional bassist. He moved to Seattle, Washington, where he began serious study with James Harnett of the Seattle Symphony. He continued his education at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where he studied with Warren Benfield and principal bassist, Joseph Guastefeste, both of the Chicago Symphony. He graduated from Northwestern in 1971 with a bachelor of music degree as a performance major on the double bass.

Rufus Reid truly continues to be *The Evolving Bassist*.

ELIZABETH CATLETT (1915–2012)

SCULPTOR AND GRAPHIC ARTIST

In 1940, Elizabeth Catlett became one of the first three MFA graduates from the University of Iowa and was the first African American woman to receive the degree. She would go on to become one of the most important American sculptors and printmakers of the 20th century.

Catlett experienced discrimination throughout her life. In the early 1930s, she was rejected from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh because she was African American, and when she taught high school in North Carolina, she was denied equal pay.

Although the UI accepted African American students during a time when many institutions throughout the country refused to do so, university housing remained closed to African Americans until Betty Jean Arnett desegregated Currier Hall in 1945.

While a student from 1938–40, Catlett lived off campus with Estella Scott, a local woman. She also lived for a year in a home sponsored by the Iowa Federation of Colored Women's Clubs and at one point roomed with renowned poet Margaret Walker.

Catlett chose to attend the UI so she could study with Grant Wood, painter of the famed *American Gothic*, from whom she received the career-defining advice to “paint what you know.”

The grandchild of freed slaves and the daughter of a truant officer and a university instructor, Catlett frequently depicted women, mothers with children, and working-class African Americans, as well as icons such as Malcolm X, Angela Davis, and Sojourner Truth.

After receiving a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, Catlett visited Mexico, where she eventually took up residence and spent most of her life. She died in Cuernavaca in 2012.

Catlett received the UI Distinguished Alumna Award for Achievement in 1996 and was named a UI Alumni Fellow in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 2006.

“I have always wanted my art to service black people,” Catlett told Samella Lewis in the book *Art: African American*, “to reflect us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential.”

Catlett's artwork has grown in popularity and is included in collections around the world, such as at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City; the National Museum in Prague; the Smithsonian National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.; and the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.



Photo by Shirley Briggs,
Shirley Briggs Papers, Iowa Women's Archives,
University of Iowa Libraries.



Elizabeth Catlett, *Sharecropper*, 1968. Linoleum-block print.
Purchase from the friends of Jean Davidson in loving memory, 2002.4
University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art

The UI acquired Catlett's iconic *Sharecropper* print in 2002, and in 2006, Kathleen Edwards, senior curator at the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, met with Catlett to arrange the purchase of an additional 28 prints for the UI's permanent collection. In celebration of Rufus Reid's Hancher residency, the Stanley Museum of Art has a portion of its Catlett holdings on display at the Iowa Memorial Union. Those holdings include lithographs Catlett created for *For My People*, a 1942 poetry collection by Margaret Walker, Catlett's erstwhile roommate.

Catlett donated proceeds of the 2006 UI Museum of Art purchase back to the UI to establish the Elizabeth Catlett Scholarship Fund, which each year supports an African American or Latino undergraduate or graduate student in printmaking.

In 2017, the UI's newest residence hall—Elizabeth Catlett Residence Hall—opened, honoring a trailblazer who was unable to live on campus during her student days.

“(Elizabeth Catlett’s) values—the arts, justice for humanity, support for all individuals—that’s what this type of building represents, and it’s so important that we honor her and her family letting us remind ourselves in the perpetuity of the core values she represents,” said UI President J. Bruce Harreld during the opening ceremony for Catlett Hall.



Elizabeth Catlett Residence Hall opened in 2017 on the University of Iowa campus (Photo: Justin Torner)

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PROGRAM NOTES

By Rufus Reid

Recognition

Elizabeth Catlett

Onyx, 40 x 30 x 20 cm, 1970

The title itself conjures up myriad thoughts. When I view this sculpture, I think of how life unfolds for two people meeting for the first time and the series of events that transpire to keep them together to become life partners. A sense of acknowledgement of existence in an intimate relationship requires a long process. The first movement, "Recognition," begins as two individuals are startled by one another's existence. The first theme depicts the male character with his somewhat careless, cocky nature depicted by a bluesy harmony that suggests a freer spirit. The second theme is melancholy, not to be confused with sadness, which introduces the female character as a more complex individual. Each of the solo sections depicts the various stages of their relationship as it grows. Suddenly, the harmonic movement changes once again, supporting the final, jubilant, and celebratory theme that acknowledges their committed union and meeting of the minds.

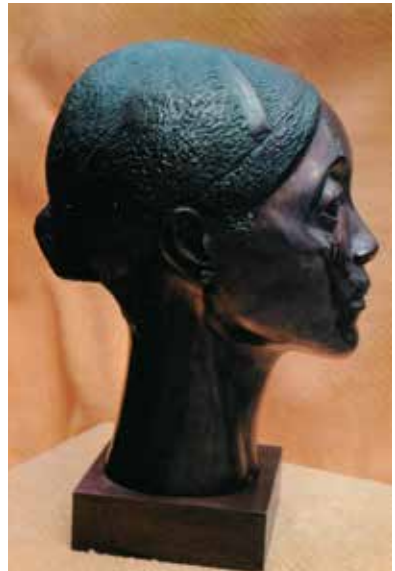


Glory

Elizabeth Catlett

Bronze, 34 x 20 x 24 cm, 1981

This striking sculpture signifies a black woman's beauty and inner strength. She exudes that powerful distinctive quiet pride that cannot be wavered by adversity. The second movement, "Glory," opens with a six-note theme that suggests a questioning of oneself. Answers begin to formulate as this theme grows and becomes larger, more complete, and moves forward. The recurring theme is heard within various sections of the ensemble with increasingly faster, more complex rhythms and harmonies. An abstract turbulent section occurs, depicting life experiences, but the majestic theme is relentless and survives all trials and tribulations encountered.



Mother and Child

Elizabeth Catlett
Cedar, 66 cm, 1971

The third movement, “Mother and Child,” opens with the anticipation and wonderment which surrounds the birth of a child. The incredible, maternal bond between a mother and her child is intense, powerful, and beautiful. The opening section attempts to convey the anxiety of awaiting the arrival of that glorious day. The primary theme is serene and linear in shape. As the harmonic movement develops it intertwines into a $7/4$ odd-meter tapestry. It depicts the nurturing of constant love and comfort for the child as it grows and becomes less and less dependent on the mother. However, just as life has its unexpected occurrences, this movement ends mournfully as this particular sculpture conveys angst. I am reminded of my own mother whose life was never the same after losing her daughter. Nevertheless, the mother and child relationship still prevails as one of the glorious feelings of life.



Singing Head

Elizabeth Catlett
Mahogany, 31 cm, 1975

This sculpture exhibits the ease of the simple act of singing with our voice, the original musical instrument. Movement four, “Singing Head,” opens with the a-cappella voice rendering the theme resonating from the piano. This theme becomes integrated and supported by different harmonies, bass movement, and accelerated tempos. The theme is molded into more complex melodies. However, the singing quality of the main melodic motif still prevails. The harmonic movement challenges the improvising soloist to create additional melodies, rendering even more singing themes. The initial theme returns to its more simple quality, resolving on a major triad to close this movement.





Stargazer

Elizabeth Catlett
Black Marble, 2007

“Tapestry In The Sky” was expressly written for this occasion inspired by the sculpture, *Stargazer*.

Think of the last time you gazed at the billions of stars above. There are formations of stars that evoke images and concepts that have been documented since 276–195 B.C. Gazing at this spectacular canvas of lights, constantly shimmering and gleaming, can set the mind free, if you allow it.

“Tapestry In The Sky” evokes what one might imagine when you set the mind free. Initially there’s not any one particular focus, but several visions occur simultaneously. The animated motion of the pizzicato double bass and cymbals along with the bass clarinet ground the shimmering of the upper woodwinds and voice. The muted trumpets join in with gestures from the piano. The first brief melodic motif appears in the voice and flute. Listen for the shimmering of the flute, then clarinet, then the trumpet, setting the stage for the arrival of the next motif, a duet with piano and trumpet.

The woodwinds prelude the main melody introduced by the voices and guitar, supported by the lower sonorities of the bass clarinet and double bass. The harmonic structure of this melody provides various opportunities for improvisations from different soloists. These improvisations develop in intensity, which awakens us from our dream. The voices quietly reminisce the motif while returning to the opening animations of the double bass, shimmering cymbals, and muted trumpets. The movement comes to a close with the sparkling piano and the dimming rhythmic pattern in the voice, flute, clarinets, and cymbal.

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LINER NOTES

By Bob Blumenthal

For the recording of *Quiet Pride*, Motéma Music MTM-114

Quiet Pride is technically complex and emotionally straightforward, five aural images impeccably conceived and imaginatively interpreted. It is everything to which a major composer/arranger might aspire.

For those familiar with the storied career of bassist Rufus Reid, *Quiet Pride* might also seem par for the course, for everything Reid has done to date has been done exceptionally well. For over four decades, he has been the ideal accompanist in any idiom one can name. Though less extensively documented, his efforts as a bandleader, most often at the head of trios and quintets, trace a similar trajectory of power and flexibility; and since beginning his affiliation with Motéma Music, Reid's composing has gained an elevated profile. Those who have enjoyed his tutelage directly as students and more generally through his leadership in building the celebrated jazz program at William Paterson University have seen their vision and virtuosity expanded through his efforts. His resume is full, and the accolades he has garnered over the decades are fulsome.

But, to paraphrase the title of his text *The Evolving Bassist*, Reid is an evolving artist, and *Quiet Pride* heralds a new phase in his evolution. He has worked into the challenge of orchestral composition meticulously since leaving William Paterson in 1999. "Composition has always intrigued me, given the great music that I have performed with Bob Brookmeyer, Thad Jones, and others," Reid explains, "so I joined the BMI Composers Workshop. But it took me a year to decide what to write, because writers are so often responding to specific situations. It's a movie score or a record date or whatever, with limitations on the nature of the ensemble and how quickly you must turn things around."

The freedom that the workshop provided was something else, and has allowed Reid to create works for a variety of instrumentations. His efforts have been recognized through commissions from a growing list of organizations, including BMI, ASCAP, Chamber Music America, and the Guggenheim Foundation. The resulting works range from traditional big band scores to a three-movement symphonic work. With no previous recordings of these efforts by professional ensembles, however, Reid's growing command of the written idiom remained a well-kept secret in the wider jazz world.

Quiet Pride began to take shape in 2006, when the Sackler Composition Competition at the University of Connecticut announced that it would focus on jazz for the first time. As he searched for a theme, Reid considered how several of his associates had found inspiration in the work of visual artists—Jane Ira Bloom with Joan Miró, Jim McNeely with Paul Klee. He realized that he could similarly draw upon one of his own passions, the work of sculptor Elizabeth Catlett.

The career of Catlett (1915–2012) was filled with the kind of struggles that one might expect to befall a politically committed African American woman. She was born in Washington, D.C., and received her college degree from that city's Howard University; but her early years also led her to study with Grant Wood and obtain a Masters in Fine Arts at the University of Iowa, serve as Chair of the Art Department at Dillard University in New Orleans, and move to first Chicago for studies at the Art Institute (a time during which her *Mother and Child* was awarded First Honors at the American Negro Exhibition) and then

Harlem (where she taught Roy DeCarava among other future luminaries at the Carver School) before relocating to Mexico in 1946.

While her new home offered success at both the grassroots level of the People's Graphic Workshop and the halls of academia (she became the Chair of the Sculpture Department of the National School for Fine Arts in 1959), Catlett's leftwing politics made her the victim of Red Scare vitriol in her native land, where she was declared an "undesirable alien" after becoming a Mexican citizen in 1962. When the Studio Museum in Harlem mounted her one-woman show in 1971, Catlett had to obtain a special visa in order to attend. America began to embrace her from that point forward, however, and in her final years she was able to make annual springtime visits to New York. Among the many commissions for public murals and sculptures that followed were *Strive to Aspire* (1977) for her college alma mater, a bronze relief of novelist Ralph Ellison (2003) for New York City's Riverside Park, and statues of native son Louis Armstrong (1975) and daughter Mahalia Jackson (2010) for New Orleans.

With his subject in hand, Reid conceived a modified big-band instrumentation. "I try not to be one of those self-indulgent composers who get caught up in technique and off-the-wall effects," he explains, "but I have always been intrigued by the sound of French horn and voice, which have primarily been used by European composers, so I decided to add two horns and the female voice." He was encouraged by the success of *Linear Surroundings*, his 2004 Chamber Music America commission in which he added horn, cello, bass clarinet, and voice to his working quintet. Reid also committed himself to originality, which was no mean feat given his experience with the music of so many notable orchestrators. "The first time Bob Brookmeyer saw a score of mine," Reid recalls, "he circled one phrase and said, 'That's just like Thad.' Now when I write something, when it reminds me of Thad, or Bob, or Jimmy Heath, I change it."

Once Reid had chosen the works by Catlett that lend their titles to the individual sections, he entered into a more ineffable territory. "I'd be lying if I said that I set pictures up on the piano and waited for that divine light to strike," he laughs. "But you know how you can spend hours in a gallery, just letting the images sink in? Artists work in their own bubble, and I found myself responding to the shapes and lines in Elizabeth's work. While there is no absolute correspondence, I do feel that she inspired me to mix my own shapes and lines."

The four sections that formed the original suite received the Sackler Award, and Reid presented this initial version of the piece in 2007 at the U Conn campus with a student ensemble. "I think that many of the students responded to the challenges of the music like deer in the headlights," he admits, "but the vocalist was the strongest musician, which really helped pull it all together. And what made the event more special was that the Sacklers, who were unaware of Elizabeth Catlett's work until my composition, arranged to show several of her pieces in the campus gallery."

After the Storrs performance, Reid contacted Catlett's son Francisco "Ali" Mora Catlett, a percussionist who has performed with Sun Ra and M'Boom, and arranged for the sculptor to attend a New York gig. A friendship developed that ultimately led to Reid and his wife spending a week with Catlett in Cuernavaca. "She was a free spirit, outspoken but down-to-earth, and she taught me so much about the art world and how she produced her pieces." After their friendship blossomed, Reid added a fifth section, "Tapestry In The Sky," based on the sculpture *Stargazer* which was the centerpiece of the 2011



Rufus Reid and Elizabeth Catlett in 2009 (Photo © Andrew Lepley)

Bronx Museum exhibit *Stargazers: Elizabeth Catlett in Conversation with 21 Contemporary Artists*.

Reid and Catlett also decided to create a multi-media university residency that would include performances of *Quiet Pride*, exhibits of Catlett's art, and the documentary *Betty and Pancho*, a dual biography of the sculptor and her husband Francisco Mora directed by another of their sons, filmmaker Juan Mora Catlett. The expanded suite premiered at the first of these residencies, performed by the Louisiana State Jazz Ensemble in the Shaw Center for the Arts in Baton Rouge, LA., in February 2012; it subsequently was performed to great acclaim at the January 2013 Jazz Education Network Conference. As these notes are written, a second educational residency is about to take place at Bucknell University.

It was the LSU performance that directly led to the present recording. "The gallery in the Shaw Center had 17 pieces of Elizabeth's art on exhibit, which was really thrilling," Reid recalls, "and I got so excited with the musical results that I became determined to record the work with professionals." What resulted was the present album, in which every musician as well as conductor Dennis Mackrel, co-producer Akira Tana, and engineer James Farber was handpicked by the composer.

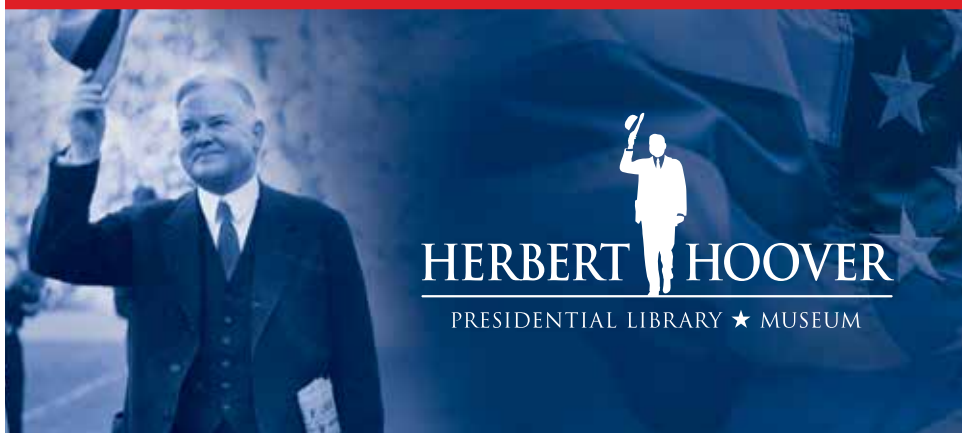
Reid's descriptions of the individual sections and the solo credits elsewhere in these notes make another track-by-track analysis unnecessary; but attention should be directed to Reid's striking use of complex rhythms, his precise weighting of ensemble parts (particularly the voice, which is often felt more than distinctly underscored), the insights that can be gained by comparing earlier combo versions of two of the pieces ("Glory" is performed by a trio on *Out Front*, "Mother and Child" by a quartet on *Hues of a Different Blue*), and the superlative performances of each member of the ensemble.

Reid is happy to second this last point, singling out several individual contributors but also heartened by the collective effort. "Charenee Wade has studied both jazz and classical music; and she can read well, which was a prerequisite. Vic Juris is indicative of what the music required—a player who can read anything and is not thrown by the rhythms. And Scott Robinson almost sounds like Stan Getz on 'Tapestry In The Sky.'

"But everyone in the band deserves credit. They were all intrigued to play my music and, in some cases, to play with each other. Almost no one else in the

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band had ever played with Herlin Riley before, for example, which added a special excitement. It was a real meeting of generations, with people like Dave Taylor who is about my age sitting next to someone like Michael Dease, who at the time had not turned 30.

“Hearing the music jump off the page with that level of understanding was an incredible experience for me, and I loved the way everyone took it to other places. You hear all of the nuances in the music, which often get lost in live performance. And there were no playbacks, because Akira, Dennis, and I trust each other. When Akira said ‘We’ve got it,’ we moved on.”

The end result speaks to both the hard work and core feeling that underlie so much of Reid’s music. “Elizabeth admitted that she didn’t know how she came upon the titles for her pieces,” he notes. “*Glory* is a great example. I thought that it was named after the feeling it evokes, but she told me it was the name of the person who sat for the sculpture. Now I have the same reaction to *Quiet Pride*, listening to the music and wondering where it all came from.” Those of us on the outside might suggest that it came from both a life lived at the highest level of creativity and an undimmed willingness to face and meet new challenges.



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