

Joelle Wallach

Long Biography

Joelle Wallach composes music for orchestra, chamber ensembles, solo voices and chorus. Infused with the vivid imagery of nature and myth, her music's intimate expressivity and persuasive emotional landscapes speak to the soul.

Much of Wallach's work is concerned with 20th and 21st century issues from perspectives beyond the strictly musical; each using conventional musical techniques and instruments to reach beyond the past into a vibrant - if at times disturbing - present. Frequently her music is the fruit of connections with colleagues and disciplines beyond music.

Wallach's early training in piano, voice, theory, bassoon and violin included study at the Juilliard Preparatory Division, and she earned bachelors and masters degrees at Sarah Lawrence College and Columbia University respectively. In 1984 the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with John Corigliano, granted her its first doctorate in composition.

Although she makes her home in New York City, where she was born, Wallach's childhood in Morocco colors her work and world view. Her interest in non-Western music is threaded subtly through her work's engaging, exotic melodies and evocative use of non-Western rhythms and scales.

Her years on the Fulbright Senior Scholars Music Panel contributed to her familiarity with creative and scholarly musical activity around the world; and her childhood in Morocco contributed to her abiding interest in cultures and worldviews beyond our own.

Since 1980 when her choral work, **On the Beach at Night Alone**, won first prize in the Inter-American Music Awards, Wallach's music has consistently won prestigious international prizes, commissions and awards.

Her **String Quartet 1995** was the American Composers Alliance nominee for the 1997 Pulitzer Prize in Music. The New York Philharmonic Ensembles premiered her octet, **From the Forest of Chimneys**, written to celebrate their 10th anniversary.

Toward a Time of Renewal, Wallach's secular oratorio for orchestra, chorus and solo voices, was commissioned by the New York Choral Society for their 150th anniversary season in Carnegie Hall. **Toward a Time of Renewal** was written in collaboration with the late American poet, Denise Levertov, and its vivid voice prophetically addresses the links between the global and interpersonal issues troubling our time.

Each of Wallach's choral works and each of her many songs represents a collaboration with poets, subjects, singers and audience. From the personal plaint of **Who is that Stranger**, crafted from the oral poetry of illiterate, anonymous women of Yemen and the

West Bank to **The Alley-Cat Love Song**'s ribald look at Wallach's pet's fantasy sex life, Wallach's dramatic, sensual imagination evokes the psyche and reflects the human (and occasionally feline) condition .

A provocative look at gender relations, **Glancing Below**, Wallach's ballet written in collaboration with British choreographer Collin Connor, was commissioned by the Carlisle Project in 1995. **Glancing Below** then entered the repertoire of the Hartford Ballet and Hartford Symphony, and was a showcase production of both the Juilliard Dance Ensemble and the Guild of Musicians for Dance.

Wallach's collaborations with dancers and choreographers began many years prior to **Glancing Below**. While still an undergraduate at Sarah Lawrence College, Wallach became involved in music for dance through Bessie Schonberg's legendary dance department, working with faculty and students such as Meredith Monk, Yuriko, Donald McKayle and Ruth Currier. After graduation, Wallach worked with dancers and choreographers at the Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor Dance Companies.

Wallach's collegial spirit, humor, imagination and tact have made her a welcome guest and resident composer at orchestras and festivals around the world, including the Billings [Montana], Hudson Valley and San Jose Symphonies, the National Orchestral Association, Piccolo Spoleto and Charles Ives Festivals, as well as the United States' National Park Service.

A pre-concert lecturer for the New York Philharmonic and a founder of her own lecture series ("Music as a Meltingpot Mosaic" and "Bridging the Sacred and the Secular Through Music") at New York's famed "92nd Street Y," Ms Wallach speaks on a broad range of musical subjects, bringing fresh insights to familiar works and opening doors to more recent ones and to those less frequently heard. Through music, her talks reach beyond the specifically musical world to a wider intellectual and aesthetic universe.

An original and engaging educator, Wallach has designed new pedagogical approaches for the Lincoln Center Institute; and created and expanded outreach programs at the Billings [Montana], Hudson Valley and San Jose Symphonies. As early as the 1980's, she integrated music into a multidisciplinary course at Hunter College (CUNY) called "Patterns of Contemporary Culture," which focused on the roles of the arts in the rich, complex, at times uncomfortably ambiguous, and increasingly global culture of our time.

When not composing, Ms Wallach reads, swims, communes with nature and close friends, and – since her husband's untimely death some years ago - lives in New York City with Jasmin, her magical cat and mini-muse.