

BENNINGTON COLLEGE MUSIC DIVISION

Presents

JULIE'S VOICES

A SOLO CONCERT BY JULIE KABAT

Wednesday
December 7, 1988

8:15 p.m.
Greenwall Music Workshop

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|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Cloud Song | Charlie Morrow |
| 2. Dream Sequence (Kenneth Rexroth) | Julie Kabat |
| 3. Invocation in Centrifugal Form | Julie Kabat |
| 4. Tapestry | Julie Kabat |
| 5. Echo Tap | Julie Kabat |

** SHORT INTERMISSION **

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| 6. Arachne | Hilary Tann |
| 7. The Idea of Order at Key West
(Wallace Stevens) | Julie Kabat |
| 8. Kalimba Alight | Julie Kabat |

This concert is a production of Concerted Effort, Inc.

ARACHNE

I. A Primer For Those Who Have Dealings With The Gods

Say first the cat is stretching in the sun,
Kneading her paws. The low sun streaks the table,
Gilds the loom, the room where work is done.
Tell plainly what you see, the stable

Household. These things are the sunlight's altars,
Unaltered and specific, splendid flecks
Of constancy. For the gods all this is neither
Here nor there. They prefer rhetoric,

The breath of force. They take nothing on faith.
Here are the slim margins they reserve
For us. We are the stage-set for their play
of metamorphosis. They are all nerve--

The sway of branches in your yard.
When they approach, a slipping knot of cunning,
Offer what you can least afford, a shard,
Some loved thing. Show what can't be undone.

II. Arachne's Boast

I was a girl when I took to this craft
Of thread entwined with thread,
Athene's gift. She taught my weft
to follow the shuttle's lead.
I learned too well for her. More deft,
Surer in skill and speed.

I no longer weave to her design
The landscape where power resides,
Our shimmering coast where the divine
Ruthlessness, like a tide,
Floods and floods. Why waste my fine
Talent to praise a lie?

I've learned to grasp the moment when
The gods' deceits are made plain,
When Zeus' eagle, bull, and swan
Are gone. See what remains:
Some tangled girl, like a thread that turns
At the selvage, turns again.

III. Athene's Song

Listen Arachne,
My old apprentice
Who would reject me,
Bold, so impatient
To be the master
That you have shirked
The simplest tasks,
Back to work.
In Circe's house
My loom is busy,
Perked ears, broad snouts
On the crew of Odysseus.
Perseus hoists
Medusa's head
Above the feast
As my shuttle speeds,
And see, those gluttons
Sit stone-still, stare
Rapt at the Gorgon's
Woven hair.
So all your habits
Of greed, desire
Are threads in the web
Of our greater hunger.
Sley the reed,
Draw the warp tighter,
My proud, my greedy
Handmaid, my spider.

IV. The Spider's Valediction

At the edge of things, I pull
A thread dyed
Like lichen, like leaves dwindling,
As mortal
In its unravellings as I know
I must be.
Athene's craft is nothing:
A tangled
Skein. Here in the warp's tension
Of drawn strands,
What is her anger to me?
She wove me
To her design: a spider.
As spider
I find the skill to render
From nothing
My minor necessity.
Who else stirs
The web's heart in the sunlit
Dew? Who spins
Substance from shadow? I am
Arachne,
Loom of the gods and the gods'
Undoing.

Jordan Smith