



Flame without End

Original pieces &
songs ranging from
**Meditations to
Maritime ballads**

Jeffrey Steele playing:
*Hasselbacher guitar; percussion;
harmonica*

Plus **assisting artists** listed
below

from the show *Gift of Vision* . . .

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|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Vessels | solo guitar |
| 2 | Soliloquy | Chris Fitzpatrick <i>tenor, choir</i> |

from the show *Clear Away: A Fisherman's Farewell* . . .

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|----|--------------------|---|
| 3 | Lovell | Dawn Pratson <i>narration</i> |
| 4 | Envy of the Seas | <i>all of those below</i> |
| 5 | Gloucester Wife | Alberta Hill <i>vocals</i> , Dawn Pratson <i>flute</i> |
| 6 | Tremolo del Viento | solo guitar |
| 7 | Fisherfolks' Reel | Patricia Doucette <i>violin</i> , Dawn Pratson <i>flute</i> |
| 8 | Baile Enojado/Vows | Alberta Hill <i>vocals</i> |
| 9 | Pas de Duex | Patricia Doucette <i>viola</i> , Dawn Pratson <i>flute</i> |
| 10 | Flame without End | Alberta Hill <i>vocals</i> , Patricia Doucette <i>viola</i> , Dawn Pratson <i>flute</i> |
| 11 | Trio | solo guitar |
| 12 | Sailing Home | George Thompson & Michael O'Leary <i>vocals</i> |

first released in 1998 . . .

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|----|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 13 | Samba de Dos Niños | solo guitar |
| 14 | Jacob's Dream | guitar with synthesizers |
| 15 | Sunset Reverie | guitar with ambience |

I have assembled this collection of pieces and songs from earlier CDs, which are no longer being issued (*Clear Away, Voice of Creation*) and added a live excerpt from *Gift of Vision*.

1-2] In January 2001, *Gift of Vision: The Life & Work of Fitz Hugh Lane* was staged in Gloucester -- the manifestation of a collaboration between choreographer Carl Thomsen, poet Maryclaire Wellinger and myself. While *Gift* has yet to see a definitive recording made of it, I offer here the piece that inspired the first dance Carl choreographed for it, along with a live recording of the Soliloquy.

3-12] *Clear Away: A Fisherman's Farewell* was developed also in collaboration with Carl, evolving from an earlier show that had been accompanied by the recordings of other artists. The show was a source of pride for the community, not only for the fine performances given by local people, but for the history that we Cape Ann residents share. (FROM WHOLE SHOW: SYNOPSIS / COMPOSER'S NOTES / PRODUCTION PHOTOS)

13-15] I have discontinued the CD for which these were recorded -- a mixture of original and classical compositions. (The latter were preserved on *From Dowland to Silvio*, which is being released at the same time as *Flame without End*). "Samba of Two Children," which brings the phrygian mode to *Bossa Nova*, originally had words in which neighborhood children ask me to take them special places. Late afternoon shafts of light descend from the clouds for Jacob's Dream: "in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." (Genesis, 28:12) The synthesizer accompaniment could be described as "an ostinato over a ground" and is intended to induce a hypnotic state. The long reverberation in "Sunset Reverie" implies the vast space between the viewer and the sun as it sets on the ocean horizon.

Envy of the Seas

Would you like to crew her? *No!*
And sail the open sea?
There'll be cod for the take,
Lots of halibut and hake,
With a fat share guaranteed.
Do you have what it takes men? *No!*
It's not all drudgery.
When you step back on land
You will fin'ly be a man
And no more be in need.
Come all ye strong and stout hand-liners,
All ye dirt-poor Maritimers.
Never have ye sailed such boats as these!
For a schooner out of Gloucester
Is the envy of the seas.

She's built just like a castle. *Hab!*
Her hull will never leak.

No seven-story wave
Is gonna take you to your grave;
Such big seas are a freak.
Yes, you'll be home for Christmas. *Right!*
Sweet carols ye shall sing.
Though it's hard to be precise
When you're packed in by the ice
Until the end of Spring.
We always give a fair percentage,
Once we've covered our expenses.
Be the one fair ladies want to please!
For a schooner out of Gloucester
Is the envy of the seas.

Would you prefer the farm life? *Yes!*
Work in a factory?
But the best that you will find
Might be slaving in a mine.
Why not ride the lone prairie?
Come learn to tie the bowline, (*Knot!*)
Know windward from the lee.
But if you're no good at swimmin',
Don't know how to talk to women,
You won't learn that at sea.
Now some, and you know who you are,
Your pay all squandered at the bar,
Come crawling back from Main St. on your knees!
For a schooner out of Gloucester
Is the envy of the seas.

So who will board this vessel? *Me!*
Music to my ears.
For the crew that sings in tune
Can tame the big typhoon
And sail for many years.
I know where the fish are (*Ho!*)
And how to clear each reef.
If you go and ask the mate
He'll say I exaggerate;
But I say he's a thief.
And once you come to know me, lad,
You'll find that I'm just like your dad.
And one point on which everyone agrees:
That a schooner out of Gloucester
Is the envy of the seas!

Gloucester Wife

Not the bird that sings outside my window,
Not the night-time canopy of stars,
Not the woolen sweater I am knitting,
Can take away this pain within my heart.
Been ten years since I taught you steps for
waltzing,
Eight years since this ring came with your kiss,
Six years since our baby's first time crying;
And never did I feel so sad as this.
*Oh yearn for me,
Return for me.
May God send the wind that brings you home.
Return for me;
I burn for thee.
How much longer can I wake alone?*

Are you keeping watch as the sun rises?
Are you eating Johnny Cakes with tea?
Or are you halfway dead and nearly frozen,
Clinging to a timber in the sea?
*Oh yearn for me,
Return for me.
May God send the wind that brings you home.
Return for me;
I burn for thee.
How much longer can I wake alone?*

Some men have an endless thirst for power.
Some men have to give their lives in war.
Some men come into this world with nothing.
Some men never have to leave the shore.

Notes from the Composer

This "Clear Away" is significantly revised from the version last performed in August '98 — which was itself appreciably expanded from the original "Heave To" production of July 1997. In the latter, Carl choreographed to recorded music, while I danced. For last year's production, I wrote music or arranged songs by others to be performed by live musicians. Now we reach the logical conclusion of this progression: a score that is (with the exception of three short traditional tunes) entirely my own. The new songs and pieces, in turn, have generated new dramatic situations.

Carl wanted to retain the title "Clear Away" (which came from a song by Maine's Gordon Bok) for the new version of the show, so I wanted to be sure those words featured in one of the new songs. Once Carl penned, "Stow down your gear, cast off the line, Clear away..." and I came up with "... from the pier, leave it behind," we had our motto. Soon a Celtic-flavored

melody and chord progression came to me which I played for Daisy Nell (who featured in the 1998 production). She suggested three images used in traditional maritime lore: the candle lit in hope of a loved one's return from sea, the dream of a loved one dressed in white signifying his having been lost, and the gulls fleeing inland warning townsfolk of a storm at sea.

The melody for "Sailing Home" was mostly lifted from a lugubrious solo guitar piece I wrote in 1977. Its bridge came from the Fisherman's Wife solo composed for the 1998 production. "On the Banks" layers the 3/4 "Sailing Home" over a 6/8 texture. The descant (soprano) line at the end sounds like a recap of the bridge to "Flame without End" but the melody actually came to me in this context first. "Sailing Home" only recently found its home following Carl's "Lovell" story — suggesting an image of the old man singing to the men of his past while also referring to the voyage of our "Clear Away" crew.

The music for "Gloucester Wife" was actually written late one evening after one of our August 1998 performances of the show. Returning from a standing ovation to the solitude of an empty home, I created the song (then titled "Peace with Thee") to keep me company. The first three chords of the verse were in conscious emulation of Andy Stewart's "Lament for the Fisherman's Wife" (as was "Fisherfolks Reel") that we had used in that production. It was easily transformed into one about a wife's longing for a fisherman's return. Later we realized that through this song the Flirt — a character much expanded since the previous show— and the Wife find their common ground.

Community and Art

"Clear Away: A Fisherman's Farewell" is by and for the Gloucester community, involving performers and supporters at many levels of skill and experience. Much like the crew on the old schooners, each of us has had an important role in the success of the voyage. Some of us have had direct experience of the losses this show commemorates, while the rest of us have only heard stories, but what we *all* have experienced in putting on this production is the most important legacy of Gloucester's past: *community*. Whether a boat returned without a man or a whole fleet of vessels went down, it was left for the community to rally its resources to ease the pain and see to the survival of those affected.

We can easily allow our pursuit of the material — or what is often today presented as "security" — to isolate us each from the other. This show has taught me more about the importance of investing in those around me — for we're all we have in the end. I thank God for bringing me a soul brother such as Carl Thomsen to collaborate with.

Clear Away: A Fisherman's Farewell is about saying goodbye and moving on. The score is dedicated to my father, Robert R. Steele, a man with close ties to the sea who lived just long enough to see the previous version of the show performed in June 1998

—Jeffry Hamilton Steele

Sailing Home

Steer her to the West, me boys.
Sheet the mainsail tight.
Keep her pointing high and
We'll make land by night.
Time to mend some nets, me boys;
Time to lay our lines;
Tie down the dories
And leave what's done behind.
*May the breeze hold us on course
And calm the seas till we fetch our port
And make her fast.*

No one works hard as you, me boys:
Brave souls, every man.
However big the fare is,
We've done the best we can.
*Once we land we'll be warm and fed
And gentle hands have made us a bed
And there we'll rest.*

The sea has been our mother, boys.
The sea has been our friend.
But much of that she gives us
She takes back again.

Flame Without End

Once, when a girl, a candle she lit
And prayed that he might ask her hand.
Now a young wife, she starts a new flame,
With a prayer well-known through the land.
And one burns for a father
And one burns for a son
And one burns for a husband and friend.
Any place you may sail
You will hear the same tale.
*How each night in the window there burns
A flame without end.*

Weary with trying... sleep comes at last,
Though little remains of the night.
And through a thick mist she makes out a form
Coming towards her dressed all in white.
And it might be a father,
It might be a son,
And it might be a husband and friend.

At the end of each stream
You hear of the same dream.
*Where at night in the window there burns
A flame without end.*

Stow down your gear.
Cast off the line.
Clear away from the pier.
Leave it behind.

Coming on dusk, the sound fills the sky;
She goes running out to the sand.
Her eyes fill with terror; for she knows what it means
When the gulls are all fleeing inland.
And one cries for a father
And one cries for a son
And one cries for a husband and friend.
In each port ‘neath the sun,
With each generation,
*Every night in the window there burns
A flame without end.*

Stow down your gear.
Cast off the line.
Clear away from the pier.
Leave it behind.

Once, when a girl, a candle she lit
And prayed that he might ask her hand...

Synopsis of the Story to “Clear Away”

ACT I

Spirits of the Sea weave their webs of beauty and danger... countless are those whose memory we honor.

The year is 1899. The place, Gloucester. A celebration begins for the fishermen who will leave on the schooner *Clear Away* in the morning on a voyage to the Grand Banks. Townsfolk gather to eat drink and dance. In doing the old pantomimes and dances, the townsfolk relieve their fears and express and renew the strength of their community. The Fisherman dallies with a conspicuously Flirtatious Woman, infuriating his Wife.

After the party, back in their home, the Fisherman and Wife confront their deepest fears as well as their deepest love.

Early the next morning, the Fisherman finds his Daughter fishing on the wharf. She fancies the flight of seagulls and dances for him the Ballet of the Air. Soon the whole town gathers to say good-bye to the Men. The Fisherman and his Wife exchange identical scarves, a token of their love and faith to be reunited upon his safe return. As the men sail away, the song and memories of their families stay with them beyond the horizon.

The women of the town return to their unending chores of maintaining house, family, and community. Their greatest fears rise to the surface as they feel the wind change.

The Flirtatious Woman is alone in her room grieving for the man who left her for the sea. She reaches out through the walls of propriety to the Wife to share her pain, but meets with rejection.

As the storm builds outside, the Elderly Widow calms her granddaughter (and herself) with a story of her long lost husband, Lovell, the girl's Grandfather, who sailed off one day long ago and was never seen again.

ACT II

The Sea Spirit is gathering energy; from the seething depths to the raging surface, she casts her long lines to catch the fates of men.

Aboard the *Clear Away*, the crew is becalmed. Tempers flare as they sense the approach of something horrible. When the gale finally hits, all hands frantically stow down their gear. As is traditional, one man is left onboard at the wheel. All others go below to ride out the storm. Against the captain's orders, the Fisherman sends his best friend below and takes the helm himself.

Back onshore, the gale rattles the windows and the nerves of those huddled inside. With her Daughter finally asleep, the Wife lights a candle in the window for her husband and tries not to think about what he is going through. Outwardly she must keep herself calm, but the Inner Woman is raging with fear and anger.

At sea, the Fisherman struggles against the gale to keep the ship on course and his mind focused on his task - survival. The wind suddenly rips the scarf from his hands and casts it into the waters. Struggling against the gale outside him and the close-coiled tightening of his fear, he barely notices the sudden rise of a huge dark mountain of water...and then, silence.

Onshore, his Wife awakes from one nightmare into another. The candle has gone out. Knowing in her gut what has happened hundreds of watery miles away, she collapses. The Inner Woman comes like an angel to comfort her.

The men return from their voyage. Impeccability and discipline are all they have to stave off their grief. The townspeople greet them and learn the news of their loss. The Wife and Daughter are the last to learn. Her grief and rage are unutterable. She has lost her emotional mooring and begins to descend into a mad grief. The Elderly Widow reminds her that the sea gives much, but is also takes much in return. Fisher-folk all live in this circle of giving

and taking with the sea. It is a terrible bargain, but it is also our strength and our bond with each other. She be must be strong now and raise her daughter.

Mother and Daughter re-unite and gather with the Elderly Widow along the shore. One last task remains: that of forgiveness. The Wife must face the Flirtatious Woman, and in their shared loss they find common ground.

The glacial mountain of grief begins to melt. The townspeople weave the fabric of their community back together as they have done so many times before, and bid those lost a final farewell.

-- *Carl Thomsen*.



Thom Nola-Rion.