

Heidi Breyer - Long Bio (870 Words)

Heidi Breyer was born in the UK in 1969 and attended the Arts Educational School in Hertfordshire where along with her academic studies, she received a multi-disciplinary arts immersion that included ballet, modern, jazz and national dance, drama and intensive musical training in piano, violin, theory, harmony, general musicianship, voice and ear training.

She continued her focus at Leeds College of Music during high school years and went on to Trinity College of Music in London, earning an Honors degree (Graduate of Trinity College, London, GTCL) in Music History with a Licentiate of Trinity College in Piano. Her piano professors, were Eva Bernatova and Anthony Lindsay who studied with the great Arturo Benedetti Michaelangeli.

At the time of her graduation, Antony Lindsay advised Heidi that in order to manifest the breadth of her talent she should experience the true grit of life...and indeed, that is what Breyer did, turning away from playing any type of music for 15 years and unaware that she was starving herself of her most intuitive proficiency. Heidi built a formative career in publishing as a product marketing manager for RR Donnelley and Sons, both in the UK and subsequently over in the US and in 1996, in the unfamiliar geography of Ohio, she married Jack Angier and had two beautiful children who became her reason for being.

With Jack working away 5 days a week and Heidi alone with both children under 3, their marriage came under strain and in 2007 they separated. The children remained with Heidi and during this difficult period she began to approach the piano again, making its acquaintance through simple pieces by her favorite masters: Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Debussy and Ravel. However, it was in 2008 that realist oil painter, Alexander Volkov collaborated with Breyer on a project that unlocked the artistic valve, re-accessing her musical creativity.

Alexander, at the time a local neighbor had asked Heidi to record some Chopin to accompany footage of the making of a painting called Nobody's Gold. Heidi asked if she could write a piece of music instead and what followed in the next decade was a string of six albums.

In 2009, Heidi produced her own Christmas Album called Winter Light and sent it to Will Ackerman, the Founder of Windham Hill Records and at the time, Alexander's favorite painting music. Ackerman called three weeks later and along with Corin Nelsen as engineer, she recorded her 2010 debut award winning studio album, Another Place and Time, a set of piano-instrumental tone-poem duets. In 2012 Corin Nelsen produced Breyer's multi award winning collection "Beyond The Turning" which to date contains two of her best-selling pieces. The following year Heidi opened the first live show for the Zone Music Reporter Awards and that same year had two songs featured on the Grammy Nominated spoken word album, "The Storm King", an auto-biographical narration of the late Pete Seeger, produced again by Nelsen and producer Jeff Haynes. In 2015 Heidi wrote and produced "Letters From Far Away" with Will Ackerman and Tom Eaton, a dedication to her parent's story, who wrote letters for years and eventually found their way to each other...

By 2018 Heidi and Alexander, had been living together for 10 years and married a year. Heidi had come to know and love deeply Alexander's art which culminated in the multi award winning collection, "Moonlight In Empty Rooms". Each of the 12 piano and violin pieces were written in response to a corresponding painting by Alexander. On this album she is accompanied solely by violinist, Charlie Bisharat.

During the intensely creative years of 2008 to present (2021) Breyer and Volkov dug deep into their art forms but it was in 2012, alarmed by the world in which her children were fast becoming young adults, that Breyer began to channel her observations; she perceived a world in which everyone, in some capacity seemed to be struggling or re-engineering themselves for survival. Media portrayals of the migration of refugees from war torn areas, mass shootings, domestic violence and other forms of oppression, racial brutality, dissent of human rights. There seemed to be turmoil everywhere and in Breyer's music her compassion for humanity poured forth, which emphasized the grace and dignity of people during these times of adversity.

A decade later, this repeated cycle of absorption and creation resulted in a Requiem. "Amor Aeternus, A Requiem For The Common Man".

Of this music, Heidi writes:

"This is a tribute to the strength of the human spirit, as well as the mourning of the loss of a simple life. Whatever you contribute during a performance of this work, it should emanate from your core, no matter the sound of broken sustained notes, dynamic demands and general stamina required for this hour of music...just sing out from your heart in a moment of gratitude, while we continue to endure so much. We must begin to listen to one another, have patience and bring whatever abilities we all have to the collective table so we can survive this moment in history and surrender to a better future. We are living through a pivotal time and this work along with an abundance of other music, can help carry the weight."