

# Joan Tower Biography and Works



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Joan Tower is widely regarded as one of the most important American composers living today. During a career spanning more than 50 years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. Her works have been commissioned by major ensembles, soloists, and orchestras, including the Emerson, Tokyo, and Muir quartets; soloists Evelyn Glennie, Carol Wincenc, David Shifrin, and John Browning; and the orchestras of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Washington DC among others.

In 1990, Tower became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for *Silver Ladders*. She was the first composer chosen for a Ford Made in America consortium commission of sixty-five orchestras. The Nashville Symphony and conductor Leonard Slatkin recorded that work, *Made in America*, with *Tambor* and *Concerto for Orchestra* for the Naxos label. The top-selling recording won three 2008 Grammy awards: Best Classical Contemporary Composition, Best Classical Album, and Best Orchestral Performance.

From 1969 to 1984, she was pianist and founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players, which commissioned and premiered many of her most popular works. Her first orchestral work, *Sequoia*, quickly entered the repertory. Tower's tremendously popular five *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* have been played by over 500 different ensembles. She is currently Asher Edelman Professor of Music at Bard College, where she has taught since 1972.

Her composer-residencies with orchestras and festivals include a decade with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year for their 2010-2011 season, as well as the St. Louis Symphony, the Deer Valley Music Festival, and the Yale/Norfolk Chamber Music Festival.

Among her recent premieres: *White Water* (2012), commissioned by Chamber Music Monterey Bay and premiered by the Daedalus Quartet; *Stroke* (2011), commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; *White Granite* (2009), com-

missioned by St. Timothy's Summer Music Festival, Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, and La Jolla Music Society for SummerFest; *Angels* (2008), her fourth string quartet, commissioned by Music for Angel Fire and premiered by the Miami String Quartet; *Dumbarton Quintet* (2008), a piano quintet commissioned by the Dumbarton Oaks Estate (their third commission after Stravinsky and Copland) and premiered by Tower and the Enso String Quartet; *Chamber Dance* (2006), commissioned, premiered, and toured by Orpheus; and *Copperwave* (2006), written for the American Brass Quintet and commissioned by The Juilliard School of Music. *A Gift* (2007), for winds and piano, was commissioned by Chamber Music Northwest and premiered by the The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS). Other CMS premieres included *Trio Cavany* (2007) and *Simply Purple* (2008) for viola, performed by Paul Neubauer.

Her compositions cross many genres: *Can I* (2007) for youth chorus and percussionist; *Copperwave* (2006), written for brass quintet; *DNA* (2003), a percussion quintet commissioned for Frank Epstein and the New England Conservatory Percussion Ensemble; *Fascinating Ribbons* (2001), her foray into the world of band music, premiered at the annual conference of College Band Directors; *Vast Antique Cubes/Throbbing Still* (2000), a solo piano piece for John Browning; *Tambor* (1998), for the Pittsburgh Symphony under the baton of Mariss Jansons; and her ballet *Stepping Stones* (1993), commissioned by choreographer Kathryn Posin for the Milwaukee Ballet and revisited by Posin with the Bulgarian Ballet in June 2011.

Joan Tower's music is published by Associated Music Publishers.

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## Dance

**Stepping Stones** (1993) 25'  
2(pic).2.2.2/4.2.2.0/2perc/hp.pf(CEL)/str  
Alt: 2pf  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50482102 for sale*

## Orchestra

**Chamber Dance** (2006) 16'  
2(pic).2.2.2/2.2.0.0/timp.perc./str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Concerto for Orchestra** (1991) 30'  
3(pic).2+ca.3(Ebcl+bcl).3(cbn)/4331/timp.3perc/  
hp.pf/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Duets** (1994) 19'  
2.2.2.2/2.2.0.0/timp.perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**For the Uncommon Woman** (1992) 5'  
2(pic).2.2.2/4.3.3.1/timp.3perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**In Memory (string orchestra)** (2002) 12'  
str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Island Rhythms** (1985) 8'  
2(pic).2.2.2/2.2.0+btbn.1/timp.2perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**The Last Dance** (2000) 14'  
2(pic).2.2.2/2.2.0+btbn.0/timp.2perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Made in America** (2004) 13' 30"  
2(2pic).2.2.2/2.2.1.0/timp.1perc[2perc]/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Paganini Trills** (1996) 2'  
2.2.2.2/2.2.2.0/2perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Sequoia** (1981) 16'  
2(2pic).2.2.2/4.2.2+btbn.1/5perc/hp.pf(CEL)/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score 50481429 for sale*

**Silver Ladders** (1986) 23'  
2+pic.2+ca.2+bcl.2+cbn/4.3.2+btbn.1/timp.4perc/  
hp.pf[=cel]/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score 50481139 for sale*

**Stroke** (2010) 21'  
3(pic).2.3.2/4.3.3(btbn).1/timp.3perc/pf/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Tambor** (1998) 15'  
2(pic).2.2(bcl).2/432+btbn.1/timp.4perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

## Soloist(s) and Orchestra

**Concerto for Clarinet** (1988) 19'  
Solo: Clarinet or Basset clarinet  
2(pic).2.2.2/4.2.1+btbn.1/timp.2perc/hp.pf(CEL)/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50481392 for sale*

**Concerto for Flute** (1989) 15'  
Solo: Flute  
1(pic).1.1(bcl).1/0.1.btbn.0/2perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50481393 for sale*

**Concerto for Piano (Homage to Beethoven)** (1985) 21'  
Solo: Piano  
2(pic).1.2(bcl).1/2.2.0+btbn.0/2perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50480241 for sale*

**Concerto for Violin** (1991) 19'  
Solo: Violin  
2.2.2.2/2.2.1.0/timp.2perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50482283 for sale*

**Island Prelude (oboe and string orchestra)** (1989) 10'  
Solo: Oboe  
str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Music for Cello and Orchestra** (1984) 19'  
Solo: Cello  
2(pic).2.2.2/2.2.0+btbn.0/timp.2perc/hp/str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50481384 for sale*

**Purple Rhapsody** (2005) 17'  
Solo: Viola  
2(pic).0.2(bcl).2/0.2.0+btbn.0/timp.perc./str  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Reduced Score 50486854 for sale*

## Work List

# Joan Tower

**Rapids (Piano Concerto No. 2)** (1996) 15'  
Solo: Piano  
2.2.2.2/2.2.1.0/timp.perc/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

**Strike Zones** (2001) 20'  
Solo: Percussion  
2(2pic).2.2.2/4.3.3.0/timp.2perc/pf(cel)/str  
*Performance materials on rental*

## Works for Band/Wind/Brass Ensemble

**Celebration Fanfare (from "Stepping Stones,"  
for concert band)** (1993) 4'  
arr. by Jack Stamp,  
2+pic.2.3+Ebcl+bcl.2asx+tsx+barsx.2/4.3.4.1+euph/  
timp.4perc/syn  
*Score 50482981 for sale*  
*Score and Part(s) 50482654 for sale*

**Fascinating Ribbons** (2001) 6'  
4+pic.2+ca.3+Ebcl+bcl.ssx+asx+tsx+barsx.2+cbn/  
4.4.4.3+btbn.2/timp.4perc/pf  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score and Part(s) 50485419 for sale*  
*Full Score 50485420 for sale*

## Large Ensemble (7 or more players)

**Black Topaz** (1976) 12'  
Solo: Piano  
fl, cl(bcl),tpt, tbn, 2 perc  
*Score and Part(s) 50483404 for sale*

**Celebration Fanfare (from "Stepping Stones,"  
for brass and percussion)** (1993) 4'  
arr. by Daniel Forlano,  
0.0.0.0/4.3.3.1/timp.2perc  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score 50482733 for sale*

**Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman** (1986) 3'  
0.0.0.0/4.3.2+btbn.1/timp.2perc  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score 50482733 for sale*

**Second Fanfare for the  
Uncommon Woman** (1989) 5'  
0.0.0.0/4.3.3.1/timp.3perc  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score 50482733 for sale*

**Third Fanfare  
for the Uncommon Woman** (1991) 6'  
two brass quintets (2hn, 4tpt, 2tbn, 2tba)  
*Performance materials on rental*  
*Score 50482733 for sale*

## Works for 2-6 Players

**Amazon I** (1977) 13'  
fl, cl, vn, vc, pf  
*Score and Part(s) 50481978 for sale*

**And ...They're Off** (1997) 3'  
vn, vc, pf  
*Performance materials sold by Rental Library*

**Angels (String Quartet No. 4)** (2008)  
2vn, va, vc  
*Performance materials sold by Rental Library*

**Big Sky** (2000) 7'  
vn, vc, pf  
*Score and Part(s) 50485740 for sale*

**Breakfast Rhythms I and II** (1974-1975) 15'  
Solo: Clarinet  
fl(pic), vn, vc, pf, perc  
*Score 50239060 for sale*

**Catching a Wave** (2012) 8'  
vc, pf

**Copperwave** (2006) 12'  
hn, 2tpt, tbn, btbn  
*Score and Part(s) 50486855 for sale*

**DNA** (2003) 9'  
5perc  
*Score and Part(s) 50485617 for sale*

**Dumbarton Quintet** (2008) 14'  
2vn, va, vc, pf  
*Performance materials sold by Rental Library*

**Elegy** (1993) 5'  
Solo: Trombone  
2vn, va, vc  
*This work is currently unavailable*

**Fanfares**  
*Score 50482733 for sale*

**Fanfare for the  
Uncommon Woman (No. 5)** (1993) 4'  
4tpt  
*Score and Part(s) 50483002 for sale*

<b>Fantasy...Harbor Lights</b> (1983) cl, pf <i>Score and Part(s) 50488796 for sale</i>	14'	<b>Toccanta</b> (1997) ob, hpd <i>This work is currently unavailable</i>	6'
<b>For Daniel</b> (2004) vn, vc, pf <i>Score and Part(s) 50486358 for sale</i>	17'	<b>Tres Lent (Homage a Messiaen)</b> (1994) vc, pf <i>Score and Part(s) 50482270 for sale</i>	8'
<b>A Gift</b> (2007) fl(pic), cl, bn, hn, pf <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	20'	<b>Trio Cavany</b> (2007) vn, vc, pf <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	20'
<b>Island Prelude (oboe and string quartet)</b> (1989) Solo: Oboe 2vn, va, vc, [opt db] <i>Score and Part(s) 50486404 for sale</i>	10'	<b>Turning Points</b> (1995) cl, 2vn, va, vc <i>Score and Part(s) 50482943 for sale</i>	16'
<b>A Little Gift</b> (2006) fl, cl <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	2'	<b>White Granite</b> (2010) vn, va, vc, pf <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	17'
<b>In Memory (string quartet)</b> (2002) 2vn, va, vc <i>Score and Part(s) 50485849 for sale</i>	12'	<b>White Water</b> (2011) <i>Available for performances after October 2013</i> 2vn, va, vc	20'
<b>Incandescent</b> (2003) 2vn, va, vc <i>Score and Part(s) 50486703 for sale</i>	18'	<b>Solo Works (excluding keyboard)</b>	
<b>Island Prelude (wind quintet)</b> (1989) Solo: Oboe fl, cl, hn, bn <i>Score and Part(s) 50481405 for sale</i>	10'	<b>Clocks</b> (1985) gtr <i>Score 50488702 for sale</i>	9'
<b>Night Fields</b> (1994) 2vn, va, vc <i>Score and Part(s) 50482602 for sale</i>	15'	<b>For Marianne</b> (2010) fl <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	6'
<b>Noon Dance</b> (1982) fl(afl,pic), cl, perc, pf, vn, vc <i>Score and Part(s) 50482591 for sale</i> <i>Score 50507810 for sale</i>	17'	<b>Platinum Spirals</b> (1976) vn <i>Score 50228190 for sale</i>	7'
<b>Petroushskates</b> (1980) fl, cl, vn, vc, pf <i>Score and Part(s) 50236480 for sale</i>	5'	<b>Simply Purple</b> (2008) va <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	3'
<b>Rain Waves</b> (1997) vn, cl, pf <i>Score and Part(s) 50483609 for sale</i>	13'	<b>String Force</b> (2010) vn <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	7'
<b>Rising</b> (2009) fl, 2vn, va, vc <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	15' 30"	<b>Valentine Trills</b> (1996) <i>Published in the collection Carol Wincenc Valentines, Carl Fischer (05430)</i> fl	2'
<b>Snow Dreams</b> (1983) fl, gtr <i>Score 50507800 for sale</i>	9'	<b>Wild Purple</b> (1998) va <i>Score 50483608 for sale</i>	6'

**Wings** (1981) 9'  
cl  
Alt: bcl  
*Score 50228170 for sale*

**Wings** (1981/92) 9'  
asx  
*Score 50482095 for sale*

## Solo Keyboard(s)

**Ascent** (1996) 6'  
org  
*Score 50483225 for sale*

**Holding a Daisy** (1996) 4'  
pf  
*Folio 50482931 for sale*

**Ivory and Ebony** (2009) 8'  
pf  
*Performance materials sold by Rental Library*

**No Longer Very Clear** 17'  
pf  
*Folio 50482931 for sale*

**Or Like a...an Engine** (1994) 3'  
pf  
*Full Score 50482931 for sale*

**Stepping Stones (for two pianos)** (1993) 25'  
2pf  
*Score 50482102 for sale*

**Steps** (2011) 6'  
pf  
*Performance materials sold by Rental Library*

**Vast Antique Cubes/Throbbing Still** (2000) 10'  
pf  
*Folio 50482931 for sale*

## Chorus a cappella / Chorus plus 1 instrument

**Can I** (2007) 5'  
Text: (English) the composer  
Chorus: SSAA choir  
perc

**Descent** (2012)  
chorus  
*This work is currently unavailable*

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