

Interview with Dr. Tyree Mason and Catori Maasaw on *Marvelous Canna: A Serenade in Music Theory*

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Interview Conducted by Catori Maasaw

Marvelous Canna

A Serenade In Music Theory



Catori Maasaw: Dr. Mason, thank you for joining me today to discuss your latest work, *Marvelous Canna: A Serenade in Music Theory*. This piece is quite a departure from your usual works. What inspired you to create a serenade that intertwines the natural world with music theory?

Dr. Tyree Mason: Thank you, Catori. It's a pleasure to speak about this project. The inspiration came from observing the cycles of nature—how a single flower can symbolize the interconnectedness of all things, from birth to death and back again. I've always believed in the power of music to communicate complex ideas and emotions, and *Marvelous Canna* was born from that. The Serenade's structure mirrors the life of a flower, which begins with awakening, grows into something vibrant, and eventually fades, only to return again in an eternal cycle. It's an exploration of these natural rhythms through the language of music.

Catori Maasaw: The structure of the piece is fascinating. Each movement captures a different phase of the flower's life, from "Awakening Roots" to "Extended Light" and the energetic finale, "A Return to the Earth." How did you approach representing these natural transitions musically?

Dr. Tyree Mason: Each movement had to feel organic, much like the flower's transformation. For instance, in *Awakening Roots*, I used softer, grounding instruments to create a slow, deliberate rise from the earth. The piano and marimba play an essential role here, emphasizing the subtle pulse of the earth. As we move to the more energetic "Rise to the Light," the music shifts, mirroring the flower reaching for the sun, with faster, more vibrant rhythms. The final movement, *A Return to the Earth*, is where everything culminates in an upbeat tempo, symbolizing the vitality of renewal. The instruments themselves—piano, marimba, guitar, and flute—were chosen to represent both the earth and the air, grounding the listener while also lifting them into new sonic territories.

Catori Maasaw: The use of earth-toned instruments is especially interesting. Why did you choose these specific instruments to represent the life cycle of a flower?

Dr. Tyree Mason: I wanted the instruments to reflect the very essence of the earth and the natural world. The marimba's deep resonance evokes the soil, while the flute's airy qualities symbolize the wind, light, and space in which the flower thrives. The piano, with its range and ability to convey both groundedness and ethereal qualities, serves as the backbone of the piece, weaving together the movements. The guitar adds rhythmic textures and represents the fleeting nature of time—how each moment passes, only to lead to the next. Each instrument is part of the same symbiotic system, just like the natural world.

Catori Maasaw: The ritualistic, almost druidic quality of the music really shines through in the program notes and opening poem. Was there a particular tradition or philosophy that guided you in this direction?

Dr. Tyree Mason: Yes, I drew upon ancient druidic and natural philosophies—particularly the belief in the sacredness of the earth and the cyclical nature of life. In many cultures, flowers and plants are seen as symbols of transformation, wisdom, and continuity. The ritualistic quality of the music serves to honor that sacred cycle. The poem and the music are meant to evoke a sense of timelessness, connecting the listener not just to the piece itself, but to something greater: the eternal rhythm of the earth.

Catori Maasaw: As always, your work seems to push the boundaries of what music can express. What do you hope listeners take away from *Marvelous Canna*?

Dr. Tyree Mason: I hope listeners walk away with a deeper sense of connection to the world around them, understanding that life, like the flower, is a cycle. There is beauty in every stage, whether it's the quiet beginning, the vibrant middle, or the fading into the unknown. Through this serenade, I want to convey that change is both inevitable and beautiful—each phase serves its purpose, and nothing is truly lost. It's a celebration of resilience, adaptability, and the transformative power of nature.

Catori Maasaw: Well said. Dr. Mason, thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts on *Marvelous Canna: A Serenade in Music Theory*. I know that listeners will be deeply moved by this piece.

Dr. Tyree Mason: Thank you, Catori. It's been a pleasure. I'm excited for everyone to experience the *Serenade*.

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