



## Best of Bassett: Chamberworks

Compositions by Leslie and Anita Bassett  
Performed by artists of Ann Arbor Alumni

Upon listening to *Best of Bassett: Chamberworks*, you will discover creations from two brilliant musical minds who were husband and wife. Thanks to the Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation's Helen Haupt award, the *Ann Arbor Alumni* chapter has brought this special tribute to life. With four vocal/piano settings, an unaccompanied oboe piece, and a work for three flutes, there is a wide range of styles and timbres in this interesting CD of approximately 32 minutes.

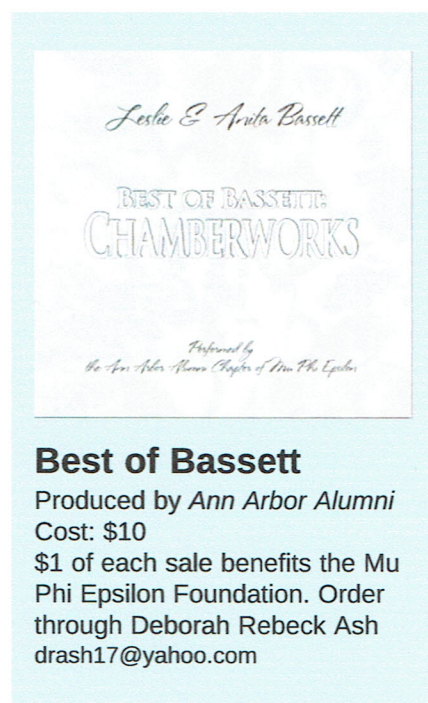
The late **Anita Bassett** (*Gamma, Ann Arbor Alumni*; see Final Notes, this issue), artist, composer and pianist, welcomes us to the CD with two of her songs, "Now Dreary Dawns the Eastern Light" (text: A.E. Housman) and "Transforming Love" (text: Glace De Conde). Soprano **Dianna Dumpel Hochella** (*Alpha Zeta*) demonstrates excellent diction and rich sonorities amidst moments of modern harmonic centers that emphasize the message within. What could be better than to have the composer (a pupil of Nadia Boulanger) at the piano to ensure sensitive partnership and perfect musical conception?

Works of **Leslie Bassett** (*Ann Arbor Alumni Patron*) complete the recording. The late University of Michigan Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer had a World War II army band background. Thus, as you experience **Susan Owen-Bissiri** (*Lambda*) negotiating leaps and jumps across her oboe's register with great panache in the unaccompanied "Song of Aulos," it

is clear that the composer is well-versed in the possibilities of the instrument. Abundant trills, interesting close harmonic intervals, and short melodic figures keep the listener engaged.

"The Three Graces" for three flutes is a rich landscape of colors, performed by **Deborah Rebeck Ash** (*Gamma Omicron*), **Glenn Metz Stout** (*Phi Pi*), and **Susan Whitener** (*Gamma Omicron*). The resulting effects of interacting harmonies, rhythms, dynamics, trills and tremolos combine wonderfully, culminating in a forceful crescendo in the first movement. The influence of the Second Viennese School and the 12-tone effect are apparent in the third movement; close timbre and harmony contrast with melodic line, and spirited urgency is demonstrated in technical flutter tongue and low tones.

"Two Stephens Songs" on texts by James Stevens, ably sung by mezzo-soprano **Lori Gould** (*Gamma*) with **Fayola Ash** (*Gamma*) at the piano, begin with effective spoken word in "The Shell," a picturesque text treatment revealing dark content and a feeling of finality. Melodic motion and a multitude of piano effects speak the sophisticated language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In "The Lion," masterfully set to reflect the text, piano punctuation mimics the magnificent beast's heavy footsteps in low basso register. We are then taken on a musical adventure, first ominous, then hopeful, as the singer ultimately offers friendship: "I dare my fear and call the Lion out to lick my hand." A delight!



### Best of Bassett

Produced by Ann Arbor Alumni  
Cost: \$10

\$1 of each sale benefits the Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation. Order through Deborah Rebeck Ash  
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