



APL98210

PRESS CONTACT:
Geoffrey Silver: 646-320-8425
geoffrey.silver@acisproductions.com

“...I am struck, as in recent years, by how much the small independent labels...have been breaking through with exciting recordings.”

ANTHONY TOMMASINI, *The New York Times*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 3, 2020 NEW YORK, NEW YORK: RELEASE OF
APPALACHIAN STORIES ON DIGITAL EP**

FOUR TIMELESS FOLK SONGS, ARRANGED BY DAVID CHASE, WITH RISING-STAR,
VIOLINIST TESSA LARK AND ESSENTIAL VOICES USA, CONDUCTED BY JUDITH
CLURMAN—ON ACIS.
APL98210 | 22:33 | DDD

APPALACHIAN FOLK MUSIC is still heard in western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Western North Carolina, Tennessee and Eastern Kentucky; it’s a tradition influenced by English, Irish, and Scottish ballads of the 18th and 19th centuries, one constantly reinterpreted through improvisation. The lyrics tell stories of love found and fortunes lost, and the songs have greatly influenced country, bluegrass and other American folk traditions in decades since. The “fiddle,” the violin, often accompanies these pieces with some percussion, a dulcimer, or banjo, and the singing is hearty! Today we add to that rich heritage.

David Chase, who grew up in West Virginia knowing these songs, was commissioned by **Judith Clurman** to arrange some of this treasury of song for mixed chorus and violin. He combined the Appalachian folk traditions together with rich stylistic elements of Sacred Harp singing. Chorus + violin is a vibrant combination, as can be seen on the session video and also the YouTube full album preview.

The cycle, *Appalachian Stories*, has four movements: I **This Old Hammer** (5’33”), II **Pretty Saro** (4’45”), III **Down In A Coalmine** (7’47”), IV **Who Will Come and Go With Me** (4’29”)

Award-winning violinist **Tessa Lark** joined **Judith Clurman’s Essential Voices USA** for the premiere performance and recording of the work in the Spring of 2019, at the Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City. Tessa Lark, grew up in Kentucky, steeped in the traditions of this musical genre. On the album, she pays homage to the old Appalachian fiddlers and improvises between the songs.

Conductor Judith Clurman says, “What a great collaboration! I loved working on this project with David and Tessa. My Essential Voices USA sang, clapped, and stomped and enjoyed making music with Tessa Lark.”

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Judith Clurman’s **Essential Voices USA (EVUSA)** is one of New York’s preeminent choral ensembles. EVUSA performs in many of the city’s iconic venues and events and records and premieres works by America’s finest composers and lyricists. Regularly on stage with the New York Pops in its Carnegie Hall subscription series, televised on NBC’s July 4th Macy’s 2014 Spectacular Fireworks and the Rockefeller Center Tree Lighting, the ensemble comprises a talented roster of seasoned professionals and auditioned volunteers, dynamically fitted to the unique needs of each project. EVUSA has produced *The Composer Speaks* at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, participated in the 2013 Presidential Inaugural activities, performed in Lincoln Center programs, and has held a month-long residency at National Public Radio. The ensemble has performed with a diverse and impressive array of artists. Their first album on Acis was released last year, *Rejoice: Honoring the Jewish Spirit*.
www.essentialvoicesusa.com

JUDITH CLURMAN is an EMMY™- (2X) and GRAMMY™-nominated musician. She currently conducts **Essential Voices USA**, and the Singing Tree Float in the **Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade**. She teaches solo voice and ensemble singing on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, and directs The Choral Initiative Project, for composition students, at The Juilliard School. Judith has conducted over commissions from over 60 American composers and has collaborated with the world's major symphony orchestras. She has served as Director of Choral Activities at The Juilliard School from 1989-2007, has been a visiting artist/teacher at University of Cambridge, Harvard University, and Curtis Institute of Music, and was the vocal/choral faculty specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts/Columbia University Institute of Classical. Her music and arrangements are published by Hal Leonard, Schott and G. Schirmer, and have been performed by the Detroit, Houston, National, and Toronto Symphonies, the New York Pops and the Boston Pops.

www.judithclurman.com

DAVID CHASE has been Music Director, Music Supervisor and/or Arranger for over 35 Broadway musicals, as well as for numerous productions in London's West End. He continues his longstanding associations with the Boston Pops, Radio City, and the Kennedy Center Honors, and has written and arranged numerous choral works that have been recorded by Judith Clurman's Essential Voices USA and published by Hal Leonard (He is a regular guest conductor at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, having led acclaimed productions of *Carousel*, *The King and I*, and *My Fair Lady*. As Music Director and Arranger for NBC's *The Sound of Music Live!* and *Peter Pan Live!*, he was at the forefront of bringing live musicals back to television, and received EMMY nominations for Outstanding Musical Direction for both programs. Other TV includes arrangements and orchestrations for *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*. He received a GRAMMY™ nomination for his work on the album of the Broadway musical *Nice Work If You Can Get It*. His degree from Harvard University is in biology.

TESSA LARK, a recently GRAMMY™-nominated artist, is the recipient of a 2018 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Silver Medalist in the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, and winner of the 2012 Naumburg International Violin Competition. Since making her concerto debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at sixteen, Ms. Lark has appeared with dozens of orchestras, festivals, and recital venues including Carnegie Hall, Ravinia, San Francisco Performances, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Buffalo Philharmonic, and Marlboro Music. Scheduled for May 2020 is a Lincoln Center recital debut on its prestigious Great Performers Series. Ms. Lark is a graduate of New England Conservatory with an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School. She plays a ca. 1600 G.P. Maggini violin on loan from an anonymous donor through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

www.tessalark.com

ACIS: Named after Handel's opera, *Acis and Galatea*, **Acis** is a critically acclaimed boutique label with a roster that boasts both emerging and GRAMMY™-nominated classical artists. Specializing in early music; living composers; choral, vocal, and organ, Acis has received praise for capturing their artists with all the energy and flair of a live performance. Acis was founded a decade ago by record producer and conductor **GEOFFREY SILVER**, who hails from the UK and was previously chorus master of the GRAMMY™-winning WASHINGTON CHORUS. The album was produced and engineered by multiple GRAMMY™-award nominee engineer, **SILAS BROWN**. **www.acisproductions.com**

DOWNLOAD AND STREAM: <https://essentialvoicesusa.hearnow.com>

SESSION VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/acisproductions/>

PRINTABLE COVERS, NOTES, LYRICS: <https://acisproductions.com/appalachian-stories-evusa/>

PRESS LINK TO FULL AUDIO: <https://bit.ly/2ZAVflb>

\\ENDS