

LANCASTER
COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE **ARTS**
presents

SOUNDTRACK

A solo exhibition of art by
Gina Noelle Ash



November 6th — December 31st, 2023
Historic Springs House Gallery
201 W. Gay Street
Lancaster, SC 29720

The works of art I create usually begin as my response to a piece of literature, or—most often—music. The lyrics or the melody will get stuck in my mind, and I'll listen to the same song over and over and over again. The image I want to convey takes shape and nests inside my brain. Sometimes the nesting phase is quite long, but once I begin painting, everything moves quickly and with assurance for me. The resulting artwork is not a literal depiction of the song that inspired it. Rather, it is my attempt to capture the mood and message that the song evoked for me, so it is extremely personal.

"Soundtrack" is a collection of many of my paintings that followed this path from musical inspiration to artistic expression. If the connection between the music and the art doesn't seem clear, just listen to the song while you look at the painting... and you may begin to see the intention.

The exhibit also features some traditional paintings, such as flowers and landscapes. However, even when I paint traditional subjects, there was usually a song or allegory or poem that inspired the work. Because of this, at heart I think of myself as an illustrator.

THORN TREE IN THE GARDEN



SONG:
THORN
TREE IN THE
GARDEN
(ERIC
CLAPTON)

*And if I never
see her face
again, I'll never hold her hand • And
if she's in somebody's arms, I know I'll
understand • But I miss that girl*

Every viewer needs to decide for
themselves—whether the woman is a
prisoner awaiting rescue... or is she the
siren luring someone to their fate?

FAREWELL, WEE GHOSTIE



SONGS: THE CRISIS (ENNIO
MORRICONE) (INSTRUMENTAL)

HEARTBREAKING (ANGELO
BADALAMENTI) (INSTRUMENTAL)

When the bees go, we go. We are in a
crisis and the carelessness of the human
race is... heartbreaking.

WHAT I RELINQUISHED



SONG: FIX YOU
(COLDPLAY)

*When the tears
come streaming
down your face •
When you lose
something you
can't replace*

When you survive cancer, there is great
joy in surviving. There are also losses
that you've experienced. Parts of you are
gone. Some come back and some never
will. This is the new reality to which
you have to reconcile yourself.



GRIEF

SONGS: ELEGIA (NEW ORDER)
MY IMMORTAL (EVANESCENCE)

*I've tried so hard to tell myself that you're
gone • But though you're still with me •
I've been alone, I'm alone*

Grief is a cold that makes your heart
feel like it's turned to stone.

UNREQUITED

A THOUSAND YEARS (STING)

*Then following this single point, this
single flame • The single haunted
memory of your face*

The cemetery angel in this painting is
from Highgate Cemetery, in London.

'NEVER' BELONGS TO GOD



SONG: ALL
THAT YOU
HAVE IS
YOUR SOUL
(TRACY
CHAPMAN)

*Hunger only
for a taste of
justice • Hunger only for a world of truth
• 'Cause all that you have is your soul*

Elizabeth, my friend and model for this
painting (and also
for *Remembering Kayura*), was an
extraordinary force for change in the
world. She regularly returned to her
native Liberia to help provide water
resources to struggling villages. Water
was, for her, a symbol of life. She died
very suddenly, and very unexpectedly,
from breast cancer in 2016. I would
have never thought she would die
so young, but as she told me, "You
should not say 'never.' Never belongs to
God." Every time I listen to this Tracy
Chapman song, I feel Liz's selfless spirit.



SHAME

SONG: KNIGHT MOVES (SUZANNE
VEGA)

*Watch while the queen, with one false
move • Turns herself into a pawn*

Sometimes we are our own worst
enemy, making the shame and regret
even more painful. The chess game has
been lost, and the rose has rusted.

FORGIVENESS

SONG: ALL I KNOW (ART GARFUNKEL)

*I bruise you, you bruise me • We both
bruise too easily • Too easily to let it
show • I love you and that's all I know*

I wanted to paint the most beautiful
scene I could imagine, because
forgiveness is the most beautiful—yet
difficult—gift imaginable.

WHAT REMAINS



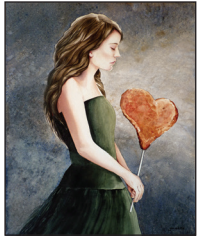
SONG: YOU WILL
BE MY AIN TRUE
LOVE (STING &
ALISON KRAUSS)

*The cannon balls fly
'round my head •
The infirmiry man
may count me dead
• I've gone to*

find my ain true love

Painted for the Civil War's
sesquicentennial. This song, from
the movie *Cold Mountain*, perfectly
captured the mood of my ghostly
soldier, whose spirit is what remains.

MY RUSTED HEART



SONG: VALENTINE HEART (TANITA TIKARAM)

*I tell you it's funny
but you like just to
twist all my words •
It's a shame you're
so young • My
word, it's a shame I'm so dumb*

MY MOTH BOUQUET

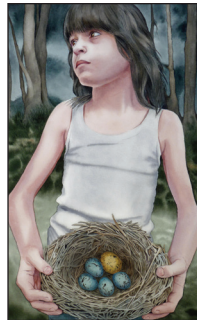


SONG: WILL NEVER MARRY (MORRISSEY)

*I'm writing this to
say • In a gentle
way •
Thank you, but no*

This pair of paintings were the expression of my thoughts about the Covid pandemic. I thought often, sadly, that so many people who had not yet met a life partner had little chance of finding that person during the isolation of the pandemic... putting their "heart" on hold, so to speak. And a heart left unused for long enough just might turn to rust.

UNINVITED



SONG: UNINVITED (ALANIS MORISSETTE)

*But this is not
allowed • You're
uninvited • An
unfortunate slight*

The cuckoo often sneaks its egg into the nest of another bird, uninvited.

The other parents, although confused, then do the hard work of raising the cuckoo's baby.

I DON'T LOVE YOU — BUT I ALWAYS WILL



SONG: POISON AND WINE (THE CIVIL WARS)

*Your
hands can heal, your hands can bruise •
I don't have a choice, but I still choose you
• Oh, I don't love you, but I always will •
I always will*

The same forces that push them apart are the forces that pull them back together, time and time again. Love—dysfunctional but enduring.

REMEMBERING KAYURA



SONG: MY WEAKNESS (MOBY) (INSTRUMENTAL)

*Remembering
Kayura comes
from a folk tale
from the Bantu
tribe of Africa.
When lightning
strikes during a*

*thunderstorm, the frightened children
are told, "Don't be afraid, (the mythical
god) Kayura is just sending little red
birds down from the sky."*

ALLEGORY (THE WOLF)



SONG: HUNTING HIGH AND LOW (A-HA)

*To find her
again • Upon
this, my dreams
are depending •*

*Through the dark • I sense the
pounding of her heart*

My fractured fairy tale of the "big bad wolf." But is he keeping her prisoner, or is he protecting her?

THE PLEA



SONG: PONY (TOM WAITS)

*I hope my pony
knows the way
back home*

The skies are threatening

and the rider, not even knowing where they are, embraces his weary horse with a silent entreaty to just "please, please get us home." Tom Waits' singing voice is like deep-fried gravel, but his music has moved me to tears like no other songwriter.

CAMDEN MARKET BUSKERS



SONG: SONNET (THE VERVE)

*Yes, there's love if
you want it • Don't
sound like no sonnet*

In London's Camden area we spotted this group of buskers brightening up

the street with their music. I don't remember what they were actually playing, but this song is what I will always remember it to be.

THE SCARLET VIOLIN



SONG: DUST IN THE WIND (KANSAS)

*I have a violin,
which I very much
want to learn to
play properly. At
this writing, I'm
still pretty terrible.
But if I could*

*ever manage to
reasonably play the gorgeous violin solo
from this song, I would feel that I was
finally a violin player.*

WHAT I MEANT TO YOU



SONG: CHERRY
PIE (SADE)

*Gotta find out what
I meant to you •
You're the one who
broke my heart in
two • Gotta find
out what I meant to
you, boy*

The romance is gone, but the questions remain, like locks that are still unopened, to which we may never find the key.

TOM'S RIVER, 1953



SONG:
RUBY'S
ARMS (TOM
WAITS)

*Will someone
put me on a
train • I'll
never kiss*

*your lips again • Or break your heart as
I say goodbye*

In 1953, my mother-in-law had already planned her whole life with my father-in-law. Marriage. Children. Domestic bliss. But he secretly craved the carefree life of a rover. She won... and they had 56 years together before she passed away. In the end, it was she who broke his heart by leaving him behind.

I WANTED MORE, I WANTED MORE TIME



SONG: TURN TO STONE (INGRID MICHAELSON)

*I know that I am nothing new • There's so much
more than me and you • But brother, how
we must atone • Before we turn to stone*

I think a lot about our mortality and how short our lives are, and I feel that—no matter how long my life is—I will be wishing I could have another moment. Another breath. Just one more. How could anyone feel otherwise?

THE MESSENGER



SONG:
THE
DAY
BEFORE
WE
WENT
TO WAR
(DIDO)

*Just the gentle hum • Of the summer's
goings on • Broken by the sudden rush*

When the world is disrupted by war and anguish, there is generally some advance warning of it... for people. But what about the other living beings on earth? Do they share with each other the dread of a coming storm?

TUESDAY IT RAINED



SONG: STREET
OF DREAMS
(LINDSAY
BUCKINGHAM)

*I turn my back
against the cold •
I turn my face into
the wind • And I
wonder will I ever,
ever make it home again?*

My modern day James Dean, restlessly walking the streets.

NANABAH (SHE RETURNS)



SONG: I WILL
FIND YOU
(CLANNAD)

*No matter where
you go I will find
you • If it takes a
thousand years*

The determination in her eyes is clear. She will always find a way to return to those she loves.

ADDITIONAL PAINTINGS FROM “SOUNDTRACK”:

AISHA
Ink photostat

BENNETT-BEAN BRIDGE
Watercolor

BOY MEETS GIRL (TRIPTYCH)
Oil

CURLY
Watercolor & Pencil

DRAGONFLOWER
Watercolor

HEARTFELT
Watercolor

THE INNKEEPER
Acrylics; cover illustration for
“The Innkeeper” by Alan Mulak

LA ESMERALDA
Watercolor

LAST LIGHT
Watercolor

LAST ONE IN
Watercolor

LOLITA
Watercolor

LONGFELLOWS
Ink & Watercolor

NEAR AUVERS
Watercolor

PIRI-PIRI IN LILACS
Ink & Watercolor

QUARTET
Watercolor

STASH
Watercolor