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Reading Eagle: Tim Leedy | Jill Haley and her husband, David Cullen, in their Exeter Township home.

SUNDAY JUNE 3, 2018 12:01 AM

## Jill Haley will present 'Soundscapes: The Waters of the Glacier' at the Berks History Center in Reading

The stories and music were composed after the Exeter Township resident spent a vacation and a residency at Glacier National Park in Montana.

### If you go

**Event:** Berks Country Fest and the Children's Home of Reading present Jill Haley, David Cullen and Sue McDevitt in "Soundscapes: The Waters of the Glacier," a multimedia presentation, part of the Pretzel City Concert Series.

**Where and when:** Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Berks History Center, 940 Centre Ave.

**Tickets:** \$15. Visit [www.berkscountryfest.com](http://www.berkscountryfest.com) (<http://berkscountryfest.com/>).

**FYI:** Haley's national park albums are available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com). For more information, visit [www.jillhaley.com](http://www.jillhaley.com) (<http://jillhaley.com/>).

**WRITTEN BY SUSAN L. PENA - READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT**  
READING, PA —

When Jill Haley and her husband, guitarist David Cullen, went on a trip to Glacier National Park in Montana in 2009, the experience set her on a musical journey that has continued to this day. Since then, the oboist/composer has found inspiration in a series of vacations and residencies in United States National Parks, resulting not only in music, photography and videos, but in many stories.

She, along with Cullen and pianist Sue McDevitt, will share the music and a few of those stories in "Soundscapes: The Waters of the Glacier" at the Berks History Center Wednesday at 7 p.m., presented by the Children's Home of Reading as part of Berks Country Fest's Pretzel City Concert Series.

During the event, Haley will perform music she composed during her four-week residency at Glacier National Park in October 2016, accompanied by videos she created while there. She'll also tell how, in this return trip, she experienced rain and snow almost nonstop (there were two days of sunshine, during which she took video and photos).

While others might have been disappointed or even packed up and gone home, Haley found the park equally beautiful through the sheets and drizzles of water, and coated in snow and frost. As a result, she said, the music she came up with was all about water in all its forms: waterfalls, lakes and streams, the glaciers themselves, falling rain and snow.

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Courtesy of Jill Haley | A photo of Glacier National Park in Montana.

The music has been released on a CD, "The Waters of Glacier," the latest in her series of CDs inspired by the parks: "Glacier Soundscapes," "Zion and Bryce Canyon Soundscapes," "Mesa Verde Soundscapes" and "National Parks Soundscapes" (a compilation created for the National Park Service Centennial in 2016).

Sitting with Cullen in their living room in Exeter Township, where she teaches oboe, flute and piano privately while maintaining a career as a freelance musician, Haley reminisced about that first trip to Glacier.

"I came home and wrote a whole album inspired by what I saw," she said. "I recorded it and packaged it, and they sold it at the park for several years."

After that, she went to Zion and Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah, for another vacation, and came back and wrote more music. While she was recording it, one of the recording engineers suggested she look into the National Park Service residency program for artists.

She applied and won her first two-week residency at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado; three more residencies followed, in the Badlands National Park in South Dakota, Glacier and, in August 2017, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in Alaska - the largest in the country, equal in acreage to six Yellowstones.

Haley said that when she applied for a residency to return to Glacier, "I told them that I had first come as a visitor, and now, seven or eight years later, I wanted to see how it would affect me musically."

## **Based on memories**

During the first visit, she didn't take a keyboard, so there was no chance to compose music while in the park, so all the music for her first Soundscape album was based on memories.

"When I went back, it was with the very deliberate intention of composing music," she said. "The park gave me a ranger house to live in off-season, and I had the luxury of having time to walk with no rushing. I could stop and look at the clouds for an hour. You're off the radar."

Commenting on the difference between the pieces Haley composed in 2009 and those composed in 2016, Cullen said: "I think that with each project, she has been able to get closer to the essence of the experience. Each park has been different, so when she went back to Glacier, she was able to use her other experiences. It's all cumulative - the writing and the observations."

"There's a gift in being outside," Haley said. "I sit down at the piano, and it's effortless. Being in that environment is wonderful."

"When I do these concerts (like the one Wednesday), people come up and they love seeing places they've been, and a lot of other people tell me they want to go after seeing this. It's important for people to be aware, these days especially, of how valuable these parks are, and how, if we do certain things, it's going to affect them adversely."

## **Presentations in schools**

In addition to giving public multimedia presentations on the parks, Haley gives presentations in schools - one of the reasons she is able to successfully apply to the competitive residencies in the parks.

She said she has finished 12 songs from the Badlands residency, and six so far from her recent Alaska sojourn, but the recording will have to wait until she finds a way to fund it.

Each residency ends with a concert at the park to premiere some of the music composed during her time there; she often brings Cullen and other musician friends to perform these.

She may return to Glacier at the end of this summer for another concert, she said.

While she has no immediate plans for another residency, Haley said she would like to continue her odyssey, perhaps in some of the parks closer to home, like Shenandoah or the Great Smoky Mountains national parks.

In addition to her private teaching, Haley is a substitute music teacher in the Exeter School District; a choir director at St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Fleetwood; and is a part-time oboe instructor at Muhlenberg College. She plays English horn with the York Symphony Orchestra, occasionally substitutes for the Reading Symphony Orchestra and performs with various orchestras and ensembles in the region.

She is a founding member of One Alternative, a small ensemble that plays original music in various styles, and is a regular guest on albums recorded by Will Ackerman, the founder of Windham Hill Records, at Imaginary Roads Studios in Dummerston, Vt.

During the 2016 parks centennial, Haley traveled throughout the country to give concerts at various national parks. Her "National Park Soundscapes" pieces have been arranged into a four-part suite for oboe/English horn and concert band, and later for oboe/English horn and orchestra, performed last year by Haley with the Reading Pops Orchestra.

Contact Susan L. Pena: [life@readingeagle.com](mailto:life@readingeagle.com).

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