

**YAQUINA RIVER, BY FRANCES
BLAKER.** Lost in Time Press
LIT001 (<corlu@actionnet.net>),
2006. SAATB and bass viola da
gamba or 'cello. Sc 8 pp, pts 2 pp ea. \$18.

Frances Blaker is well-known to readers of *American Recorder* for her informative "Opening Measures" column. With this musical edition, she shows herself to be an imaginative and resourceful composer as well. *Yaquina River* is a short but eventful piece, in something of a minimalist style that succeeds in evoking the progress of a river through changing countryside. The music is dedicated to the Oregon Coast Recorder Society and to one of its members in particular, Joann Anselone, who lives by Oregon's Yaquina River.

Blaker writes, in her introductory note, of finding inspiration not just in nature, but in the ground bass settings of Henry Purcell and in the insistent rhythms of Morse code. Thus the work is based on a chromatic ground bass in the viol part and an irregular repeated note figure that grows into an undulating melodic motion permeating the piece. As in nature, however, the textures are constantly evolving as the ground bass changes form in the course of the work and as the overall texture thins and thickens.

While the ground evokes the key of A minor, the general feeling is more modal (though with resonant triadic harmonies throughout), meaning that intonation is especially important in the performance of the piece. The effect in performance will be meditative and pleasantly evocative of the natural setting of the title.

Blaker notes various performance possibilities, including large ensemble performance. Chapters will find that this piece has special challenges, but also special rewards. The general level of difficulty puts the piece within the grasp of an intermediate group.

The music is thoughtfully presented in legible print on good quality cream-colored paper that itself assists in setting the mood of the piece. There are no page turns in the parts.

Playing this music will be a special experience for performers and listeners alike.

Scott Paterson