

compact disc

W SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

C 435

2016

5-27

TWO FALLING STARS: Music of Love, Loss, and Living

UW CHAMBER SINGERS

Geoffrey Boers, Conductor

Leann Conley-Holcom, Assistant Conductor

with special guests

ILLUMNI MEN'S CHORALE

Chris McCafferty, Artistic Director

Bryan Fiehler, Conductor

Carolyn Tanksler, Harp

May 27, 2016 - 7:30 PM - MEANY THEATER

CD1 - # 17,523
ILLUMNI MEN'S CHORALE

- 1 Songs of Sweet Accord 22:09 Donald St. Pierre (1932-2016)
- I. Albion
 - II. Innocent Sounds
 - III. Captain Kidd
 - IV. More Love
 - V. Soldier's Return
 - VI. Interlude (Flower)
 - VII. Distress/Flower
 - VIII. a. Backslider (Ed Morris, *tenor*)
b. Columbus (Chris McCafferty, *tenor*)
 - IX. Contrite Heart (Justin Ferris, *tenor* / Christian Jaeger, *baritone*)
 - X. Ninety-third Psalm

2 PAUSE remarks, Bœrs

- 3 ... of love new, old, eternal
A Boy and A Girl 5:18 Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

4 remarks

- 5 ... of love and living
From Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez 15:54 Abbie Betinis (b. 1980)

The Women of the Chamber Singers
Leann Conley-Holcom, *conductor*
Vijay Chalasani, *viola* / Miriam Anderson, *percussion*
Vocal Soloists (in order of appearance): Alice Carli, Sarah Riskind, Jocelyn Beausire, Yelena Bagdasarova,
Erica Weisman, Christine Oshiki, Makaela Mautz Bragg, Denna Good-Mojab

CD2 - # 17,524

1 remarks

- 2 ... of love, loss, and memory
It's The Morning... (*premiere performance*) 13:27 Kevin J. Isaacs (b. 1957)
Abbie Naze, *cello* / Serena Chin, *piano*

At the close of this work the performers will slowly leave their places and begin reflecting personal remembrances of loss. The audience is invited to join the performers in your own remembrances, either silently or aloud. Numerous remembrances of the choir are shared here in the program as means of prompting your own thoughts.

3 remarks

- 4 ... of love and afterlife
Song of Sky and Sea: A Song of Realization (*premiere performance*) 22:09 Paul John Rudoi (b. 1985)
- I. At Every Instant
 - II. The Infinite Dwelling
 - III. Two Falling Stars
 - IV. As One Sky

The Men of the Chamber Singers
Stephen O'Bent & Joel Bevington, *tenors*

5 remarks

- 6 ... of love, hope, and going on...
And So I Go On 7:18 Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

In memoriam, Germán Aguilar (1979- 2014)

Notes, Texts and Translations

Good Evening. We are thankful that you are here to share with the Chamber Singers in our evening's program *Song of Sky and Sea: Music of Love, Loss and Living*. Tonight is a special evening as we present premiere performances of two works, and we welcome composers Kevin Jay Isaacs and Paul Rudoï. We also welcome our guest artists the Illumni Men's Chorus, who will open our show and join our men for the premiere of Paul Rudoï's *Song of Sky and Sea*.

Donald St. Pierre's *Songs of Sweet Accord*, is set for men's voices and harp, was commissioned and premiered in 1996 as a counterpart for Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. St. Pierre provided these notes for the premiere performance:

Songs of Sweet Accord is a cycle of settings of American folk-hymns. A 'cycle' because it tells a story of sort. 'Settings' because I prefer that word to one like 'arrangements.' I think it conjures up a jeweler's task: cutting and polishing something given and placing it where one hopes its inherent beauty is more readily apparent. The texts for Songs of Sweet Accord are in a sequence moving from the establishment of music as a good, through unreflecting enthusiasm, doubt, petition and grace. I avoided seasonal texts, and hoped to avoid sectarian ones, looking for those it seemed to me anyone thoughtful might enjoy contemplating.

Our Chamber Singers program tonight begins with Eric Whitacre's setting of Octavio Paz's poem *A Boy and A Girl*. Set in three verses, the text uses images, language and form, as the boy and the girl move in stages of life from lovers, to marriage, to death—and yet love continues.

Stretched out on the grass,
a boy and a girl.
Savoring their oranges,
giving their kisses like waves, exchanging foam.

Stretched out on the beach,
a boy and a girl.
Savoring their limes,
giving their kisses like clouds, exchanging foam.

Stretched out underground,
a boy and a girl.
Saying nothing, never kissing,
giving silence for silence.

Next, the women of the Chamber Singers will sing Abbie Betinis' settings of Hâfez's ecstatic poetry in *From Behind the Caravan*, written for women's choir, viola and percussion.

Khwâja Hâfez-e Shirazi was a 14th century mystic poet from Shiraz, Persia (Iran). He wrote over 400 lyric poems, called *ghazals*, and his mastery of that form remains celebrated today. His writing is based on Sufism, a mystical tradition of Islam which focuses on the personal journey of becoming nearer the Beloved through love, beauty, and ridding one's heart of material desires. Sufism is associated with many currents of Islam, including both the Sunni and Shi'a sects, and has been practiced since the ninth century, and perhaps much earlier. Rumi (13th c.) is another well-known Sufi mystic poet.

The composer, Abbie Betinis, reflects: *I was particularly drawn to these four poems because of the elegant way they depict longing... longing for Truth, longing for Reason, longing for Kindness, Love, and - always - longing for the Beloved. I also found that many of Hâfez's poems seem to have in common beautiful metaphors of transience: fire, breath, breeze. The music is not at all meant to be authentically Persian, but is my own interpretation of an assortment of influences, including my recent love of Persian poetic meter and form, Middle Eastern musical systems and modes, and perhaps even distant memories of dancing barefoot with my Greek relatives, joyfully and tirelessly, to music that whirled feverishly around us, and - at four years old, with my arms held up to clutch their hands on either side - feeling completely free.*

I. we have come

We, to this door, not seeking pride or glory... we have come.
For shelter from ill-fortune, here... we have come.

Traveling along love's journey, from the borders of nothingness,
Now into states of being, all this way... we have come.

O ship of grace, where is thy anchor of forbearance?
For in this ocean of generosity, immersed in sin... we have come.

Hâfez, throw off your woolen kherqe [Sufi cloak], for we,
from behind the caravan, with the fire of sighing "ah!" ... we have come.

II. suffer no grief

Forsaken Joseph to Canaan shall return.
Suffer no grief.

Upon the thorny stalks of family grief, a rose shall bloom.
Suffer no grief...

If you desire the Way and plant your pilgrim foot in the desert,
Then if the mighty Arabian thorn make reproofs,
Suffer no grief...

Suffer no grief, suffer no grief, O heart.
Back to reason, comes this distraught head.
Suffer no grief...

O heart, despairing heart,
O! O! Suffer no grief...

There is no road that has no end.

III. closer to the fire

Last night I saw the angels beat at the door of the tavern,
The clay of Adam, they shaped and into the mold, they cast.

The churches war among themselves, forgive them;
When they could not see the truth, they beat the door of fable.

Fire, Fire! Oh! Oh!

Thanks be to God, for between me and Him, peace chanced,
The dancing Sufis cast the cup of thankfulness!

Fire, Fire! Oh! Oh!

IV. boatpeople

My heart falls from grasp. For God's sake come to my cry, O pious ones;
O the pain that Love's hidden mystery should be disclosed!

Arise, arise O breeze

To ease the pain of the world, live by these words:
With friends, give kindness; with enemies, courtesy.

We are the shipwrecked. O fair breeze, arise!
So that, again, we may behold the face of the Beloved.

Behold!

V. we have come (reprise)

We, to this door, not seeking pride or glory... we have come.
For shelter from ill-fortune, here... we have come.
sighing "ah!" ...

We have come.

It's the morning... is a heartbreaking poem written in the shadows of the Sandy Hook tragedy on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, where so many school children and their teachers were fatally shot.

After that tragedy composer and poet Kevin Jay Isaacs became interested in the idea of "present absence," that is, that after loss, the absence felt and expectation to see a person no longer there, is a new kind of presence. This present absence over time allows us to heal and shape the memories we carry forward.

Each instrument in the composition plays an important dramatic role in the narrative of the text. Like players on a theatrical stage, the instruments move in and out of time, in and out of physical space. The piano depicts time going by, the cello is the voice of the one no longer with us, and the solo alto and soli female chorus are the voices of the parents. The chorus serves as a *Turba Chorus*, as in Bach's passions, wherein the choir speaks for the characters, and in the end, as the American folksong *He's Gone Away* is introduced, joins them in personal reflection and remembering. The audience is invited by the composer to join the performers in their own reflections (see invitation in the program).

It's the morning when I see him
Reaching out to me,
full of life and joy and play
and last I saw him, walking toward his...

It's the morning when I see him
Reaching out to them,
Full of sweat and heart and bone
And last I saw him, walking toward his...

It's the morning when I feel him
Reaching out to her,
Full of love and soul and tears
When last I saw him, walking toward his...

It's the morning when I lose him
Reaching out to death,
Full of fear and pain, and how can I last,
When last I saw him walking toward his
End.

*He's gone away for to stay a little while,
But he's comin' back if he goes ten thousand miles.
O who will tie your shoes, who will glove your hand,
And who will kiss your ruby lips when he is gone?
Look away over yonder.*

Song of Sky and Sea: A Song of Realization is a new work by Minneapolis-based composer Paul Rudoï. This four-movement song cycle developed out of a single shorter work by the same name that Rudoï composed for the acclaimed male ensemble Cantus. As Rudoï and I first discussed the piece, the texts and music seemed so visual that we immediately conceived of the concept of the work being a multimedia piece. Soon Lynn Lukkas, Chair of the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota, was commissioned to create a film reflecting the text and music of *Song of Sky and Sea*.

A note from the composer:

Mystic poets Rumi, Kabir, and Hafiz were some of the most revered Indian and Iranian scholars, writers, and spiritual gurus of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. They held an uninhibited view of the world, the spirit, and the unity of love. Songs of Realization, in contrast, are sung poetry forms of Hinduism and Buddhism dating back to the 5th century A.D.

My *SONG OF SKY AND SEA: A Song of Realization* combines these views and concepts into a dynamic, narrative cycle that explores a hypothetical spiritual journey. Beginning at the point of death, we travel toward the Divine, where we grow accustomed to its presence, connect with it on a tangible level, and in the end, become one with the Love we've known in our heart and soul all along.

The whole choir joins together for one final work, *And So I Go On...* a work for double choir by yet another Minneapolis-based composer, Jake Runestad. Written for Jonathan Talberg, conductor of the UCLB Choral program, after his fiancé Germán Aguilar suddenly passed away while on choir tour together. A beloved person and teacher, Germán's death was a huge loss for the choral community across our country, affecting many deeply, even within our UW community. The text is a dialogue between a lover and his beloved who has died. The text reflects back and forth, each speaking to the other. The composer asks for the choirs to be apart, but in keeping with the shape of tonight's concert, we feel that intermingling the choirs and texts creates a different message.

My lovely one	My lovely one
Though you are gone	I am gone
Taken from me	taken from you
I cannot leave you	mine in the suffering
I am not free	mine in your joy
I burn in snow	my snow will kiss you
And thirst in rain	pouring down my love
There is no sea	there is no sea
That can drown my pain	that can drown my pain
But you would want me to live	I want you to live
And love again	and love again
And so I go on	and so I go on
Always, wherever you are	always, wherever you are
My lovely one	my lovely one

Guest Biographies

Lynn Lukkas' creative work spans film, video, photography, media installations, media performances, and collaborative projects with opera, theater and dance. She has also curated a number of exhibitions focused primarily on media arts practices. Her most recent curatorial effort is, *Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta*. The touring exhibition opened at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery in September 2015 and travels to Nova Southeastern Art Museum and Berkley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archives in 2016. Her work has shown nationally in New York, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Saint Louis and internationally; including Beijing, China; Zagreb, Croatia; Capetown, South Africa.

Kevin Jay Isaacs is Chair of the Department of Music and Professor of theory, composition, and choral studies at Western Connecticut University. His compositions have been commissioned and performed by leading professional choirs and collegiate choral programs across the country. He is published by Mark Foster, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, and PelCel Music. In addition to his work as a composer, he is an acclaimed teacher and conductor. Winner of numerous teaching and conducting awards in the Northeastern United States, Isaacs is regarded for his passionate artistic vision and colorful sound.

Paul John Rudoi is a rising star in the Minneapolis choral scene as a tenor and composer. He is a member of the acclaimed male vocal ensemble Cantus, which is one of two fulltime professional male choirs in the country. The American Prize committee called his music "indisputably unique, confident, and innovative." He has been commissioned and performed by vocal and instrumental ensembles throughout North America and Europe

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Chris McCafferty, Artistic Director

Brian Fiehler, Conductor

TENOR I

Justin Ferris

Ed Morris

TENOR II

Chris McCafferty

Bryan Fiehler

Steven Clark

James Foster

J. R. Lakey

BARITONE

Bill Freeland

Christian Jaeger

Scott Ramsey

Wil Sederholm

BASS

Greg Golliet

Paul Olsen

HARP

Carolyn Tanksler

UW CHAMBER SINGERS

Dr. Geoffrey Boers, Conductor

Leann Conley-Holcom, Assistant Conductor

Serena Chin, Accompanist

SOPRANO

Miriam Anderson, Wilmette, IL

Yelena Bagdasarova, Twin Falls, ID

Leann Conley-Holcom, Tacoma, WA

Denna Good-Mojab, Portland, OR

Katie Kelley, Houston, TX

Elizabeth MacIsaac, Nainaimo, BC, Canada

Christine Oshiki, Olympia, WA

Sarah Riskind, Needham, MA

Meghan Stavig, Edmonds, WA

TENOR

Thomas Almli, Arlington, WA

Joel Bevington, Albany, OR

Patrick Borrer, Oklahoma City, OK

Shane Colvin, Bigfork, MT

Ryan Ellis, Seattle, WA

Jeffrey Larkin, Salem, OR

Joshua Lutman, New Kensington, PA

Stephen O'Bent, Hanover, NH

Nic Varela, Tucson, AZ

ALTO

Jocelyn Beausire, Niwot, CO

Monica Berndt, Quincy, WA

Alice Carli, Los Altos, CA

Eleanor Kahn, New York, NY

Makaela Mautz Bragg, Roy, WA

Brenda Mohr, Glendale, CA

Amber Moore, Star, ID

Abbie Naze, Minot, ND

Sadie Quinsaat, Cypress, TX

Meg Stohlmann, Santa Rosa, CA

Erica Weisman, Austin, TX

BASS

Philip C. Arbaugh, Olympia, WA

Michael Kibbe, Houston, TX

Leif Layman, St. Paul, MN

Jonah Melchert, Puyallup, WA

Jeremy Morada, Loma Linda, CA

Ryan Mullaney, Cumberland, MD

Eric Mullen, Iowa City, IA

James Wilcox, Seattle, WA

David Wimmatt, Virginia Beach, VA