

Living Voices

Catherine Goode, soprano

Anthony Benz, piano

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

Huntington Recital Hall

6:00pm

Program

Schlechtes Übersetzunglieder (World Premiere)

Mark Buller (b. 1986)

I. You're Back

II. El Koenig

III. Dismembered Heart

I'm Nobody

Lori Laitman (b. 1955)

from *Four Dickinson Songs*

Arioso

Tom Cipullo (b. 1956)

from *A Visit with Emily*

At Last, to Be Identified

Jake Heggie (b. 1961)

from *The Faces of Love*

Will There Really Be a Morning?

Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956)

from *Too Few the Mornings Be*

I yearn so t' know things ("Lightfoot's aria")

Carlisle Floyd (b. 1926)

from *Cold Sassy Tree*

❖ Intermission ❖

Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

Katherine of Aragon

Anne Boleyn

Jane Seymour

Anne of Cleves

Katherine Howard

Home

Maury Yeston (b. 1945)

from *Phantom*

The Finer Things

Paul Gordon (b. ca. 1975)

from *Jane Eyre*

Green Finch and Linnet Bird

Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930)

from *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*

The Girl in 14G

Jeanine Tesori (b. 1961)

Please, no flash photography or unauthorized recording.

Please turn off all cell phones and audible devices.

41st concert of the 2019–2020 Season

Program Notes

The music of composer **Mark Buller** has been performed around the country and internationally, from Carnegie Hall to various venues on five continents. He has been commissioned by a wide range of organizations, including the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Houston Grand Opera, among others. Winner of several competitions, he has had works recently performed in Boston, Dallas, Atlanta, Detroit, and Houston. Upcoming performances include a second work for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, two further major dramatic works for Houston Grand Opera, and a fifth string quartet.¹ In *Schlechtes Übersetzungsglieder* (or, “Bad translation songs”), Buller took the texts of three famous art songs by Franz Schubert and ran them through Google Translate several times, “until they were mangled enough to be funny, yet still preserve the structure and main elements of the originals.”² This performance is the world premiere of the cycle. Below are translations of the original poems Schubert set, as well as the languages into which Buller translated them to produce the final texts heard today.³

“Du bist die Ruh” (“**You’re Back;**” German–Turkish–English)
Friedrich Rückert, poet (1788–1866)

You are repose, and gentle peace, longing you are, and what quiets it.
To you I dedicate, full of joy and pain, as a dwelling here, my eye and heart.
Come, enter in and close softly behind you the gate.
Drive other pain from this breast. full be this heart of your joy.
The temple of these eyes, by your gleam alone is lit, oh fill it wholly!

“Erlkönig” (“**El Koenig;**” German–English–Italian–Czech–English–Mandarin–English)
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, poet (1749–1832)

Who rides so late through night and wind? It is the father with his child; he has his arm about the boy,
he holds him safe, he keeps him warm.
“My son, why hide your face in such fear?” “Father—the Erl-king, don’t you see? The Erl-king in crown
and robes?” “My son, it is a streak of mist.”
“Dear child, come, come go with me, wonderful games will I play with you; many fair flowers are on the shore,
my mother has many a garment of gold.”
“My father, my father, don’t you hear what the Erl-king softly promises me?” “Be quiet, stay quiet, my child:
the rustle it is of dry leaves in the wind.”
“Will you, fine boy, come with me? My daughters shall take good care of you; my daughters lead our
nightly dance, they’ll rock and dance and sing you to sleep.”
“My father, my father, don’t you see the Erl-king’s daughters there in the gloom?” “My son, my son,
I see very well: it is the old willows gleaming so grey.”
“I love you. Your beauty excites me; if you’re not willing, I’ll take you by force.” “My father, my father,
he seizes me! The Erl-king has hurt me...”
The father shudders, swiftly he rides, the moaning child he holds in his arms; he gains the manor in
great distress; in his arms the child was dead.

“Gretchen am Spinnrade” (“**Dismembered Heart;**” German–English–Nepali–English–Icelandic–English; German–English–
Hungarian–English (last verse))
Goethe, poet

My peace is gone, my heart is sore, never shall I find peace ever more.
Where he is not, there is my grave, all the world to me is gall.
My poor head is crazed, my poor wits destroyed.
Only for him I gaze from the window, only for him I go from the house.
His superior walk, his noble air, his smiling mouth, his compelling eyes.
And his words—their magic flow, the press of his hand, and ah, his kiss!
My heart craves for him, oh, to clasp and to hold,
and kiss him, just as I liked, and in his kisses pass away!

Emily Dickinson is one of America's greatest poets. She was born in 1830 and lived in Massachusetts her entire life, until her death in 1886. The majority of her expansive catalogue was published posthumously, with fewer than a dozen of her works published during her lifetime. Additionally, much of her personal correspondence has survived. The poems and letter heard today were first published in 1891, 1862 (as part of a letter sent to Thomas Wentworth Higginson)⁴, 1890, and 1891, respectively.

Described by Fanfare Magazine as "one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers," **Lori Laitman** has composed multiple operas and choral works, and hundreds of songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets. Her music is widely performed throughout the world and has generated substantial critical acclaim.⁵ "**I'm Nobody**" comes from *Four Dickinson Songs*, published in 1996. Laitman describes it as "humorous and bouncy" within a cycle full of "dramatic musical contrasts."⁶

Hailed by the American Academy of Art & Letters for music that displays "inexhaustible imagination, wit, expressive range and originality," composer **Tom Cipullo's** works are performed regularly throughout the United States and with increasing frequency internationally.⁷ He is best known for his opera *Glory Denied* (2007). "**Arioso**" is the seventh movement of *A Visit with Emily* (1998, rev. 2001), a cantata of "21 songs, duets, and trios on texts of Dickinson and T.W. Higginson," for soprano, two baritones, and piano. Cipullo considers the work to be a "genre-bender:" part song cycle and part opera, and claims his musical characterizations in the work come "purely from [his] intuitive reaction to the words."⁸

Jake Heggie is the composer of numerous operas, most notably *Dead Man Walking*. The operas – most created with Terrence McNally or Gene Scheer – have been produced on five continents. He has also composed nearly 300 songs, as well as chamber, choral, and orchestral works.⁹ "**At Last, to Be Identified**" is the fifth and final song in *The Faces of Love* (1999). Of his music, Heggie states that "every song is a drama of its own," with a "sense of the psychology and emotion behind the words" that help create the character. As the final song in the cycle, "At Last, to Be Identified" has a piano part that helps create the feeling of drama over which the singer proclaims.¹⁰

Ricky Ian Gordon studied piano, composition, and acting at Carnegie Mellon University. A highly prolific composer, he quickly emerged as a leading writer of vocal music that spans art song, opera, and musical theater, with a catalogue that includes 12 stage works and nine major song cycles.¹¹ Originally written for Renée Fleming as a standalone song, "**Will There Really Be a Morning**" (1995, rev. 2008) is the eleventh and final song in *Too Few the Mornings Be*. Fleming praises the cycle, noting in a letter to the composer "I love how you write for the voice; the vocal line moves freely throughout the whole range."¹²

Composer **Carlisle Floyd** has created a distinctively American idiom for opera, drawing on national folk and religious music traditions. His music theatre works combine penetrating social commentary with acute psychological insight. Floyd writes his own librettos, in which he has treated such themes as the aftermath of the Civil War, the Great Depression, and rural fundamentalism. *Susannah*, his best-known opera, has entered the permanent repertory with countless productions in the U.S. and a growing number in Europe.¹³ *Cold Sassy Tree* takes place in Cold Sassy Tree, Georgia, in 1900. Lightfoot McClendon, a teenager from the "wrong side of the tracks," has just found out her father has tuberculosis; she will have to leave school to go work the land to make money for her family. In her aria "**I yearn so t' know things**," she explains to her schoolmate and friend Will Tweedy that school and learning bring her great joy, and that she will never stop her pursuit of knowledge, regardless of what comes her way.

Libby Larsen is one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. She has received numerous awards and accolades; she was the first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra and has held residencies with multiple organizations since. Constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles and orchestras around the world, Larsen has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.¹⁴ In her preface to the *Try Me, Good King* score, Larsen writes:

Try Me, Good King is a group of five songs drawn from the final letters and gallows speeches of **Katherine of Aragon**, **Anne Boleyn**, **Jane Seymour**, **Anne of Cleves**, and **Katherine Howard**. Henry's sixth wife, Katherine Parr, outlived him. [...] Although her written devotions are numerous, [...] I chose to focus on the intimate crises of the heart that affected the first five of the six wives. In a sense, this group is a monodrama of anguish and power. I've interwoven a lute song into each song, including John Dowland's "In Darkness Let Me Dwell" (Katherine of Aragon and Katherine Howard), Dowland's "If My Complaints" (Anne Boleyn), Praetorius' "Lo, how a Rose E'er Blooming" (Jane Seymour), and Thomas Campion's "I Care Not for these Ladies" (Anne of Cleves). These songs were composed during the reign of Elizabeth I, and while they are cast as some of the finest examples of the golden age, they also create a tapestry of unsung words which comment on the real situation of each doomed queen. Two other musical gestures unify the songs, firstly, the repeated note, which recalls the lute and creates psychological tension. The second device I created is abstract bell tolling, which punctuates each song and releases the spiritual meaning of the words.¹⁵

Maury Yeston is a composer, lyricist, author, and teacher. He moves easily between the worlds of theater, film, and academia, writing concert music, Broadway shows, and holding teaching posts as a musicologist and music theorist.¹⁶ He has won two Tony Awards for Best Original Score (music and lyrics) for *Nine* (1982) and *Titanic* (1997). Both shows won Best Musical; in 2003, *Nine* won Best Revival of a Musical. His score for *Phantom* (written in 1983; premiered in 1991) has received national and international acclaim. In the show, “Christine Daaé works her way from obscurity to a starring role in the Paris Opera house.[...] When she first steps foot on the stage, only a costume girl at the time, she sings of the thrill she feels as she knows she is ‘Home.’”¹⁷

Award-winning composer **Paul Gordon** received a 2001 Tony Award for Best Original Score (music and lyrics) nomination for *Jane Eyre*. Several of his other musicals have received critical acclaim, including *Sense and Sensibility* (2015 Jeff Award for Best New Work) and *Daddy Long Legs* (2009 Ovation Award; nominated for two Drama Desk Awards, an Off-Broadway Alliance Award, and three Outer Critic Circle awards.) Gordon is also a pop songwriter and has several number one hits.¹⁸ In “**The Finer Things**,” Blanche Ingram, an aristocratic guest in the home of Edward Rochester, brazenly sings the praises of both Edward’s decadent possessions and herself. It is her attempt to solidify a marriage between her and Edward, much to Jane’s dismay.

Stephen Sondheim is a musical theatre composer and lyricist with an expansive career of more than 50 years. He has received numerous awards, including (but not limited to) eight Tony Awards (including Best Original Score, 1979, for *Sweeney Todd*), an Academy Award, eight Grammy Awards (including Musical Theatre Album, 1980, for *Sweeney Todd*), and a Pulitzer Prize.¹⁹ In “**Green Finch and Linnet Bird**,” Johanna Barker shares her desire to be free from her captivity in Judge Turpin’s house, grappling with the knowledge that she will likely never be able to escape. She compares her imprisonment to birds in cages and tries to find hope in her despair.

American musical theatre composer, arranger, pianist, and conductor **Jeanine Tesori** has been nominated five times for Tony Awards for her Broadway scores: *Twelfth Night* (1998), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (2002), *Caroline, or Change* (2004), *Shrek the Musical* (2009), and *Fun Home* (2015; winner Best Original Score). She is the first woman composer in history to have two original musicals running concurrently on Broadway (*Millie* and *Caroline*). In the field of film, she has composed new songs for nearly a dozen movies.²⁰ While “**The Girl in 14G**,” with lyrics by Dick Scanlan and made popular by Kristin Chenoweth, is not from a show, it is still theatrical in nature. The singer bemoans her new neighbors who cannot seem to stay quiet but finally gives in, joining the fun.

¹ “Biography,” Mark Buller | Composer, accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.markbullercomposer.com/biography/>.

² Mark Buller, *Schlechtes Übersetzungsglieder* (Houston: Mark Buller, 2017), 2.

³ George Bird and Richard Stokes, trans., *The Fischer-Dieskau Book of Lieder: The original texts of over seven hundred and fifty songs* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1998), 195, 207-8, 235-6.

⁴ Aife Murray, *Maid as Muse: How Servants Changed Emily Dickinson’s Life and Language* (Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2009), 170.

⁵ “Abbreviated Biographies,” Lori Laitman Composer, last modified September 2019, accessed November 4, 2019, <http://artsongs.com/abbreviated-biographies/>.

⁶ Lori Laitman, *Four Dickinson Songs* (Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI, 1996), ii.

⁷ “Biography,” Tom Cipullo, accessed November 4, 2019, <https://tomcipullo.net/biography/>.

⁸ Tom Cipullo, *A Visit with Emily* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.

⁹ “Short Biography,” Jake Heggie, Composer & Pianist, last modified 2019, accessed November 4, 2019, <https://jakeheggie.com/biography/>.

¹⁰ Jake Heggie, *The Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1* (Santa Monica, CA: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1999): iii.

¹¹ “Bio,” Ricky Ian Gordon, last modified January 2018, accessed November 4, 2019, <https://rickyangordon.com/bio/>.

¹² Ricky Ian Gordon, *Too Few the Mornings Be* (New York City: Carl Fischer Music, 2009), 2.

¹³ “Carlisle Floyd: Biography,” Boosey & Hawkes, accessed November 4, 2019, https://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer_main?composerid=2810&tttype=BIOGRAPHY/. Reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes.

¹⁴ “Press,” Libby Larsen, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://libbylarsen.com/accelsite/media/mediaFile14.pdf>.

¹⁵ Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.

¹⁶ “About,” Maury Yeston, last modified 2012, accessed November 6, 2019, <http://www.mauryyeston.com/about/>.

¹⁷ Richard Walters, foreword to *The Singer’s Musical Theatre Anthology: Soprano*, vol. 4 (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005), 10.

¹⁸ “Paul Gordon,” New Musical Theatre, accessed November 5, 2019, <https://newmusicaltheatre.com/collections/paul-gordon/>.

¹⁹ “Stephen Sondheim,” Playbill, accessed November 6, 2019, <http://www.playbill.com/person/stephen-sondheim-vault-0000007373/>.

²⁰ “Jeanine Tesori,” Masterworks Broadway, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://www.masterworksbroadway.com/artist/jeanine-tesori/>.