

Merkin Concert Hall
at Kaufman Center

03|04

KAUFMAN



About Riverside Opera Ensemble

Incorporated in March 1984 by founding directors, James Kardon, Nathan R. Matthews and Carol Y. Kendrick, Riverside Opera Ensemble is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving, developing and nurturing artists and audiences through a diverse program of music theatre production, creation, experimentation and education. The productions are fully produced with orchestra and have received accolades from the New York press.

The company has attracted the notice of renowned artists such as Leonard Bernstein, Rosemary Harris, John Ehle and Harolyn Blackwell. Bernstein served as honorary chair for the New York premiere of Zandonai's *Giulietta e Romeo*, a benefit performance for God's Love We Deliver in 1988. Ms. Harris and Mr. Ehle served as honorary chairs for the 2001 World Premiere of Byers' *Incident at San Bajo*. Ms. Blackwell has appeared on behalf of the company at its benefits. Riverside's alumni have moved on to perform with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Rome Opera, Netherlands Opera, Santa Fe Opera and San Francisco Opera.

The company's first production was Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*. This was followed by a new production of Leoncavallo's *Zaza* which had not been performed in New York for many years. Following several concerts that year, Stephen Pickover joined the company when it presented a workshop production of *Hansel and Gretel*, enlisting students from the Harlem School of the Arts. Massenet's *Werther* was produced with a new arrangement for strings, piano and synthesizer, while *The Threepenny Opera* had complete orchestration and mixed operatic and Broadway-style voices.

In 1990 Riverside Opera Ensemble mounted Jerome Kern, Guy Bolton and P.G. Wodehouse's *Oh! Boy*. The company produced a 25th year anniversary production of John Clifton's *Man With a Load of Mischief* in 1991. 1992's centennial production of Tchaikovsky's one act opera *Iolanta* once again brought Riverside Opera Ensemble critical acclaim.

Artistic Directors Nathan Matthews and Stephen Pickover began exploring the possibility of developing new works with *Where Or When*. Using the music and lyrics of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, the two created a new music theatre piece on Theatre Row which incorporated new arrangements and storylines.

During the 1998-99 season, Riverside Opera Ensemble co-produced three concerts with Columbia University's Miller Theatre that included a 75th birthday celebration for the prominent American composer, Ned Rorem. In May 2000, the company joined forces with Mystery Writers of America to produce the first pre-Edgar Awards concert at St. Peter's at the Citicorp Building in New York City.

Riverside Opera Ensemble now focuses on developing new work through a series of readings and workshops. In January of 2004 Riverside Opera Ensemble produced the initial reading of a new musical, *Con Man*, at the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU in conjunction with the University of Southern California and NYU. Riverside is currently working with composers and librettists in developing a new opera and a new musical for future production. The company is primarily supported by tax-deductible donations from individuals and family foundations. www.riversideopera.org



Steinway is the official piano of Merkin Concert Hall

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Merkin Concert Hall

Saturday, May 29, 2004 at 8:30 pm

Riverside Opera Ensemble

Nathan R. Matthews and Stephen Pickover, Artistic Directors
20th Anniversary Concert

An Evening of World Premieres

CALDARA/SCOTT GENDEL

Sebben Crudele

DURANTE/SCOTT GENDEL

Danza, Danza Fanciulla

JOHN KOCH, tenor and NATHAN R. MATTHEWS, piano

PATRICK BYERS

Music For Friends (selections)

from Seana Marena; poems by Patrick Byers

Introduction: piano, clarinet, cello

I. Come!

II. Madness Found in Love

III. The Friend

IV. In Green Fields of Clover

SHERRY ZANNOTH, soprano; JENNIFER BYERS, cello

MARISSA BYERS, clarinet; PATRICK BYERS, piano

STEPHEN DEMBSKI

Simples — three songs

from Pomes Penyeach (James Joyce)

I. A Flower Given to my Daughter

II. Simples

III. Alone

JUDITH SKINNER, contralto and NATHAN R. MATTHEWS, piano

NATHAN R. MATTHEWS

A Woman's Plight (Edgar Allan Poe)

HAROLYN BLACKWELL, soprano and NATHAN R. MATTHEWS, piano

Intermission

DAVID DEL TREDICI

On Wings of Song

I Can Change (David Brunetti)

New Year's Eve (Carla Drysdale)

Song of Loss and Pain: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed

(Edna St. Vincent Millay)

Song of Faith of Hope: Abide With Me (Henry Francis Lyte)

A Visitation (Edward Field)

(played without pause)

HILA PLITMANN, soprano and DAVID DEL TREDICI, piano

RIVERSIDE OPERA ENSEMBLE

AN EVENING OF WORLD PREMIERES

PROGRAM NOTES

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Welcome to Riverside Opera Ensemble's 20th Anniversary Celebration. Looking back at our history it is hard to believe that it has already been twenty years! We have endeavored to provide the highest quality music theatre performances and concerts utilizing young talent—first with lesser known works and more recently devoting ourselves to the development and production of new works for voice and stage. The joys and struggles of birthing new works has immeasurable worth for the mind and soul. The seeming miraculous experience of creating and being a part of new music, whether it evolves from a Jungian collective unconscious, from a gracious Muse, or from complex mathematical equations, is an amazing and wonderful occupation for the composer, performer and audience alike.

Tonight we celebrate our past, present and future with friends old and new. We hope you will join us on our continuing journey, and thank all of you for your vitality and support.

Welcome. And Enjoy!

NOTES FROM THE COMPOSERS

Scott Gendel:

The classic *Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias* has always been a love of mine. Many of the melodies in that standard vocal teaching volume are charming and wonderful, and I find much of the poetry to be surprisingly moving. In these arrangements, I have kept the original melodies intact, to retain the catchiness, elegant text-setting, and singability of these classic songs. The role of the piano, however, has been altered, sometimes drastically, so that the songs can express different aspects of themselves. These new accompaniments incorporate many different compositional styles and techniques, inviting the listener to hear how the classic songs fit into a variety of contemporary contexts. By highlighting facets of the texts, the singer can explore new approaches to the songs, and new meanings can emerge. It is my hope that the charm of the original melodies co-existing with my new settings, which tonight's offering shows two of many, will allow the resulting songs to be immediately appealing, musically complex, and intellectually rewarding, even to a listener not familiar with the original songs.

Patrick Byers:

Music for Friends is based on experiences in South Africa during the apartheid years. A journal kept during those years is the source of the text, the words drawn from particular friendships made. The four songs representing the cycle are reflective. Other songs in the cycle attempt to include African idioms, more a gesture of thanks to African classical musicians, careful not to claim African musical authenticity. From the friendships, the Soweto String Quartet returned to their homeland creating authentic African music. **As** an ensemble they performed at the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela. Presently, the quartet tours the world as cultural ambassadors of a democratic South Africa.

Stephen Dembski:

There must be some reason why I've kept these simple songs to myself for the past quarter-century or so -- I guess it could have been fear of the sensuous sound of those poisonous "Laburnum tendrils" in the last, or the subtly scandalous focus on the flesh when the word "blueveined" finally describes the child whose eyes veil wild wonder in the first. Whatever it may have been, tracing as they do the trail from frail to shame, from white to night delight, for me, staunchly pro-Joyce, these little pomes have always packed a punch, and especially at just a penny each. So, somehow, way back then, I started, finding what I did. lurking just below their simple surfaces. But I'm older now.

Nathan R. Mathews:

Plight:

- 1) A condition or situation of difficulty or adversity.
- 2) A solemn pledge.
- 3) To promise or bind by a solemn pledge.
- 4) To marry.

A Woman's Plight grew from a wonderful collaboration with Harolyn Blackwell. As Harolyn and I read through Poe's poems, she was moved by the poems that now comprise this piece. I put them in a sequence that forms an extended dramatic monologue for the singing actor. The cycle became one concert work. Harolyn continued to inspire as she suggested the title for this piece. The mysteries of Poe's writing inspired us both as I traded notes on the page for the lush sounds of Harolyn's voice.

David Del Tredici:

What lifts us up, energizes us. inspires us – what gives us wings – is the theme of this 35-minute sequence of five songs for soprano and piano. which are played without pause.

The first poem, David Brunetti's *I Can Change*, celebrates the tantalizing possibility of personal change, as glimpsed in and inspired by the surrounding world. Brunetti's vivid, far-flung images are held together by a rigid structure. Four of the five verses begin with the word "if" (e.g., "if that worm ... can turn into something exquisite ..."), then conclude with the affirmation, "I can change." The music beneath these verses is fast and breathless, offering the composer the challenge of differentiating the two portions of each verse while maintaining forward motion.

New Year's Eve was written by Carla Drysdale as an appreciation for my piano performance, in drag, at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, New Year's Eve 1998. At breakfast on New Year's Day, Carla presented me with her newly-minted poem and I delightedly set it to music. What lifted her, moved her, was not so much my piano-playing or the celebratory night, but rather the audacious dress (and accessories) in which I flew, as it were, across the keyboard. The song is fast and fiery, with an overdeveloped piano part reminiscent of my New Year's Eve exertions.

The third and fourth songs are a contrasting pair, as their respective subtitles underscore: The third song, *What Lips My Lips Have Kissed*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay, is subtitled *Song of Loss and Pain*, and counterposed to it is a *Song of Faith and Hope* – my subtitle for *Abide With Me*, which is the fourth song. *What Lips* is the still-point of the cycle – a wingless place where regret and hopelessness banish the possibility of uplifting flight of any kind. The music, in E-flat minor, is static, sluggish and chromatic. Only near the end does an ecstatic passage in the piano touch upon the major mode and suggest a momentary lifting of the gloom. By way of fulfillment, *Abide With Me*, an E-flat major setting of Henry Lyte's familiar hymn-text, flies us to a brighter world, full of infinite possibility. During the final verse; the famous hymn-tune associated with the Lyte text is added as counterpoint to the piano part, around which the soprano weaves a graceful melisma *in alt*.

The climactic final song, *A Visitation*, by Edward Field, is the longest and most epic. Wings, no longer mere metaphorical allusion, are actually made flesh (or perhaps feather) in this narrative poem – the tale of an angel who crashes to earth and startles, then deeply touches, the two earthling witnesses. The music begins dramatically, even violently ("The man fell out of the sky"). Then, as the angel awakens and begins to speak, the music turns unearthly and mysterious, as if from another planet. Each narrative event of the poem is pictured vividly in the music – the angel speaks the word "brother" – his limbs miraculously heal – a ship descends to take him away, while the earthlings fall into a trance. Towards the end there is an extended, neo-romantically rich, epilogue: "Then we awoke, looking at each other with wonder." At the *very* end, a new melody suddenly appears and makes manifest?in its Mendelssohnian way, the full significance of the title *On Wings of Song*. *On Wings of Song* was commissioned by ROE in observance of its 20th anniversary.

BIOGRAPHIES

HAROLYN BLACKWELL, soprano, has performed before enthusiastic audiences from the opera stage to concert and recital halls around the world, such as those at The Metropolitan Opera, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Teatro Colon de Buenos Aires. Netherlands Opera, Canadian Opera, Opera de Nice, Glyndeborne Festival and Aix-en-Provence Festival among others.

To date, Miss Blackwell's most successful operatic roles have been Marie (*La Fille du Regiment*), Lakmé (*Lakmé*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Oscar (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Zdenka (*Arabella*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Giulietta (*ICapuleti e i Montecchi*), Olympia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) and Constance (*Dialogues of the Carmélites*). Miss Blackwell also starred in the most recent Broadway Revival of Bernstein's *Candide* as Cunegonde.

The soprano's symphonic engagements have included appearances with The New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Pittsburgh Symphony, The NHK Symphony, Japan, The Royal Philharmonic, The London Symphony Orchestra, The National Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Minnesota Orchestra, The Munich Philharmonic, and The Orchestra of St. Martin in the Fields, among others.

Miss Blackwell has performed under the baton of such renowned conductors as Herbert Blomstedt, James Conlon, Christoph von Dohnányi, Charles Dutoit, Jane Glover, Erich Kunzel, James Levine, Andrew Litton, Zdenek Macal, Kurt Masur, Trevor Pinnock, Andre Previn, Simon Rattle, Gerard Schwarz, Leonard Slatkin and David Zinman.

A native of Washington, D.C., and a graduate of The Catholic University of America, Miss Blackwell's recordings include the role of Clara in the Glyndebourne Festival's *Porgy and Bess* (EMI), Cunegonde in the Broadway cast album of *Candide* (RCA Victor), two solo albums: *Strange Hurt* (RCA Victor) and *Blackwell Sings Bernstein* (RCA Victor), and The London Symphony Orchestra's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (LSO). She is also featured on: *Selections from Porgy and Bess* (Telarc); *The Canadian Brass: Noel* (RCA Victor); and *Sondheim: A Celebration at Carnegie Hall* (RCA Victor).

Miss Blackwell is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, one of which afforded her the opportunity to study and to work in Italy with Renata Tebaldi and Carlo Bergonzi. Others include The Metropolitan

Opera National Council Auditions, two career grants from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation. Opera Index, The Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Award, the Baltimore Opera's Puccini Foundation Award, the WGN-Illinois Opera Guild's "Audition of the Air," the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation and an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Siena College and most recently, an Honorary Doctorate of Music from George Washington University.

In addition to performing, Miss Blackwell is on the Voice Faculty at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland.

JENNIFER BYERS, cellist, also a composer, has composed music for playwrights Edward Albee and Adrienne Kennedy at the Signature Theatre. She is on the staff of composers for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Ms. Byers and her husband, Patrick Byers, have had new compositions performed at the Northampton Center for the Arts, Massachusetts, for the investiture of Dr. Walter Sisulu, in South Africa, and at the Ibla International Piano Competition in Italy.

MARISSA BYERS, clarinetist, began music studies with her father, Patrick Byers. She received her undergraduate degree at New England Conservatory where she studied with Richard Stoltzman. She received a masters degree from Mannes School of Music after studying with David Krakauer. This past year she founded Delancey, A Chamber Music Festival in New York, which encourages new works by composers from non-western traditions presented alongside western composers. She teaches clarinet and chamber music at the Festival of Barbara Krakauer in Vaison la Romaine, France

PATRICK BYERS, composer and pianist, studied composition with Pulitzer Prize winning composers Robert Ward and Karel Husa, with additional studies in orchestration with Sir Leo Aumaud. Bassist, Lynn Peters, violist, Sally Peck, clarinetist, Marissa Byers, and pianist, Robert Rocco presented New York City premieres of *Moby Dick Sonata*, Composers *Sonata*, and *Music History Quartet* at Merkin Hall in November of last year. His opera, *Incident at San Bajo*, was produced in March 2001 by the Riverside Opera Ensemble at the Theatre for the New City in New York City. Ms. Zannoth, who premieres this evening's *Music for Friends*, sang the role of Vera in that opera. Ludwin Music in Los Angeles publishes *Moby Dick Sonata* and *Music History Quartet*. The CD 2001: A Bass. Odyssey with bassist Lynn Peters and friends is distributed by Lemur Music.

DAVID DEL TREDICI, composer and pianist, a Pulitzer-Prize-winning composer, he is generally recognized as the father of Neo-Romanticism in music. He was trained in serial techniques, but his early works, many of them settings of poems by James Joyce, reflect quirky individuality in the handling of those "orthodox" musical materials. Soon, however, he broke away from the language of his teachers to explore the fantasy world of Lewis Carroll and, in so doing, developed his own unique voice -- a rich musical idiom of color, humor and sentiment -- worked out on vast orchestral canvases of tonal sound. His fascination with Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* books produced a surprising diversity -- from the spiky, witty settings of *Pop-Pourri* and *Adventures Underground* (which include folk and rock ensembles), to the extravagant, theatrical opera-cantata, *Final Alice*, and the lush, neo-romantic *Child Alice*.

Del Tredici's music has been commissioned and performed by nearly every major American and European orchestral ensemble. Best-selling recordings were made of both *Final Alice* and *In Memory Of a Summer Day* (Part I of *Child Alice*); the latter work won Del Tredici the Pulitzer Prize in 1980.

Recent years have seen Del Tredici turn from Lewis Carroll to American poetry as a fount of inspiration. Victorian sensibility has yielded to urban contemporary realities -- tormented relationships, personal transformations, and the joys and sorrows of gay life. *Gay Life*, in fact, happens to be the title of his song cycle premiered in May 2001 by the San Francisco Symphony, conductor Michael Tilson Thomas and baritone William Sharp. (Some months later, *OUT Magazine* named the composer one of its people of the year.)

As well, another Del Tredici focus in recent years has shifted from grandiose symphonic works to the more intimate realm of chamber music. In addition to *Grand Trio*, written for the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, Del Tredici has produced *String Quartet No. 1*, for the Da Ponte String Quartet, and *Wondrous The Merge*, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, for baritone and string quartet.

Del Tredici's *Secret Music* CD (on CRI), was hailed by *New York* critic Alex Ross, *Fanfare's* Robert Carl and critic-at-large Jason Serinus as one of the top ten new-music albums of 2001. Commenting on Del Tredici's new vocal outpouring, San Francisco critic Marilyn Tucker was moved to write that it "must surely herald a bright new era for the neglected tradition of song composition." New Del Tredici CDs abound in 2004 -- Deutsche Grammophon's release, in its highly-regarded "20/21" series, of an all-Del Tredici CD featuring conductor Oliver Knussen, soprano Lucy Shelton and the Netherlands' ASKO Ensemble; on the Music and Arts label, a pair of recent Del Tredici song cycles featuring soprano Hila Plitmann with the composer at the piano; on Dorian: *In Wartime*, a spectacular new work for concert band; and on Koch, a selection of piano compositions played by Anthony de Mare.

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Del Tredici's many compositional honors include Guggenheim and Woodrow Wilson fellowships, the Brandeis and Friedheim Awards, grants from the NEA, and election to The American Academy of Arts and Letters. He currently sits on the Boards of Directors of Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music and is Distinguished Professor of Music at the City College of New York.

Del Tredici lives in New York City with his husband, Ray Warman.

STEPHEN DEMBSKI, composer. During the past year, Stephen Dembski's work has been premiered in Prague, Bologna, and Chicago; his concert music is widely recorded, and he now also appears on six recent CDs as a conductor of large-scale modular compositions for improvising musicians. Among his many honors are several commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a major award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He divides his time between New York City and Madison, where for over two decades he has supervised the graduate program in composition at the University of Wisconsin.

SCOTT GENDEL, composer, has composed music which has received performances by Mimmi Fulmer, Leone Buyse, The American Symphony Orchestra, and the La Crosse Chamber Chorale. He has received commissions from the Madison Children's Choir, the Edgewood Community Orchestra, and the Bel Canto Singers. Gendel is an associate lecturer in composition as he pursues a DMA in composition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Gendel has studied composition with Steve Dembski, Daron Hagen, and Joan Tower. Scott is excited to be making his New York City debut tonight, and would like to thank the Riverside Opera Ensemble for the opportunity.

JOHN KOCH, tenor. has performed with regional opera companies throughout the United States. For five seasons he has performed the role of King Kaspar in Gian Carlo Menotti's own production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall with The Little Orchestra Society. Mr. Koch has toured internationally in several productions including the Philip Glass opera, *Einstein on the Beach*, performing at the Frankfurt Opera, the Liceu Opera in Barcelona and music festivals at the Victoria State Theatre in Melbourne, Australia, the Bobigny Festival in Paris, and the Tokyo Opinions Festival. He has recorded *Einstein on the Bench* with the Philip Glass Ensemble for Nonesuch Records, and was a featured performer in the PBS television documentary, *The Making of Einstein on the Beach*. He can also be heard singing Mozart, Bernstein and Gershwin on the Allegro recording entitled *Summerdays*. Along with his performance obligations, Mr. Koch maintains a private voice studio in New York City.

NATHAN R. MATTHEWS, composer and pianist, is a founder and Artistic and Music Director of the Riverside Opera Ensemble. He has served as Artistic and Music Director/Conductor for all of the company's productions. His credits with the company are included in the Riverside Opera Ensemble company history. Mr. Matthews's credits include serving on the music staff of the Santa Fe Opera; touring North America over many seasons for Columbia Artists and Karlsruhe Concerts where he appeared as a solo pianist and accompanist; Mark Hamill's keyboard coach for the original Broadway production of *Amadeus*; music director, Off-Broadway revival of *They're Playing Our Song*. Among those he has worked with on the concert, opera and musical theatre stage are Harolyn Blackwell, Dixie Carter, Jane Powell, Ann Blyth, Mariette Hartley, Richard Fredricks, Ken Berry, Noel Harrison, James Randolph, Harry Dworchak and Edmond Karlsruud. Regionally, he has been music director for new productions at the Riverside Theatre (FL), Virginia Musical Theatre and at Stmthers Library Theatre (PA). Mr. Matthews is Music Director in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University at Buffalo – State University of New York. He is an Artist/Teacher for Arts4All, Ltd and has served on faculty at the University of Florida, and the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. He serves on the Advisory Board for the AMAS Musical Theatre in New York City. Mr. Matthews graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He holds a Master of Music in Vocal Accompanying and Coaching from the University of Illinois where he studied with John Wustman. Mr. Matthews maintains a studio as a vocal coach in Manhattan.

HILA PLITMANN, soprano, born in Jerusalem, began her professional career by premiering Pulitzer Prize winner David Del Tredici's *The Spider and the Fly* with The New York Philharmonic under the baton of Maestro Kurt Masur, Her solo work includes performances with The New York Philharmonic, The Chicago Symphony, The Israel Philharmonic, The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, The Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, The New Israeli Opera and numerous other orchestras and ensembles in the U.S. and abroad. Other performances include a debut recital in Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall premiering David Del Tredici's song cycle *Lament on the Death of a Bullfighter*, Fauré's *Requiem* with Bobby McFerrin and The Pacific Symphony, and Mozart's *Mass in C minor* with The Mexico City Philharmonic. Her performed operatic roles include Monica in *The Medium*, Sister Constance in *Dialogues of the Carmélites*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*. Ms. Plitmann's catalogue of Del Tredici recordings include the song cycle *Miz Inez Sez*, under the CRI label,

Vintage Alice and *Dracula* with the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, and *Lament on the Death of a Bullfighter* with the composer at the piano. She received her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees with high honors from The Juilliard School of Music, and has been awarded the coveted Sony ES Prize for her outstanding contribution to the vocal arts.

JUDITH SKINNER, contralto, a Brooklyn native, has sung Erda in *Das Rheingold* with conductor Richard Weitach; Mama Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Cape Cod Opera; Tituba in *The Crucible* at Toledo Opera; Alto Soloist in *Elgar's Sea Pictures Symphony* at the New York Symphonic Arts Ensemble; the Mother in *Les Contes d'Hoffman* and created the role of Harriet Tubman in *She Never Lost A Passenger*, as a Resident Artist with Opera Memphis; Betty in Michael Ching's opera, *Faith*, at both the Vital Theater in New York and in Chicago; Baba in *The Medium* and Magdelone in Nielsen's *Maskerade* at Bronx Opera. Roles include Marcelina (*Le Nozze Di Figaro*), La Principessa (*Suor Angelica*), the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*, the Mayor in *The Happy Prince*, Marah in *Riders To The Sea*, Lady Spirit in *A Christmas Carol*, and Katisha in *The Mikado* with Regina Opera.

SHERRY ZANNOTH, soprano, has appeared as a solo artist at the Metropolitan Opera and at Carnegie Hall. She has performed roles in numerous opera houses including the New York City Opera, Bavarian State Opera, the Wexford Festival and Opera Cologne. She has sung extensively throughout North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Far East with Ambassadors of Opera, with whom she was a guest of the Chinese government and appeared on Chinese television. Ms. Zannoth has performed with conductors James Levine, Jeffrey Tate, Julius Rudel, Pinchas Steinberg, Marcello Panni and John Mauceri. Her Lady Macbeth was described by l'Opera Milano as "... a surprising lady and an unusual one, totally secure from the highest note to the lowest note and first rate phrasing, regal, elegant, cold, formidable and thrilling," Her premiere performance recording of *Death of the Hired Man* by Andrew Violette was released on the Innova Label in 2004. This evening marks Ms. Zannoth's second world premiere of music by Patrick Byers with The Riverside Opera Ensemble. She created the role of Vera in *Incident at San Bajo* with the company in 2001. Ms. Zannoth is a recitalist and a voice teacher.

POMES PENYEACH

by James Joyce

A Flower Given to My Daughter

Frail the white rose and frail are
Her hands that gave
Whose soul is sere and paler
Than time's wan wave.

Rosefrail and fair-- yet frailest
A wonder wild
In gentle eyes thou veilest,
My blueveined child.

Simples

*O bella bionda,
Sei come l'onda!*

Of cool sweet dew and radiance mild
The moon a web of silence weaves
In the still garden where a child
Gathers the simple salad leaves.
A moon dew stars her hanging hair
And moonlight kisses her young brow
And, gathering, she sings an air:
Fair as the wave is, fair, art thou!
Be mine, I pray, a waxen ear
To shield me from her childish croon
And mine a shielded heart for her
Who gathers simples of the moon.

Alone

The noon's greygolden meshes make
All night a veil,
The shorelamps in the sleeping lake
Laburnum tendrils trail.

The sly reeds whisper to the night
A name-- her name -
And all my soul is a delight,
A swoon of shame.

A WOMAN'S PLIGHT

Poems by: Edgar Allan Poe

To _____
Undated manuscript 1845-49

I heed not that my earthly lot
Hath —— little of Earth in it —
That years of love have been
forgot

In the hatred of a minute: —
I mourn not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate
Who am a passer by.

SONG OF THE NEWLY- WEDDED

Bridal Ballad – Text C – Mar. 4,
1843

The ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well,
But, when he breath'd his vow,
I felt my bosom swell —
For the words rang like a knell,
And the voice seem'd *his* who fell
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to re-assure me,
And he kissed my pallid
brow,
While a reverie came o're me,
And to the church-yard bore
me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
"Oh, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were
spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be
broken,
And, though my heart be
broken,
Behold the golden token
That *proves* me happy now!

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken,
Lest an evil step be taken, —
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

(1849)

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow --
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand --
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep -- while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

I 1 CAN CHANGE

by David Brunetti

If those trees can turn from green to red to brown to black and white and then back to green again, if those trees can change like that, I can change.

If that worm, sneered at; trying to avoid being stepped on, terrified, self-loathing, can turn into something exquisite and free and orange, gasped at by children as it flies gently across the grassy lawn, if that worm can change like that, I can change.

If that tadpole, trapped in the water at the edge of the lake, darting madly around, panicking as he watches his brothers and sisters being eaten alive, if he can turn into a funny, fabled creature, gasped at by children, dreamed at by men, who goes deep down into the dark water when he chooses, or sits on a leaf in the air, breathing and calling to his funny friends, if that tadpole can change like that, I can change.

If that wounded man, sinking like a stone in a lake, ripping at himself, ripping at other people in his impotent rage as he sinks, heart and groin frozen, if he can turn into a singing, screaming, seeing, sober, sobbing, laughing, loving, fucking, truth-telling liver of life, trusted by children, if that wounded man can change like that, I can change.

God became trees and worms and tadpoles and wounded people and children, and He changed and changed and changed and changed again; until He touched His hand to His forehead and laughed, remembering He was God; then the whole world relaxed at last.

II NEW YEARS EVE *for David Del Tredici*

His head jerked and shook
the trashy yellow shag wig he wore.
He grimaced and shuddered, eyes wild, focussed.
A spaghetti strap from his pink nylon slip
rolled down to rest on a ledge of muscle
between his shoulder and tricep.
Music tore through his body
his hands stormed the keys
the piano shrieked in primal notes
we felt in our human bones.
I loved looking at him.
He played for us -- the dreamers, creators,
eccentrics, the driven, the insecure,
the arrogant; the labelled and unlabelled,
the disowned and owned again.
I loved looking at him
as the year crested and rolled forward again.

—Carla Drysdale

III

WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE KISSED

(Song of Loss and Pain)

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,
 I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
 Under my head till morning; but the rain
 Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
 Upon the glass and listen for reply,
 And in my heart sits a quiet pain
 For unremembered lads that not again
 Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.
 Thus in winter stands the lonely tree,
 Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,
 Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
 I cannot say what loves have come and gone,
 I only know that summer sang in me
 A little while, that in me sings no more.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

IV

ABIDE WITH ME

(Song of Faith and Hope)

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
 The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, oh abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
 Change and decay in all around I see;
 O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
 What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
 Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
 Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
 Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
 I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
 In life, in death. O Lord, abide with me.

Henry Francis Lyte

V

A Visitation

The man fell out of the sky
 crumpling among the dunes,
 his legs and wings broken.

I saw him from the lighthouse
 window and ran out
 calling Reina to come
 and we brought him indoors
 to the big room below.
 He was surprisingly easy to carry.

Reina knew how to set broken
 legs
 but how do you do wings?
 Lying on his back as he was
 they stuck out crookedly.
 How do you lie down with wings
 on?

Wherever he came from
 there must be special beds
 or racks they hang over.

I started to call the doctor
 but hung up, thinking
 that this man with wings
 could upset people a lot.

He stirred and mumbled blurry
 words.

Reina wiped off his face –
 he was beautiful.
 His eyes opened--they were blue.
 He spoke, and we loved him.

What did he say?
 Later on we talked about it a lot
 but never agreed exactly

except that he called me brother
 and Reina daughter
 perhaps because between men
 it is brotherhood that moves the heart
 and for a man it is his daughter
 who arouses his tenderness.

On awakening he had a kind of
 epileptic fit:
 A vibration went through him
 and his limbs healed instantly.
 Maybe what we call epilepsy
 is powers of the body
 we don't know how to use.
 He sat up, stretched his wings
 that folded naturally behind him,
 then leaned back against them.
 Of course, that's the way you do it.

Our instinct had been right
 not to tell anyone about him:
 He thanked us for our kindness
 and asked us not to give him away
 for there would be no escaping the
 protective custody
 earthmen would put him under.

He made a strange whistle,
 a humming surrounded our lighthouse,
 and we seemed to fall into trance.
 I think a ship descended and there was
 activity.
 Then we awoke, looking at each other
 with wonder.

- Edward Field

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