

NIGHT
DISSERTATION RECITAL
OF
KIRSTEN ASHLEY WIEST, SOPRANO

WITH
DR. KYLE ADAM BLAIR, PIANO

Saturday, April 13, 2019
7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Program:

- Black Sunday (2018) **world premiere*.....Joseph Bishara (b. 1970)
- Leinolaulut (2007).....Kaija Saariaho (b.1952)
- Phoenix (2016).....James Erber (b.1951)
- Mara (2019) **world premiere*.....Jeffrey Holmes (b. 1971)
- Being Beauteous (2018).....Gérard Pape (b. 1955)

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Dissertation Recital of Kirsten Ashley Wiest, soprano

with

Dr. Kyle Adam Blair, piano

Saturday, April 13, 2019 at 7:00pm

*Though my soul my set it darkness, it will rise in perfect light;
I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.*

Sarah Williams

Joseph Bishara (b. 1970) is an American composer, music producer, and actor, best known for his work scoring films such as *Insidious*, *11-11-11*, *Dark Skies*, and *The Conjuring*. Bishara's career began with the 1998 Biblical drama *Joseph's Gift*, though he composes music for mainly horror and thriller films and has collaborated several times with director James Wan. Projects by directors John Carpenter and Joseph Zito, and musicians Ray Manzarek and Diamanda Galás have incorporated Bishara's work. In addition to composing, Bishara frequently appears in films he is involved in, usually made up as a demon or other supernatural creature. He has also functioned as a producer on *Repo! The Genetic Opera*.

Black Sunday for textless a cappella soprano is a sonic exploration of the microtonal nuances inherent in the human voice. Composed in November 2018 for soprano Kirsten Ashley Wiest, this short piece combines elements of horror film scoring with the resonant acoustics of the concert stage to create a lingering, haunting atmosphere.

Kaija Saariaho (née *Laakkonen*, b. 1952) is a Finnish composer based in Paris, France. She studied composition in Helsinki, Freiburg, and Paris, where she has lived since 1982. Her research at the Institute for Research and Coordination Acoustic (IRCAM) marked a turning point in her music away from strict serialism towards spectralism. Her characteristically rich, polyphonic textures are often created by combining live music and electronics. During the course of her career, Saariaho has received commissions from the Lincoln Center for the Kronos Quartet and from IRCAM for the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the BBC, the New York Philharmonic, the Salzburg Music Festival, the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, and the Finnish National Opera, among others.

Leino Songs are Saariaho's setting of poems by one of Finland's most important poets, **Eino Leino**. He was the most important developer of Finnish-language poetry at the turn of the 20th century, and in his works combined symbolism, mythic tradition and influences from Nietzsche with his own romantic concept of the poet as a truth-seeking visionary. The four songs, entitled "Looking at You", "The Heart", "Evening Prayer", and "Peace", were written for the Finnish soprano Anu Komsa and are the first set of songs Saariaho has written in Finnish.

I.

Sua katselen silmin ma huikaistuin
kuni kaunista sateenkaarta,
sua silmäni sulkien muistelen kuin
meren laskija lehtosaarta.

Sua katson ma hiljaa henkien
kuin kuvaa äitini armaan
ja uskon, ett' enkelit lapsuuden
nyt lähellä liikkuvat varmaan.

When I open my eyes, I am mesmerized
by a beautiful rainbow.
When I close my eyes, I remember you
as a fisherman remembers his island.

When I look, breathing silently,
like a picture of my graceful mother,
I believe that angels of childhood
stir nearby.

II.

Sydän, mitä sahaat?
Sahaatko lautaa
neljää, joiden
välissä maata,
maata mun mieluisa on?
Sahaan ma rautaa,
kahleita katkon,
että sun henkesi
vapaa oisi,
henkesi onneton.

Sydän, mitä kuiskaat?
Kuiskitko kummaa
polkua päivän,
tunturin tietä
taivahan tähtiä päin?
Kuiskin ma tummaa
runoa Tuonen,
kuiluja vaivaa
virkkamatonta,
autuutta ylpeäin.

Heart, what do you saw?
You are sawing
four pieces of wood
for me to comfortably
lie between.
I am sawing my iron
shackles open,
so that your
unhappy spirit
will be free.

Heart, what are you whispering?
You whisper
the path of the day,
down the mountain road
and toward the Heavenly stars.
I whisper dark
poems of death,
troublesome gaps
abound.
Arrogant blessedness.

III.

Mitä on nää tuoksut mun ympärillän?
Mitä on tämä hiljaisuus?
Mitä tietävi rauha mun sydämessäin,
Tää suuri ja outo ja uus?

Minä kuulen kuink' kukkaset kasvavat
ja metsässä puhuvat puut.
Minä luulen, nyt kypsyvät unelmat
ja toivot ja tuo'ot muut.

Kaikk' on niin hiljaa mun ympärillän,
kaikk' on niin hellää ja hyvää.
Kukat suuret mun aukeevat sydämessäin
ja tuoksuvat rauhaa syvää.

What are these scents around me?
What is this silence?
What does this peace in my heart mean,
so big and strange and new?

I hear the flowers growing
and the trees talking in the woods.
I believe my dreams are growing, too,
bringing hope and more dreams.

Everything is so quiet around me,
everything is so tender and good.
The flowers bloom inside my heart
and the fragrance is deep peace.

IV.

Unta, unta, unta
syvää uinumaan.
Lunta, lunta, lunta
päälle mustan maan.

Yössä, yössä, yössä
öiset lunnut lentää.
Työssä, työssä, työssä
lepää tuskat sentään.

Lennä, lennä, lennä
aatos inehmon!
Mennä, mennä, mennä
aika maata on.

Dream, dream, dream,
deep sleep.
Snow, snow, snow
on black earth.

In the night, in the night, in the night,
fly the birds of the night.
In work, in work, in work
my pains do rest.

Fly, fly, fly
thoughts!
Go, go, go
it's time to sleep.

James Erber (b. 1951) is a British composer of the New Complexity school. Born in London, he studied music at the universities of Sussex (BA, 1973) and Nottingham (MA, 1975), and worked in music publishing from 1976 to 1979. In the early 1980s, he undertook serious studies in composition, first with Jonathan Harvey at Sussex (MPhil 1983), and then with Brian Ferneyhough at the Hochschule für Musik

Freiburg. In addition to composing, Erber lectured for three years at Goldsmiths College, London (1991–94), and has written articles and given guest lectures throughout Europe.

The two songs which make up *Phoenix* are settings of sonnets, both concerned with the subject of love, from "De gli eroici furori" by the 16th century hermetic philosopher **Giordano Bruno**. In the first, "Unico augel del sol", the lover compares himself with the mythical Phoenix. He himself burns with transitory earthly love, while the flames which periodically consume the Phoenix (the symbol of divine love) cause him to be reborn to new life. The second sonnet "Ben ch'a tanti martir" is a paean to love, which has caused the poet to suffer unimaginable torments but has also rewarded him with transcendental vision.

The music of *Phoenix* shows Erber's love of the music of the early Baroque, in particular the solo motets which occur throughout Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. In both sonnets, the piano part consists of a two-part invention, which both supports and contrasts with the (more freely composed) vocal line. The end of the second sonnet is a vocalise: the voice (symbolising the voice of the Phoenix) and the two piano lines become one, as earthly and divine love merge.

Phoenix: Two Sonnets by Giordano Bruno was composed in December 2016 for Kirsten Ashley Wiest, and is dedicated to her and Jeffrey Holmes.

I.

Unico augel del sol, vaga Fenice,
Ch'appareggi col mondo gli anni tui,
Quai colmi ne l'Arabia felice,
Tu sei chi fuste, io son quel che non fui.
Io per caldo d'amor muoio infelice;
Ma te rattiv'il sol co' raggi sui.
Tu bruggi 'n un, ed io in ogni loco;
Io da Cupido, hai tu da Febo il foco.

Hai termini prefissi
Di lunga vita, e io ho breve fine,
Che pronto s'offre per mille ruine;
Né so quel che vivrò, né quel che vissi:
Me cieco fato adduce,
Tu certo torni a riveder tua luce.

Only bird of the sun, fair Phoenix,
Who equals the world's years with your own,
Which you live out in Arabia Felix,
You are what you were, I am what I was not.
I die unhappy from the heat of love,
But the sun revives you with his rays.
You burn in one, and I in every place.
I have my fire from Cupid, you from Apollo.

You have fixed terms
Of long life, and I have a short course,
Which readily reveals itself in a thousand ruinings;
Neither do I know what I shall I've out, nor what I have lived:
Blind fate leads me,
While you will surely return to see your light again.

(adapted from the translation by George Kay)

II.

Ben ch'a tanti martir mi fai soggetto,
Pur ti ringrazio, e assai ti deggio, amore,
Che con si nobil piaga apristi il petto,
E tan impadronisti del mio core,
Per cui fia ver, ch'un divo e viv' oggetto
Di dio piu bella imago in terra adore.
Pensi chi vuol, ch'il mio destin sia rio,
Ch'uccide in speme, e fa vivo in desio!

Pascomi d'alts impresa;
E ben ch'il fin bramato non consegua,
Et in tanto studio l'alma si dilegua,
Basta, che sia si nobilmente accesa,
Basta, ch'alto mi tolsi,
E da l'ignobil numero mi sciolsi.

I thank you and am grateful to you, o Love,
For you opened by breast with so generous a wound
And have so mastered my heart,
That it adores a divine and living object,
The most beautiful image of God on earth.
Let him who will think that my fate is cruel,
For it kills in hope and revives in desire.

I am nourished by my high enterprise,
And even if the soul does not attain the desired end,
And is consumed by so much zeal,
It is enough that it burns in so noble a fire;
It is enough that I have been raised up on high
And delivered from all ignoble ties.

(adapted from the translation by P. E. Memmo Jr.)

Jeffrey Holmes (b. 1971) composes post-spectral, teleological music incorporating elements of mysticism and lyrical expression. His creative inspiration is rooted in primitive myths, transcendent legends, and dramatic elemental landscapes in their primal and violent natural states. He has received commissions, performances, and awards from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, Carnegie Hall, American Composers Forum, the Guitar Foundation of America, Talea Ensemble, JACK Quartet, and many others. He holds a Doctorate in Music Composition from the University of Southern California, and is Associate Professor of Composition at Chapman University.

Mara, for soprano and piano, is comprised of three sections or images, each preceded by an instrumental introduction, all culminating in a final closing section. Each of the three sections or images portrays a dream state with text by the composer: a winter landscape; night falling; the abyss or chasm of the primordial sea. These three dreams are then recapitulated in reverse order, but now the dreams have passed from psychological fantasy to the physical realm, by being conjured through the recitation of a magick runic formula. Each of these images manifest in contrasting, though related, intertwined musical materials: non-octave harmonies for the freezing mist and silent lake; polyrhythmic scales for the serpent-like turbulent river; arpeggios across wide registers for the violent sea. *Mara* is a highly virtuosic and dramatic work that is neither a song-cycle nor theater, but instead exists beyond reality, as a union of the cerebral and the imagination. *Mara* was composed during the winter of 2019 in Lake Arrowhead, California, for Kirsten Ashley Wiest.

| | |
|---|--|
| I. Ór Vetrinn Hljoðr vatn blár skikkja Herfiligar kala þoka Dauði vindr galagaldr | I. From Winter Silent lake, blue cloak Harsh freezing mist Death-wind sings spells. |
| II. Ók Náttu Qlfossa tunglskin ormr Sky dreyrugr bylgja Úrvedr kala | II. Become Night Turbulent river, moonlit Serpent Blood-stained clouds billow Cold rainstorm. |
| III. At Gap Ægir meinsamr ríkr dreki Þrymja færa dǫuðarorð Snjár hogg helgrind bardagibani hefnd | III. To the Chasm Violent sea, powerful Dragon Thunder hurls death-tidings Snow strikes death-gate, Battle-Slayer, vengeance. |

Gérard Pape (b. 1955) is a composer of electronic music, author, and psychologist. He studied clinical psychology and music at University of Michigan, and works as a Lacanian psychoanalyst and composer. After moving to France at the beginning of the 1990s, his compositions came under the influence of the Mexican composer Julio Estrada, with the two sharing an interest in psychoanalysis and focus on "sound fantasies"—fantasies that occur "inside the head of the composer and take the form of sequences of sounds" (Estrada). Pape extended Estrada's conception by treating chaos as a formal concept, composing highly-notated chaos into his works. In 1991, Pape became the director of Les Ateliers UPIC (now CCMIX), and created the *CLSI ensemble* (Circle for the Liberation of Sounds & Images) in 2007.

Being Beauteous was composed in October 2018 for soprano Kirsten Ashley Wiest on text of the same title by **Arthur Rimbaud**. In this work, all harmonies, durations, pulsations, and microtonal patterns of vibrato are composed based on the rhythmic structure of Rimbaud's poetry. The meaning and resulting sound of the French text inspired the notated vocal timbres and dynamics, which vary over the course of the piece. While voice and piano play in different tuning systems, they work as one to create a dramatic space for the work, filled with shimmering colors and unexpected twists and turns.

Devant une neige un Être de Beauté de haute taille.
Des sifflements de mort et des cercles de musique
sourde font monter, s'élargir et trembler comme un
spectre ce corps adoré: des blessures écarlates et
noires éclatent dans les chaires superbes. Les
couleurs propres de la vie se foncent, dansent, et
se dégagent autour de la Vision, sur le chantier.
Et les frissons s'élèvent et grondent, et la
saveur forcenée de ces effets se chargeant avec
les sifflements mortels et les rauques musiques
que le monde, loin derrière nous, lance sur notre
mère de beauté, - elle recule, elle se dresse. Oh!
nos os sont revêtus d'un nouveau corps amoureux.

In front of the snow stands a tall Beauteous Being.
The hissing of death and circles of muffled music
make this adored body climb, expand, tremble:
black and scarlet wounds
burst in the superb flesh.
The proper colors of life darken, dance,
and give off around the vision, upon the yard.
And the shudders rise and fall, and
the maniacal flavor of these effects being charged
with the mortal hissing and raucous music
that the world, well behind us, hurls on our
mother of beauty-she withdraws, she stands up. O!
Our bones are dressed again in a new amorous body.

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With lots of love and deep gratitude,
Kirsten*