



The Lady of Shalott (New York Premiere)Robert Convery (b. 1954)
Jovanne Cortez, Bryce Logan, Teeanna Fogle, Cesar Rangel Muñoz, Shane Geisel, soloists

Part I

*On either side the river lie long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky; and thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot; and up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow round an island there below, the island of Shalott.*

*Willows whiten, aspens quiver, little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever by the island in the river flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers the Lady of Shalott.*

*By the margin, willow veil'd, slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd the shallop flitteth silken sail'd skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand? Or is she known in all the land, the Lady of Shalott?*

*Only reapers, reaping early in among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly from the river winding clearly, down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary, piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy Lady of Shalott."*

Part II

*There she weaves by night and day a magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say, a curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot. She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily, and little other care hath she, the Lady of Shalott.*

*And moving thro' a mirror clear that hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear. There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot: there the river eddy whirls.
And there the surly village-churls and the red cloaks of market girls, pass onward from Shalott.*

*Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, an abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad, or long-hair'd page in crimson clad
Goes by to tower'd Camelot; and sometimes thro' the mirror blue the knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true, the Lady of Shalott.*

*But in her web she still delights to weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights a funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot: or when the moon was overhead
Came two young lovers lately wed; "I am half sick of shadows," said the Lady of Shalott.*

Part III

*A bow-shot from her bower-eaves, he rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, and flam'd upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot. A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd to a lady in his shield,
that sparkled on the yellow field, beside remote Shalott.*

*The gemmy bridle glitter'd free, like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy. The bridle bells rang merrily as he rode down from Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldrick slung a mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung, beside remote Shalott.*

*All in the blue unclouded weather thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down from Camelot. As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright, some bearded meteor, trailing light, moves over still Shalott.*

*His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd; on burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd his coal-black curls as on he rode, as he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river he flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river sang Sir Lancelot*

*She left the web, she left the loom, she made three paces thro' the room
She saw the water-lily bloom, she saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot. Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side; "The curse is come upon me," cried the Lady of Shalott.*

Part IV

*In the stormy east-wind straining, the pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining, heavily the low sky raining over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote, The Lady of Shalott.*

*And down the river's dim expanse like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance – with a glassy countenance did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day she loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away, the Lady of Shalott.*

*Lying, robed in snowy white that loosely flew to left and right –
The leaves upon her falling light – thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot: and as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among, they heard her singing her last song, the Lady of Shalott.*

*Heard a carol, mournful, holy, chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly, and her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to tower'd Camelot. For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side, singing in her song she died, the Lady of Shalott.*

*Under tower and balcony, by garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by, dead-pale between the houses high, silent into Camelot.*

*Out upon the wharfs they came, knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name, The Lady of Shalott.*

*Who is this? and what is here? And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer; and they cross'd themselves for fear, all the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space; he said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace, the Lady of Shalott."*

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Robert Convery is an authentic vocal composer, as opposed to most, who are inauthentic instrumental composers. His music is expressed in a distinctly personal voice of lyricism, rhythmic vitality, a keen harmonic sense, and transparent textures. He has written many works in all genres of vocal music, but his first love is choral music. He has held composer residencies at universities and colleges around this great nation of ours. His own musical studies were at Westminster Choir College, The Curtis Institute of Music, and The Juilliard School where he finished with a doctorate which almost 'finished' him. Principle teachers have been David Diamond, Ned Rorem, Vincent Persichetti and, most influentially, his friend and mentor, Richard Hundley.

Mr. Convery has written seven one-act operas, forty-five cantatas, twelve song cycles, sixty-five songs for voice and piano, as well as numerous non-vocal orchestral and chamber works. His operas have had performances with Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Festival Dei Due Mondi, Lake George Opera Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, Juilliard Opera Center, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, The Aaron Copland House, and The Curtis Institute of Music Opera Theater where Mr. Convery's one-act opera *Pyramus and Thisbe* was staged and conducted by Boris Goldovsky. Performances of other works have been with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestra del Teatro Verdi di Trieste, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony, Musica Sacra and New York Festival of Song. Mr. Convery's cantata *Songs of Children* (1991), poems by children from Terezin Concentration Camp, received its Washington, D.C. premiere in 1993 as part of the celebration of the opening of The United States Holocaust Museum. *Making Art*, an award-winning documentary for PBS Television on the creation and performance of Mr. Convery's Christmas cantata *The Nativity of Our Lord*, was produced in 1993. Mr. Convery's fifth opera, *Clara*, based on the life of Clara Schumann, was commissioned and produced by the University of Maryland at College Park in 2004. Mr. Convery's song cycle, *Five Settings of Robert Louis Stevenson*, and a short comic opera, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, were premiered in February 2007 at Weill Recital Hall under the auspices of Center for Contemporary Opera. In April 2010, Mr. Convery's cantata *Songs of Children* was performed on the United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Day concert. In December 2011, Mr. Convery's opera *The Passion of Lizzie Borden*, was performed at the Aaron Copland House with Lauren Flanagan, soprano, and Michael Boriskin, piano. In 2020, a recording of Mr. Convery's cantata *Voyages* was nominated for a Grammy.

Mr. Convery's works are published with E.C. Schirmer, Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., earthsongs, and Emerson Music. He is included in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Mr. Convery was born in 1954 in Wichita, KS, was raised in San Francisco, CA, and currently resides in Long Island City, NY.

PERFORMING PERSONNEL

CHORALE

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor

Soprano

Margaret Keeley
Katarina Lingo
Jinge Ma
Haley McNally [MU Alumna]
Cassidy McNew
Megan Murphy
Dana Raugh
Cassandra Wright

Alto

Hannah Buckbee
Teeanna Fogle
Leah Halcisak
Marisa Kowalski [MU Alumna]
Madalyn Miller
Kellee Roberts
Sarah Rothermel
Annie Sahd

Tenor

Grayson Conrad
Matthew Cortes
Nick Keilholtz
Bryce Logan
Roberto Santana
Dakota Shertzer
Brayden Smith

Bass

Matt Cona
Jovanne Cortez
Shane Geisel
Ezekiel MacCloskey
Liam Moss
Samuel Pedersen
Cesar Rangel Muñoz

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Prof. Michael Vitale
Prof. Vera Volchansky