

Saturday, 1 November 2025
7:30 p.m.

Biemesderfer Concert Hall
Winter Center of Visual and Performing Arts



presents

Poetic Gems, Choral Jewels

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor

Dr. Xun Pan, collaborative pianist

I. Cantilena Women's Choir

The Lake Isle of Innisfree.....Eleanor Daley (b. 1955)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree, and a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;

Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee, and live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;

There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow, and evening full of linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey, I hear it in the deep heart's core.

W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Wenn die Klänge.....Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

When the lamentation flees in the waves of sweet joy; ah, the lonely breast often longs for deeper melodies

Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788-1857)

The Waking.....Giselle Wyers (b. 1969)

I strolled across an open field; the sun was out; heat was happy.

This way! This way! The wren's throat shimmered, either to other; the blossoms sang.

The stones sang, the little ones did, and flowers jumped like small goats.

A ragged fringe of daisies waved; I wasn't alone in a grove of apples.

Far in the wood a nestling sighed; the dew loosened its morning smells.

I came where the river ran over stones; my ears knew an early joy.

And all the waters of all the streams sang in my veins that summer day.

Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)

"Father William"

from *Three Choral Settings from Alice in Wonderland*.....Irving Fine (1914-1962)

"You are old, Father William," the young man said, "And your hair has become very white.

And yet you incessantly stand on your head. Do you think at your age it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to this son, "I feared it would injure the brain.

But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none, why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "And your jaws are too weak for anything tougher than suet.

Yet, you finished the goose, with the bone and the beak, pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law, and argued each case with my wife.

And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw has lasted the rest of my life."

Lewis Carroll (1832-1898)

II. Chorale

The Lady of Shalott (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 baldric 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)

III. University Choir

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.....Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

*Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here to watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer to stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake the darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake to ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.*

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

En Une Seule Fleur (In a Single Flower)

from *Les Chansons des Roses*.....Morton Lauridsen (b. 1943)

*It is we, perhaps, who proposed that you replenish your bloom.
Enchanted by this charade, your abundance dared.
You were rich enough to fulfill yourself a hundred times over in a single flower;
Such is the state of one who loves. . . But you never did think otherwise.*

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), from *Les Roses*

A Red, Red Rose.....James Mulholland (b. 1935)

*O, my luve's like a red, red rose that's newly sprung in June.
O my luve's like the melody that's sweetly played in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass, so deep in love am I,
I will love thee still, my dear, till a' that seas gang dry,
As fair art thou, my dear, so deep in love am I,
And I will love thee still, my dear, till a' the seas gang dry.
I will love thee still, my dear, while the sands of life shall run.
Till the seas gang dry, my dear, and rocks melt with the sun!
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass, so deep in love am I,
I will come again, my love, tho' it were ten thousand mile!*

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

IV. Choral Union

An Earth Song.....Marques L. A. Garrett (b. 1984)

*I have been waiting, I've been waiting, waiting long.
It's an earth song it's a life song. And I've been waiting long for an earth song.
Strong as the shoots of a new plant, strong as the bursting of new buds.
Strong as the coming of the first child from its mother's womb.
It's an earth song, it's a new song. And I've been waiting long for this new song.
It's an earth song!*

Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

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

CANTILENA CHOIR

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor

Emma Agis
Eva Anderson
Care Bello
Lyn Bingaman
Gianna Carbone
Kathryn Cieri
Rania De La Mar
Isabelle Ebersole
Zoey Fizz
Veronica Fox

Abigail Fraver
Anna Hennessy
Zining Hu
Rose Leitner
Keirly Mcgonigal
Madalyn Miller
Katelyn Mongiovi
Madelyne Prazak
Dana Raugh
Kaydence Reinhart

Charlotte Reisse
Ava Rodriguez
Caris Rolph
Sarah Rothermel
Catherine Samer
Katherine Sarro
Molly Schaeffer
Olivia Shaheen
Jilleanne Sharpe
Eva Shaw

Kat Sherry
Morgan Shultz
Grace Simpson
Cameron Smeltz
Bozhena Sobkevych
Devin Sparwasser
Madelyn Stern
Emily Stinchfield
Morgan Wells
Ava Zink

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 Sahl

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

UNIVERSITY CHOIR

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor

Soprano

Emma Agis
Eva Anderson
Kat Dorsheimer
Margaret Fogleman
Alec Gartner
Rena Greak
Cassidy McNew
Makenzie Merkel
Alexis Phillips
Dana Raugh
Grace Ritter
Sarah Rothermel
Molly Schaeffer
Noah Schenke
Grace Simpson
Bozhena Sobkevych
Devin Sparwasser
Sarah Stevens
Greta Weirich
Elizabeth Wicht
Cassandra Wright

Alto

Madison Bednarz
Bella Dayton
Kathryn Felix
Teeanna Fogle
Izzy Funari
Abigail Giughlo
Leah Halcisak
Chrono Holly
Indi Loop
Jemai Mallory
Natalie Martin
Madalyn Miller
Melanie Palen
Jozie Papcun
Caris Rolph
Celia Romero
Naomi Sharpless
Madelyn Stern
Madison Sweeney

Tenor

Jayvion Allison
Blake Atkins
Enzo Bellini
Rye Boland
Peter Coulbourne
Caleb Creviston
Brian Dobbs
Victoria Dorsch
Kyle Duvall
Timothy Grundy
Kevin Lynch
Samuel Messersmith
Liam Moss
Roberto Santana
Olivia Shaheen
Dakota Shertzer
Brandon Shilling
Elliott Stabler
Michael Tchernev
Collin Warner

Bass

Daniel D'Albora
Enrique Angeles
Jackson Baker
Jeremiah Bell
Anthony Ramos Calderon
Ethan Causa
Josh Corcoran
Damion Crawford
Justin Davis
Joaquin De Los Rios
Edrien Dingzon
Max French
Dylan Gehringer
Tymere Glenn-Peters
Max Guthrie
Sam Heebner
Eamon Helfrich
Rohit Kandala
Jason Klein
Tyler Leakway
Matthew Miller
Justin Natale
Jack Newkirk
Samuel Pedersen
Lucas Sinkinson
Gabe Wolford
Evan Zimmerman

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