

THE BOB COLE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH AND THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PROUDLY PRESENT:



COMPOSITION FACULTY RECITAL

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2011 // 8:00PM

GERALD R. DANIEL RECITAL HALL

PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC MOBILE DEVICES.

PROGRAM

Aves, Ecos, Alientos y Sonido (2005) Raymond Torres-Santos

Lindsey Gonzalez—soprano, Kristina Abella—mezzo-soprano,
Taylor Chan—piano, Alan Shockley—conductor

Three Greek Songs for soprano alone (1966; rev. 2011) Justus Matthews

I. First Delphic Hymn to Apollo
II. Epitaph of Seikilos
III. Hymn to the Sun

Mindi Ehrlich—soprano

Athene (1999) Carolyn Bremer

Gregorio Taniguchi—tenor, Justus Matthews—clarinet, Mark Uranker—piano

INTERMISSION

from *Five Alice Songs* (2010) Luke Hannington

“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Bat”
“Jabberwocky”
“White Knight’s Song”

Ilana Summers—mezzo-soprano, Katie Cox—flute, Peter Martin—alto saxophone,
Justus Matthews—bass clarinet, Casey Martin—trumpet,
Sean Dunnahoe—percussion, Rochelle Nieblas—cello

The End and the Beginning (2007) George Wheeler

Erika Mariko Olsen—soprano, J. Michael St. Clair—vocoder, George Gomez-Wheeler—EWI

Micro-operas 1-3 (2011) Alan Shockley

mystery [passion play]
40s noir film (probably starring Robert Mitchum)
The Spanish Prisoner

Mindi Ehrlich—soprano, Patrick O’Konski—percussion

Cheryl Songs (2008) Adriana Verdié de Vas-Romero

1. A Kite
2. Judging
3. The Big Day
4. Raggedy School
5. Twilight

Scarlett Brais—soprano, Gregorio Taniguchi—tenor,
Mark Uranker—piano, Patrick O’Konski—snare drum

PROGRAM NOTES

AVES, ECOS, ALIENTOS Y SONIDO (Birds, Echo, Breath and Sound) is a song for two sopranos and piano composed in 2005. As many of my works, it is inter-disciplinary and inspired by literature -in this case, by Scene V of *Loa 374* by Mexican nun Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (1651-1695). A loa is a brief play used as a prelude to a longer religious play or court entertainment. What captivated me about this particular literary work was De La Cruz’s profound awareness of the connection between spirituality, science and the arts. *Loa 374* is a conversation between the following characters: music, heaven, fire, air, and water, in which there is reference to the sea, fish, crystals, silver, foam, sun, ray, moon and stars in a poetic style characterized by the use of rhyme and the repeating device of the echo, which is a recurring element in her writing. It provides sufficient elements to play with counterpoint, the interpolation of voices, spatial movement and the use of repetition as unifying resources, within a 3-note motif and an intervallic relation of 9ths.

Aves, Ecos, Alientos y Sonido

Text by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz
(from Scene V of Loa 374)

Música
Pues ya le han rendido
Todos sus esencias, ahora tus frutos
Cada cuál le ofrezca.

Cielo
El Cielo os da, en sus puras luces bellas.

Música
Estrellas,

Cielo
Porque os asista, sin mudanza alguna,

Música
La Luna,

Cielo
Y os adornen, con varios arboles,

Música
Soles,

Cielo
Y con lucientes cándidos esmeros,

Música
Luceros:

Cielo
Para que el Mundo, ufano de teneros
Vuestras leyes admita sin recelo,
Pues ve qué os contribuye el mismo Cielo

Música
Estrellas, Luna, Soles, y Luceros

Fuego
El Fuego os da, ministro de vigores,

Música
Ardores,

Fuego
Porque en sus fraguas engendréis no escasas

Música
Brasas,

Fuego
Para que en vuestra diestra hagan ensayos

Música
Rayos,

Fuego
Que en asombro del Mundo esparzan bellas

Música
Centellas

Fuego
Suenen del Enemigo las querellas,
De vuestras armas al primer amago,
Y sepan que tenéis, para su estrago,

Música
Ardores, Brasa, Rayos y Centellas.

Agua
Os da el Mar; y en las venas que desata,

Música
Plata,

Agua
con que argenta, y guarnece tantas veces,

Música
Peces,

Agua
y en fugitivos cándidos raudales,

Música
Cristales:

Agua
para que vuestras fuerzas sin iguales
los términos excedan del deseo,
pues Neptuno os tributa, por trofeo,

Música
Espumas, Plata, Peces y Cristales.

Aire
El Aire os rinda, de su Esfera, graves

Música
Aves,

Aire
y, repetidos en los troncos huecos,

Música
Ecos,

Aire
Que den a militares instrumentos,

Música
Sonido.

Aire
Sólo en vuestra alabanza repetido,
el clarín de la Fama rompa el viento,
pués tenéis, en su diáfano elemento,

Música
Aves, Ecos, Alientos y Sonido.

THREE GREEK SONGS

When I was an undergraduate at CSU Northridge, I was always attracted to early music, and my encounter with the music of antiquity, all Greek, piqued my enthusiasm. Of course, we knew little of this music at the time—only a handful of pieces existed, among them the two Delphic Hymns, some of the poems of Mesomedes of Crete, the Epitaph of Seikilos. I was fascinated by these works, all vocal and essentially monophonic, with their use of a very limited pitch vocabulary set to very specific rhythmic principles. I decided to write what I considered “modern” versions of three of these and dedicate them to my music history teacher, George Skapski.

Written by an anonymous Athenian, the *First Delphic Hymn to Apollo* was chiseled on the south outer wall of the Athenian Treasury in Delphi, where it must have won a prize in the Pythian festival of either 128 or 127 BCE. It was discovered by the French Archeological School in Athens in May 1893. The original stone is damaged in several places, leaving us with only three fairly clear sections (out of perhaps five), the remainder nearly unreadable. I used the first two sections of the paean.

The *Epitaph of Seikilos* was engraved on a stele of a tomb found at Aydin in Turkey, near Tralleis, sometime during the second century CE. It identifies the composer as simply “Seikilos,” a Sicilian, son of Euterpes, and that he was at the time still living. The stele was discovered by Sir William M. Ramsay in 1883.

From the Cretan Mesomedes, court musician to the Roman Emperor Hadrian (r. 117–38 CE), we have altogether fifteen poems, but only four of these contain musical notation, and the *Hymn to the Sun* is one of only seven transmitted under his name. It appears, along with other poems of his, in a series of manuscripts dating from between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.

First Delphic Hymn to Apollo (Athenaios)

Hark, you fair-armed daughters of loud thundering Zeus,
who dwell in the deep forests of Helicon:
come to praise in songs your brother Phoebos of the golden hair,
who high above the twin peaks of Parnassos,
surrounded by the august maidens of Delphi,
comes to the limpid waters of Kastalis,
visiting at Delphi the prophetic oracle.

Lo, Attica with its great city is at prayer,
dwellers on the unconquered land of the armed Triton,
and on the holy altars Hephaestos consumes thighs of bull-calves,
and together with the smoke, Arabian incense rises toward Olympos,
and the shrill, blaring aulos weaves a melody with varied notes,
and the golden sweet-voiced kithara blends with the hymn of praise...

The Epitaph of Seikilos

As long as you live, be cheerful,
let nothing grieve you,
for life is short,
and Time claims his tribute.

Hymn to the Sun (Mesomedes of Crete)

Father of the snow-eyed Dawn,
you who drive your rosy chariot with the winged courses of the steeds,
delighting in your golden hair,
over the boundless vault of heaven,
shedding your far-piercing ray and winding around the whole earth the far-seeing fount of your splendors:
your streams of immortal fire bring forth the lovely day.

Before you the gentle chorus of the stars dance over Lord Olympos,
forever singing their leisured song, rejoicing in the lyra of Phoebos.

And before you the silvery Moon in due season leads the way amid throngs of white kine,
and your wild spirit is glad as it speeds through the richly clad firmament.

ATHENE

Athene's text explores feminist readings of the myths of Athene, the Greek goddess of wisdom and war. At first glance her stories seem to contradict each other: in one she is the caretaker of humanity, in another their enemy. Embedded in these apparent discontinuities is the thread of human complexity, of a woman who has balanced the call of feminism with the tools to excel in a male-dominated world. The music is simple, but this hides a greater complexity as well, for it ultimately thwarts what it portends to recall. There is no single tonic to strive toward, no linear path from beginning to end.

ATHENE by Carolyn Bremer

Gray-eyed.
What secrets do you hide behind your birth?
No childlike honesty to betray you,
no commonplace nucleus to inform you.
Situated in the impossible
you bring consciousness to a blind world.

I see.

Owl-Eyed.
Some say you see better by darkness.
Under our shroud of insecurity and unwillingness
the depths of our natures are open to you.
You heal by touch,
teach by example,
yet judge by jury with eyes open.
Each event in relation to others.

I know.

Hard-eyed.
Medusal serpents once rendered as punishment,
murdered for glory,
now worn with honor upon your breast.
You do not fear them.
You do not shun them.
They are as muscle and blood, idea and instinct.

I follow.

Sharp-eyed.
What secrets do you harbor dredged from our very souls?
Those who fall within the flesh of your protective arms.
Those who embrace your fury as a force of nature,
you turn to tasks too dark for the human imagination.
The tentative, they fear your wrath.

I accept.

Bright-eyed.
You are more than fire.
Earth, air, water, and thunder
guarding the House of Life.
Your hands weave patterns of balance
from great-grandmother earth to grandmother
moon
mother wisdom to daughter.
I understand.

Far-seeing.
Transforming idea to material,
strand to fabric, deed to honor.
You have no threshold.
You know it is not one or the other
But always both.
The beauty of renewal.

I recognize.

Gray eyes ever-near.
These things never happened
yet they always were.
Remembering what once was known.
It is the cyclic path.
Present, future, past.

FROM FIVE ALICE SONGS

These pieces are three selections from *Five Alice Songs*, a collection of songs derived from Lewis Carroll's Alice books. They are designed to be a companion work to William Walton's *Façade*, which uses the same instrumentation.

"Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!"

Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!
Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea tray in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!

"Jabberwocky"

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! and through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.
'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outrabe.

"White Knight's Song"

I'll tell thee everything I can;
There's little to relate.
I saw an aged, aged man,
A-sitting on a gate.
"Who are you, aged man?" I said.
"And how is it you live?"
And his answer trickled through my head
Like water through a sieve.

He said "I look for butterflies
That sleep among the wheat;
I make them into mutton-pies,
And sell them in the street.
I sell them unto men," he said,
"Who sail on stormy seas;
And that's the way I get my bread—
A trifle, if you please."

But I was thinking of a plan
To dye one's whiskers green,
And always use so large a fan
That it could not be seen.
So, having no reply to give
To what the old man said,
I cried, "Come, tell me how you live!"
And thumped him on the head.
His accents mild took up the tale;
He said, "I go my ways,
And when I find a mountain-rill,
I set it in a blaze.
And thence they make a stuff they call
Rowland's Macassar Oil—
Yet twopence-halfpenny is all
They give me for my toil."

But I was thinking of a way
To feed oneself on batter,
And so go on from day to day
Getting a little fatter.
I shook him well from side to side,
Until his face was blue;
"Come, tell me how you live," I cried
"And what it is you do!"

He said, "I hunt for haddocks' eyes
Among the heather bright,
And work them into waistcoat-buttons
In the silent night.
And these I do not sell for gold
Or coin of silvery shine,
But for a copper halfpenny,
And that will purchase nine.

"I sometimes dig for buttered rolls,
Or set limed twigs for crabs;
I sometimes search the grassy knolls
For wheels of hansom-cabs.
And that's the way" (he gave a wink)
"By which I get my wealth—
And very gladly will I drink
Your Honor's noble health."

I heard him then, for I had just
Completed my design
To keep the Menai bridge from rust
By boiling it in wine.
I thanked him much for telling me
The way he got his wealth,
But chiefly for his wish that he
Might drink my noble health.

And now, if e'er by chance I put
My fingers into glue,
Or madly squeeze a right-hand foot
Into a left-hand shoe,
Or if I drop upon my toe
A very heavy weight,
I weep, for it reminds me so
Of that old man I used to know—
Whose look was mild, whose speech was slow,
Whose hair was whiter than the snow,
Whose face was very like a crow
With eyes, like cinders, all aglow,
Who seemed distracted with his woe,
Who rocked his body to and fro,
And muttered mumblingly and low,
As if his mouth were full of dough,
Who snorted like a buffalo—
That summer evening long ago
A-sitting on a gate.

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

text by Wislawa Szymborska

After every war
someone has to clean up.
Things won't
straighten themselves up, after all.

Someone has to push the rubble
to the sides of the road,
so the corpse-laden wagons
can pass.

Someone has to get mired
in scum and ashes,
sofa springs,
splintered glass,
and bloody rags.

Someone must drag in a girder
to prop up a wall.
Someone must glaze a window,
rehang a door.

Photogenic it's not,
and takes years.
All the cameras have left
for another war.

Again we'll need bridges
and new railway stations.
Sleeves will go ragged
from rolling them up.
Someone, broom in hand,
still recalls how it was.
Someone listens
and nods with unsevered head.
Yet others milling about
already find it dull.

From behind the bush
sometimes someone still unearths
rust-eaten arguments
and carries them to the garbage pile.

Those who knew
what was going on here
must give way to
those who know little.
And less than little.
And finally as little as nothing.

In the grass which has overgrown
causes and effects,
someone must be stretched out,
blade of grass in his mouth,
gazing at the clouds.

MICRO-OPERAS 1-3

The *micro-operas* are tiny works for solo voice, some with simple accompaniment (that may optionally be played by the singer), others *a cappella*. These are part of an ongoing series; each opera is under three minutes long, and is an attempt at presenting a complete story in miniature, while using texts derived completely from spam emails. Each opera is a stand-alone work, though they may be performed in combinations as well, or, preferably, interwoven between other, longer works on a program of other vocal works. I copied the words exactly from a spam email message for No. 1. For No. 2 I excerpted words from a long string of seemingly random words in a spam message. (I added one word, "stop.") The text for No. 3 comes completely from the opening of a letter that is a version of the infamous Nigerian Prince 419 scam, which is itself a modern day variation on a long con known as "The Spanish Prisoner."

1. mystery [passion play]

Seasonal! Fear the vengeance, powdery.
The Sanhedrin asks ... (hideaway.)
Be heard through. Scourge! at a flying,
myriad waterweeds swayed.

2. 40s noir film (probably starring Robert Mitchum)

Mexico.
Genevieve.
Crime!
Signpost: asperity.
Explosion, policeman, churchyard.
Object! Hereinbelow cast calumny, assail
Frederick. Divest Patrolman Foley!

[Stop] film.

3. The Spanish Prisoner

[Lagos, Nigeria.]
Dear Sir, [request for urgent business relationship]

First, I must solicit strictest confidence in this transaction. This is by its nature as being utterly confidential and top secret. You have been recommended by an associate who assured me in confidence of your ability and reliability to prosecute a transaction of great magnitude involving a pending business transaction requiring maximum confidence. Hence we are writing you this letter. [Lagos, Nigeria.]

CHERYL SONGS

CSULB alumni Michael Foreman was singing at a benefit concert two years ago and asked me to write songs for tenor, mezzo-soprano and piano to complete the program. I gladly accepted with one condition: he would provide a copyright cleared text. He brought to me a folder with some hundred poems hand-written by his aunt Cheryl Robinson—as Michael described her: a child's mind in a grown-up person, sweet and charming. I found some of the poems very fresh and candid, and I set them in an unsophisticated way, trying to keep the funny twist alive in them. I had the pleasure of meeting Cheryl at the recital where three of the songs –“A Kite,” “The Big Day” and “Twilight”—were sung. Mike Foreman lives in New York pursuing a very successful singing career, and to this day I keep receiving poems on a weekly basis from Cheryl, who lives in Utah with her family.

Texts by Cheryl Robinson

“Judging”

“My feathers are the biggest!”
said the peacock with a grin
“My feathers are very big and bright—
so you see I must win!”

“My song is the sweetest!”
said the nightingale in her flute-like voice.
“It makes you want to dance and sing so
of course I am the Best Choice!”

“I can soar the highest”
said the hawk in his bragging sort of way
“I can sing all night” said the owl
“I don't have to wait for the day.”

“Oh, yeah! Well, my breast is the reddest”
said the robin (with a silly little grin)
“Oh, you foolish little robin,
who would judge someone for the color of his skin?”

“A Kite”

My big brother Jimmy helped me build a kite (a kite is a thing that everyone likes).
We got some fancy strong string and some strong sticks too.
We fastened it all on to some paper of blue.
Then we made a pretty tail (this was not too much of a chore),
Because without a tail a kite cannot ever soar!
Then we took our pretty kite and ran outside together.
The wind blew in our faces, perfect kite flying weather!
The wind tugged and tugged at our string (it wanted to play with our tag too!)
Then ZIP! The wind took it out of our hands and into the sky so blue.

“The Big Day”

The baits and lines were all ready!
The picnic lunch was there!
My dad's heart was beating steady—
we didn't have a care!

We were all ready to go fishing—
(we would certainly catch a whale!)
The sail boat was tied to the back of our car—
we'd go sailing with a sail!

The birds were all singing together happily
the sky was –oh! so blue!
When we turned off the road to the highway,
10,000 other cars went fishing too!

“Twilight”

The stars glisten in the sky—
the clouds are floating up on high—
the crickets chirp and sing a song...
the sunset's color burns on and on.
The moon gleams out a shining hue—
I feel at peace—
I think of you.

“Raggedy School”

Raggedy Andy went to raggedy school
(a neat place for learning—which is really cool!)
They had raggedy reading and raggedy math—
and raggedy Gymnastics, which made his soul laugh!
They had raggedy Lunch for his raggedy belly
with raggedy peanut butter and raggedy jelly.
They had raggedy library—which really was fun!
for raggedy Homework when school time was done!
He went to raggedy school 'til he was a raggedy man,
then one day he was quite impressed
with that Raggedy Anne!



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