

WELCOME



To our audiences, artists, and community:

As each of our lives has been affected by the dynamic events of this year, we remain committed to the core mission of the Ad Astra Music Festival. We continue to integrate emerging young artists, community members, and professional musicians in performance projects that range from exciting new music to fresh performances of history's well-known works.

In the days following our decision to move the season to a virtual format, we knew that we needed to innovate by capitalizing on what silver linings might exist. With that charge, our artistic team secured a grant to hire some of our regular musicians to deliver performances from their homes. We commissioned a brand new piece of music from a composer used to working in electronic mediums and asked him to write a work specifically for this time, this place, and in this remote, electronic format. We continued full steam ahead with our opera commission, to be premiered in June 2021, about the life of Russell High School art teacher Trudy Furney by holding a workshop with the six singers and three artistic staff in person, after we were each tested for COVID-19 and quarantined together. We expanded our high school program, attracting students from New Jersey, Illinois, Arizona, Puerto Rico, and, of course, Kansas. The students met on Zoom every day for two weeks learning about and creating a *cappella*/vocal jazz works. We even made sure we could lead the Russell Community Choir in a virtual choir project, which so many of our peers are doing.

Beyond the musical performance elements of the festival, we've partnered with local restaurants and businesses for discounts for our audience on each performance day. We featured another beautiful work by David Friday on the front cover of this souvenir program. And we continue to make sure we're attracting business and tourism to our community even in the midst of the pandemic.

We are continually inspired by the people of Russell; their generosity, their spirit, and their interest help make our community a beautiful and culturally rich place to live. We're honored to be part of those efforts.

I hope you enjoy this year's festival. I hope you are moved by the performances, and I hope that even though we cannot be together in person, this festival will still function in your life in a similar way to our previous work.

Here's to making the best out of any given situation. Here's to a brighter future. And here's to a celebration of artistic work in our community!

My best to each of you,

Alex Underwood

Founding Artistic Director

SEASON OVERVIEW

All concerts will be broadcast at 7:30 pm CDT on Facebook Live.

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High School and Community Virtual Choir	July 24	Page 17
Trudy Furney Opera: A Sneak Peek	July 25	Page 22

STAFF

Alex Underwood	Artistic Director
John Irving	Artistic Director
Brittany Fritsch	Executive Director
Austin McWilliams	Festival Director
Katy Hertel	Development Director
Grace Currie	Media Director
Shelby Laird	Festival Manager
Jordan Doss	Outreach Intern



presents

YOUNG ARTISTS AT HOME

Friday, July 17, 7:30 pm CDT

featuring

Elary Mede, soprano

Thereza Lituma, mezzo-soprano

Graham Brooks, tenor

Cole Bellamy, baritone

with

Katelyn Mattson-Levy, program curator

FEATURED RESTAURANT

Waudby's Sports Bar & Grill

Present this program to receive a 10% discount on your take-out order!

FEATURED COCKTAIL

Daiquiri

Shake 1 oz. dry white rum, 1 oz. freshly squeezed lime juice, and 1 oz. simple syrup over ice. Strain into a glass and garnish with a lime slice.

PROGRAM

STUDENT LIFE

Depuis le jour Elary Mede	Gustave Charpentier 1860–1956
The Swimmer Thereza Lituma	Edward Elgar 1857–1934
I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General Cole Bellamy	Arthur Sullivan 1842–1900
O del mio amato ben Graham Brooks	Stefano Donaudy 1879–1925

LOCKDOWN

Fly Me to the Moon Graham Brooks	Bart Howard 1915–2004
Dream a Little Dream of Me Elary Mede	Fabian Andre 1910–1960
How Can I Keep from Singing arr. Thereza Lituma	Robert Lowry 1826–1899
You'll Never Walk Alone Cole Bellamy	Richard Rodgers 1902–1979

UPRISING

We Shall Overcome	arr. Deke Sharon b. 1967
Lift Every Voice and Sing	J. Rosamond Johnson 1873–1954
MLK	U2, arr. Bob Chilcott b. 1955

NOTES

Once we understood that coming together and holding the Ad Astra Music Festival in person wasn't possible, we began to brainstorm what it would be like to make a cohesive, collective experience while being apart. I wanted this recital to

reflect the world we are currently living while highlighting each artist's voice and unique talents. Here we have four young singers, cut off from their circle of teachers, coaches, and mentors, and an entire world of unknowns lies ahead for

them. They inspired me to help create an evening of music which reviews their 2020.

We see them first as music students, practicing and refining their repertoire. This moves into their uncertain, isolating reality as musicians without a stage. What does the life of a musician in lockdown

look like? They allow us to peek in and find the joy in music at home. Finally, out of isolation comes a way to rise up and sing together as we see a society dedicated to thriving through the revolution of their generation.

—Katelyn Mattson-Levy

TEXTS

SONG TO THE MOON

Text by Gustave Charpentier

Depuis le jour où je me suis donnée,
toute fleurie semble ma destinée.
Je crois rêver sous un ciel de féérie,
l'âme encore grisée de ton premier baiser !
Quelle belle vie !

Mon rêve n'était pas un rêve !
Ah! je suis heureuse !
L'amour étend sur moi ses ailes !
Au jardin de mon cœur
chante une joie nouvelle !

Tout vibre,
tout se réjouit de mon triomphe !
Autour de moi tout est sourire,
lumière et joie !
Et je tremble délicieusement
Au souvenir charmant
Du premier jour
D'amour !

Quelle belle vie !
Ah! je suis heureuse! trop heureuse...
Et je tremble délicieusement
Au souvenir charmant
Du premier jour
D'amour !

*Since the day I gave myself
my destiny seems all flower-strewn
I think I'm dreaming under a fairy sky
my soul still intoxicated by your first kiss!
What a beautiful life!
My dream wasn't a dream!
Oh! I'm so happy!
Love is spreading its wings over me!
In the garden of my heart
sings a new joy!*

*Everything is vibrant
everything rejoices at my triumph!
All around me everything is smiling
light and joy!
And I'm trembling delightfully
from the charming memory
of the first day
of love!*

*What a beautiful life!
Oh! I'm so happy! ...utterly happy!
And I'm trembling delightfully
from the charming memory
of the first day
of love!*

THE SWIMMER

Text by Adam Lindsay Gordon

With short, sharp, violent lights made vivid,
To southward far as the sight can roam;
Only the swirl of the surges livid,
The seas that climb and the surfs that comb.

Only the crag and the cliff to nor'ward,
 And the rocks receding, and reefs flung forward,
 Waifs wrecked seaward and wasted shoreward
 On shallows sheeted with flaming foam.

A grim, grey coast and a seaboard ghastly,
 And shores trod seldom by feet of men—
 Where the battered hull and the broken mast lie,
 They have lain embedded these long years ten.
 Love! when we wandered here together,
 Hand in hand through the sparkling weather,
 From the heights and hollows of fern and heather,
 God surely loved us a little then.

The skies were fairer and shores were firmer—
 The blue sea over the bright sand rolled;
 Babble and prattle, and ripple and murmur,
 Sheen of silver and glamour of gold.

So, girt with tempest and winged with thunder,
 And clad with lightning and shod with sleet,
 And strong winds treading the swift waves under
 The flying rollers with frothy feet.
 One gleam like a bloodshot sword-blade swims on
 The skyline, staining the green gulf crimson,
 A death stroke fiercely dealt by a dim sun,
 That strikes through his stormy winding sheet.

O, brave white horses! you gather and gallop,
 The storm sprite loosens the gusty reins;
 Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
 In your hollow backs, on your high-arched manes.
 I would ride as never a man has ridden
 In your sleepy, swirling surges hidden;
 To gulfs foreshadowed through strifes forbidden,
 Where no light wearies and no love wanes.

I AM THE VERY MODEL OF A MODERN MAJOR-GENERAL
Text by Arthur Sullivan

I am the very model of a modern Major-General,
 I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral,
 I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical
 From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;
 I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,
 I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical,
 About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,
 With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.

I'm very good at integral and differential calculus;
 I know the scientific names of beings animalculous:

In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

I know our mythic history, King Arthur's and Sir Caradoc's;
I answer hard acrostics, I've a pretty taste for paradox,
I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of Heliogabalus,
In conics I can floor peculiarities parabolous;
I can tell undoubted Raphaels from Gerard Dows and Zoffanies,
I know the croaking chorus from The Frogs of Aristophanes!
Then I can hum a fugue of which I've heard the music's din afore,
And whistle all the airs from that infernal nonsense Pinafore.

Then I can write a washing bill in Babylonian cuneiform,
And tell you ev'ry detail of Caractacus's uniform:
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

In fact, when I know what is meant by "mamelon" and "ravelin",
When I can tell at sight a Mauser rifle from a javelin,
When such affairs as sorties and surprises I'm more wary at,
And when I know precisely what is meant by "commissariat",
When I have learnt what progress has been made in modern gunnery,
When I know more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery—
In short, when I've a smattering of elemental strategy—
You'll say a better Major-General has never sat a gee.

For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury,
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century;
But still, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

○ DEL MIO AMATO BEN

Text by Alberto Donaudy

O del mio amato ben perduto incanto!
Lungi è dagli occhi miei
chi m'era gloria e vanto!
Or per le mute stanze
sempre lo cerco e chiamo
con pieno il cor di speranze?
Ma cerco invan, chiamo invan!
E il pianger m'è sì caro,
che di pianto sol nutro il cor.

Mi sembra, senza lui, triste ogni loco.
Notte mi sembra il giorno;
mi sembra gelo il foco.
Se pur talvolta spero
di darmi ad altra cura,
sol mi tormenta un pensiero:
Ma, senza lui, che farò?
Mi par così la vita vana cosa
senza il mio ben.

*Oh, lost enchantment of my dearly beloved!
Far from my eyes is he
who was, to me, glory and pride!
Now through the empty rooms
I always seek him and call him
with a heart full of hopes?
But I seek in vain, I call in vain!
And the weeping is so dear to me,
that with weeping alone I nourish my heart.*

*It seems to me, without him, sad everywhere.
The day seems like night to me;
the fire seems cold to me.
If, however, I sometimes hope
to give myself to another cure,
one thought alone torments me:
But without him, what shall I do?
To me, life seems a vain thing
without my beloved.*

FLY ME TO THE MOON*Text by Bart Howard*

Fly me to the moon
 Let me play among the stars
 Let me see what spring is like
 On a-Jupiter and Mars
 In other words, hold my hand
 In other words, baby, kiss me

Fill my heart with song
 And let me sing for ever more
 You are all I long for
 All I worship and adore
 In other words, please be true
 In other words, I love you

Fill my heart with song
 Let me sing forevermore
 You are all I long for, all I worship and adore
 In other words, please be true
 In other words, in other words
 I love you

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME*Text by Gus Kahn*

Stars shining bright above you
 Night breezes seem to whisper, I love you
 Birds singin' in the sycamore trees
 Dream a little dream of me

Say nighty-night and kiss me
 Just hold me tight and tell me you'll miss me
 While I'm alone and blue as can be
 Dream a little dream of me

Stars fading but I linger on dear
 Still craving your kiss
 I'm longin' to linger till dawn dear
 Just saying this

Sweet dreams till sunbeams find you
 Sweet dreams that leave all worries
 behind you
 But in your dreams whatever they be
 Dream a little dream of me

Sweet dreams till sunbeams find you
 Leave the worries behind you
 But in your dreams, whatever may be

You've gotta make me a promise, promise
 to me
 You'll dream, dream a little dream of me

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?

My life flows on in endless song;
 above earth's lamentation,
 I catch the sweet, though far off hymn
 that hails a new creation.
 Through all the tumult and the strife,
 I hear that music ringing.
 It finds an echo in my soul.
 How can I keep from singing?

But though the tempest loudly roars
 I hear the truth, it liveth,
 and though the darkness round me close,
 songs in the night it giveth.
 No storm can shake my inmost calm
 while to that Rock I'm clinging.
 Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,
 how can I keep from singing?

Why tyrants tremble in their fear
 and hear their death knell ringing,
 when friends rejoice both far and near,
 how can I keep from singing?
 In prison cell and dungeon vile,
 our thoughts to them are winging.
 When friends by shame are undefiled,
 how can I keep from singing?

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE*Text by Oscar Hammerstein II*

When you walk through a storm
 Hold your head up high
 And don't be afraid of the dark.
 At the end of a storm
 Is a golden sky
 And the sweet, silver song of a lark.

Walk on, through the wind,
 Walk on, through the rain,
 Though your dreams be tossed and blown.
 Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart,
 And you'll never walk alone,
 You'll never walk alone.

WE SHALL OVERCOME

We shall overcome,
 We shall overcome,
 We shall overcome, some day.
 Yes, deep in my heart
 I do believe that
 We shall overcome, some day.

We shall live in peace,
 We shall live in peace,
 We shall live in peace, some day.
 Yes, deep in my heart
 I do believe that
 We shall overcome, some day.

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Text by J. Rosamond Johnson

Lift every voice and sing
 Till earth and heaven ring,
 Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
 Let our rejoicing rise
 High as the listening skies,
 Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
 Sing a song full of the faith that the dark
 past has taught us,
 Sing a song full of the hope that the
 present has brought us,
 Facing the rising sun
 Of our new day begun
 Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
 Bitter the chastening rod,
 Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
 Yet with a steady beat,
 Have not our weary feet
 Come to the place for which our fathers
 sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears
 has been watered,
 We have come, treading our path through
 the blood of the slaughtered,
 Out from the gloomy past,
 Till now we stand at last
 Where the white gleam of our bright star
 is cast.

God of our weary years,
 God of our silent tears,
 Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
 Thou who has by Thy might
 Led us into the light,
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
 Lest our feet stray from the places, our
 God, where we met Thee,
 Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the
 world, we forget Thee;
 Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
 May we forever stand.
 True to our God,
 True to our native land.

MLK

Sleep, sleep tonight,
 And may your dreams be realized.
 If the thunder cloud passes rain
 So let it rain, rain down on him.
 So let it be.

Sleep, sleep tonight,
 And may your dreams be realized.
 If the thunder cloud passes rain
 So let it rain, let it rain,
 Rain on him.

BIOGRAPHIES

ELARY MEDE is a soprano studying voice at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her

love of singing started at a young age in church and school choirs. Elary has participated in many of the productions at IUP, singing the roles of Barbarina (*Figaro! Figaro! Figaro!*), Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*)

and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*). During her time at IUP, Elary has competed in both district and regional NATS where she was awarded first place in her category. Most recently Elary won the Butler Symphony Collegiate Concerto Competition and performed the winning selections with the symphony in concert.



Mezzo-soprano **THEREZA LITUMA** is a recent graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where

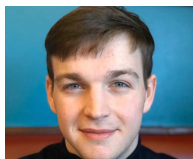
she received a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance and Music Education under the tutelage of Sylvia Stone. There, she performed the titular role in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and was praised by *The News-Gazette* for singing with a "sweeping emotive power." Her past opera credits also include Ježibaba/Third Wood Sprite (*Rusalka*), the Owl (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and Albanact (*King Arthur*). Last summer she was a Project Inclusion Voice Fellow with the Grant Park Music Festival, where she had the opportunity to perform as a soloist in multiple Chicago summer concert series and as a professional chorus member with the Grant Park Chorus. She made her Italian debut at the Scuola Italia Summer Program for Young Opera Singers, where she performed scenes as Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*), Quickly (*Falstaff*), and Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*). This fall she will begin her graduate studies at the University of Illinois with research focuses in Quechua and Andean operatic/art song repertoire. therezalituma.com



GRAHAM BROOKS is a tenor from Bellevue, Nebraska. A recent graduate of Simpson College, Graham

participated in multiple choirs, bands, and the opera program while earning

bachelor's degrees in music performance and mathematics. Notable Simpson College opera credits include Damon (*Acis and Galatea*), Laurie (*Little Women*), Don Pelagio (*La Canterina*), Hortensio (*Kiss Me, Kate*), and Tamino (*The Magic Flute*). He has also competed in many NATS voice competitions, earning awards at the state and regional levels. Last summer Graham was a young artist in the CORO program of the Des Moines Choral Festival. He has interned with the Des Moines Metro Opera as a member of the house staff. In the fall, Graham will be continuing his vocal studies at Florida State University, where he will pursue a master's degree in music performance in voice and work as a teaching assistant in the voice department.



COLE BELLAMY is a baritone from Olathe, Kansas, and is a student at Wichita State University, where

he is double-majoring in vocal performance and music education. With the WSU Opera Theatre, Cole has performed as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Frank (*Street Scene*) and Betto (*Gianni Schicchi*). Additionally, Cole had the opportunity to perform in Wichita Grand Opera's production of *All is Calm*.

 **AD ASTRA**
MUSIC FESTIVAL

presents

SCATTERED INHERITANCE

Saturday, July 18, 7:30 pm CDT

featuring

Tynan Davis, mezzo-soprano

Tammy Evans Yonce, flute

Kristin Pisano, clarinet

Negar Afazel, violin

Benjamin Cline, cello

César Cañón, piano

Ryan Pearson, percussion

with

Andrew Rodriguez, composer

Xuan, new media artist

FEATURED RESTAURANT



Present this program to receive a 10% discount on your take-out order!

FEATURED COCKTAIL

Margarita

Shake 2 oz. blanco tequila, $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. Cointreau, 1 oz. freshly squeezed lime juice, and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. simple syrup over ice. Pour into a salt-rimmed glass, and garnish with lime.

PROGRAM

Scattered Inheritance

I: My warmth, my gaze

II: I remember

III: Dust

Andrew Rodriguez

b. 1989

NOTES

As prospects for an in-person festival looked unlikely by April, the Ad Astra Music Festival commissioned Andrew Rodriguez to compose an original musical work for this summer's *virtual* edition. The festival expressed interest in a composition that fulfilled its mission by bringing together people from across the country to its center in Kansas. This year because of the COVID-19 pandemic we come together safely to the middle of your phone, tablet, computer, or tv screens. Andrew's composition *Scattered Inheritance* connects us in real time from our separate, physical spaces using the same technology that often alienates us from ourselves and one another. The project also reunites Andrew and new media artist Xuan, who collaborated on *Empty parking lot, ringing* at National Sawdust in 2019.

Scattered Inheritance calls for voice, flute, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, and cello, hearkening to the instrumentation of Arnold Schoenberg's 1912 atonal song cycle *Pierrot lunaire*. This unique orchestration provides modern composers an inclusive vehicle for exploration akin to the string quartet during the Classical and Romantic eras. Now commonly known as *Pierrot* ensemble (pronounced quickly as "pea-air-oh"), composers and performers explore expression through the

ensemble's diversity of range, color, timbre, virtuosity, and extended techniques. From its origin the instrumentation has embodied an openness to heterogeneity and celebrated new and evolving ideas.

Scattered Inheritance creates new from old at a time when we are asking ourselves, "what is my role right now?" In the musical score the composer offers the performers (and perhaps all of us) a potential way forward: "the general nature of this piece is for the performer to take what is written and mold it to fit the environment of the performance they are participating in." The performers are invited to adapt to their changing environment by reshaping elements of time, rhythm, melody, and rest. The composer took a similar approach while setting the text of Jeremy De La Rosa through a form of poetry known as Erasure, sometimes called blackout poetry. The process transforms an existing poem into a new one, opening a dialogue between the two. The resulting union of words and music in *Scattered Inheritance* encourages listening and thoughtful interaction from its performers and audience.

—John Irving

TEXTS

by Jeremy De La Rosa

I: MY WARMTH, MY GAZE

My warmth, my gaze
(my warmth, my gaze)

These days,
sometimes,
so many hours spent
searching
(my warmth, my gaze)
(my words, my shape)

For years I've tried to find
memories
searching
(my warmth, my gaze)
(my words, my shape)

Memories as recent as yesterday.
Memories as recent as
a hundred years ago.
(my warmth, my gaze)
(my only wish, distancing yourself)

II: I REMEMBER

I remember picking out carnations,
I knew you when you were my age now,
I'm trying to not lose myself in thought,
For years I've tried to find my way back,

I've passed you half a hundred times by now,
I'm trying to not remember,
I knew you when you were my age now,
I believe you.

III: DUST

Tabernacle in dust,
this scattered inheritance
signal mirrors flickering,
distancing yourself

Tabernacle in dust,
this scattered inheritance,
crystalline glow,
my warmth, my gaze

Tabernacle in dust,
this scattered inheritance,
neighbors I never knew,
my only wish.

Tabernacle in dust,
this scattered inheritance,
myriad of me,
becoming dust, before long.

BIOGRAPHIES



Grammy-winner **TYNAN DAVIS** is fortunate to sing all styles of music with all sorts of incredible people.

She has toured with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Orchestra and the North American tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*. Her debut album *TYNAN* is a collection of jazz arrangements of favorite

tunes from stage, television, and film, and is available on iTunes and Spotify. Other favorite performance collaborations include: Roomful of Teeth, Heartbeat Opera, Cantata Profana, Boston Modern Orchestra Project (2019 Grammy, Best Opera Recording, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*), SOLI Chamber Ensemble, Austin Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Opera San Antonio, and a happy vocal jazz trio The All's Well Sisters (a modern nod to the

Boswell Sisters). She lives in New York City with her husband Austin and their hilarious, always hungry baby boy Ambrose.



TAMMY EVANS YONCE an Atlanta native, is a flutist, collaborative musician, writer, professor, and

Fulbright Scholar to Egypt. She is a dedicated new music performer and has commissioned over two dozen works involving flute, many concentrating on creating music for the Glissando Headjoint. Based in South Dakota, Tammy has recently presented and performed at the National Flute Association, British Flute Society, Canadian Flute Association, World Flutes Festival (Argentina), and New Music Gathering conventions. She has given recitals and masterclasses throughout the Midwest and Southeast and was guest artist at the 2015 New Voices Festival at Wichita State University and the 2017 Montana Flute Festival. Her debut CD *Dreams Grow Like Slow Ice* was released in September 2018. Tammy is Associate Professor of Music at South Dakota State University, where she teaches applied flute, woodwind pedagogy, and courses in musicology. A first-prize winner of the Atlanta Flute Club Young Artist Competition, she holds degrees in flute performance from Kennesaw State University (BM), Indiana University (MM), and the University of Georgia (DMA). She is a Powell Flutes Artist. tammyevansyonce.com



KRISTIN PISANO serves as Associate Professor of Music in the Fort Hays State University Department of

Music and Theatre and is the Artistic

Director of the FHSU New Music Festival. Her career as a clarinetist has taken her across the United States, Taiwan, and China. She performs with the Wichita Grand Opera and the Newton Mid-Kansas Symphony and has performed on several occasions with Ad Astra Music Festival. She also performed with the New World Symphony under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas and is featured on their album *New World Jazz*. She is sought after as an adjudicator and clinician at local, regional, and national festivals. She has also served on faculty at the Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Sitka, Alaska, ranked in the top four camps of its kind in the nation by the National Endowment for the Arts.



NEGAR AFAZEL, originally from Tehran, Iran, holds a Master of Music degree in violin performance from

Western Michigan University. She has served as the concertmaster for WMU's University Symphony Orchestra (2017–2019) and performed Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major with them after winning the annual concerto competition (2019). Negar is a diverse musician who has collaborated with jazz and tango ensembles, new music composers, and hip-hop band Last Gasp Collective. She studied music for two years in Germany and performed at the Orfeo Music Festival in Italy, Montecito Music Festival in California, and Electronic Music Midwest festival among other solo and chamber recitals in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her tango duo ensemble has won the DownBeat award for outstanding performance for a Latin group (April 2020). She is a former Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra Artist Scholar (2017–2019) and has been accepted to pursue her doctorate in violin performance at Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute of Music. She is one of the lead violin instructors at the Kalamazoo Kids in Tune program.



BENJAMIN CLINE is an American cellist who has performed in the United States, Europe, Near East, and

Asia. He has appeared as soloist with many orchestras, including the Kaohsiung City Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan, was featured in performance on Public Radio's WXXI "Live from Hochstein" in Rochester, and has collaborated with many noted musicians, including Sharon Stanis, Ingrid Matthews, Yumi Hwang-Williams, Theodor Kuchar, Tali Morgulis, and the Russian String Orchestra. A highly versatile musician, he has performed as recitalist, soloist, orchestral principal, and chamber musician. His repertoire is equally diverse, spanning from the 17th-century works of Gabrielli to 21st-century electroacoustic works for cello. Benjamin currently teaches at Fort Hays State University as Associate Professor of Cello and Bass and serves as Music Department Chair. He studied with Alan Harris at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Jim Fittz at the University of Northern Colorado. Master classes and additional studies were undertaken with Norman Fischer, Gordon Epperson, Anne Epperson, and members of the Cleveland and Juilliard String Quartets. Benjamin resides in Hays with his wife and enjoys spending his free time gardening, fishing, and cooking. He plays on an Italian cello by Luigi Bajoni.



CÉSAR CAÑÓN alternates his activities as a pianist and conductor with teaching and vocal

coaching. He has performed and collaborated on many stages in his native Colombia, as well as in Brazil, Canada, Italy, Mexico and across the United States. César holds degrees in piano performance from the National University of Colombia and in collaborative piano from the

University of Michigan, where he obtained Master and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees under the mentorship of celebrated pianist Martin Katz. He is also an alumnus of the Aspen Opera Theatre Center, the Merola Opera Program, and San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship. He has been a guest lecturer and performer in several universities in Colombia and across the United States, including residencies at Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and Emory University. Recently, he has been a member of the teaching staff of the voice and opera departments at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and in the music staff of San Francisco Opera. While in the bay area, he has been music director for Pocket Opera's 2019 production of *The Elixir of Love* and 2020 production of *Don Giovanni*. In fall 2020, he will join the Norwegian National Opera as opera repetiteur and assistant chorus master.



RYAN PEARSON is a percussionist, performer, and educator. He performs and teaches regularly

throughout Kansas and the Midwest as a chamber musician, orchestra member, and soloist. Ryan is currently a Lecturer in Percussion at the University of Kansas and the professor of Percussion at Fort Hays State University. He is an avid performer and collaborator, striving to bring diverse, contemporary, and artistic percussion music to the world. Ryan is a member of the Heartland Marimba Ensemble and the PostScript Duo. He has been a member of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony and Sinfonia da Camera. Ryan served as principal percussion of the Urbana Pops Orchestra and percussionist for the Transit Brass Ensemble, the Champaign-Urbana Theater Company, and the Central Iowa Symphony. As an educator, Ryan works at many high schools throughout the

Midwest. He was most recently the Head Percussion Instructor for the Mahomet-Seymour School District in Mahomet, Illinois. Ryan teaches at Blue Valley West High School in Overland Park, Kansas, and at Urbandale High School in Des Moines, IA. Ryan serves as a percussion instructor at the Midwestern Music Camp at the University of Kansas and the High Plains Music Camp at Fort Hays State University. Ryan also runs an online lesson studio for students across the Midwest.



ANDREW RODRIGUEZ'S interest in music began with stints as the guitarist for various

metal/hardcore bands as a teenager, eventually recording three full-length albums as one of the main songwriters for the Texas hardcore/punk band Close Your Eyes on Chicago-based label Victory Records. Andrew's history as a performer in the hardcore scene sculpts the core of his musical identity. Having spent over three years touring the country, Andrew's passion for the DIY scene continues to guide his creativity. The embedded experiences of performing intense and passionate music night after night have led to a musical language that is both raw and dramatically expressive. Throughout this period, Andrew has remained active in the indie music scene both as a songwriter and producer. These three avenues (composing, songwriting, and producing) often intersect to create a unique vision wherein lies Andrew's voice. Having built his career on writing and performing music with close friends and collaborators, Andrew is eager to develop long-lasting relationships with artists and musicians that share the same vision of collaboration. andrewmrodriguez.com

XUAN is a new media artist, filmmaker, and pianist working at the intersection of music, visual art, and technology. Her

work encompasses experimental animation, abstract scenography, narrative documentaries, music videos, interactive



installations, and real-time audio-visual programming. With a background as a contemporary

classical pianist, she actively develops innovative, cross-disciplinary projects that broaden the immersive scope of new music through technology. She has collaborated with artists such as Glenn Kotche, Pierre Jodlowski, Michael Burritt, Gemma Peacocke, Annika Socolofsky, Third Coast Percussion, Nois Quartet, Parhelion Trio, Rubiks Collective, and Ensemble Garage, which have led to performances at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the MCA Chicago, the Smithsonian Institution, University of South Carolina, Carnegie Mellon University, Constellation, SF Jazz, Le Poisson Rouge, and the Indie Grits Film Festival. Recent projects in interactive design have been exhibited at the ErsterErster Gallery in Berlin, Germany, the ibug Urban Art Festival in Reinchenbach, Germany, and Design Biennale 2019 in Zürich, Switzerland. Xuan is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and has studied Media Spaces at the BTK University of Art and Design in Berlin. She is currently teaching experimental filmmaking as an Adjunct Professor of Humanities at Eastman and works as a freelance video artist. Upcoming projects include abstract scenography for Kinds of Kings for their multi-concert residency at National Sawdust (Brooklyn) in 2019–2020, a concert-length program of experimental animation with cellist Audrey Q Snyder at Constellation (Chicago), music videos "Turadh" with Annika Socolofsky and Parhelion Trio, "Busy Making Steps" with avant-pop artist Bec Plexus, and a major collaboration with Eighth Blackbird in June 2020.

 **AD ASTRA**
MUSIC FESTIVAL

presents

HIGH SCHOOL & COMMUNITY VIRTUAL CHOIRS

Friday, July 24, 7:30 pm CDT

featuring

Mixed High School Ensemble

SOPRANOS

Alisara Arial
Devlyn Jochum
Beth Land

ALTOS

Lauren Keith
Caitlin Leiker

TENORS

Jackson Deardorff
Adrian Justin Songco

BASSES

Caleb Gottry
Allen Lin

Treble High School Ensemble

SOPRANOS

Ava Dominguez
Sarai Gonzalez
Natalia D. Perera-DelValle
Alexis White

ALTOS

Hanna Dannar
Aubrey Larson
Olivia Rozenberg

Russell Community Choir

with

Alex Underwood, director

Shelby Laird, director

Grace Currie, director

FEATURED RESTAURANT



Present this program to receive a 10% discount on your take-out order!

FEATURED COCKTAIL

Spritzer

Mix 6 oz. of your favorite chilled white or rosé wine with 3 oz. soda water.

OR Grab your favorite beer from Defiance Brewing Co!

PROGRAM

MIXED HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE

Words

Anders Edenroth
b. 1963

Revolution

Pinkzebra

TREBLE HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE

Good Intent

arr. MaryAnne Smith and Celine Durney

Kimbra
b. 1990

Sit Still, Look Pretty

arr. Deke Sharon

Daya
b. 1998

RUSSELL COMMUNITY CHOIR

Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler

arr. R. Nathaniel Dett
1882–1943

NOTES

Tonight's program is the closest the Ad Astra Music Festival's season will get to the format being used by so many of our peers in the choral music community. Our artistic team is primarily made up of choral conductors and teachers who led virtual choirs as they concluded their academic semesters. Having learned from those experiences, the team decided that smaller groups of high school students would be best and that the students need to have significant musical training and independence before entering the intensive. The festival formed two student groups: one with seven students, the other with nine. They met for about two hours on Zoom every day for two weeks and learned about the style, history, and culture of a *cappella* and vocal jazz singing while rehearsing and recording two songs that they chose. Students were guided by

Grace Currie, Shelby Laird, and me while getting a chance to work with special guest clinicians Celine Durney and MaryAnne Muglia Smith. Celine and MaryAnne have recorded with Pentatonix and shared the stage with The Real Group, Take 6, and New York Voices. The festival was lucky to have them enrich this experience for the students. The two-week intensives were free for students. One of the advantages to this remote experience is that students from all over the country were able to join us. We had students from Arizona, Illinois, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and, of course, Kansas.

The students drove the artistic vision for this program, and because they are coming from all parts of the country, students in both sessions discussed how their worlds are being impacted at this

moment. They shared their fears about the pandemic, their frustration at racial injustices, and how they, as the future leaders of our world, hope to proceed. Their song choices reflect that. The mixed group chose a jazz song called “Words” exploring how simple and inexpensive words are while also being one of the most powerful forces in humankind. Their second song is “Revolution”, which is about how their generation is ready to take the lead. The treble group chose “Good Intent” and “Sit Still, Look Pretty”, two songs about relationships and particularly about the empowerment of women in their romantic relationships.

The concert closes with a virtual choir performance from the Russell Community Choir. Despite not being able to meet in person this year, the choir was able to put a song together by recording their own

part and submitting it electronically. Grace Currie, the festival’s media director, mastered the recordings into what the audience will hear. R. Nathaniel Dett’s 1926 setting of the spiritual “Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler” brings a welcome message of encouragement during this troubling time. Dett said the spiritual “was widely used by the slaves as a signal that one of their number was being helped to escape to freedom.” According to Dett scholar and University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor Marques L. A. Garrett, R. Nathaniel Dett was an influential and beloved professor at the Hampton Institute, an historically Black college/university. He was the first Black person to graduate from the Oberlin Conservatory, and his writing and arranging of short choral works leaves an important legacy today.

—Alex Underwood

TEXTS

WORDS

Words

A letter and a letter on a string
Will hold forever humanity spellbound

Words

Possession of the beggar and the king
Everybody, everyday

You and I, we all can say

Words

Regarded as a complicated tool
Created by man, implicated by mankind

Words

Obsession of the genius and the fool
Everybody, everyday
Everywhere and every way

Words

Find them, you can use them
Say them, you can hear them
Write them, you can read them
Love them, fear them

Words

Transmitted as we’re fitted from the start
Received by all and we’re sentenced to a
life with

Words

Impression of the stupid and the smart
Everybody, everyday

You and I, we all can say

Words

Inside your head can come alive as they’re
said

Softly, loudly, modestly and proudly

Words

Expression by the living and the dead
Everybody, everyday
Everywhere and every way

REVOLUTION

Get ready for the revolution
It’s coming to you now
It’s coming to you now

Rising up, now the tide is turning
 Feel the heat, yeah the fire's burning
 No hesitation
 Our generation leads us onward

Start the clock, now the game is changing
 Curtain's up and the lights are blazing
 We're never gonna turn this dream around

Get ready for the revolution
 It's coming to you now
 It's coming to you now
 You're witnessing an evolution
 And they'll never bring us down
 No, they'll never bring us down

Feel the rush, and the race is on, yeah
 Turn it up, it's your favorite song, yeah
 Our motivation
 Our inspiration feeds the fire

There's a light on a new horizon
 There's a dream that our hopes are guiding
 This time we're gonna reach the other side

GOOD INTENT

You heard the crickets of the early eve
 They lurk around the opening in twos and
 threes
 Clementine told you not to move with the
 breeze
 I'll take you down to places where we dare
 not speak

The red light in the doorway says she's
 armed
 But boy, go try your luck and you might
 get past
 Step into the dwelling of the liger's mouth
 Peer into the panic for a kick and swell

You know you shouldn't be there but it's
 way past bed
 There's comfort in the fingers of your
 good intent
 You know you shouldn't be there but your
 money's all spent
 You've got your reputation and your good
 intent

Out to feed that habit when you sowed
 that seed

Nothing made you feel out of the ordinary
 But the air turned sombre and the night
 took thee
 Took you on a waltz of hypocrisy

She broke your bones, now you're lying in
 the dirt
 The shadow of a hunter under your torture
 It's not enough to say, it's not what's in
 your heart
 You've tainted every moment till death do
 we part

I know you didn't mean it, boy you meant
 so well
 Your pennies are cascading down your
 wishing well
 I know you didn't mean it when you
 counted to ten
 You've got your reputation and your good
 intent

It's not enough to hope for the best
 It's not enough to lie there on a brace
 The liger's on the prowl, now you've
 pulled its strings
 One false move and soon you're playing
 dice for a...

SIT STILL, LOOK PRETTY

Could dress up to get love, but guess what?
 I'm never gonna be that girl
 Who's living in a Barbie world
 Could wake up and make up and play dumb
 Pretending that I need a boy
 Who's gonna treat me like a toy

I know the other girlies wanna wear
 expensive things and diamond rings
 But I don't wanna be the puppet that
 you're playing on a string
 This queen don't need a king

Oh, I don't know what you been told
 But this gal right here's gonna rule the world
 Yeah, that is where I'm gonna be because
 I wanna be
 No, I don't wanna sit still, look pretty

You get off on your 9 to 5
 Dream of picket fences and trophy wives

But no, I'm never gonna be 'cause I don't
wanna be
No, I don't wanna sit still, look pretty

Sure, I'm a pretty girl up in a pretty world
But they say pretty hurts
And I don't wanna sit still
I'm a pretty girl up in a pretty world
I don't wanna sit still, look pretty

LET US CHEER THE WEARY TRAVELER

Let us cheer the weary traveler,
Cheer the weary traveler,
Let us cheer the weary traveler,
Along the heavenly way.

I'll take my gospel trumpet,
And I'll begin to blow,
And if my Saviour helps me,
I'll blow wherever I go.

And if you meet with crosses
And trials on the way,
Just keep your trust in Jesus,
And don't forget to pray.



presents

TRUDY FURNEY OPERA: A SNEAK PEEK

Saturday, July 25, 7:30 pm CDT

featuring

Katelyn Mattson-Levy, mezzo-soprano	Trudy Furney
Dominic Aragon, baritone	Narrator
Alyssa Toepfer, soprano	Chorus
Janie Brokenicky, soprano	Chorus
Michael Davidson, tenor	Chorus
Patrick Graham, baritone	Chorus

with

Anna Pidgorna, composer
Maria Reva, librettist
Austin McWilliams, music director
Sasha Hildebrand, stage director

FEATURED RESTAURANT

Meridy's Restaurant & Lounge

Present this program to receive a 10% discount on your take-out order!

FEATURED COCKTAIL

French 75

Shake 2 oz. bourbon, $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice, and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. simple syrup over ice. Strain into a glass and top with a splash of champagne.

PROGRAM

Scenes from the *Trudy Furney Opera*

The Students
The Angel
Promise Me

Anna Pidgorna

b. 1985

NOTES

When Anna and I first began interviewing people who knew Trudy, we thought our mission was to zero in on the “true” Trudy, and the one accurate version of her story. But we soon realized this was impossible. Trudy’s students, colleagues and friends each knew a slightly different version of Trudy and of the events that transpired throughout her life. This may be why Trudy had such an impact on Russell and the arts community: she was an acutely sensitive woman with a big heart, who knew what individual people needed from her, and she became that for them, to help them. She was a mentor to her students, a mover-and-shaker in the school district, a lively party host to her many friends. But the multiple personal tragedies throughout Trudy’s life meant that she also suffered deeply; this was a side she showed to few people. To write an opera that purports to show the “real” version of Trudy or the “definitive” story

of her life would be doing a disservice to her complexity, depth, and humanity.

Anna and I chose the meta-opera structure to enable us to explore the many sides of Trudy, and the slipperiness of memory. It is an opera about staging an opera, inspired by the meta-theatrical structure of Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*. You will witness characters arguing over how to tell Trudy’s story and whether the opera should have a happy or sad ending, just like Anna and I witnessed interviewees correct each other about their memories of Trudy. Though it may be tempting to draw parallels, the characters are not based on specific interviewees. Rather, the characters are amalgamations of conversations about Trudy, research articles and books, and my own interpretation.

—Maria Reva

LIBRETTO

by Maria Reva

THE STUDENTS

CHORUS

We came from good homes and bad.
Poor homes and rich.

Unseemly, broken or bored,
we drank, we smoked,
or vowed our souls to the Lord.
One by one you found us,

mended us, loved us,
drove us to school,
coaxed out scraps of talent,
made us draw circles
over and over
and over and over,
stroking our minds calm.

TRUDY

Don't draw a picture.
Draw an illusion.

CHORUS

Don't draw a picture.
Draw an illusion.

TRUDY

Let them imagine the rest.

CHORUS

Circles, over and over
and over and over
till we saw
plates,
pancakes,
hubcaps
gears,
manholes,
bath drains,
moons,
planets,
suns
winding forever
one round the other
galaxies spinning

THE ANGEL

NARRATOR

Mrs. Furney's husband and son, only 27,
have died.

CHORUS

No matter what,
she carries on.

NARRATOR

Mrs. Furney herself is dying.
No one knows but she.
Mrs. Furney carries on.
She has no choice,
when there are bigger matters:

CHORUS

We watch our town
circle the drain.
Circle over and over,
as we grow older and older.

NARRATOR

Oil and farm jobs dry up.
Bob Dole, pride of the town,
Loses Presidential bid a second time.
Schools defunded.
Stores shuttered.

CHORUS

We watch our town
circle the drain.
Circle over and over,
as we grow older and older.

TRUDY

From the steel of the oil fields,
The steel of the wheat fields,
The Seventh Angel
will make our town sing anew,
wash away ugliness,
herald the good.
Our town will prosper again.

CHORUS

Our town will prosper again.

TRUDY

Oil fields and wheat fields singing anew.

CHORUS

Oil fields and wheat fields singing anew.

TRUDY & CHORUS

Paradise on Earth!
The trumpet shall blow
For a brand new beginning.

PROMISE ME

TRUDY

Oh, Lord:
First you took my husband,
breath by ragged breath.
Then you took my son
in my own kitchen,
pointed the gun.
His wild mind, such a mystery to me,

smashed open,
like a jar of jam
all over the wall.

Oh, Lord:
Now you've come for me.
Will you snatch me whole,
or piece by piece?
Will I see my husband?
Will I see my son?
Promise me,
or I won't go.

Send a kiss from Red.
A caress from Drew.
Or I won't go.

Make my heart trip,
My leg twitch, my ear itch.
Promise me,
or I won't go.
No, I won't go.

BIOGRAPHIES



KATELYN MATTSON-LEVY is a two-time award winner of the Metropolitan Opera's National Council

Competition at the district level, a first place recipient in the National Opera Association Competition, and a finalist in both the International Contemporary Opera Competition and Liederkrantz Foundation Competition. On the concert stage, Katelyn has proven herself a recitalist of the highest caliber, described as "...performing with deeply emotional perspective" by the *Bellingham Herald* after her performance of Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été* with the Bellingham Festival Symphony Orchestra. Katelyn has performed with opera companies, symphony orchestras, and music festivals around the country, including Des Moines Metro Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Musica Sacra of Cincinnati, Chicago Chamber Orchestra, Southern Illinois Music Festival, and the Bellingham Festival of Music. Katelyn is the voice of classical music in the morning with Radio Kansas.



DOMINIC ARAGON is a native of Wichita, Kansas. He currently resides in Boulder, Colorado, where he recently

completed his Artist Diploma in voice performance at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying under Dr. John Seesholtz. Dominic has performed concert works by Handel, Mozart, Bruckner, Poulenc, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, and Claussen with various ensembles during his time in the Front Range, and he currently sings as a chorister with the Colorado Bach Ensemble and Boulder Bach Ensemble. As an apprentice artist with Opera Fort Collins, Dominic performed Yamadori (*Madama Butterfly*). He has performed choral works, chamber music, and Pa (*Proving Up*) as an artist in residence at the Ad Astra Music Festival in 2019. He has also enjoyed performing roles including Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Onegin (*Eugene Onegin*), Bernardo (*West Side Story*), Fredrik (*A Little Night Music*), Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), Escamillo (*The Tragedy of Carmen*), and Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*). Dominic completed his undergraduate studies at Baldwin Wallace

University and his graduate studies at Colorado State University.



Soprano **ALYSSA TOEPFER** has been praised as a performer with “unbridled dexterity” (*Kansas*

City Star) and a “marvelous, soaring tone” (*KC Metropolis*). She was seen last season at Ad Astra as Littler Daughter in Missy Mazzoli’s *Proving Up*. Additional stage credits include Musetta (*La bohème*) with Opera180, Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) with Lawrence Opera Theatre, Jemmy (*Guillaume Tell*) with Wichita Grand Opera, Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) with the South Dakota Symphony, Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*) with Opera South Dakota, and Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) with Opera Omaha. She was scheduled to sing the soprano solos in Mozart’s *Requiem* with the Savannah Philharmonic in Savannah, Georgia, this spring, but it was unfortunately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alyssa is a district winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She currently sings in the Grammy Award-winning Kansas City Chorale and teaches voice at Benedictine College and Ottawa University. alysساتoeppersoprano.com



Soprano **JANIE BROKENICKY**, whose voice has been described as “rich and versatile,” has been a featured

soloist at the Meyerson Symphony Hall (Dallas), The Kauffman Center, and The Folly Theater (Kansas City). Additionally, she has been a guest artist with the Wichita Chamber Chorale, Hays Symphony Orchestra, Flint Hills Masterworks Chorale, and served three summers as artist in residence for the Ad Astra Music Festival in addition to multiple guest appearances. Janie has enjoyed

several collaborations with the Kansas State Symphony Orchestra since joining the voice faculty and in 2017 took on the infamous role of The Queen of the Night in the KSU production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. Last year she collaborated with the Wichita Grand Opera as a guest soloist for both their “Opera on the Lake” production and *Chris Mann: Home for Christmas, Part 2*. She will join the Salina Symphony next season for three guest soloist performances. Janie is a full-time instructor at Kansas State University, teaching applied voice and music theory, while concurrently pursuing a PhD in curriculum and instruction with a focus in music theory. She is also executive director and co-founder of the Flint Hills Children’s Choirs, based out of Manhattan, Kansas. The choirs have performed at the KMEA State Convention, collaborated with the Kansas City ballet, and performed with the Wichita Symphony Orchestra and soloist Chris Mann. In June 2019 FHCC performed in Carnegie Hall and will travel to Scotland in 2021. Professionally, Janie has served as a guest choral clinician and adjudicator in both Missouri and Kansas. She served eight years on the board for the Kansas Choral Directors Association as both chair of women’s choirs and North Central representative. She holds degrees in music education, choral conducting and vocal performance, a degree in mathematics (hence her love for music theory), and is an accomplished oboist. None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of her husband Cole and two children, Ava (7) and Ethan (3).



MICHAEL DAVIDSON

holds a Bachelor of Music degree in voice from Loyola University New Orleans and a

Master of Music degree in voice from the University of Kansas. While at the

University of Kansas, he was on stage in several operas including as Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*). Professionally, he has sung with both the New Orleans Opera and the Kansas City Lyric Opera choruses as well as the Eutin Summer Opera Festival in Eutin, Germany. Michael has performed now in two choruses accompanying Plácido Domingo and has worked with some of the nation's foremost vocal coaches including John Wustman, Martin Katz, Russell Miller, and Leonardo Vordoni. Currently Michael teaches vocal music at Russell High School and Ruppenthal Middle School. Michael's most recent projects include directing and producing *Cinderella* at RHS and directing music for *Godspell* at Barton County Community College.



Baritone **PATRICK GRAHAM**, a Kansas City, Missouri, native, has been praised for his "vocal strength"

and "beautiful tone." Having recently completed his master's degree in voice performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music, he also holds a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the University of Missouri. He has sung in productions with the Eastman Opera Theater, Eastman Collegium Musicum (under the direction of Paul O'Dette), Seagle Music Colony, and the University of Missouri Opera, including works ranging from 17th-century French Baroque operas to 21st-century American operas and musicals. In 2021, Patrick will return to Seagle Music Colony to sing Charles Ives in the world premiere of Russell Banks' and Robert Carl's new opera *Harmony*. His concert work includes Bach's *St. John Passion*, Haydn's *The Seasons*, and Liszt's *Missa Solemnis*, as well as a number of Bach cantatas. In 2019, he was awarded the Una Creditor Encouragement Award at the Kansas City District Metropolitan Opera National

Council Auditions, and in 2016 he won his division of the NATS National Student Auditions.



ANNA PIDGORA is a Ukrainian-born, Canadian-raised composer and multi-media artist who combines

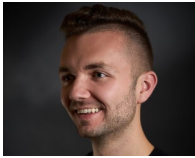
sound, visual arts, writing, and carpentry to create works that are dramatic and picturesque. She works extensively with Ukrainian folk singing, incorporating elements of this style in instrumental music and performing as a pseudo-folk vocalist herself. With an enduring love for the outdoors, Anna draws a great deal of inspiration from the natural soundscape, often imitating birds and animals. Having studied visual art from an early age, she incorporates visual elements into some of her manuscripts. She has been commissioned by Wild Shore Festival, Irish Language Art Song Project, Ludovico Ensemble, Ensemble Paramirabo, 21C Festival, Soundstreams, Toronto's New Music Concerts, Gryphon Trio, and Thin Edge New Music Collective. She is a recipient of two SOCAN Foundation Emerging Composers' Awards and represented Canada at the ISCM World New Music Days 2013 festival in Vienna. Anna recently completed a PhD in music at Princeton University.



MARIA REVA writes fiction and opera libretti. She is the author of the story collection *Good Citizens Need Not*

Fear (Doubleday, Virago, and Knopf Canada New Face of Fiction, 2020). Maria's stories have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *McSweeney's*, *Granta*, *The Journey Prize Stories*, *The Best American Short Stories*, and elsewhere. She won the Writers' Trust of Canada's RBC Bronwen Wallace Award in 2018 and a National

Magazine Award in 2019. Her musical collaborations include an opera libretto for ERATO Ensemble, texts for Vancouver International Song Institute's Art Song Lab, and a script for City Opera Vancouver. In March 2017, *musica intima* vocal ensemble premiered *Uta's Escape*, a commission by Canadian composer Jennifer Butler based on one of Maria's stories. Maria was born in Ukraine and grew up in Vancouver, British Columbia. She received her MFA from the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas, and is at work on an opera and a novel.



**AUSTIN
MCWILLIAMS,**
conductor and
countertenor, is an
Adjunct Professor at
Western Michigan

University, where he conducts the university operas, teaches phonetics, and assists the choral ensembles. Austin strives to present compelling, intriguing music that is directly relevant to the communities in which it is performed. He is a faculty member at Missouri Scholars Academy, an annual, month-long governor's school for gifted high school juniors. In 2019, Austin earned his Master of Music in choral conducting at WMU under Kimberly Dunn Adams. While at WMU, he designed a recital on HIV/AIDS awareness in collaboration with several community organizations, and he earned the School of Music Graduate Award for Excellence in Teaching. Austin graduated in 2017 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor of Science in computer engineering with highest honors. He hails from the illustrious micropolitan hub of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, where he received his formative training from Rachael Bonk.



SASHA HILDEBRAND
is a native of
Stafford, Kansas,
and is currently
working as the
Assistant Professor

of Theatre and Artistic Director for Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas. Sasha holds a BA in Theatre and Communications from Sterling College, a postgraduate degree in acting from The Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts in Liverpool, England, and an MFA in theatre from the University of Iowa. Sasha's first love is performance, and she has worked academically and professionally across the country and in Great Britain, specializing in musical and classical theatre performance with such companies as Drury Lane in Chicago, the Chicago Academy for the Arts, the Texas Shakespeare Festival, the National Youth Theatre of Britain, and the Springer Opera House Theatre Academy of Georgia. Directing is equally important to Sasha, with some of her favorite past projects being Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Sasha's other passion is costume design, with over 50 shows completed, including *A Little Night Music*, *Macbeth*, and *The Boyfriend*.