TCU COLLEGE of FINE ARTS
School of Music

presents

Roberto Sierra Art Song Masterclass

Roberto Sierra, clinician
Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

November 4, 2026 4:00 PM Moudy Auditorium

Program

Yo sé
from *Rimas* (1999)
Roberto Sierra
(b. 1953)

Tim McCracken, tenor
Vincent Li, piano

Medianoche
from *Décimas* (2013)

Emily Spretz, soprano

La amistad
from *Cinco Poemas Aztecas* (1994)

Payton Fortner, tenor

Sueño VII: Eclipse
from *33 Sueños* (2018)

Jaylord Lobaton, baritone

Canción hacia adentro
from *Julia* (2014)

Samantha Irvin, mezzo-soprano

La buena nueva
from *Canciones de Navidad* (2012)

Olivia Garza, soprano

Mr. Sierra's residency is made possible in large part by the TCU College of Fine Arts Guest Artist/Guest Lecturer Grant.

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TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OR USING RECORDING EQUIPMENT IS PROHIBITED

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Texts and Translations

Yo sé

Yo sé cual el objeto
de tus suspiros es;
yo conozco la causa de tu dulce
secreta languidez.
¿Te ries...? Algún día
sabrás, niña, por qué:
tú los sabes apenas,
y yo lo sé.

Yo sé cuando tú sueñas,
y lo que en sueños ves,
como en un libro puedo lo que callas
en tu frente leer.
¿Te ries...? Algún día
sabrás, niña, por qué:
tú los sabes apenas,
y yo lo sé.

Yo sé por qué sonries
y lloras a la vez;
yo penetro en los senos misteriosos
de tu alma de mujer.
¿Te ries...? Algún día
sabrás, niña, por qué:
mientras tú sientes mucho y nada sabes
yo, que no siento ya, todo lo sé.

I Know

I know which one
is the object of your sighs;
I know the cause of your sweet
secret languor.
You laugh...? Someday,
child, you will know why:
you barely know it,
and I know it.

I know when you dream,
and what you see in your dreams,
as in a book, what you hide
I can read on your forehead.
You laugh...? Someday,
child, you will know why:
you barely know it,
and I know it.

I know why you smile
and cry at the same time;
I penetrate the mysterious bosom
of your womanly soul.
You laugh...? Someday,
child, you will know why:
while you feel a lot and know little
I, who do not feel anything, know it all.[1]

Medianoche

A la orilla del camino
que en la sierra se encarama,
mi gallo duerme en la rama
de viejo laurel vecino.
Le corre ardor masculino
desde el pico hasta la hiel.
Y en la rama de laurel,
la luna que lo ilumina
es como blanca gallina
que abre un ala sobre él.

Midnight

At the side of the road
that climbs the mountains,
my rooster sleeps in a branch
of the old bay bush.
There are hints of male ardor
from his beak down to his guts.
And in the branch of the bay bush,
the moon shining above
is like a white hen
spreading a wing over him.[2]

[1] Roberto Sierra, trans., preface to *Rimas: for Voice & Piano*, poetry by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, composed by Roberto Sierra (Verona, NJ: Subito Music Publishing, 1999).

[2] Virginia Sierra, trans., preface to *Décimas: for High Voice & Piano*, poetry by Luis Lloréns Torres, composed by Roberto Sierra (Verona, NJ: Subito Music Publishing, 2013).

IV. La amistad

Cual pluma de quetzal, fragante flor,
la amistad se estremece:
como plumas de garza, en galas se entreteje.
Una ave que rumora cual cascabel es nuestro canto:
¡qué hermoso lo entonáis!
Aquí entre flores que nos forman valla,
entre ramas floridas los estáis cantando.

Friendship

Like a quetzal's feather, fragrant flower,
friendship quivers:
like heron feathers it gallantly interlaces.
A bird that murmurs like a bell is our song:
how beautifully you sing it!
Here, surrounded by flowers
between flowery branches you sing.[3]

Sueño VII: Eclipse

A pesar de todo, de esta podedumbre antigua
que confunde los días y las noches,
del dolor clavado en la garganta, del peso que dobla las rodillas,
los signos de los vestigios avisan de que solo
es posible reunir lo disperso,
y así, un perro que bebe el agua pura de un manantial,
el brillo punzante de Aldebarán,
el estallido de una cuerda rota del piano, o mutilarte
con mi sexo ardiente, constituyen la amalgama
con la que el día forja los peldaños de una escala interminable;
la que dicen que conduce hacia el centro de los centros.

Seventh Dream: Eclipse

Despite everything, despite this ancient rot
that blurs the days and nights,
the pain lodged in the throat, the weight that buckles the knees—
the signs left by these vestiges warn that it is only
possible to gather what is scattered;
and so, a dog drinking pure water from a spring,
the piercing gleam of Aldebaran,
the snap of a broken piano string, or mutilating yourself
with my burning sex, form the amalgam
with which the day forges the rungs of an endless ladder—
the one said to lead toward the center of centers.[4]

VI. Canción hacia adentro

¡No me recuerdes! ¡Siénteme!
Hay solo un trino entre tu amor y mi alma.

Mis dos ojos navegan
el mismo azul sin fin donde tú danzas.

Tu arco iris de sueños en mi tiene
siempre pradera abierta entre montañas.

Inward Song

Don't remember me! Feel me!
There is only one chirping song between your love and my soul.

My two eyes are cruising
The same endless blue where you dance.

Your rainbow of dreams can count on me
having an prairie between the mountains.

[3] Robert Sierra, trans., preface to *Cinco Poemas Aztecas (Five Aztec Poems): for Voice and Piano*, composed by Roberto Sierra (Verona, NJ: Subito Music Publishing, 1995), ii–iii.

[4] Poetry by Juan Carlos Garvayo, translated from Spanish to English using Google Translate, October 8, 2026, https://translate.google.com.

U na vez se perdieron mis sollozos,
y los hallé, abrigados, en tus lágrimas.

¡No me recuerdes! ¡Siénteme!
Un ruiseñor nos tiene en su garganta.

Los ríos que me traje de mis riscos,
desembocan tan solo por tus playas.

Hay confusión de vuelos en el aire...
¡El viento que nos lleva en sus sandalias!

¡No me recuerdes! ¡Siénteme!
Mientras menos me pienses, más me amas.

Once, my sobs were lost,
And I found them, warmed, by your tears.

Don't remember me! Feel me!
A nightingale has us in his throat.

The rivers that I've brought from my cliffs,
Flow only towards your beaches.

There is confusion in the air...
The wind is carrying us in her sandals!

Don't remember me! Feel me!
The less you think of me, the more you love me.[5]

La buena nueva

Una noche sin luna, de lejanas estrellas,
y susurros de palmas mojadas de lluvia,
la jovencita reza,
ríe y reza, reza y sonríe,
sonríe y reza.

Pronto será moza, no más,
y José, el carpintero, la casará.

Reza y sonríe, sonríe y reza,
reza y sonríe, sonríe y reza,

De pronto, muy de pronto,
una luz brillante
corta la noche.

La niña, asustada,
mira angustiada,
y ante sus ojos aparece el ángel Gabriel.

No temas, María, le dice el ángel,
el Dios que me envía te bendice.
Darás a luz un niño,
a quien llamarás Jesús.

En los campos del mundo, honda huella dejará.

The Good News

On a moonless night of distant stars
and the whispering of wet palms,
the young girl prays,
she laughs and prays, prays and smiles,
smiles and prays.

Soon she will be a grown woman,
and José, the carpenter, will maryy her.

She prays and smiles, smiles and prays,
prays and smiles, smiles and prays,

Suddenly, all too suddenly,
a brilliant light
pierces the night.

The girl, frightened,
looks on in anguish,
and before her appears the angel Gabriel.

“Do not fear, Mary,” the angel tells her,
“The God who sends me blesses you.
You shall give birth to a child, whom you will name Jesus.”

“Upon the fields of the world, he will leave a deep mark.

[5] Virginia Sierra, trans., preface to *Julia: for High Voice & Piano*, poetry by Julia de Burgos, composed by Roberto Sierra (Verona, NJ: Subito Music Publishing, 2015).

Entre viejos platanales, fértiles surcos brotarán. Será oro para humildes y pan para pobres.	Amidst ancient groves, fertile furrows will spring forth. He will be gold for the humble and bread for the poor.”
Y para ti, María, por tu valor, María, gozo y tormento, tormento y gozo.	“And for you, Mary, for your courage, Mary, joy and torment, torment and joy.”
María la niña, María la sabia, María la puerta del porvenir, abre sus brazos, hinca su pecho, y acepta con gracia su gozo y tormento.	Mary the girl, Mary the wise, Mary, the gateway to the future, opens her arms, bares her breast, and graciously accepts joy and torment.
Y Dios la bendice, sonrisa de Dios.	And God blesses her, God's own smile.[6]

Artist Bios



For more than four decades, the works of Grammy-nominated and Latin Grammy-winning **ROBERTO SIERRA** have been part of the repertoire of many of the leading orchestras, ensembles, and festivals in the USA and Europe. At the inaugural concert of the 2002 world-renowned Proms in London, his Fandangos was performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, a concert broadcast by both BBC Radio and Television throughout the UK and Europe. Many major American and European orchestras and international ensembles have commissioned and performed his works. Among those ensembles are the orchestras of Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, New Mexico, Houston, Minnesota, Dallas, Detroit, San Antonio and Phoenix, as well as the American Composers Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, Berlin Philharmonic, and the Spanish orchestras of Madrid, Galicia, Castilla y León, Barcelona, and Murcia.

Commissioned works include: Concerto for Orchestra for the centennial celebrations of the Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the Philadelphia Orchestra; Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for James Carter; Fandangos and Missa Latina commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington DC; Sinfonía No. 3 "La Salsa", commissioned by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; Danzas Concertantes for guitar and orchestra commissioned by the Orquesta de Castilla y León; Double Concerto for violin and viola co-commissioned by the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia Orchestras; Bongo+ commissioned by the Juilliard School in celebration of the 100th anniversary; Songs from the Diaspora commissioned by Music Accord for Heidi Grant Murphy, Kevin Murphy and the St. Lawrence String Quartet; and Concierto de Cámara co-commissioned by the the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Northwest and Stanford Lively Arts.

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[6] Poetry by Virginia Sierra, translated from Spanish to English using Google Translate, October 8, 2026, https://translate.google.com.

In 2021, Roberto Sierra was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 2017, he was awarded the Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize, the highest honor given in Spain to a composer of Spanish or Latin American origin. In 2010, he was elected to the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2003, he was awarded the Academy Award in Music by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The award states: "Roberto Sierra writes brilliant music, mixing fresh and personal melodic lines with sparkling harmonies and striking rhythms. . ." His Sinfonía No. 1, a work commissioned by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, won the 2004 Kenneth Davenport Competition for Orchestral Works. In 2007, the Serge and Olga Koussevitzky International Recording Award (KIRA) was awarded to Albany Records for the recording of his composition Sinfonía No. 3 “La Salsa”. Roberto Sierra has served as Composer-In-Residence with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra and New Mexico Symphony.

Roberto Sierra's Music may be heard on CDs by Naxos, EMI, IBS Classics, UMG’s EMARCY, New World Records, Albany Records, Koch, New Albion, Koss Classics, BMG, Fleur de Son, and other labels. In 2011, UMG’s EMARCY label released Caribbean Rhapsody featuring the Concierto for Saxophones and Orchestra, commissioned and premiered by the DSO with James Carter. In 2004, EMI Classics released his two guitar concertos, Folias and Concierto Barroco, with Manuel Barrueco as soloist (released in the USA by Koch in 2005). Sierra has been nominated twice for a Grammy under the best contemporary composition category, first in 2009 for Missa Latina (Naxos) and in 2014 for his Sinfonia No. 4 (Naxos). In addition, his Variations on a Souvenir (ALbany) and Trio No. 4 (Centaur) were nominated for Latin Grammys in 2009 and 2015. In 2021, his Sonata para Guitarra won the Latin Grammy for Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

Roberto Sierra was born in 1953 in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico. He studied composition in Puerto Rico and Europe, where one of his teachers was György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany. The works of Roberto Sierra are published principally by Subito Music Publishing (ASCAP).[7]



Taiwanese pianist **CECILIA LO-CHIEN KAO** is a dynamic performer that is in demand as a chamber musician. She has collaborated with several distinguished artists including Lynn Harrell, Stefan Jackiw, Robert McDuffie, James Marckey, Bion Tsang, David Coucheron, and Jennifer Stumm, members of the Tokyo, Emerson, Juilliard String Quartets, among many others.

Kao is an Associate Professor of Professional Practice in Collaborative Piano at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. She is also the Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Scheherazade Music Festival in Kansas City and the Coordinator of Collaborative Piano at the prestigious Meadowmount School of Music in Westport, New York. She has been a collaborative pianist at Columbus State University and Mercer University in Georgia, where she worked with students of the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings.

She has appeared at Carnegie Weill Hall and can be heard with cellist Bion Tsang on his CD *The Blue Rock Sessions*. She was also a founding member of the Boulder Altitude Directive, a modern music ensemble dedicated to commissioning and performing new music, during their inaugural season. Kao has received fellowships for both the Aspen School of Music and the Music Academy of the West. She also was a chamber music artist at the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival in Florida.

[7] Roberto Sierra, “Bio,” *Roberto Sierra*, accessed September 15, 2026, https://www.robertosierra.com/markdown/.

Kao holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Colorado Boulder and a Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Texas at Austin, where she studied with the pioneer pedagogue, Anne Epperson. Prior to her move to the U.S., she was one of the first pianists to receive the Master of Arts degree in Collaborative Piano from National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei, where she also received her bachelor's degree in Piano Performance.

Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao is a Yamaha Performing Artist.



PAYTON FORTNER is a tenor from Midlothian, Texas. He received his Bachelor's degree in Choral Music Education from the University of Texas at Arlington, and is currently pursuing his Master of Music in Vocal Performance here at TCU. He performs with local opera companies such as Atchley Opera and Opera Arlington, and enjoys directing as well as performing. Upcoming engagements include Alfred in Atchley Opera's *Die Fledermaus* later this month.



OLIVIA GARZA is a soprano based in Fort Worth, Texas. She obtained undergraduate degrees from Texas Christian University in both Vocal Performance and Vocal Music Education. She is currently completing her master's degree in Voice Pedagogy at TCU. She has experience teaching elementary music and voice at the secondary level. Recent favorite roles include the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, Mrs. Nolan in *The Medium*, and Butterfly Chorus in Fort Worth Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*. Outside of music, she enjoys scrapbooking, salsa dancing, and playing with her pug.



SAMANTHA IRVIN is a junior vocal performance major at TCU, studying under Dr. Gwendolyn Alfred as a mezzo-soprano. In addition to her classical operatic focus, Samantha is very interested in compositions from the 20th century and on, with some of her favorite composers being Irving Fine, Lori Laitman, and Leonard Bernstein. She made her opera debut last year as Mama in Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortilèges*, and is excited to be preparing for the role of Zita in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.



Born in Beijing, China, **VINCENT LI** began piano at age five. He is a second-year master's student at Texas Christian University, studying with Dr. Enrico Elisi. In 2024, he made his orchestral debut with the Central Texas Philharmonic, performing Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major. Recent summers have taken him to the Aspen Music Festival and School, Madeline Island Chamber Music's Fellowship program, and Banff Centre's Art of Piano residency. Alongside his solo work, Vincent is an active collaborative pianist and received the Judith Solomon Award in Vocal Accompanying. His former teachers include Joseph Rackers and Eldon Ng.



JAYLORD LOBATON is a Filipino baritone, and is currently pursuing a MM Voice Performance degree, where he also serves as a graduate assistant for TCU Opera and TCU's Musicology Division. An alumnus of Eastern New Mexico University (BM '25), Jaylord has performed in numerous concerts and productions all over New Mexico and outside the United States as a singer, actor, conductor, and music director. His most recent stage

performance was Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore back in the spring of 2025. Additionally, Jaylord is an active member of the Barbershop Harmony Society as a competitor, educator, coach, researcher, and most recently, member of Dallas-based chorus and 14-time international champions, the Vocal Majority. Jaylord is a student of Dr. James Rodriguez.



TIM MCCRACKEN is a dynamic young conductor, tenor, and music educator recognized for his artistic leadership throughout the region. As the founder and artistic director of the Kairos Chamber Singers, he made his mark at age 20 by directing a prominent performance at Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth. Under his direction, the ensemble expanded its footprint with a comprehensive "A Very Kairos Christmas Tour" and achieved international acclaim with the release of their debut album, Voices of a New Era, which was streamed in over 150 countries.



EMILY SPRETZ is a junior at Texas Christian University double majoring in Music (Voice) and Fashion Merchandising. She has recently performed in the musicals *Hairspray* and *Frozen*, combining her passions for singing, dancing, and theatre. During her time at TCU, Emily has enjoyed performing works such as Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade" and Puccini's "O mio babbino caro." Beyond her vocal studies, she serves as President of License to Trill, a TCU a cappella group, and Vice President of Still in Motion, a TCU dance organization. Her involvement across music, dance, theatre, and fashion reflects her love for creativity and collaboration across the arts.

Please join us for the remainder of this week's events!

