



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

This is Nothing But Thy Love

A recital of new music by Patrick Vu

Saturday, December 4th, 2021

3:00 PM

PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

A Trumpet Fanfare (2020)*

Patrick Vu
(b. 1998)

TCU Trumpet Studio, directed by Dr. Jon Burgess

Clarinet Sonata in F Minor (2019)*

Patrick Vu

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante espressivo

Christian Lackey, clarinet
Dr. Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

Puedo escribir (2020)

Patrick Vu

John Dubois, tenor
Dr. Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

Han: Korean Songs of Loss and Longing (2019)*

Patrick Vu

- I. Ah! What Have I Done?
- II. When Have I Ever?
- III. Don't Tell Me
- IV. They Say

Wonjin Choi, tenor
Dr. Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

The following selections will be performed by the TCU Reading Choir

A Golden Day (2020) Patrick Vu

She Walks in Beauty (2020)* Patrick Vu

I Believe (2020) Patrick Vu

Elijah Ong, violin
Alexia Wixom, violin
Elissa Hengst, viola
Max Healy, cello
Lauren Hanifan, oboe

This is Nothing But Thy Love (2021)* Patrick Vu

Catherine DiGrazia, soloist

Silent Night (2021)* arr. Patrick Vu

TCU Reading Choir
Patrick Vu, conductor

Matthew Boon
Amber Bowen
Landon Bradley
Rachel Brookver
Jacob Brown
Kayden Burns
Lee Clark
Alicia Cruz
Catherine DiGrazia
Victor Doan

Coleton Evans
Olivia Garza
Nathan Gepanaga
Jess Harper
Rachel Heiser
Jack Johnson
Anna Morgan
Tristan Olvedo
Sydney Palomo
Emily Platon

Hayden Ponder
Abbey Sensenich
Ben Smith
Andy Stellar
Annika Stucky
Andrew Walters
Sam Taylor
Wesley Vaughn

** denotes a world premiere*

This recital is given in fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Music in Music Composition. Mr. Vu is a student of Dr. Martin Blessinger.

A Trumpet Fanfare* (2020)

This piece was written for the 2020 TCU School of Music Call for Scores competition and was named the winner of the “current student” category for the competition. Along with a monetary prize, this piece will be performed during the grand opening of the new TCU Van Cliburn Concert Hall. The grand opening was supposed to happen in the Fall of 2020, but due to the delays, this piece has not been performed yet. Thankfully, Dr. Burgess and the trumpet studio have agreed to premiere the piece as the opener to my recital.

As the title suggests, it is a fanfare written for trumpets, and the opening section features fanfare-like rhythmic figures and triumphant chromatic-median chords. Soon after, a driving and punctuated 7/8 meter marks the beginning of the second section, and the piece accelerates forward.

In the third section of the piece, a solo flugelhorn plays a melodic quote taken from the main theme in Tchaikovsky’s *Piano Concerto No. 1 in B ♭ minor, Op. 23*. I wanted to allude to this particular piece because Van Cliburn, the namesake of TCU’s new concert hall, played this exact piano concerto to win the inaugural International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1958 that brought him to fame. At the conclusion of this solo flugelhorn melody, other flugelhorns and trumpets join in to create a soft, lyrical section that contrasts to the driving and rhythmic sections that preceded it. However, it does not last too long because the 7/8 section returns once more to bring the fanfare to a dramatic finish.

Clarinet Sonata in F Minor* (2019)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante espressivo

This piece is incomplete since it is missing a third and final movement, but tonight, I would like to share the two movements I have completed with you. This clarinet sonata is written for my friend and TCU alumni Taylor Courtney. As suggested by the title, the first movement follows the traditional sonata-allegro form, but I have added a short introduction for the piano followed by a short introduction for the clarinet. Once they finish their solos, they play together and the clarinet introduces the primary theme.

After writing the first movement, former TCU clarinet professor Mr. Whitman encouraged me to write a second movement. When I was trying to find a theme, I remembered that my friend Taylor loves memorizing as many numbers of Pi that she can fit in her head. I experimented with the numbers of Pi and found that the first 17 digits worked melodically if I paired every digit with a scale degree in a major scale ($1=Do$, $2=Re$, $3=Mi$,... $8=Do$, $9=Re$). It worked quite nicely and I was really proud of this discovery. This melody forms the foundation of the second movement to this clarinet sonata. The second movement is cast in ternary form with a coda.

Puedo escribir (2020)

Neruda's poem "Puedo escribir" is a passionate love poem from his collection *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* published in 1924. "Puedo Escribir," the penultimate poem in the collection, expresses the pain the speaker feels after losing his lover. He juxtaposes the beauty of the passionate intimacy the speaker shared with his lover with the frustration and uncertainty the speaker feels now. In order to capture this emotional confusion in the music, the key areas change dramatically and frequently, and the music oscillates between areas of sweet consonance and brooding dissonance.

I initially started writing my setting of **Puedo escribir** in July of 2020 as an experiment with unconventional harmonic progressions and angular melodic lines, but as I continued working, I began to really enjoy the new challenge. This piece is unlike anything I have done before and I am very proud of how it turned out! One of my dreams is to set Neruda's entire collection to music, but for now, please enjoy the first of hopefully many Neruda songs to come.

Han: Korean Songs of Loss and Longing* (2019)

I. Ah! What Have I Done?

II. When Have I Ever?

III. Don't Tell Me

IV. They Say

This song cycle was written for Dr. San-Ky Kim, my voice teacher at TCU. After hearing my first art song, he gave me four short Korean *sijo* poems and asked me to write a song cycle as a challenge. These texts are all written by female poets and all talk about love or loss.

"**Ah! What Have I Done?**" captures the early stages of grief: denial and anger. In the middle of the piece, the piano introduces the central theme of the cycle which represents the beauty that exists in every relationship. Despite the singer's anger, they can still reflect upon the love they shared. Fragments of the theme appear in all movements but the second one. The second piece, "**When Did I Ever?**" captures the bargaining stage of grief. There are moments where the subject waits for an answer and it never comes.

"**Don't Tell Me**" is the third movement of the cycle. In this piece, the singer is looking at their own face in a pond and realizes that time has created wrinkles and stress on their face. This movement's theme is built upon suspensions, retardations, and the minor second interval. The minor second interval is a metaphor that represents time and the "seconds" that pass so quickly. Fragments from the cycle's main theme appear throughout in the piano accompaniment, but its harmonic implications are darker and more dissonant. In the second half of this piece, the polyrhythmic "duple vs. triple" pattern captures the text's meaning and resembles the "grief that has become knotted" on their face.

The fourth and final movement, "**They Say,**" explores the acceptance stage of grief. The piano accompaniment is simplified, and the vocal melody finally sings the cycle's main theme first introduced in the first movement in its entirety.

A Golden Day (2020)

A Golden Day was written for Carlos Cordero's Happy Composer Commission Project in collaboration with Chorus Austin. Six composers were chosen to write new choral music for professional choral ensembles in Austin, Texas, and **A Golden Day** is my contribution to the project. The piece features Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem of the same title, and it paints pictures of love, loss, and fond remembrance. I wanted to capture the idea of "bittersweetness" in my music, and Dunbar's beautiful words made that task easy.

The piece begins in E major with several layers of voices repeating the opening line: "I found you." Near the end of the piece, this idea is repeated, but it is slightly different since the music is now in Eb major as if to say the protagonist of this story has been changed after their encounter. The most important moment falls in the middle when the speaker confesses that they "loved her." The piece never resolves as the story ends in reflection and reverie.

The piece was premiered last spring by the TCU Concert Chorale under the direction of Dr. Aspaas. The piece is now published by Gentry Publications under the Dr. André J. Thomas's choral series.

She Walks in Beauty* (2020)

There are a handful of famous poems that have been set to music by countless composers, and Lord Byron's "She Walks in Beauty" is one of those texts. I have heard and sung many settings of this famous poem, and I was skeptical to write my own because I wanted it to be special and unique. In 2019, my good friend Audrey Burchfield encouraged me to write a setting of "She Walks in Beauty," but for months, I could not find the right music for these words. Almost a year later, I sat down at my piano just as Winter break began, and I wrote this piece.

There are two main themes in the piece, and they both relate to my friend Audrey Burchfield. The main theme uses the letters in her name as the melodic content that unifies the entire piece. The secondary theme comes from an art song I wrote for Audrey in 2018 using her own words called "In Between." The main theme in that piece is a descending arpeggio of a major 7th chord; this appears as a secondary theme throughout **She Walks in Beauty**.

The composition was completed and gifted to Audrey as a Christmas present because without our original collaboration on "In Between," I truly believe I would not have received the opportunities I have been blessed with, and I would not be the composer I am today.

I Believe (2020)

The first time I heard these words, I was sitting in the very back of the audience listening to the 2016 TMEA All-State Mixed Choir sing Kim André Arnesen's setting called "Even When He is Silent." I had tears in my eyes and chills all over my body. These powerful, poignant, yet simple words were found scrawled on a cellar wall in a concentration camp during World War 2. It is a potent message of hope and faith. I knew I wanted to set these words to music, but I did not know when or how.

In the spring of 2020, the pandemic started and everyone was trapped in their own homes. The Society of Composers at TCU decided to hold their biannual 24-Hour Composition Competition that summer. The theme for that competition was "convalescence" which was fitting for the times, and I knew this was the perfect time to use these words. For a whole day, I wrote this piece without sleeping, and I gave it everything I had. The piece was performed the following semester and won the student vote and received a unanimous faculty vote. **I Believe** later received "Honorable Mention" for the Chorus Austin's 2021 Young Composers Competition.

This is Nothing But Thy Love* (2021)

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali polymath, but he is most known for his poetry. **This is Nothing But Thy Love** comes from his collection of Bengali devotional poems entitled *Gitanjali*, which means "Song Offerings." The collection was published in 1910 and translated to English by Tagore himself in 1912. **This is Nothing But Thy Love** comes from *Gitanjali 59* and paints the image of God's love all around us in nature.

The choral piece is rhapsodic in nature to reflect the various images described in Tagore's text. From dancing leaves to idle clouds, rhythms and textures quickly change to reflect these aspects of nature. The opening line of the text is repeated in the beginning and the end of the piece to express gratitude and excitement before the work ends with a buildup leading to a huge outburst of confident joy.

Silent Night* (2021)

“**Silent Night**” was my grandmother’s favorite Christmas carol. Every Christmas, she always asked me or my brothers to sing it for her, and while she did not speak more than a handful of words in English, she knew Silent Night when she heard it. In 2013, my grandmother was bedridden from stage 4 lung cancer. She was staying in our house in the bedroom adjacent to the room with the piano, and because she knew her time was coming soon, she called individual family members into her room to talk privately. When she called me in, she told me to never stop playing, singing, and sharing my gifts.

Days later, she was taken to the hospital and in the moments leading to her death, an ICU unit full of her children and grandchildren sang Vietnamese folk songs and religious songs to her despite the fact that she was in a coma. It was May, and Silent Night was one of those songs we sang for her. She passed soon after at 3am peacefully with her family around her, and I was holding her hand.

I have wanted to write an arrangement of this timeless Christmas carol for years, but I never knew when the right time would be. As I was planning this recital program, I knew this would be the perfect opportunity, so I wrote this arrangement just before the start of the school year. Because it is such a well-known and beloved carol, I was conservative with my arrangement, but I feel that is still true to my harmonic language and style. I want everyone to know that this piece is for her, and I know she is listening from above tonight.

As “Silent Night” expresses the excited anticipation for Jesus’s birth, I know full well that the God, the saints, and the Heavenly Hosts sang “Alleluia” as they welcomed my grandmother into Heaven.

With all the love in my heart, thank you for attending the recital, and I hope you enjoy this final piece.

Texts and Translations

Puedo escribir

Poem by Pablo Neruda

Puedo escribir los versos más tristes esta noche.

Escribir, por ejemplo: 'La noche está estrellada,
y tiritan, azules, los astros, a lo lejos.'

El viento de la noche gira en el cielo y canta.

Puedo escribir los versos más tristes esta noche.
Yo la quise, y a veces ella también me quiso.

En las noches como ésta la tuve entre mis brazos.
La besé tantas veces bajo el cielo infinito.

Ella me quiso, a veces yo también la quería.
Cómo no haber amado sus grandes ojos fijos.

Puedo escribir los versos más tristes esta noche.
Pensar que no la tengo. Sentir que la he perdido.

Oír la noche inmensa, más inmensa sin ella.
Y el verso cae al alma como al pasto el rocío.

Qué importa que mi amor no pudiera guardarla.
La noche está estrellada y ella no está conmigo.

Eso es todo. A lo lejos alguien canta. A lo lejos.
Mi alma no se contenta con haberla perdido.

Como para acercarla mi mirada la busca.
Mi corazón la busca, y ella no está conmigo.

La misma noche que hace blanquear los mismos árboles.
Nosotros, los de entonces, ya no somos los mismos.

Ya no la quiero, es cierto, pero cuánto la quise.
Mi voz buscaba el viento para tocar su oído.

De otro. Será de otro. Como antes de mis besos.
Su voz, su cuerpo claro. Sus ojos infinitos.

Ya no la quiero, es cierto, pero tal vez la quiero.
Es tan corto el amor, y es tan largo el olvido.

Porque en noches como ésta la tuve entre mis brazos,
mi alma no se contenta con haberla perdido.

Aunque éste sea el último dolor que ella me causa,
y éstos sean los últimos versos que yo le escribo.

Tonight I Can Write

Translation by W. S. Merwin

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

Write, for example, "The night is starry
and the stars are blue and shiver in the distance."

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.

Through nights like this one I held her in my arms.
I kissed her again and again under the endless sky.

She loved me, sometimes I loved her too.
How could one not have loved her great still eyes.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have lost her.

To hear the immense night, still more immense without her.
And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture.

What does it matter that my love could not keep her.
The night is starry and she is not with me.

This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the distance.
My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

My sight tries to find her as though to bring her closer.
My heart looks for her, and she is not with me.

The same night whitening the same trees.
We, of that time, are no longer the same.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved her.
My voice tried to find the wind to touch her hearing.

Another's. She will be another's. As she was before my kisses.
Her voice, her bright body. Her infinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, forgetting is so long.

Because through nights like this one I held her in my arms,
my soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer,
and these the last verses that I write for her.

A Golden Day - Dunbar

Text by Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1872-1906)

I found you and I lost you,
All on a gleaming day.
The day was filled with sunshine,
And the land was full of May.

A golden bird was singing
Its melody divine,
I found you and I loved you,
And all the world was mine.

I found you and I lost you,
All on a golden day,
But when I dream of you, dear,
It is always brimming May.

She Walks in Beauty

Text by Lord Byron (1788-1824)

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

I Believe

Anonymous

I believe in the sun, even when it's not shining.
I believe in love, even when I am alone.
I believe in God, even when He is silent.

This is Nothing But Thy Love (Gitanjali 59)

Text by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Yes, I know, this is nothing but thy love,
O beloved of my heart-
This golden light that dances upon the leaves,
These idle clouds sail across the sky,
This passing breeze leaves its coolness upon
my forehead.

The morning light has flooded my eyes-
This is thy message to my heart.
Thy face is bent from above,
Thy eyes look down on my eyes,
And my heart has touched thy feet.

Silent Night

Original German text by Franz Joseph Mohr

Translated by John F. Young

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth!