



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Composition Faculty Recital
Till Meyn, composer

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

7:00 PM

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

Program

Double Trouble (2023)

Till Meyn (b. 1970)

Stacie Mickens and Heather Test, horns

Career Crisis (2016) (recital premiere)

lyrics by Richard J. Allen

Cassie Westlund, soprano
Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

Imágenes de Miró (2022) (world premiere)

Abby Losos, flute
Diego Torres, clarinet
Giuliano Bucheli, cello
Igor Parshin, piano
Nathan Grissett, percussion
Mitchell Manlapig, conductor

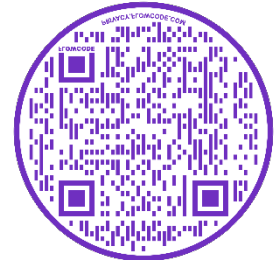
Defining Me (2016) (recital premiere)

lyrics by Richard J. Allen

Susanna Meyn, soprano
Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

Virtual Phases (2023)

video by Drone Buys: Nick Bontrager and Adam Fung



You Deserve a Song (2016) (recital premiere)

lyrics by Richard J. Allen

Faith Adams, soprano
Till Meyn, baritone
Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

Oculi in astra (2024)

Singing Girls of Texas

Singing Girls of Texas

Kerra Simmons, director

Nayely Aguirre	Rorie Herlache	Prickett, Madelyn
Kailyn Alee	Kolby Hribar	Alexandra Rodriguez
Caroline Burshears	Selah Hughes	Lizuly Rodriguez
Chrisna Benson	Sam Ikeda	Evie Runnels
Janiris Caez-Mercado	Novella Huynh	Jordan Salem
Caitlyn Castillo	Jayla Johnson	Avery Scroggins
Fiona Corbin	Kaylee Lehr	Jayla Smith
Abigail Davis	Meredith Martin	Savannah Solsbery
Alexa Flores	Susanna Meyn	Embry Stringer
Natalia Golebiewski	Aileen Morales	Acacia Thomas
Madeleine Grim	Michelle Pearce	Zanya Widemon
Promise Henderson	Kate Portele	Rachel Williams

Special thanks:

Dr. Amy Tully, Dean of the TCU College of Fine Arts
Dr. Sean Atkinson, Director of the TCU School of Music
Lori Stowe and Dr. Paul Cortese
Kerra Simmons for making it happen
the stage managers in Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU
all the amazing musicians performing on my recital
Richard J. Allen for the wonderful collaborations
Dr. Rich Enos for the guidance with Latin text
my compositor/theory colleagues for their unwavering support and friendship
my wife Laura Meyn for always being there for me

The use of recording equipment or flash photography is prohibited.
Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers and phones.

Program Notes

Double Trouble

Written for Heather Test and Stacie Mickens, *Double Trouble* is a romp through different moods and expressions. The piece opens with a fanfare motive that pops up intermittently. Next, we hear a rhythmic ostinato that emulates the words “double trouble” accompanied by an ominous theme, followed by a couple of wistful melodies. After a return of the fanfare, the horns play a swaggering theme, and then we hear the wistful music again. The music becomes more urgent after yet another emergence of the fanfare, and Till Eulenspiegel makes a brief appearance. The work closes with the unrelenting fanfare motive. The idea behind this composition was to have playful interaction between the two horns, and to allow the horns to explore together different techniques, attitudes, and emotions that they portray so well.

Three Songs from ‘You Never Know’

My colleague across campus **Richard J. Allen** (book, lyrics) and I collaborated to create a musical in 2016. ‘You Never Know’ is about a dancer who becomes injured and is no longer able to do the thing she loves. She has a career crisis, and the song of the same name describes her longing to find the right path. In *Defining Me*, the main character passionately sings about her strengths, especially after a difficult breakup with a new beau. *You Deserve a Song* is a duet sung by the dancer and her ex-boyfriend, now a close friend, and it offers a final tribute to the character who now has found her new life and career path. These three songs are excerpts that I am presenting as interludes between other larger works on the program.

Imágenes de Miró

Imágenes de Miró was composed as a vehicle for expressing the composer’s admiration of paintings by artist Joan Miró. Each of the eight short movements is inspired by a different painting by the Spanish artist, the music representing the lines, shapes, colors, moods, and themes in each work. Compositionally, each movement was written using a different type of synthetic scale that spans multiple octaves—which creates the impression of familiar structures, but with chromaticism that changes from section to section (analytical materials are available upon request). Instruments are paired together at various points as they work in counterpoint, while the texture shifts to highlight changing moods; the percussion adds timbral and rhythmic energy to the work.

Virtual Phases

In 1967 Steve Reich composed a ground-breaking work in which two pianists play the same music on two separate pianos, but one of them begins to play slightly faster, bringing the music in and out of phase. This is very difficult to achieve in performance. The effect is mesmerizing, especially considering that the materials and the concept seem so simple, but with complex ever-changing results. With my own *Virtual Phases*, I decided to compose a work expressly for electronics (tape, as we used to say), with the idea that I would have my virtual lines do things that would be next to impossible for live performers. I created a 13-note ostinato (purposely prime and odd-numbered), which is subsequently doubled. The second voice speeds up causing a perceived flurry of notes (phasing), settling down and locking into a novel configuration with new counterpoint. Later, a third voice joins and also phases with the other voices. Throughout the piece, timbres are constantly changing as a result of instrument changes, filter manipulation, and panning effects. I attempted to explore as many different combinations of counterpoint between the two and three voices as time would naturally allow. I am grateful to Drone Beuys (my colleagues **Adam Fung** and **Nick Bontrager**) for creating an original film to accompany the music.

Oculi in astra

Oculi in astra was composed for the Singing Girls of Texas directed by Kerra Simmons for their choral tour of Scandinavia. The poetry and music speak of boundless dreams, and of making the seemingly impossible attainable. The middle section warns of becoming lost, but ultimately celebrates a personal striving for the stars.

Text

Oculi in astra tene;
Amor tuus est somnium quod extendet infinite.
Imaginare lucem omnem quae ornet caela,
Mille soles longe impossibilitate,
Tamen omnes simul videre potes.

Sed cave foveae quaerendi omnia videre,
Ut perdes viam tuam
Perducat ad interitum aeternum.

Somnia tua inventa sunt in caelo sursum,
Sed corpus in terra radicitus est.
Flammae tuae tendite ad stellam ultimam.

Lift your eyes to the stars;
Your love is a dream that extends infinitely.
Imagine all the light that adorns the heavens,
A thousand suns impossibly far,
Yet you can see them all at once.

But beware the pitfalls of seeking to see all,
For you will lose your way
And it will lead to your eternal undoing.

Find your dreams in the *boundless* sky above,
Yet your body is rooted in the earth.
Let your flames extend to the farthest star.

– text by the composer with assistance from Dr. Richard Enos

Faculty and Guest Artist Bios

Faith Adams is a lyric soprano based in Fort Worth, TX. She graduated with her BM in Vocal Performance at TCU in December 2023. With TCU Opera, Faith Adams has performed as Susannah in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* (2023), Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (2023) and First Witch in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (2022). In summer 2023, Ms. Adams made her Carnegie Hall debut with Manhattan Opera Studio. While there, she performed as both Papagena and Pamina in two productions of *Die Zauberflöte* at The National Opera Center. Ms. Adams also attended the 2021 Taos Opera Institute. She is a 2nd prize winner of the Young Soloist International Music Competition and multiple-year Texoma NATS Finalist. Professional engagements in DFW include performing at the Fort Worth Rodeo and at Billy Bob's for the National Rodeo.

Richard J. Allen has directed *Bad Jews* at Stage West in Fort Worth and *Songs the Rabbi Shouldn't Sing* at Four Day Weekend Theatre in Dallas. As a playwright, his professional credits include *Starbright and Vine*; *Seducing Sally*; *Spirit of the Trail*; and *The Man Who Killed Rock Monnenoff*. His *Parasha Plays*, published in 2000, are performed at Hebrew Schools and synagogues across the U.S. The former Head Writer of NBC's *Days of Our Lives*, Richard has also written for *One Life to Live*, *General Hospital*, *Another World* and *As the World Turns*, for which he won two Daytime Emmy Awards. Richard is Professor and former chair of the department of Film, Television and Digital Media at Texas Christian University, where he has been on faculty since 1993. He is married to Cantor Sheri Allen and father to the most wonderful people you'd ever want to meet.

Nick Bontrager is an interdisciplinary artist and technologist. He loves slow looking, slow cooking, and slow sipping.

Nick received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from the University of Houston and a Master of Fine Arts in New Media from The Ohio State University. He is currently an Associate Professor of New Media Art here at TCU! He lives with his best friend, some tiny humans, and little animals.

Oh- and he also just read this great book called *The Rainbow Goblins* that has some incredible illustrations.

Adam Fung received his Master of Fine Arts from University of Notre Dame and Bachelor of Fine Arts from Western Washington University. Fung lives here in Fort Worth, Texas where he is currently an Associate Professor of Art in the School of Art at TCU.

Fung art works arise from direct, sustained experiences within the land, including sites such as the Arctic, Iceland, Antarctica, Italy, Australia, and the American West. Engaging with these spaces Fung primarily utilizes painting as means to survey the condition of the planet. Fung also has created films using aerial drones, and has a range of research interests that touch upon issues such as eco-anxiety, climate change, the history of landscape painting, celestial objects, and interconnected systems- a.k.a. hyper-objects.

Fung's paintings can be found in public art collections at Microsoft, South Bend Museum of Art, Mercedes-Benz Financial Services, TCU, and the US Department of Energy's Fermilab (just outside Chicago), as well as numerous private collections. In summer 2023, Fung participated in the Arctic Circle Summer Solstice Expedition and Artist Residency (for the second time) and is exhibiting the resulting film-installation titled "fathom" at the Arlington Museum of Art on view right now.

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, Bion Tsang, Gerardo Ribeiro, David Coucheron, and Jennifer Stumm, members of the Tokyo, Emerson, Juilliard String Quartets, among many others.

Kao is an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in Music and Collaborative Piano Artist at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. She is also the co-founder and artistic director of the Scheherazade Music Festival in Manhattan, Kansas, 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 member of the Boulder Altitude Directive, a modern music ensemble dedicated to commissioning and performing new music, during their inaugural season. Cecilia 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.

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. Her principal teachers include Anne Epperson, Margaret McDonald, Alexandra Nguyen, Elizabeth Pridgen, Chi-Chen Wu, and Shu-Cheng Lin.

Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao is a Yamaha Artist.

Till Meyn is Professor of Theory and Composition at Texas Christian University. He earned degrees from U.C. San Diego, Indiana University, and USC's Thornton School of Music. Till's music has had international performances in Sweden, Switzerland, France, Italy, Cuba, China, Spain, Ukraine, and Slovenia. Performances of his music in the United States include those at Carnegie Hall, Bass Performance Hall, Clarinet Fest, the Biennial Saxophone Congress, The Florida State University Festival of New Music, the Society for Composers, Inc. National and Regional Conventions, National Flute Association Conventions, the College Music Society National Convention, at the Manhattan School of Music, and at the Intercollegiate Men's Choruses National Seminar at Harvard, among others. Till is often commissioned to compose new works, including one to open the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra's 2019 – 2020 season. His recent choral commission *Oculi in Astra* by the Singing Girls of Texas was premiered by the ensemble in Stockholm, Sweden in 2024. He has been a featured composer at the Cliburn at the Modern series, a finalist in the NFA Newly Published Music Competition for 'Urban Ragas,' and earned first prize in the NACUSA Texas Composition Contest for 'Celestial Mechanics.' Till's music is published by Alliance Music Publications, ALRY Publications, C. Alan Publications, ECS Publishing, GIA Publications, Walton Music, and self-published by Muse Worthy Music. For further information about commissioning and scores, please visit tillmeyn.com.

Dr. **Stacie Mickens** is Associate Professor of Horn at the University of North Texas College of Music. Prior to UNT, she was Associate Professor at the Dana School of Music, Youngstown State University and adjunct faculty at Luther College and Winona State University. She holds degrees from the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Luther College.

Mickens has performed with Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Plano Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Opera, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Chamber Winds, Blossom Music Festival, Monarch Brass, Madison Symphony Orchestra, and Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. She previously held positions in orchestras in Akron, Wheeling, Youngstown, Lansing, Dearborn, Southwest Michigan, La Crosse, Waterloo-Cedar Falls, and Dubuque. She is currently principal horn of Richardson Symphony and acting third horn of The Dallas Opera.

Mickens' solo album *From the Great Lakes* features new works by David Morgan and James Wilding. "Stacie Mickens's playing is superb; her musicality has a sort of confidence that makes one feel entirely secure in her hands..." – *Fanfare* Nov/Dec 2020. "Stacie Mickens...shows masterful control of her instrument throughout the CD, displaying the diverse sound quality of the horn with beautifully lyrical and melancholic playing..." – *Brass Band World* Dec 2020.

She is a founding member of the Lantana Trio. Lantana's 2022 album, *Crossing Barriers*, features commissioned works by Jeff Scott, Ivette Herryman Rodriguez, Shanyse Strickland, Dorothy Gates, and Erik Morales. The group co-hosted the International Women's Brass Conference at UNT in 2022. Mickens has been a member of Stiletto Brass Quintet since 2022.

Kerra Simmons is currently the Artistic Director of the Singing Girls of Texas (grades 7-12) at Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts. Ms. Simmons earned her Bachelor of Music from the University of North Florida (UNF) in Vocal Performance with a Choral Conducting cognate and her Master of Music in Choral Conducting at Texas State University. Ms. Simmons has been involved with choral music since junior high, participated in three Divisional and National ACDA Honor Choirs, and sang in top vocal ensembles at her respective alma maters touring to places like South Africa, South Korea, and the Czech Republic. Most recently, Ms. Simmons was nominated and was a quarter-finalist for the GRAMMY© Music Educator Award.

At UNF, she was deeply involved in Choral Leadership and was the Assistant Conductor to the UNF Chorale, UNF Chamber Singers, and UNF Women's Chorus. During her time at Texas State, she was the Assistant Conductor of the Men's Chorus, Women's Chorus, University Singers, and the Texas State Chorale. She also assisted in creating an undergraduate lab choir, was the Teaching Assistant for the undergraduate conducting class, and had the opportunity to work with Dr. Craig Hella Johnson during conducting seminars and to perform his masterwork, *Considering Matthew Shepard*, as a member and soloist of Texas State Chorale with Dr. Johnson as the conductor. Her Master's research was on Gender Bias in Choral Conducting and The Development of Korean Choral Music.

After completing her MM, Ms. Simmons used her gap year to teach Music and English in Seoul, South Korea where she rewrote an English as a second language music curriculum and taught ages 5 to 12. After her gap year, she served as the Associate Artistic Director and Interim Artistic Director of the world-renowned and GRAMMY© award-winning, Texas Boys Choir, a program of TCAA. During her transition from directing Texas Boys Choir, she re-established the Singing Girls of Texas as its own independent organization within TCAA and helped to bring the singers to the same level of professionalism and artistic excellence.

Ms. Simmons' goal in her teaching is to not only inspire the singers to produce a beautiful and healthy sound but to also encourage them to tap into their individual and unique strengths as musicians and human beings. She believes in the power of music to bring together all people from different backgrounds and uses creative programming to intertwine various artistic mediums such as poetry and visual art. Her favorite pieces to conduct and teach are those of the non-Western tradition and her current research is on the advocacy and visibility of female composers, conductors, and musicians. Additionally, Singing Girls of Texas and Ms. Simmons have partnered with Sarah Quartel for a two-year residency in which Mrs. Quartel has composed a new masterwork to be premiered in Spring of 2024 and a culminated tour to Denmark, Sweden, and Finland with SGT Tour. In her free time, she likes to cook vegan food, read, and hang out with her cats, Bubba and Peaches.

Heather Test is Instructor II of Horn at Texas Christian University. Prior to joining the Texas Christian University music faculty in August of 2011, she taught horn at the University of Texas at Arlington for three and a half years. Heather has a Bachelor of Music in Performance from the University of North Texas (2001) and a Master of Music in Performance from Southern Methodist University (2003). Professor Test is currently playing 2nd horn in the Dallas Opera's 2023-24 season as a substitute musician. She is also one of many members of the Dallas based rock-symphonic-choral-pop group The Polyphonic Spree who recently released its eighth studio album, *Salvage Enterprise*. With The Polyphonic Spree, Heather has performed at Austin City Limits LIVE!, Radio City Hall in New York City in tribute to the late David Bowie, and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno. Heather's horn playing can be heard on recordings by The Polyphonic Spree, Dark Rooms with Daniel Hart, Anaphase, David Pierce, These Machines are Winning, Bill Callahan, John Grant, Sarah Jaffe, Sunshine Village, The Maniacal Four's Matt Jefferson, Kaela Sinclair, Rahim Quazi, Robert Gomez, The UNT Wind Symphony, The UNT Two O'clock Lab Band, and various film scores by local composers such as "Ain't Them Bodies Saints" by Daniel Hart. Heather is married to fellow musician/drummer/percussionist and Certified Arborist, Kelly Test, and they reside in East Dallas with their ten year old son Benji, three dogs, Russell, OB, and Rob and their common red-eared slider named Lettuce aka Leti.
