



August 30, 2009, 1:00 PM

Composer's Voice concert

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Jan Hus Sanctuary • 351 E 74th Street • New York • NY • 10021

A Woman's Life and Loves

David Wolfson

based on an idea by Eileen Moore

Lauren Pastorek (voice), David Wolfson (piano)

Ah Vastness of Pines

Brent Chancellor

text by Pablo Neruda

Shabana Tajwar (voice), Shiau-uen Ding (piano)

Dos Palabras

Robert Voisey

text by Alfonsina Storni

Beth Griffith (soprano), Shiau-uen Ding (piano)

Summer

David Morneau

texts by William Shakespeare & Anne Cammon Fiero

Shabana Tajwar (voice), Shiau-uen Ding (piano)

3 Japanese Songs

George Brunner

texts by Ono No Komachi & Izumi Shikibu

Monica Harte (voice), Christian McLeer (piano)

The Composer's Voice Concert Series is an opportunity for contemporary composers to express their musical aesthetic and personal "voice" created in their compositions.

Vox Novus is collaborating with the Remarkable Theater Brigade and Jan Hus Church to produce a monthly concert series promoting the chamber works of contemporary composers.

Vox Novus produces and promotes new music. We are dedicated to contemporary music, the musicians who perform, and the composers that write the music of today. Our mission is to cultivate a music community and make their work available to the greater public.

Remarkable Theater Brigade, founded by Christian McLeer, Dan Jeselsohn and Monica Harte, creates and produces new operas and musicals and takes children's versions out to special-needs and at-risk children free of charge.

Support from the Puffin Foundation

"...continuing the dialogue between art and the lives of ordinary people."

More information can be found on the web at:

www.voxnovus.com

www.remarkabletheaterbrigade.com

www.janhus.org

A Woman's Life and Loves - text by David
Wolfson

1.

I have (No! Down from there!) many keys
(After supper, maybe.)
on a ring (In the parlor, dearest!) at my
waist.
Each key (Because I said you couldn't.)
opens (It doesn't look fresh.)
a door (Try another, then.) to somewhere.

Are they (Give that back to your brother!)
keys to (There isn't any left?)
ballrooms (When I'm finished in here,
dearest.) or pantries?
Someday (Put those down before you hurt
yourself!) I'll have (Dearest don't forget your
medicine!)
time to (Then I'll have to take the cheaper
one.) try (Oh, no! What have you tracked
in?) them
(No! Down! After supper in the parlor
doesn't look because I said so try another
give that back there isn't any when I'm
finished put those down before your
medicine Oh, no!) try them all...

2.

The butcher's boy looked at me today.
It was a kind of half-smirk, half leer,
Part insolence, part tenderness;
I remember that look well, from other eyes.
It used to make me flustered, and silly,
And outraged, and happy.
Thank goodness I'm beyond that now.
I drew my shawl closer around me
And did not look again at the butcher's boy.

3.

Oh God my boy, a soldier!
How could he be a soldier!
My boy, with his model trains, and his
pastry crumbs,
and his runny nose, his unending questions,
his dirty knees, his dirty diaper!
My boy!

He'll put on a uniform,
He'll wave goodbye.
Then he'll disappear,
And so will I.

Oh God my boy, a soldier.
How can he be a soldier?
You might as well tell me that a cow stood
on its hind legs and swallowed the sun.
I could believe it as well.
It can't be right that my son will be shot at
and sleep in the dirt.
That can't be right.
That can't be right.
You might as well tell me that a fish spoke
poetry and then burst into flame.
It can't be right that my son will take orders
and shoot to kill.
That can't be right.
That can't be my boy!

Who used to have such a temper
Who used to play with bugs
Who used to tell me that he loved me ev'ry
morning when I told him to go play...

He'll put on a uniform,
He'll wave goodbye.
Then he'll disappear,
And so will I.

4.

We have been married many years,
You and I.
It has not been what I expected.
I knew I would become part of you;
I did not know you would become part of
me.

I did not know the way bad days mix with
good days over time,
And settle like an old snowfall on our house.
I did not know the way little things wear out
big things,
the way ev'ry day pecks at you like hungry
chickens.

I did not understand how all the broken
pieces of those hungry days fit together,
like dough and yeast, like mortar and stone.
How could I have known that you would
change?
How could I have known that I would?

How could I have known that we would
change
into a man and a woman who love each
other so much...
We have been married many years,
You and I...

Ah Vastness of Pines - text by Pablo Neruda

This is part of a song cycle for orchestra and soprano based on poems by Pablo Neruda. The piano and voice version may be performed with amplified piano and electronics or solo piano. Today's concert will be performed with solo piano.

Ah vastedad de pinos, rumor de olas
quebrándose,
lento juego de luces, campana solitaria,
crepúsculo cayendo en tus ojos, muñeca,
caracola terrestre, en ti la tierra canta!
En ti los ríos cantan y mi alma en ellos huye
como tú lo deseas y hacia donde tú quieras.
Márcame mi camino en tu arco de esperanza
y soltaré en delirio mi bandada de flechas.
En torno a mí estoy viendo tu cintura de
niebla
y tu silencio acosa mis horas perseguidas,
y eres tú con tus brazos de piedra
transparente
donde mis besos anclan y mi húmeda ansia
anida.
Ah tu voz misteriosa que el amor tiñe y
dobla
en el atardecer resonante y muriendo!
Así en horas profundas sobre los campos
he visto doblarse las espigas en la boca del
viento.

Ah vastness of pines, murmur of waves
breaking,
slow play of lights, solitary bell,
twilight falling in your eyes, toy doll,
earth-shell, in whom the earth sings!
In you the rivers sing and my soul flees in
them
as you desire, and you send it where you
will.
Aim my road on your bow of hope
and in a frenzy I will free my flock of
arrows.
On all sides I see your waist of fog,
and your silence hunts down my afflicted
hours;
in you, with your arms of transparent stone
my kisses anchor, and my moist desire nests.
Ah your mysterious voice that love tolls and
darkens
in the resonant and dying evening!
Thus in deep hours I have seen, over the
fields,
the ears of wheat tolling in the mouth of the
wind.

Dos Palabras - text by Alfonsina Storni

Dos Palabras means "two words" which refers to the words two Spanish words "Te amo" meaning "I love you" in English. Alfonsina Storni is considered the Virginia Woolf of Argentina, who also met her end by drowning herself in the sea.

Dos Palabras (Two words)

Esta noche al oído me has dicho dos
palabras comunes.
Dos palabras cansadas de ser dichas.
Palabras que de viejas son nuevas.
Dos palabras tan dulces,
Que la luna que andaba filtrando entre las
ramas se detuvo en mi boca.
Tan dulces dos palabras
Que una hormiga pasea por mi cuello y no
intento moverme para echarla.
Tan dulces dos palabras
Que digo sin quererlo: ¡oh, qué bella, la
vida!
Tan dulces y tan mansas
Que aceites olorosos sobre el cuerpo
derraman.
Tan dulces y tan bellas
Que nerviosos, mis dedos, se mueven hacia
el cielo imitando tijeras.
Oh, mis dedos quisieran cortar estrellas.

Tonight you have said two words to my ear,
which are common,
Two words tired of being said.
Words which being so old are new.
Two words so sweet
That the moon, filtered through branches,
stop in my lips,
Two sweet words
That an ant walks along my neck
and I don't even try to move to shake it off.
Two sweet words
That I say unwillingly: Oh, how beautiful life
is!
So sweet and so tame
That they spill as aromatic oils on my body.

So sweet and so beautiful
That nervous my fingers move towards
heaven like scissors.
Oh! my fingers wish they could cut stars.

Queja (Complain)

Señor, mi queja es ésta,
Tú me comprenderás:
De amor me estoy muriendo,
Pero no puedo amar.
Persigo lo perfecto
En mí y en los demás,
Persigo lo perfecto
Para poder amar.
Me consumo en mi fuego,
¡Señor, piedad, piedad!
De amor me estoy muriendo,
¡Pero no puedo amar!

Lord, my complain is this,
You will understand me:
Of love I'm dying,
but I cannot love.
I pursue perfection
In myself and in others,
I pursue perfection
to be able to love.
I consume myself in my fire,
¡Lord, piety, piety!
Of love I am dying,
¡But I cannot love!

Summer

(Sonnet no. 18 & In a hot country)

Summer is the first song from a set called Love Songs that I am in the process of composing. The concept for this set is simple: pair texts by contemporary poets with Shakespeare's sonnets as the basis for new songs. Initially these songs are composed for piano and soprano voice, but I am planning a whole series of alternate versions that include additional instruments, different voices, and live electronics.

Sonnet no. 18

by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of
May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course
untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his
shade
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

In a hot country

by Anne Cammon Fiero

A languid afternoon
in heat
that feels like summer.

I turn on the fan and stretch
across the bed. Listening
to its subtle crooked whir,
I wonder if fans
become unscrewed
from their hinges.

Through the thin rectangular screen,
I watch the same tree
I've watched
for months.

Though as always with spring in a hot
country
it seems the leaves have burst like flames
upon branches
that appeared as though dead.

3 Japanese Songs

1. Flowers
by Ono No Komachi

How invisibly
It changes color in this
world.
The flower of the human
heart.

2. Crickets
by Izumi Shikibu

Although the cricket's song
Has no words
Still it sounds like sorrow.

3. No Color
by Izumi Shikibu

In this world
Love has no color
Yet, how deeply
My body is stained by
yours.

Composers

George Brunner, Composer and Artistic Director of Electronic Music New York (EM-NY), is an American composer with international acclaim. The theme concerts and electroacoustic dramas he presents include virtuosic singing and dancing as well as drama. His most recent work, *Lady MacBeth*, was premiered at the International de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges in France in June. In July, he directed the *New Waves in Electroacoustic Music* concert for the RTB Young Artist Program and he is currently developing an Electroacoustic Shakespeare Series that will be performed in NYC and tour to various Shakespeare Festivals and operatic young artist programs throughout the US. Mr. Brunner is an authority on Text Sound Composition and lectures worldwide on the topic.

Brent Chancellor is a New York based composer and conductor. His music has been performed in the United States, Canada and Germany and has been featured at the Festival of New American Music as well as in films and gallery installations. Most recently he served as assistant conductor to Maestro Paul Nadler for productions of *La Traviata* and *Rake's Progress* in Tel Aviv, as well as for concerts with the Israeli Chamber Orchestra. Upcoming projects include music for a motion comic, his first opera, music for amplified string quartet and music for two flutes and two cellos. He also serves as assistant conductor for Astoria Symphony.

David Morneau is a composer of an entirely undecided genre, a provider of exclusive unprecedented experiments. In his work he endeavors to explore ideas about our culture, issues concerning creativity, and even the very nature of music itself. His current projects include a short concert-opera based the classic Simon electronic game and *a/break machinations* – a series of music videos for a dance in collaboration with Amiti Perry. He is also an active member of *Seen Performance*, an artist collective in New York City, and co-founder of *Elevator Machine Room*, an electronic music performance project. More information can be found at his website <http://5of4.com>.

“With few opportunities and much competition, young composers show creativity in just getting heard.” And in Chris Pasles’s article in the *Los Angeles Times*, **Robert Voisey** is highlighted as one of those composers. Composing electroacoustic and chamber music, his aesthetic oscillates from the ambient to the romantic. Rob Voisey embraces a variety of media for his compositions, and pioneers new venues to disseminate his music and reach audiences. He is also director of *Vox Novus* and *60×60*, as well as co-director for the *Composer’s Voice* concert series.

David Wolfson is a freelance composer, music director, arranger, pianist and copyist who has lived in New York City since 1986. He is Associate Artistic Director, Music Director and resident composer of *Experience Vocal Dance Company* (www.experiencevocaldance.org). The *Strollers of Maplewood*, New Jersey recently produced the premiere of his children’s musical *Cat: Adventures of a Caterpillar*. Mr. Wolfson’s most recent concert works were the cello quartet *Time Flies*, which was premiered last fall by the cello quartet *Cello and Feet First* for solo violin, which was premiered on the *Composers Voice* series last spring by Suzy Perelman.

Performers

A native of Taiwan, pianist **Shiau-uen Ding** is a rising presence on the new and electro-acoustic music scenes, and an original and energetic performer of traditional solo and chamber repertoire. She received her degrees from National Taiwan Normal University and University of Cincinnati. She has performed in Germany, France, and throughout the US and Taiwan. She was called a “daredevil” by New York Times for her performance at Bang on a Can Marathon and “a powerful force on the new music scene” by Array for her concert at Spark Festival in Minneapolis. She has recorded for Capstone, Centaur, Innova and Electric Music Collective. <http://shiauuending.com>

Beth Griffith has appeared with Sequentia, Musikfabrik, Ensemble13, L’Art pour L’Art, Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Paris Nouvel Orchestra Philharmonique and has worked with composers John Cage, Morton Feldman, Mauricio Kagel and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Her one-hour, solo recording of Feldman’s “Three Voices” was awarded the German Record Critics Prize.

Monica Harte, Soprano and General Director of RTB, has performed more than 25 coloratura roles in the standard operatic repertoire and numerous world premieres. This season she sang concerts in France and throughout North America and recorded for Albany, Pogus Productions and MSR Classics Labels. Her students sing for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Miami Grand Opera, Oper Frankfurt, and other respected venues. Also, Monica is the Director for the Natchez Festival of Music Educational Outreach Tour and Production Coordinator for Electronic Music New York.

Christian McLeer, Composer and Artistic Director of Remarkable Theater Brigade (RTB), received his first commission at 14 for the American Cancer Society. By 25 he had won numerous piano competitions, performed his works at Carnegie, Steinway and Merkin Concert Halls, received more than 20 commissions, had works recorded by numerous labels and founded his own professional company, RTB. In the last 5 years, Christian has had more than 100 performances of his orchestral, operatic, electroacoustic, solo instrumental, choral, solo voice and chamber works and has written film scores and commercials.

Lauren Pastorek, mezzo-soprano, has been enjoying a busy and varied career. This past year she starred Off-Broadway in *The Marvelous Wonderettes*. She has also appeared with NY Gilbert and Sullivan Players at City Center and Symphony Space. Lauren has toured North America with Mackintosh’s *My Fair Lady*, *The Will Rogers Follies* (Betty Blake u/s) and the 1st National Tour of *Oklahoma!*, and she appeared at the Kennedy Center in *Carnival!* (Rosalie u/s), directed by Robert Longbottom. Past roles include the title role in *Xerxes*, *Lady Angela* in *Patience*, *Bianca* in *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Guenevere* in *Camelot*, and *Meg Brockie* in *Brigadoon*. Recordings of her performances with the Ohio Light Opera as *Phoebe* in *Yeomen of the Guard*, *Treszka* in *Autumn Maneuvers*, and *Hederl* in *Das Dreimaederlhaus* are available online and in stores. Lauren was the mezzo soloist in Philip Glass’ *Choral Symphony No. 5* with the composer in attendance, *Beethoven’s Ninth*, *Bach’s St. Matthew Passion*, *Handel’s Dixit Dominus*, and was a repeated performer in the Cincinnati Pops’ *Home for the Holidays*. As Grand Prize Winner of the 1st Annual Lotte Lenya Competition, Lauren was invited to sing in Weill’s 100th birthday performance of the *Mahagonny Songspiel*. She has her BM from Eastman School of Music, and her MM from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Lauren is a native of Houston, TX and now hides out in Queens.

Shabana Tajwar spends her days as an Environmental Engineer and her nights wondering what it might be like to be a classical singer. Some of her questions have been answered through valuable performance opportunities that have ranged from recitals at The Juilliard School to concerts in the Austrian Alps as part of the Tyrolean Opera Program. Shabana has also had the incredible opportunity to perform in her own concert of opera arias at New York’s Lang Recital Hall, programmed by her coach Joan Dornemann, Assistant Conductor/Coach of the Metropolitan Opera of New York. Shabana is thrilled to be able to sing just for the love of it.

