



**Inversion Ensemble presents  
Planet Home  
Saturday, February 25, 2023, at 7:30 PM  
Sunday, February 26, 2023 at 3 PM**

The Rosette  
3908 Avenue B Ste 116, Austin, TX 78751  
Trevor F. Shaw, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor  
Seylon Stills, Soundscape Artist  
Benjamin Dia, piano

Adrienne Inglis and Catherine Spainhour, Audio and Video Recording

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Thanks to [Austin Sierra Club](#) and [Travis Audubon](#) for providing information and conversation about our planet at the concerts!

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**You are welcome to take photos and videos during the concert!** Please make sure that devices are kept silent and flashes turned off.

Tag us @inversionensemble on Facebook & Instagram, and @inversionatx on Twitter.



Enjoy free wine and beer at today's concert!  
A huge thank you to [Austin Beerworks](#) for providing the beer!

## Program

**The Red Wheelbarrow** by Rich Campbell (world premiere) | Text – The Red Wheelbarrow  
by William Carlos Williams

so much depends  
upon  
a red wheel  
barrow  
glazed with rain  
water  
beside the white  
chickens

Text: Public Domain | Originally published in "Spring and All" | Contact Publishing ©1923  
William Carlos Williams

“The Red Wheelbarrow,” an environmental poem I first read as a teenager, struck me as an alluring and joyful means to immerse in the Planet Home project. The score blossomed during a resident fellowship at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, a pastoral setting that nurtured embracing the poem’s vivid landscape. The piano provides a repeating foundation over which the choir playfully evokes the spare text, using variations of the initial theme throughout. There is a contemplative moment midway, then the pulse resumes, concluding with a gleeful repetition of the last line.

**Love's Philosophy** by Trevor Shaw (ASCAP) (world premiere)  
Text by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

The fountains mingle with the river  
And the rivers with the ocean,  
The winds of heaven mix for ever  
With a sweet emotion;  
Nothing in the world is single;  
All things by a law divine  
In one spirit meet and mingle.  
Why not I with thine?—

See the mountains kiss high heaven  
And the waves clasp one another;  
No sister-flower would be forgiven  
If it disdained its brother;

And the sunlight clasps the earth  
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:  
 What is all this sweet work worth  
 If thou kiss not me?

Percy Shelley's 1819 poem has been a long-time favorite of mine. Its simple imagery shows that nature beautifully creates inherent togetherness. I sought to honor the poet's simplicity of metaphor by keeping the length of my composition relatively brief, harmonically thick, but tonal, and its form uncomplicated (A-A-B-A). While Shelley's poem clearly leads us to embrace the logic of romantic love, it simultaneously serves as a reminder of the value of basic human connection, highlighted more than ever as I write this note during a global pandemic.

**Hymn to Creation** by Suzette Emberton (ASCAP) (world premiere)  
 Text by Suzette Emberton based on translations of Rig Veda 10:129

In the beginning, before the beginning,  
 When there was no before, and there was not yet time.  
 ...Only nothingness.

There was no being or nonbeing, neither space nor the sky beyond.  
 What stirred? In whose protection?  
 Neither life, nor death, nor immortality.  
 No stars, no sun, no moon, no night or day.  
 Only The One breathing windlessly  
 And nothing else beyond The One.

All was in darkness, hidden by darkness.  
 (In the swirling darkness – energy and chaos)  
 In the swirling, roiling cosmic waters, all which was becoming  
 - Swirling and covered within the Void.  
 (Energy, Chaos, Fire, and Heat)  
 The Universe burst forth alive, born by Fire!

Whence came The Fire? Whence came The One?  
 Whence came Creation?  
 Who can say?

No one knows whence The One arose.  
 Perhaps the Divine willed it all to be.  
 Perhaps the Universe is the Divine and willed itself to be.

The Universe is here.  
 We are here.  
 We are made of stars.

Hymn to Creation is inspired by the creation story as told in the Rig Veda. When I happened upon this writing, I was immediately struck by the similarities between the ancient text and our current understanding of cosmology. In this creation story the universe is ancient, and perhaps even timeless, born from cosmic energy and chaos in a burst of fire. The existence and purpose of the universe remain a mystery to all except, possibly, The Divine; yet The Divine may be just another name for the universe. Nevertheless, it all exists, and we are part of the universe - made of the stuff of stars.

**Afternoon on a Hill** by Jeffrey Derus

Sandy Fivecoat Memorial Emerging Composer Contest Winner 2023 – Open Division  
 Text by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

I will be the gladdest thing  
 Under the sun!  
 I will touch a hundred flowers  
 And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds  
 With quiet eyes,  
 Watch the wind bow down the grass,  
 And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show  
 Up from the town,  
 I will mark which must be mine,  
 And then start down!

This poem is in the public domain.

Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Afternoon On A Hill" brings us to a sunlit hillside where one can ponder the beauty of this earth and how we choose to live among it every day. The opening line, "I will be the gladdest thing under the sun!", sets the tone for this piece. We often find ourselves lost in material possessions and our daily monotonous tasks that we walk right by the natural beauty of this planet we call home. The music is inspired by the natural lines and movement of nature. One will musically hear soaring clouds over peaks and valleys among bursts of flowers with the swaying grass. Millay calls us to observe nature with "quiet eyes." I believe this is her call to action. She calls us to witness the beauty of the earth without corruption, but with contemplation on our own true beauty.

**Interspace** by Seylon Stills

**Do You Wanna Ride** – Music and Text by Seylon Stills

Text

VERSE 1

Orchestra comes from the ground  
I sink into the the itchy earth  
Cold air sings across my cheeks  
My tummy is warmed when you see me  
lights above begin to merge  
The hazy daze conducts my nerves  
Brings my heart beat to a pause  
I'm almost still, thank the Lord

CHORUS

Do you wanna go  
Do you wanna go ride  
Do you wanna, do you wanna  
Do you wanna go, do you wanna go ride  
Do you wanna, do you wanna  
Do you wanna go  
Do you wanna go ride  
Do you wanna, do you wanna  
Do you wanna go, do you wanna go ride  
Do you wanna

VERSE2

Don't you just want to pretend  
We are children once again  
Forget about what was today  
Hold my hand, hold your breath  
What about the road above, Ophiuchus may heal our wounds  
I'll wrap my arms and hold on tight  
If you ride away tonight

CHORUS

BRIDGE

I don't want to know what's going on in the world

I don't want to know 'bout the lies believed and the fans he's won  
 I don't want to know 'bout the deepened gaps and the lives we've lost  
 Just tonight can we pretend we're on another world and don't know?

**Laki's Birds** by Seylon Stills

Intermission

**La magia del río** – music and text by Santiago Veros (North American premiere)

Somos la unión;  
 La fuerza más poderosa de la naturaleza,  
 Capaz de hacer brillar  
 El manantial de los deseos.  
 Somos los brazos en alto  
 Abrazando el cielo y  
 Uniendo los mares;  
 Atravesamos las fronteras y  
 Creamos la magia  
 Somos transportados allí,  
 Dónde el deseo fluye y  
 Dónde juntos somos el caudal  
 Capaz de convertir los sueños en realidad.  
 Juntos somos la magia del universo.

We are the union;  
 The most powerful force in nature,  
 With the ability to make shine  
 The spring of desires.  
 We are the arms high up and  
 We are hugging the sky  
 Uniting the seas;  
 We cross the borders and  
 We create magic.  
 We are transported there,  
 Where desire flows and  
 Where together we are the torrent  
 With the ability to turn dreams into reality.  
 Together we are the magic of the universe.

We are brothers of the same species and maybe we do not realize but our differences ideological, behavioral, religious, gender, etc. – In truth are skills to complement us and if we unite them, we will have access to all the knowledge of all the truths existing in humanity. We must be tolerant and learn from one another because we are in the same boat traveling together and to live a wonderful life, we must listen to each other and unite to awaken our kindness and create synergistic relationships. So we will always remember that we are the same species and we will find peace.

**Every Swing of the Axe** by Stephen Ryan Jackson (world premiere)

Commissioned by Inversion Ensemble as part of the Happy Composer Commission Project  
Soundscape composed by Seylon Stills

Text : The Disease Of Deforestation by Sam Illingworth

Looking down on jaded canopies, blinded eyes quickly cast their Milky gaze across logging  
that persists without permission  
And wildfires that raze without restraint;  
Ploughing through virgin shades of green to create hard edges where assassins lurk in  
dampened shadows.  
Escalating in their severity,  
These infected hosts Breed, Thrive, Survive;  
Smearing their sickly saliva across the sweltering skins of their unwitting enablers.  
Every swing of the axe, perfectly attuned to the avarice of their appetite;  
A duet of devastation curbed only by a hidden loop that beats against this toxic tide.  
A cue nearly missed; as we lose sight of the forest amongst the trees we have felled.

Source: <https://pickmeuppoetry.org/the-disease-of-deforestation-by-sam-illingworth/>  
poem used with permission from Sam Illingsworth

we lose sight of the forest amongst the trees we have felled.  
(this piece is meant to recreate that distinct sensation.)

**A Moment with a Bumblebee** by Carol Brown (world premiere)

Soundscape composed by Seylon Stills

Text by Trevor F. Shaw

A Moment with a Bumblebee

My flowered shirt attracts your gaze,  
So, you approach with bumbly ways.  
Gentle Bombus on my hand,  
I hear you buzzing as you land.

With comic bulk and wings so small,  
 How can you help to save us all?  
 You're unassuming, fuzzy, kind,  
 With only pollen on your mind.  
 You seek a world which may be gone,  
 Rife with borage and bee balm.  
 Forgive us for our apathy,  
 Precious, golden bumblebee.  
 Eternally we owe a debt  
 To those who pollenate, and yet  
 We dedicate few words or tears  
 As your dear species disappears.  
 I'm no flower, our visit's over.  
 Go bask in lavender and clover.  
 Each day I'll spare at least a thought  
 For how much you improve our lot.

Text used with writer's permission.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, approximately one in four of North America's 4,000 bee species are in danger of extinction. Without enough bees to pollinate our crops and native plants, our very existence is at risk. I wanted to focus on the plight of our tiny superheroes for Planet Home, and I have the good fortune of having a partner who is a wordsmith and was able to create lovely imagery while also reminding us that we should not take these essential helpers for granted. I hope the listener will be able to imagine a bumblebee weaving from one flower to the next within the recurring theme throughout this piece, surrounded with the beautiful sounds of nature created by Seylon Stills for this program.

**Extinction** by Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP) (world premiere)

Soundscape composed by Seylon Stills

Text : An Extinction by Kim Stafford

The poem "An Extinction" © 2022 Kim Stafford is unpublished and used with permission.

An Extinction by Kim Stafford

Not just the creature gone,  
 not just the tattered feathers,  
     dry leaf pressed thin.  
 Not just the rendering from memory,  
 not just the lost-list growing longer,  
     a shape and hue from the field guide fled,



not just a name that meant a life, a syllable that once  
 was teeming glory, one bright flurry  
 shimmering the sun.

No. No. No.

It's one name gone from our happiness,  
 one breath lost from our respiration,  
 one thread frayed from our salvation,  
 one plank gone from the ark that carried us.

Be the songbird now and testify.  
 Be the butterfly hinge of gold.  
 Be the one with open hands  
 these wonders to behold.  
 Don't let them fly.  
 Be the songbird now and testify.

Commissioned by Inversion Ensemble for its February 2023 Planet Home concert, Extinction sets the poem "An Extinction" (2022) by Kim Stafford for SATB mixed chorus. The three stanzas of the poem get distinct musical treatment: the first some text-painting and dissonance, the second rhythmic parts underpinning canonic melodic lines, the third a rich chorale. During my work on this piece, I happened to be traveling by train. The pitches of the train whistle snuck their way into the score as a dissonant chord. A nature soundscape may sometimes accompany this piece, although the tongue click sounds create a bit of their own aural ecosystem. Drawing attention to the unfolding catastrophe of mass extinction, Extinction hopes to inspire humans to action to prevent further loss of species biodiversity.

**Planet Home** — words and music by Jason Kay, Derrick McKenzie, Simon Katz, Toby Smith, Sola Akingbola, and Wallis Buchanan, arr. Trevor Shaw (ASCAP) (world premiere)  
 Soundscape composed by Seylon Stills

You know, there's no place like planet home  
 Nowhere else I'd rather be  
 It's the only place I know  
 Where you can witness tragedy  
 There's no time to wonder now  
 About who is right or wrong  
 We're gonna need some help to get things straight  
 So come on, bring your voice along  
 'Cause sure enough

There's no place like planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 If only we could make it right, planet home  
 I wanna go there

This blue sphere of shattered dreams  
 Is heading for destruction  
 Illusions drip from every seam  
 It's just death, war and corruption  
 I heard there was a promised land  
 On planet home  
 Two thousand years have been and gone  
 But still we don't know  
 Can't you see that

There's no place like planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 If only we could make it right, planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 Find yourselves some peace on, planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 Anything's in reach on planet home  
 Planet home

Planet Home is blue and green, beautiful for you to see  
 I wanna go there

There's no place like planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 If only we could make it right, planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 Find yourselves some peace on planet home  
 I wanna go there  
 Anything's in reach on planet home (You know that anything's in reach on)  
 I wanna go there

This arrangement of "Planet Home" sticks closely to the original Jamiroquai song, at least as far as the melody and overall form. Much of the melody in the verses is unison, with only a few splits among the voices. The piano, however, adds an even thicker harmonic language than the source material. The chorus nearly exactly maintains the original harmony and is merely orchestrated for choir. Jason Kay's "breakdown", which replaced a traditional bridge has been converted into a classical/ minimalist texture.

Thank you for coming!

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## ABOUT SEYLON STILLS

“Here with the crickets and the pines I feel at home,” says Seylon Stills when asked about her studio tucked away in the piney woods of Texas.

Seylon Stills is a sound artist, composer, and performer known for her captivating audience interactive performances. She uses technology to create immersive, ambient experiences. She weaves in field recordings collected while out in nature to transport audience members to beautiful natural spaces. She has a deep sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world. Seylon Stills fuses the vulnerability of acoustic folk with experimental electronic soundscapes. Her background as a classical singer and composer surface in her intricate instrumentation and hypnotizing vocal harmonies.

Born in Sri Lanka, Seylon Stills was influenced by the gorgeous jungles and beaches that her family frequented. Though her family moved to Canada when she was young, her visits back home made a lasting impression. At the age of 10 during a family visit to Sri Lanka, her uncle Laki Senanayake (picture Summer 2018), an acclaimed artist and sculptor, would become a great influence in her life. She remembers visiting him in his home - a house without walls, deep in the jungle. He fed the ants the leftover breadcrumbs and the iguanas the leftover chicken bones. Everything was respected and had a place. His example showed her the value of simplicity, creativity, and realizing your imagination. He taught her that in our fullest potential our very lives can be an expression of art.

Seylon Stills holds her M.A. in STEM Education (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Education) from UT Austin and has over 10 years of experience as a public school educator.

Stay in touch with her at [seylonstills.com](http://seylonstills.com) and sign up for her mailing list for more updates.



## SINGERS

## SOPRANO

Adrienne Pedrotti Bingamon  
 Carol Brown  
 Juliane Orlandini  
 Suzette Emberton

## ALTO

Adrienne Inglis  
 Deirdre Spainhour  
 Jennifer Inglis Hudson  
 Katrina Saporsantos  
 Rosa Mondragón Harris

## TENOR

Holt Skinner  
 Jonathan Riemer  
 Lester Tanquilut  
 Nathaniel Fomby

## BASS

Emanuel Glenn Pruitt  
 Gregory A. Hilliard, Jr.  
 Isaac Arterburn  
 Steven Sérpa  
 Steven Young

## STAFF

Trevor Shaw, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor  
 Katrina Saporsantos, Administrative Director  
 Adrienne Inglis, Outreach and Artist Manager  
 Carol Brown, Production Manager  
 Juli Orlandini, Associate Conductor  
 Adrienne Pedrotti Bingamon, Associate Conductor

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## Upcoming Concerts

### Helios

Saturday June 3, 2022 at 7:30 PM

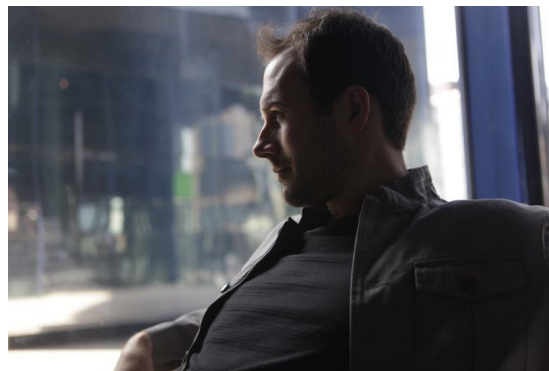
Sunday June 4, 2022 at 3 PM

[KMFA](#) 89.5 Classical

41 Navasota St., Austin, Texas 78702

Inversion presents **Helios**, the multimedia work by

[Tim Takach](#).



### Star Stuff

June 11, 2023 at 4 PM

Austin Public Library – Central

710 W Cesar Chavez St, Austin, TX 78701

Inversion's brand new youth choir [Nova](#) under the direction of Juli Orlandini presents its inaugural concert "Star Stuff" with music that inspires exploration and a sense of wonder, connection, and belonging.



Inversion is a collection of vocal ensembles dedicated to commissioning and performing timely new works by living composers. Inversion presents themed concerts on myriad topics including LGBTQIA+ rights, racial justice, immigration, climate change, and democratic rights, as well as space exploration, philosophy, natural science, and the ancient elements. Inversion advocates for inclusion through outreach with local public schools, college partners, and annual emerging composer contests.



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